



Olly and Eachann take the plunge in chilly challenge

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Trolley Dash Competition 2019

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For more information see page 3

Martyn's Monday Club plans move to new home

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



A peer-to-peer support group which is helping to save lives is about to get its own permanent space.

In less than one year, Martyn's Monday Club (MMC), set up in memory of Oban man Martyn Cruickshanks, who took his own life, has helped hundreds of people living on the edge.

More than 500 people have turned up to support sessions run at Hope Kitchen on Soroba Road, but with enough funds in the pot, MMC is ready to rent a premises of its own to allow it to grow.

The club's bright future is all credit to the town's tremendous generosity, said MMC facilitator Des Macmillan, who this week revealed news of new premises on the horizon.

He said: 'We are getting a new premises for ourselves and it's all down to the community backing us. We never thought for one second this

would be possible after only one year but we are just going to grab it and do it.'

The club has been hosted by Hope Kitchen since it started, but once it is relocated, as well as the groups for men on Mondays and women on Tuesdays, MMC is going to start a new mixed session to fill a need for 16- to 24-year-olds.

Club plans to start a new mixed group for 16- to 24-year-olds.

Des continued: 'At the moment there's nothing much available for them outwith school but that's going to be one of our priorities.'

The new base will also see a place of safety set up where people in mental health crisis can be brought while waiting to be assessed.

Attaining charity status is also on the cards for MMC in the new year, which will allow it to apply for

more grants and funding. More than 500 people have come through MMC's doors this year so far, with about 40 people turning out to the club's weekly meetings.

Club leaders say renting a town centre premises is looking 'pretty favourable' and the club is talking again with a landlord next week. If all goes well, they hope to be in the property for February after celebrating MMC's first anniversary on January 6.

'This place would be absolutely perfect,' said Des. 'It's got everything we need. We do need to sit round the table with police, ambulance and the hospital about how we would use the place of safety, but we believe it would take the pressure off the hospital and it should help bring anxiety levels down.'

'Hospitals and police stations are not the best place to be taken if you're in mental health crisis. This would be a neutral safe space to take someone.'

Continued on page eight

Stage is set for panto magic



Richard Baker leaves behind the 'high wires' of SSE to don a jester suit as Laughlot, the court jester in this year's pantomime, Camelot, oh yes, he does! The show kicks off tonight, Thursday, at 7.30pm in the Corran Halls, and runs until Saturday, including a matinee. To book your tickets, call the box office on 01631 567333.



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OT

Oban swimmer set for fourth and final challenge

Oban's George Gray and his Volkswagen work colleagues are donning their wetsuits for the final swim of their 4 Rivers Challenge on Saturday December 7 at the Serpentine Swimming Club, Hyde Park, London. It's going to be a wee bit chilly!

The team are swimming to raise money for mental health charities – one in four people will suffer a mental health issue during their lives and the biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK is suicide.

And this week they reached the £10,000 mark, with the total rising to just under £12,000 with gift aid.

George said: 'A big thank you to all who have donated so far.

'Everyone's mental health is important so please donate to help our charities go the extra mile, by visiting uk.virginmoneygiving.com/GeorgeGray5.'

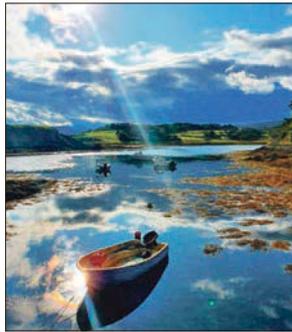
Mull binman Colin snaps back at critics

Mull binman Colin Morrison, lighting up lives with his 2020 calendar, has been forced to defend himself against driving complaints, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The 48-year-old, who has already given proceeds from his calendar sales towards Tobermory's Christmas lights and for the New Year fireworks display, and this week is making a donation to Mull's Army cadets, has been the target of complaints to the council about him allegedly taking photographs of his scenic bin round while he was driving.

On his Facebook page, Colin said he wanted to clarify the situation and explained that many of his photographs were taken before or after work or on his days off, and that the ones taken while at work were during his breaks.

He said: 'Thankfully, the



council understands this and knows I never take photos whilst driving, which of course would be highly dangerous and illegal. Sadly, some folk are never happy, but I am not going to let this get me down even though it's very disappointing.'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Colin is an ambassador for Argyll and Bute, particularly Mull and Iona. We are proud that

our staff use their spare time to promote the area and to undertake charitable work. It shows the big-heartedness of our residents.

'We have a dedicated and hardworking team on Mull and Iona that delivers the council's roads and amenity services. Colin is a valued part of that team.'

The amount Colin has raised for charity so far is now in its thousands, with sales of the calendar flying out to homes worldwide.

Demand for the £8 calendars was so huge, extra copies had to be ordered. The first 500 sold out in just one day.

Other charities also set to benefit from the binman's calendar are Dervaig Primary School's new playground project, the island's hospital, which looked after his dad, and Tobermory Pipe Band.

POLICE FILES

At about 3.25am on Monday December 2, in a property near Ballygrant, Islay, a man aged 42 was arrested for allegedly assaulting a woman. The man was charged, held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At about 11.45pm on Monday November 25, a woman was allegedly assaulted within licensed premises in Oban. Police were called, investigated and the following day a man aged 31 was arrested and charged. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At about 5.55pm on Thursday November 28, at Corran Esplanade, Oban, a man aged 37 was arrested for allegedly behaving in an abusive manner. The man then obstructed officers who were searching him. The man was charged and a report submitted to the procurator fiscal.

On November 28, a property in Glenmore Road, Oban, had a window smashed. The same day, a CCTV security camera within Westbay Flats, Corran Esplanade, Oban, was damaged. Between 7pm on Saturday November 30 and 10am on Sunday December 1, in Colonsay Terrace, Oban, a grey Landrover Freelander was damaged by having the rear passenger side window smashed.

At about 1pm on Saturday

November 30, graffiti was discovered on the wall of a changing room building within Mossfield Stadium.

At about 8.45am on Friday November 29, at the junction of George Street and Stevenson Street, Oban, a car was in collision with a pedestrian who was injured. The driver of the vehicle, a woman aged 58, will be the subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

At about 6pm on Saturday November 30, a man aged 44 was stopped by police and found to be in possession of a number of items allegedly stolen from a supermarket in Oban. He was arrested, charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

On November 30 and to December 1, two houses in the Lochandhu Road area of Taynuilt were broken into and items stolen.

At about 10.10pm on Saturday November 30, in George Street, Oban, a man aged 31 allegedly behaved in an abusive manner. The man also allegedly assaulted a several people and was aggressive and abusive to police. He was arrested, charged, held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

If any member of the public has information in relation to any incident, they can contact police on 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

McCaig's Warehouse collects gifts for care home residents

Now in its fourth year, McCaig's Warehouse in Oban is running its Christmas campaign, collecting gifts for residents at Eadar Glinn Care Home.

Customers have until Christmas Eve to help spread festive joy, before the presents are wrapped and delivered to residents.

Marion Chamberlain, store supervisor, said: 'This is probably the fourth year we have done it.

Every year it seems to be getting a lot better. A lot of people are seeing it more and they are coming in, which is great.

'It is just really to give something back to the community and Christmas sometimes is a little bit lonely, so it helps them a wee bit.'

Marion Chamberlain and Michelle Marlow from McCaig's Warehouse. 17_T49_McCaigsWarehouse01



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Give gift to Hope this Christmas

by David McPhee
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



For some, Christmas is a celebration, but for others it can be a period of profound stress. That is why organisations such as Hope Kitchen are a vital service. Hope helps people get through the festive period by providing food, company and advice.

However, in order to meet the extra demand over the holiday, Hope is in need a little help of its own.

Service manager Catriona Petit said: 'We need the community's support. They are so fantastic and every year they go above and beyond to make sure the most vulnerable in our area get the help they need at Christmas.'

'People can give in lots of different ways to Hope. We are giving out food parcels and we want to give out proper meals as well as Christmas treats. Sometimes people need a bit of extra help to get through. There is no shame in finding your finances not stretching over Christmas.'

The charity is asking people to donate a selection of food that can be made into a meal, such as: tinned meat or vegetarian main; tinned vegetables; tinned or dried potatoes; a chutney sauce; tinned or packaged pudding; tinned or carton of mustard; or evaporated milk.

Hope is also asking for people to consider adding tins of pet food, as well as some simple toiletries, and a wee Christmas treat.

'Christmas is a celebration,' Catriona added. 'But it can be



Catriona Petit, left, and the team at Hope will keep the service open over the festival period.

a very different time for many people. Coming in, helping by donating and being part of Hope is what it is all about. It would be really good if people were not on their own over Christmas.'

Catriona explained that as well as donating food, if people were in a position to donate financially to Hope, that 'would be really helpful'.

'At the moment we are very dependent on different grants, but I would like Hope to be more owned by the community,' she added.

The service manager said that they already have regular donations from people, which really helps as it allows Hope to respond to the needs of the community. This differs from grant funding, as the money from grants is reserved for specific projects.

People can donate via Hope's website www.hopekitchen.org.uk, via the Hope Kitchen Facebook page, or through

Paypal using obanhopekitchen@gmail.com.

Alternatively, people can drop in to the premises located at Hope Kitchen, 2 Soroba Road, during opening hours: Monday-Wednesday, 11am-6pm, Thursday-Friday, 11am-3pm.

The Oban charity is one of the few services that will be open over the festive period and it will be hosting a Christmas lunch for around 40 people on December 25.

On December 23 and 24, it will be open from 11am-6pm, and from noon until 3pm on Christmas Day, featuring a meal and games.

On Boxing Day it will also be open from noon until 3pm.

On December 30 and 31, Hope will be open from 11am-6pm, with a special Hogmanay evening steak pie.

It will be closed on January 1 and 2, and will reopen again on January 3 from 11am-3pm. 'We are opening throughout

the Christmas period between Christmas and New Year and some of the other services are shut. People are welcome to come and it would be nice to see some new faces,' Catriona added.

Tesco trolley dash is back

We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year, so how great would it be able to fill your shopping trolley COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE in January?

Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will win the chance to fill their trolley with up to £200 worth of goods (see T&Cs for exclusions). All you have to do is collect four tokens over four weeks starting on December 12, get them to us by 10am Thursday January 9 and you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash. What are you waiting for? Banish those post-Christmas blues and start collecting your tokens!

All four tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter.



Last year's competition winner, Liz Crawford.

The editor's decision is final. **Terms and conditions** Winner must be at Tesco, Lochside, Oban, PA34 4HP for 9.30am January 20. Excludes tobacco, lottery, baby food, non-food items and alcohol. Quantity limited to two per item. The winner will be given a hand held scanner to monitor spend to the value of £200.

We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/disposed immediately upon the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.

Man suffers burns in campervan fire

A man was taken to hospital with burns to his hands after a motorhome burst into flames in an Oban car park, writes David McPhee.

Emergency services were called to Lochavullin car park in Lochside Street at 3.35pm on Thursday November 27.

A gas canister is thought to have started the fire which spread to two cars parked nearby.

Police confirmed a man was taken to Lorn and the Islands Hospital in Oban suffering from burns to his hands.

'It was pretty surreal at the time. People were coming out of Tesco and businesses



to look at what was happening. You could hear things exploding,' said one man who was there.

Police are not investigating.

The fire gutted the campervan, injuring one person, and spread to two cars which were parked nearby.

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OT

Oban police officers are hailed for heroics

by David McPhee
dmpcpee@obantimes.co.uk



Two Oban police officers who saved the life of a man during a mental health episode have been hailed for their heroic actions.

Officers were called to a property in Oban on March 3, 2019, amid reports that a man was stabbing himself and threatening to jump out of a third-floor window.

Constables Shaun Conway and Scott Deakin arrived at the scene and found the highly intoxicated man who had self-inflicted wounds to his stomach and neck.

Specialist police resources were called for but with a two-hour arrival time, the constables were left to try to talk the man down.

After several minutes, the man appeared to be calming down and began engaging with the officers but suddenly



Shaun Conway and Scott Deakin were nominated for a Scottish Police Federation Bravery Award. Photograph: Andy Barr

started lowering himself out the window.

Both officers quickly grabbed hold of the male, who was covered in blood, and refused to let go despite risking being pulled out of the window themselves.

Constable Conway, 27, said:

'While we were holding on to him, he actually brought his feet up the wall and tried to kick off the wall as if to get us to let go or take us with him.'

'He eventually gave up and realised we weren't letting go no matter what so we dragged him back inside and we got

him under control. With that particular situation, there's no opportunity to speak to each other and make a game plan.

'I've worked with Scott for years – we've been through many incidents together. You don't need to talk, we know how each other is going to react.'

Constable Deakin, 31, added: 'Part of the difficulty in working in a remote area like this is that you know the specialist support is a long way off.'

'Firearms were deployed to it but we were given an ETA [estimated time of arrival] of over two hours so you know that it's up to you and you've got to sort it out until someone else can get there. Luckily, we managed to.'

The duo were nominated for a Scottish Police Federation Bravery Award and were two of the winners honoured at a

ceremony in Edinburgh last night (November 28).

Andrea MacDonald, who chairs the Scottish Police Federation, said: 'All the winners this year are a credit to the service and it was my privilege to thank them for their heroic actions, on behalf of their colleagues, families, friends and the general public.'

'Much has changed in Scotland's policing landscape in recent times with new and unprecedented challenges facing officers on a daily basis. But what remains the same is the dedication and bravery of the men and women who put on their uniform every day and go out to do their duty, keeping the citizens of Scotland safe.'

'The desire to protect and service the public, often in exceptional circumstances, continues to be at the forefront of everything we do.'

Lochaline slipway reopens

The slipway at Lochaline Ferry Terminal returned to full service on Monday (December 2), following a planned six-week closure.

The closure was part of a larger ongoing harbour project to replace the aligning Ferry Terminal, which is expected to be completed by April 2020.

During the closure contractor George Leslie Ltd completed the steel sheet piling element of the work, as well as installing the berthing face of the new structure and the new vessel berthing fenders.

The new underwater slipway sheet piles are in place, and the toe of the slipway has been reconstructed.

The retaining wall at the marshalling area is still under construction, and lane restrictions will remain in place until January, when this part of the project is due to complete.



Innes Hughes was met by friends and family after running from Fort William to Oban.

DM_T49_CharityRun01

Oban man does 45-mile run after only four weeks' training

Innes Hughes approached Oban's Station Square on Saturday night to the applause of his friends and family.

The 21-year-old had just run from Fort William to Oban, almost 45 miles – after just four weeks of training.

He completed the feat in under 12 hours and has raised almost £1,000 for Martyn's Monday Club – an Oban peer to peer support group.

Speaking about his accomplishment, Innes said: 'Thank

you so much to everyone who donated and showed up at the finish line. Thanks to everyone who gave us a wee beep driving past or a message during the run. [It] definitely gave us a little boost.'

The Oban man said it was the 'hardest' thing he has ever done.

'I'm in absolute agony,' he added, 'but it was worth it.'

He chose to raise money for Martyn's Monday Club, a mental health support group,

as he admits he has suffered his own 'ups and downs'.

Speaking previously, Innes said: 'I'll be doing all this and raising money for Martyn's Monday Club – a fantastic local support group for people who feel like they need help in any sense. So who better to raise money for than a charity that I can completely connect with and understand?'

Donations can still be made to www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/innes-hughes



"The quality of the workmanship was excellent, they left the place clean and tidy every night and we thought it was extremely good value for money."



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Christmas tree festival sees school take top spot

by David McPhee
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With Christmas only three weeks away, people will have spent the weekend decorating this year's tree.

But anyone in need of inspiration needed to look no further than St Conan's Kirk, which hosted its annual Christmas tree festival.

More than 70 tree-mendous entries were scattered around the historic church, using everything from hot tubs to toilet rolls.

Some were large, some were small, but they all had their own personality.

More than 1,000 people voted in the competition, but in the end Lochnell Primary School took the top spot with its 'Reduce, Reuse, Treecycle' creation.

Taking second place, was A Fatal Case of Tinselititis from Taynuilt Medical Practice;



Above, twins, Lucas and Zara McLeod, from Achaleven Primary School DM_T49_StConan's05; right, Ailith Livingstone had fun at the festival. DM_T49_StConan's06

and Ballet West Outreach's Handprint Tutu Tree was chosen as the third best.

Also very popular were All Things Bright and Beautiful from Pat McLeod and Betty Jamieson, and the Helter Skelter Tree, Railway Cottages, Lochawe.

There was something for

everyone in the church – youngsters took part in a search for Santa's elves. 'The elves come every year to see the trees but like to play hide and seek with us, finding ever more ingenious hiding places,' the organisers said.

And there were choirs and coffees for the adults.



Santa's sleigh is Oban bound this weekend

Oban will have snow this Sunday.

Santa will be pulling up inside Cuan Mor on George Street between 2pm and 4pm on December

8 to bring a full sleigh-load of festive cheer and goodies, helping raise funds for Martyn's Monday Club.

There will be mulled wine for the grown-ups and presents for the children in return for a donation, says organiser and restaurant manager David Wilson.

Mr Wilson hopes Santa's



visit, with a snow projector, will become an annual event, supporting a different charity in the town every year.

'Christmas can be fun for lots of people but it can also be a particularly difficult time for some. We wanted to show support for all those people and for the work MMC does to help.'

'Everyone is welcome to come in on Sunday to meet Santa and make a donation,' said Mr Wilson.

Traffic and parking survey

Oban Community Council is seeking feedback for the council based on the public's views of traffic and parking in town.

The current Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is currently being reviewed so this is an opportune time for thoughts and suggestions. A link to a digital survey can be found

on the new Oban Community Council Discussion Group Facebook page.

Paper copies are also available and can be returned to the BID4Oban office. The feedback has been very valuable so far with more than 400 responses and some excellent and practical suggestions on ways to improve traffic safety.

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OT

Shinty club graffiti under investigation

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Disgusted shinty club bosses are urging people to grass up vandals after a graffiti attack at Oban's Mossfield stadium.

Sloss Out! was discovered scrawled on the outside of a single-storey changing room wall and reported to police at 1pm on Saturday.

The wording appeared in bold capital lettering in red and black Oban Camanachd colours, ending with an exclamation mark. Stephen Sloss is the manager of the club's first team.

The night before, November 29, the shinty club had celebrated its end of season prize-giving at its 130th-year dinner dance at the Royal Hotel.

By Monday morning, the graffiti had been cleaned off and police confirmed they



The graffiti was discovered on Saturday afternoon on the changing rooms at Mossfield stadium.

were investigating it. An Argyll and Bute spokesperson said: 'Graffiti of this kind is shameful. Removing it uses already stretched resources that would be better spent on other much needed services.'

A statement from Oban

Camanachd committee read: 'As a club we are disgusted and extremely disappointed to hear of the vandalism which occurred at Mossfield Park at the weekend. Not only is this a direct and personal attack on the club,

its coaches, players, members and supporters, it is defacing a valuable public asset to Oban and the game of shinty.'

The club is urging anyone with information to go to the police.

The statement added: 'Oban Camanachd Club is a very open, proud, successful, inclusive and diverse club, run entirely by volunteers and has been for 130 years. The club is currently fielding four very successful teams at all levels of the game, with many committed and dedicated people giving up their time and effort to ensure the club succeeds at every level both on and off the park.'

'We greatly value the service, time and effort of every member of our club and we stand together against any form of abuse directed at anybody associated with the club.'

Climate rebels take over Station Square

Extinction Rebellion Oban took over Station Square on Sunday at the start of a 'Twelve Days of Crisis' campaign, writes Kathie Griffiths.

In the lead up to the General Election, the group is saying whoever gets the vote on December 12 will be the last government who can act and hope to make a difference to the climate and ecological crisis facing people.

Other XR rebel groups across the UK have also been taking action as part of the latest wake-up campaign.

'In the UK, floods are destroying people's lives. Millions of tonnes of crops are rotting in drowned fields

and the prices of staple goods are set to rise. Australia and California have suffered excruciating wildfires and large parts of India are recovering from a crippling drought.

'Here in Scotland, Britain's longest-lasting snow patch, the Sphinx in the Cairngorms melted for the second year in a row, an unprecedented event. Last year the World Wide Fund for Nature's Living Planet Report found that 60 per cent of all wildlife on our planet has been destroyed in the past 45 years due to human activity. This is all happening now, in our life times,' said a spokeswoman for XR Oban.



Campaigners took to Station Square on Sunday to highlight the start of the 'Twelve Days of Crisis' campaign.

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Santa's visit lights up Tobermory

Tobermory RNLI welcomed Santa on Friday November 29, raising £430 for the town Christmas lights fund.

Prior to his arrival, Santa's elves worked hard to transform the lifeboat station garage into a festive grotto.

Santa arrived just before the switching on of Tobermory's Christmas lights and in the next two hours met 126 children to give them an early Christmas present.

Upstairs, there was more Yuletide fun with biscuit decorating for the youngsters and mulled wine for the grown-ups.

Speaking afterwards, Santa said: 'It was lovely to meet the boys and girls from Tobermory and the Isle of Mull. Thanks to all the grown-ups for donating to such a great local cause. The Tobermory Christmas lights will be a helpful navigational aid when I'm back on Mull on my sleigh on Christmas Eve.'

Oban is perfect for Christmas shopping

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk



WHERE IS THIS?



Three weeks today it will be Boxing Day and Christmas will be all over – and I haven't even started my Christmas shopping yet!

Luckily, I do my shopping locally which makes things much easier and nicer – a couple of afternoons wandering round Oban with the odd tea and cake thrown in to warm me up and it'll be all done.

I've done the hustle and bustle of shopping in Glasgow at Christmas and I just don't want to anymore; it's too hot and too busy and I get shopping rage – it is a real thing, honestly.

After the third or fourth time getting hit by someone's bag or elbowed aside, I end up storming out of the shop and asking myself why

I go through this, so I don't anymore.

I have Argos for the kids and electricals that I may need, lots of wonderful local gift shops where I know the gifts will be a wee bit different and individual, and it's easy for things to be returned if they're not suitable.

For the really awkward people to buy for (you know who you are), I also have the benefit of LoveOban Gift Vouchers which mean

no stress for me as they can be used in more than 80 businesses.

That's my wish for this Christmas for myself and everyone else – no stress, just a wee bit hustle and bustle because it wouldn't be Christmas without it. But I've no desire to be rushing about tying myself in knots this year. I'm going to be calm and relaxed.

So if you see me rushing about looking harassed, remind me: 'Calm and relaxed', is my mantra for this Christmas.

The photograph last week was taken from John Street as is the side of Fancy That, and as I write that I'm going through a list in my head of all the shops it used to be – must be old age setting in.

This week's photograph is a wee bit harder.

All units, appliances, sink & tap, laminate worktops, glass splashback & shelves included.

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Argyll and Bute candidates questioned at Mull hustings

by Stephanie Cope
editor@obantimes.co.uk

On Thursday November 28, all four election candidates for the constituency of Argyll and Bute attended a hustings at Craignure Village Hall on the Isle of Mull.

The successful candidate will represent Argyll and Bute at Westminster, following the General Election on December 12.

The event was hosted by Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT), and streamed live through its Facebook account. A full recording is available to view on its Facebook page.

The session was chaired by councillor for Oban South and the Isles, Mary-Jean Devon, who introduced Alan Reid (Liberal Democrat), Brendan O'Hara (Scottish National Party), Gary Mulvaney (Conservatives) and Rhea Louise Barnes (Labour).

Each candidate briefed the audience on their position and policies before taking questions. Topics included austerity, Brexit, Prime



Moray Finch, general manager of Mull and Iona Community Trust opened the event, which was live-streamed on Facebook.

Minister Boris Johnson, the future of Scotland's shellfish industry, the future of Scottish agriculture, human rights, indyref2, broadband, climate change, renewable energy and the Child Maintenance Allowance. The devolved issues of education, healthcare and business rates were also discussed.

On Brexit, Ms Barnes held that leaving the EU would be detrimental to Argyll and Bute, citing the loss of

European funding as a risk to local industries.

Mr Reid commented that leaving the EU would be 'bad for the constituency', highlighting uncertainty surrounding agricultural support post-2022.

Mr Mulvaney argued that delivering Brexit would 'restore trust in politics', describing the EU as a 'declining market' and emphasising matters of state sovereignty.

Mr O'Hara countered that no economic analysis had yet forecast a good outcome for Argyll and Bute.

Supply chain equity between Scottish and Northern Irish shellfish fleets after Brexit was a key area of concern.

Mr Mulvaney celebrated demand for quality Scottish produce; outlining a Conservative desire for 'mutual win' trade deals, but no strategy for replicating current just-in-time supply arrangements.

Mr O'Hara referenced points he had made during Prime Minister's Questions on October 23, and cited remain as the best possible outcome.

Mr Reid said remain provided an 'obvious solution' to the maintenance of frictionless trade, and Ms Barnes underscored Labour's pledge to offer a remain option on the ballot of a second Brexit referendum.

Indyref2, and the wider ethics of confirmatory referendums, attracted lively debate. Mr Reid and Mr Mulvaney both opposed a repeat of the 2014 vote. However, Mr O'Hara retorted that 'democracy is not a des-

tinuation, it's a process', commenting that '[political] priorities are what the people of Scotland say they are'. Ms Barnes stated that, if elected, Jeremy Corbyn would consider a second referendum in due course, and she would faithfully represent the will of her constituency.

Shortcomings in Argyll and Bute's communications infrastructure, and its constraining influence on rural communities, were widely acknowledged.

Mr O'Hara noted that this is a reserved issue, but maintained better connectivity was essential to the retention of young people in rural areas. Mr Mulvaney highlighted his central influence in the event of Conservative victory in Westminster. Mr Reid emphasised his previous work on broadband infrastructure, and pledged to continue it if elected. Ms Barnes restated Labour's manifesto promise to provide free fibre-broadband for every home and business.

The hustings concluded with thanks from Councillor Devon.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:

SNP 36%

CON 33.2%

Gary only needs 1,300 more votes to beat the SNP

IT'S EITHER GARY MULVANEY OR NICOLA STURGEON'S SNP

LIBDEM 18.2%

LAB 12.6%

Labour and the Lib Dems are just too weak to beat the SNP here.

Result of the last General Election here.

OT

2019 Oban Winter Festival closes with grand finale

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Oban Winter Festival 2019 came to a thrilling climax on Saturday night when a special St Andrew's Day fireworks finale lit the sky above the town.

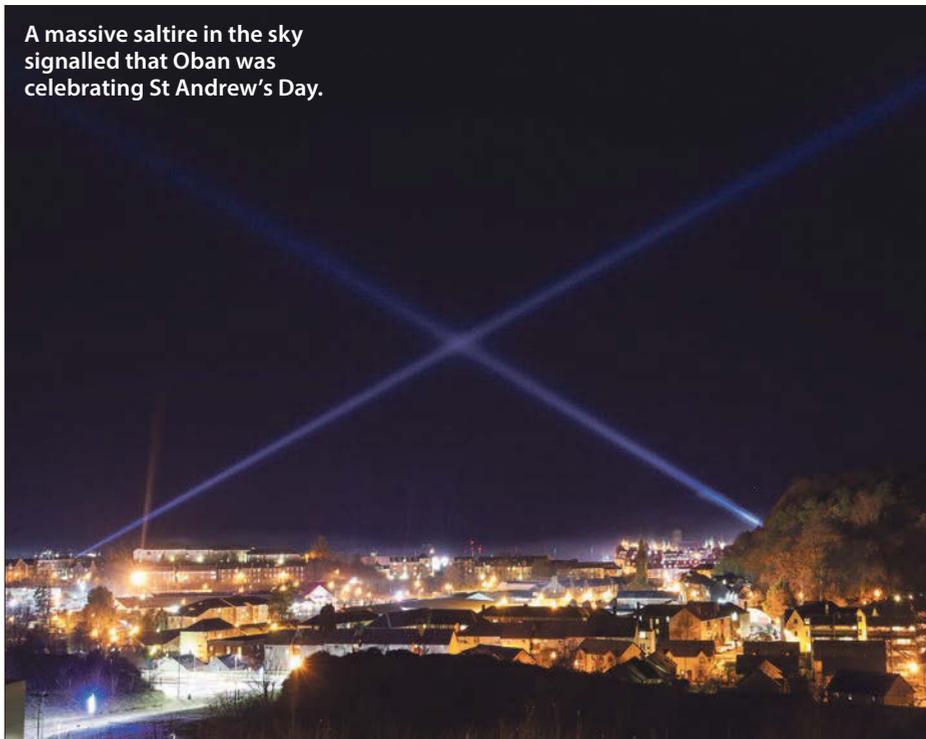
A saltire created by spotlights could be seen from as far away as Benderloch while crowds gathered along the Esplanade to witness the spectacle.

Organisers declared this year's event, held from November 15-30, a huge success.

'Many of the events were up, in terms of footfall, compared to last year and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves,' said an Oban Winter Festival organising committee spokesperson.

'The St Andrew's Day fireworks and Big St Andrew's

A massive saltire in the sky signalled that Oban was celebrating St Andrew's Day.



Abbi Ferguson, Aimee Greenlaw and Ella Mackechnie produced over 50 flavoured lollipops for the Junior Entrepreneurs' Market in the chocolate shop.

making their own angels, and Christmas cards and decorations from recycled materials.

Along at The View, a very special Local Heroes event, incorporating the Lighthouse Keepers Lunch, was taking place. Heroes of the sea, including Oban RNLI, Northern Lighthouse Board and Oban Sea Cadets, were all on hand to meet and chat with members of the community.

Young entrepreneurs took over at the distillery and the Oban Chocolate Company, selling goods they had made themselves.

New this year was the Junior Entrepreneurs, for youngsters age 10-16 years, who set up stall at the chocolate shop between 4pm-6pm.

Saturday's events rounded off a very busy three weeks in the town and organisers hope to build on this year's success.

'Our job isn't finished yet as we now need to gather together all the impact reports to present to our funders,' said the festival spokesperson.

'We are thrilled about how things have gone this year and are overwhelmed with how the community has helped and supported us throughout.'

Earlier this week Winter Festival mascot Coolio handed over £50 worth of vouchers to Oban's Agnes Ingram for submitting the most receipts from the town's late-night shopping event, and presented a bottle of wine to Amore Hairdressing owner Rebecca Neilson with daughter Katie, one, for the best dressed window.

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Bash were both very well attended and provided a fitting finale for what has been a fantastic three weeks for all concerned.'

During the day on Saturday, Winter Festival entertainment continued with workshops and markets taking place throughout the town.

Artists of all ages gathered at the Rockfield Centre for Create and Make it for Christmas workshops led by Val Hamilton, Val Leckie (2 Vals Art Classes) and Elizabeth Stevenson of Art Explorers.

Families were invited to go join in the free sessions which saw everyone getting stuck into designing and

Martyn's Monday Club reveals plans to move to new home

Continued from page one

Other plans for the new space also include opening up a drop-in centre at weekends and offering the venue out through the week for other clubs to meet up.

'Having our own base will make things so much easier and better. It will open up lots more opportunities, but we need the community's support. We couldn't do any of this without them.

'We definitely need people more than ever now. We have been so very fortunate that people have supported us so well in our first year but we need to keep it going.'

Ootmahoosewindae 2020 wildlife calendars in aid of MMC are still on sale in shops around town for £15.

This year MMC has funded, thanks to donations, a series of mental health first aid courses in Oban through the Choose Life initiative, run

suicide awareness talks for high school teachers and senior pupils, and helped train 18 members of the public in suicide intervention skills.

Des said: 'Every penny we get in goes back out into the community. All our talks and training has been funded by MMC and we have not charged a penny, because the community has made it possible.'

'Together we are making a difference to so many lives.'

RE-ELECT

BRENDAN O'HARA **For Argyll & Bute**



Here in Argyll & Bute this election is a straight fight between the SNP and Boris Johnson's Tories. It's also a fight for Scotland's future.

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BEFORE SOMEBODY ELSE DOES.



VOTE SNP



ON Dec. 12th

OT

Argyll drink-driving figures among the worst in Scotland

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll and West Dunbartonshire drivers are in the top five most likely to be caught drink driving, according to a 2018 report by Transport Scotland.

And almost 100 people in the region have provided positive roadside tests for drugs since the new drug-driving law came into force on October 21.

Motorists in Argyll are being warned of a zero tolerance approach to driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs during this festive season.

The revelation came as Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf and Police Scotland launched the first festive enforcement and awareness campaign to include the use of the new laws last week.

Road Policing West



Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf joined Police Scotland to launch the festive drink- and drug-driving campaign.

Command Chief Inspector Darren Faulds said: 'Disappointingly, we have seen nearly 100 people provide positive roadside tests in the first four weeks.'

'Our festive drink drug-driving campaign started on December 1 and we will have dedicated resources on patrol, targeting motorists at all times of the day who

choose to take the risk of taking drugs and driving or drinking and driving.'

'The campaign highlights the criminal and personal consequences of being found guilty of driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or with drugs in your system.'

Latest figures show drivers in Argyll and West

Dunbartonshire are in the top five most likely to be caught drink driving, at 3.3 per cent of those for whom a breath test was requested according to the Transport Scotland Reporter Road Casualties Scotland 2018.

'As we move into the festive party season, I want to remind motorists of the devastating consequences driving with alcohol or drugs in their system can have on their and others lives,' added CI Faulds.

'I am urging people in Argyll and West Dunbartonshire to think if you have to drive what could the consequences be to your life if you do it under the influence of drink or drugs.'

'Always remember and think about how you're going to get home safely and don't forget about the impact alcohol can still have the morning after.'

Mr Yousaf added: 'Driving a vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is totally unacceptable and puts not only the driver, but passengers and other road users, at risk of serious injury or even death.'

'As well as such devastating consequences, drivers caught drink or drug-driving also face significant criminal penalties which could result in them losing their licence or their liberty.'

'The new drug-driving law and Scotland's low driver-alcohol limit are focused on making our roads safer for everyone.'

During the first four weeks of the new law coming into force (October 21 to November 18), 96 people have provided positive roadside tests. Of the 96, six were women aged between 23 and 42. The 90 men were aged between 17 and 50.

Council responds to consultation

A response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the principles of a visitor levy was agreed by Argyll and Bute Council last Thursday (November 28).

This will help the Scottish Government's understanding of the pressures on the local environment and infrastructure felt in some areas by the increase in overnight and day visitors. It will inform development of legislation to allow councils to introduce the levy if they felt it appropriate.

Community councils and destination marketing organisations were also given opportunity to share their views as part of the Argyll and Bute response.

The Transient Visitor Levy bill would be a means to seek increased powers over local taxation that would help enhance and maintain the tourist experience.

Read the response at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ielistDocuments.aspx?CID=257&Mid=8500&Ver=4>

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



The richness of bardic culture in Gaeldom

From a Tìree book of contemporary times that gave the inspiration for last week's article, it is an earlier publication from 1932 that has sparked this week's offering.

The Bàird Thirisdeach (The Tìree Bards) is an anthology of poetry by Tìree composers written from the late 18th century through to the time of its publication in the early 1930s.

The book contains around 250 poems – nearly all songs – from 49 bards and is a strong reminder of the value of putting on written record, material that exists otherwise only in oral tradition. It is also a reminder of the sheer volume of output of song that was produced in the communities of the Highlands and Islands in past centuries.

The content represents a small selection of the work of the bards featured and those 49 bards represent only a small fraction of those who composed during that time period.

This is reflected in the following quotation taken from Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies' Eric Cregeen and the Reverend

Donald W MacKenzie in the small publication Tìree Bards and their Bàrdachd from 1978.

While referring to the village of Balephuill, on Tìree, it is written: 'The names of over 30 men and women known to have composed songs there in the 19th century have been recorded and there must have been many others of whom there is no tradition.'

'This, for a township of crofter-fishermen and cotters rarely exceeding 30 of 40 families is remarkable, though in the context of the Highlands is perfectly credible.'

If you consider that one small village on one small island produced more than 30 bards during the 1800s, then multiply that across other townships of that island, then other islands and other villages across the Highlands, then it gives an idea of the richness of bardic culture that existed in Gaeldom.

Although there is a vibrant music scene in the Highlands today, we contemporary composers and musicians are but a small remnant of a once huge songwriting tradition.

For all that the Bàird Thirisdeach contains a comparatively small sample of what existed, its importance in preserving these songs is hugely significant.

The work of the Rev Hector Cameron, who compiled and edited the book, was valuable at the time of publication but with every year that passes, as more and more of our oral tradition is lost in the mists of time, it becomes more and more valuable.

It is certainly the case that without the existence of this book, most of the songs it contains would have been lost without trace already.

Donald Meek's book *Seòl Mo Bheatha* did not win its category at last week's Saltire Society Awards, but like the Bàird Thirisdeach, it is a book that has contained within it a rich well of our history.

The facts and reflections of people and place nearly lost to oblivion are now recorded for posterity. I hope without delay, Donald continues in this vital work and to produce more books of a similar type and standard.

Scottish
Liberal
Democrats



THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS ARE ON THE WAY UP.

Their opinion poll rating is far higher than at recent General Elections and they finished above both Conservative and Labour at the European Elections earlier this year.

Alan Reid achieved much during his 14 years as Argyll & Bute's MP, such as the 5 pence a litre fuel duty cut on islands. Back him to stand up again for Argyll & Bute's interests at Westminster.

Only Alan Reid and the Liberal Democrats stand for a Strong Scotland - in the UK and in Europe.

Alan REID



School's out for action to tackle global climate crisis

by David McPhee
dmcphoe@obantimes.co.uk



Oban High School pupils organised a climate change strike last Friday morning, urging Argyll and Bute Council to declare a climate emergency.

The pupils were not alone in their protest as they were supported by concerned adults, including election candidates Rhea Barnes and Brendan O'Hara.

Everyone gathered at Oban's Station Square at 9am, before marching to the Corran Halls and back again. The protest came to an end at around 11am.

A spokesperson for the pupils said: 'As young people, we recognise the drastic influence the climate crisis poses on our futures.'

'We strike today in the hope we will demonstrate to

politicians our refusal to sit back while our planet is being destroyed. We are on track to overshoot the limit of 1.5°C of warming agreed by world leaders in 2016.

'This Friday our global schools strike looks to specifically target Argyll and Bute Council, which has yet to declare a climate emergency, as well as governments across the world who have still not done enough to tackle the crisis.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson said: 'At the meeting on September 26, Argyll and Bute Council agreed to establish a climate change environmental action group for the purpose of considering and advising on policy options and opportunities for strategic projects and activities that will form part of our ongoing commitment to deliver the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.'



Concerned Oban High School pupils were supported by many adults.



The protesters marched from Station Square to the Corran Halls and back again.



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OT

Argyll College comes highly commended

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll College received not one but two 'highly commended' awards at the College Development Network (CDN) annual awards ceremony.

Held on Thursday November 21 at Radisson Blu, Glasgow, the awards recognise the talent, skills and achievements of colleges, their staff and their learners.

They provide a valuable opportunity to celebrate the innovation taking place in colleges across the country and showcase the impact the sector is having – every day – for learners, communities and the wider economy.

In the Innovation category, hairdressing tutor Elaine Smith and former Oban High School pupil Finlay MacDonald collected a Highly Commended award for a computer game used to teach how



Photographed from left: Finlay MacDonald, Susannah Wilson, Elaine Munro (depute principal), Elaine Smith and Vanessa Hafezi, digital marketing officer.

colour neutralisation works – a fundamental concept within hairdressing curriculum – named Game of Tones.

Finlay, who is one of the college's newest employees having recently taken up the post of IT modern apprentice, said: 'I was ecstatic to hear that our project was Highly Commended at the awards.'

'I think it was an amazing

series of events leading up to the award, such as the original idea pitch and the project's inclusion in The Oban Times.

'I had never been to an event similar to the CDN awards. I spoke to many new people about their awards as well as ours, and discussed what it meant to receive something like this.'

Finlay's game is now com-

plete and is available to download for Android devices on the Google Play Store, while he is currently working on making it available on iPhones and iPads.

He said: 'I am looking into ways to possibly expand the game further, or to work on an entirely new educational product – virtual reality has been brought up.'

In the Digital Learning category, tutor Susannah Wilson collected a Highly Commended prize for a pilot project which utilises screen capture videos to provide personalised, formative feedback to students. This has proven to be an effective way of improving students' experience, enhancing engagement and increasing student satisfaction.

College principal Martin Jones said: 'We are really delighted to see our efforts in Innovation and Digital Learning being recognised in this way.'

'As a truly digital institution with learning centres located throughout Argyll, it's important we continually strive to embrace innovative technology and ensure our students' experience is second to none.'

'I congratulate all of our staff who have been involved in these projects.'

Opening doors to learning



Argyll College learning Centre has an open day today (Thursday December 5) for people to find out what the institution has to offer.

Tutors will be there between 11.30am and 7pm to give advice on course options, what funding is available and what support can be given.

Horticulture tutor Elspeth MacDonald, who works with the E4L and Wings group, hopes that care in the community organisations will also take the opportunity to bring clients to the college to wander around their garden and into the crafting class to see what its members do.

The two groups have been busy selling goods at Oban's recent Christmas craft markets.

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Call 0800 138 3944 to book your phone or face-to-face appointment, or go to pensionwise.gov.uk for more information.



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If, like Citizens Advice, you have reached the age of 80 you may already be drawing on your pension savings. But if you are still to decide what to do with your pension pot, do you know your options?

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- Pension Wise from your local Citizens Advice Bureau is the UK government backed scheme that gives you free and impartial guidance about your options. Gillian McInnes Manager of Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau says:

"Choice can be good. But now there are more options available for those with personal or workplace pensions making a decision about what to do with your savings can seem daunting."

"If you are confused about your pension options or simply want to know more, help is at hand. Since April 2015, we have provided one-to-one guidance to thousands of people across Scotland helping them to make better decisions about pension savings in excess of £1 billion."

"Free and impartial Pension Wise appointment will set out the options available to you and explain the pros and cons of each taking into account your plans for the future. You can learn about the impact of each option on your tax and benefits, how to shop around for products and services and keeping your pension safe. Finally, we will set out the next steps for you to take and send you a written summary of our meeting."

Anyone aged 50 or over with a defined contribution pension scheme is eligible for a Pension Wise appointment. Call Pension Wise on 0800 138 3944 or go online at www.pensionwise.gov.uk to book your appointment. Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau to find out more.



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OT

Olly and Eachann take the plunge in chilly challenge

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Yes, it's cold and it will be difficult ... but the island boys are up for the challenge.

At the age of nine, Olly Vollum and Eachann McGregor-Louw aim to be the youngest swimmers to ever cross the Sound of Kerrera.

On December 7 – weather dependent – the boys plan to swim from the mainland, 600m across open sea to their island home, all in support of the big Kerrera project to create a new island community centre.

They have been practising a lot, helped by their mums and dads – Gill, Tim, Sheila and Corrie – who will be with them on the day, swimming alongside in the water and in support boats. It's a tremendous challenge for any swimmer and islanders are already incredibly proud of



Olly and Eachann are ready to make a splash on December 7.

the boys for their willingness to jump in – literally.

In July this year, islanders (68 in total) bought the old primary school on the island, and are now working to fund-raise for renovations. With no facilities on the island and the last public ferry at 6pm, there is currently very limited opportunities to socialise, or

take part in any classes or events of any kind. Everyone is doing their bit to turn the old building into a new multi-purpose community facility.

Olly has been dreaming of raising £100 and islanders are delighted to report that so far generous support has already helped them to reach this target and beyond.

In fact, the total is up to £1,845.37 at the latest count. They would love to make an even bigger splash, so anyone wanting to help them can head to www.justgiving.com/kerrera-kids-swim

Cash donations can be made at Oban Cycles, Food From Argyll at the Pier and Albany Stores.

New 'first contact' physio service launched in Oban

FirstContactPhysiotherapists are being gradually introduced in larger GP surgeries across Argyll and Bute as part of the national Primary Care Modernisation Project.

Patients can be directly appointed to the physiotherapist which ensures patients get to see the right professional at the right time and frees up GPs to spend more time with patients in specific need of their expertise.

The service is aimed at over-16s who have joint and/or soft tissue issues.

The physiotherapist will be able to make a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan; refer for further investigations such as X-ray if required; refer onwards to specialist services as necessary.

The service is currently available at Lorn Medical Centre in Oban. People wishing to make an appointment can book via the GP reception and should ask to see the First Contact Physiotherapist.

James Barrow, a First Contact Physiotherapist who is delivering the service at Lorn Medical Centre, said:

'I am delighted to be able to deliver the first contact physiotherapy service in the Oban area.

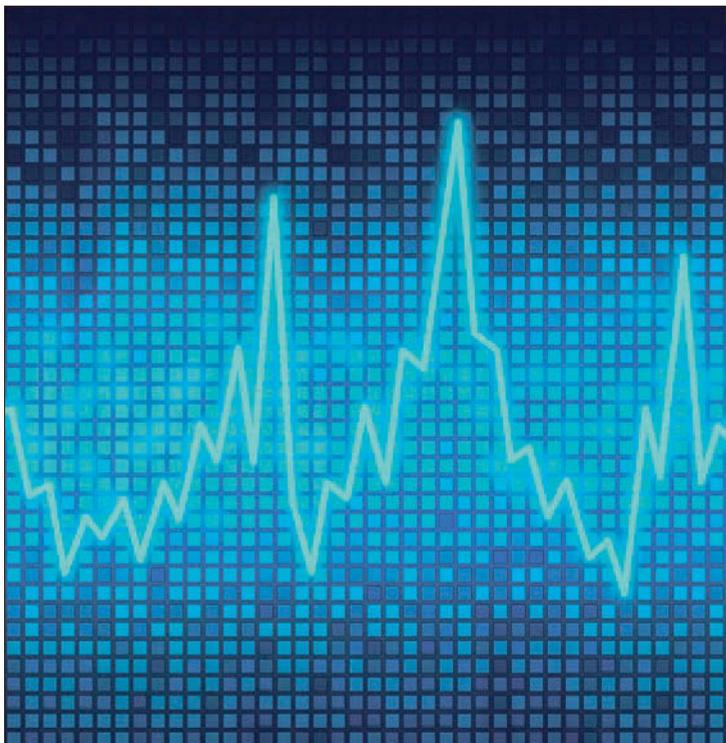
'We are able to offer early access to specialist musculoskeletal assessment and treatment planning, and provide physiotherapy support at initial point of access.

'Appropriate investigations and imaging can be arranged if required following a comprehensive musculoskeletal assessment. We can also arrange onward referral to physiotherapy and other specialities.

'Although the service is new, the uptake and feedback has been very positive and encouraging. Our patients are also pleased as they can access the right health professional at the right time.'

Where the service is being delivered, the feedback from people using it has been very positive.

The service will be rolled out to larger practices over the next two to three years. A remote and rural model is also in development for smaller practices.



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Oban hospital has key training role

The Oban a University Town (OaUT) project is most focused on the four key academic partners: SAMS UHI, Argyll College UHI, Ballet West and Oban High School, with more than 1,000 students between them last year.

However, OaUT is also working to highlight other education opportunities in the town and this month our spotlight turns to Lorn and Islands Hospital.

Although everyone will know the hospital, not all will be aware of the number of students working there and living in Oban during the year.

Every month five new students arrive on rotation from Dundee University to Oban's medical and surgical departments alone; in September, final-year students from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, joined the audiology department for a three-month placement, and eight elective students from across Europe spent the summer working here.

These are just a few departments where opportunities exist for apprenticeships, student placements and medical rotations. There are also junior doctors and recent grad-



Aidan Harris.

'I've had a really good time working here – the experience in Oban is great'

uates regularly joining the hospital staff and local community.

We caught up with both an undergraduate and a recent graduate to hear about their experiences and their thoughts on the development of OaUT.

Mary Finn, is a first-year undergraduate at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) studying to become a midwife and is currently on placement with the Oban maternity department.

She said: 'I have really enjoyed my time in the maternity department here, and out across the area – I'm looking forward to a trip to Tiree shortly. I have been lodging with a local family which has been a very positive experience.'

'I am so glad that my university offers the opportunity to do a rural placement to experience living in a place like Oban – it was a major draw for me – and it has been an incredible experience in terms of enhancing my learning for Midwifery. I will go back to UWS and encourage other students to do rural placements as I think it's a really beneficial experience.'

'Before I started at UWS, I studied at Falmouth, which is also a small coastal town with a very good student scene, and it would be good for Oban to develop a space for students to meet. If I had more time I would have seen if there was an Oban student Facebook group so I could find

out about meeting other students.'

Aidan Harris is a physiotherapist who has been employed at the hospital since February. He has a degree in Sports Science from the University of Glasgow, and a Masters in Physiotherapy from Glasgow Caledonian University.

'I am from Oban and still have lots of friends here, so moving back was easy. I like climbing Munros so it's a good place to be for that. My degree in Sports Science combined university education with my interest in sport – I wasn't sure where it would lead but had a friend studying physiotherapy and I decided to specialise.'

'My interest is in muscular-skeletal physio. The usual route to getting employment as a physiotherapist is to go on rotation. I applied to do that, then I was offered the opportunity of a temporary job in the physio department here.'

'I've had a really good time working here – the experience in Oban is great – because this is a small hospital I have been able to do muscular-skeletal work but also get experience the other branches of physiotherapy as well.'

'Because I studied elsewhere, I

wasn't really aware of the Oban a University Town project or the number of students there already are in or around the town. I like the idea of having a space where students from different places can get together and get involved in things like sports clubs.'

We are fortunate in Oban to have students and graduates such as Mary and Aidan here helping in delivery of key services through the local hospital. Their shared experiences, combined with the discussions we have been having with other OaUT students point to a great student life already and demonstrate the demand for further student focused activities, venues and events through a more joined-up approach, bringing students together from wherever they are studying.

Of course, there needs to be a balance and ensuring local and visitor needs are met as well, but there is a lot we can still do to welcome students into Oban and to grow local businesses opportunities.

OaUT has a fantastic team working on exactly these issues at the minute, so watch this space for updates. #lovelearningloveoban

WHAT'S ON @ CORRAN HALLS



DECEMBER

DEC
WED-SAT
04-07

Spotlight MTG Pantomime
CAMELOT

Doors: 7pm Starts: 7:30pm (Sat Matinee 2pm)
Contact box office for ticket information



JANUARY 2020



THU JAN
02
MANRAN

Doors: 8pm
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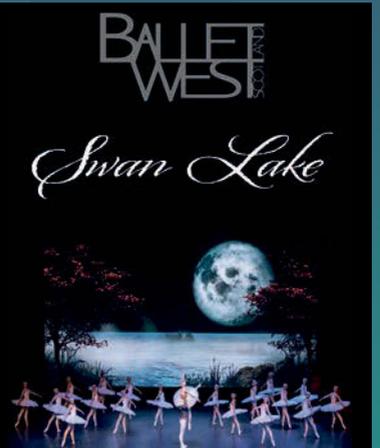
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BUSINESS NEWS

SSF takes delivery of new workboat

Scottish Sea Farms is set to take delivery of a new purpose-built workboat to increase response times to gill health issues.

This is part of a drive by the salmon grower to boost fish welfare and survival and follows on from its £750,000 investment in two gill-health related research projects.

Costing £1.9m, the Fair Isle will service Scottish Sea Farms' more northerly regions delivering proactive, preventive veterinary treatment for gill health issues as they emerge.

This, in turn, will enable existing workboat, the Sally Ann, to dedicate itself to the company's mainland farms, ensuring faster response times across the estate.

Scottish Sea Farms' Ralph Bickerdike, said: 'Recent years have seen significant investment in the surveillance of fish health and the farming environment, with water quality monitored on a daily basis and gill health routinely assessed by our farmers to detect any challenges and highlight where pre-emptive action is needed. Having a second dedicated workboat takes this prevention over cure approach a key step further, enabling us to administer the best veterinary care.'

The Fair Isle has a service speed of eight knots, combined with the sturdiness and stability to fulfil duties even in the more extreme weather conditions of Shetland and Orkney.



Fair Isle skippers Aaron Anderson and Alastair MacEachen

High hops for Islay Ales thanks to help

Islay Ales, a traditional four-barrel brewery based on the island of Islay, has doubled its turnover after being awarded a grant and receiving specialist support from Business Gateway.

Local entrepreneurs Mackay Smith and Donald MacKenzie approached Business Gateway for support as they embarked on the company's first rebrand and the development of essential training workshops for their small team.

The duo, who also run the established whisky company, The Islay Boys Ltd, have wholly owned Islay Ales since July 2018.

'A new brand for Islay Ales spoke to its heritage and position in the market as a premium ale'

Since working with Business Gateway, the business has revamped its product offering with the notable introduction of a lager, the development of new recipes and the roll-out of a fresh, contemporary brand for the 15-year-old company.

These steps have significantly increased the appeal and success of the brand, which is now sold in all bars and hotels in Islay. It is a popular choice for locals and tourists who can also purchase it on the ferry crossing.

The increased turnover, which has sparked the growth of the business, has resulted in the installation of a taproom at their brewery and Islay Ales is currently planning work on bigger, bespoke premises.

This has created an opportunity for interested parties and investors to be part of the business's future growth plans.

Mackay Smith, co-owner and head brewer of Islay Ales, said: 'While Islay Ales was well-known among its core customer base, we knew the brand was due a refresh to increase its appeal and grow the business.'



Donald MacKenzie, left, and Mackay Smith, owners of Islay Ales.

'This is where Business Gateway support was vital as, following a strategic review, we applied for a training and growth grant. This allowed us to launch a contemporary new brand for Islay Ales that spoke to its heritage and position in the market as a premium ale.'

'Since introducing the new brand, we have increased our customer base, and boast much broader appeal across a range of demographics.'

'This has directly contributed to our increased turnover and, thanks to Business Gateway, we are in a strong position to achieve our ambitious growth objectives in 2020.'

'This will include planning work on bespoke new premises that will allow us to streamline our brewing process and accommodate the growth in our expanded operations to be

able to meet the increased demand for our product.'

Donald Melville, Business Gateway adviser, Argyll and Bute, added: 'Food and drink is a crucial industry that supports the economy of Argyll and Bute and it's excellent to see Islay Ales benefit from Business Gateway support, providing a vital contribution to the wider growth of the sector.'

'Business Gateway offers a variety of tools to unlock growth for businesses across all sectors including access to grant funding through the Business Local Growth Accelerator Programme, alongside specialist advice and the support offered by all our advisers.'

More information about Business Gateway's services can be found on their website: <https://www.bgateway.com>.

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Oban branch of TSB is saved from closure

Oban's TSB branch has not been included in the list of 82 outlets set to close in 2020.

Earlier this week, the bank announced there would be closures as part of a plan by new chief executive Debbie Crosbie to make £100 million of cost cuts by 2022.

The bank said that 370 staff positions would be hit by the closures which, it says, are largely being brought about following the IT crisis last year, which affected 1.9 million customers.

Andrew Spence, chief executive of BID4Oban, the organisation tasked with delivering projects and services that will improve the trading environment within the town, said: 'I am delighted that the Oban branch will remain open.'

'We must be one of the few towns in Scotland still to have four major banks. It is an indication of the continued growth of Oban as a town and business hub.'

'Over the next five years we



Oban's TSB branch will remain open for business.

will have 500 more houses in the vicinity, the residents of which will all need these vital services. This news will be welcomed by residents and businesses alike.'

At the end of 2020, TSB will have a network of 454 branches.

Banks and building societies

closed a total of 3,312 branches in between January 2015 and August 2019, with an average of 55 closing each month. A further 100 branches have already been scheduled to close before the end of this year.

The RBS group, which com-

prises of NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank, closed 1,094 branches during the period.

Lloyds Banking Group, made up of Lloyds Bank, Halifax and Bank of Scotland, shut down 569 sites.

Islay and Oban top list of distillery tours

Distilleries from Oban, Islay and Arran have been chosen in the top eight distillery tours in Scotland.

Holidu, which describes itself as the search engine for holiday homes, has collected data from Google reviews to produce a list of the highest rated whisky distilleries available to take a tour around.

Topping the list was Laphroaig from Islay with a rating of 4.8 out of 220 reviews.

Second was Lochranza Distillery on Arran on 4.7 out of 541 reviews.

Next was Lagavulin Distillery, also from Islay, with 4.7 stars and 212 reviews.

Oban Distillery was fourth on the list with a rating of 4.6 out of 379 reviews.

Completing the list was Kingsbarns Distillery from Fife; Pitlochry's Blair Athol Distillery; The Glenlivet Distillery Brand Home from Ballindalloch; and Glenfiddich Distillery in Dufftown - in that order.

Holidu created the list to give tourists a helping hand in choosing out of the dozens of distilleries offering tours in Scotland.

The company wrote: 'It's no secret that Scotch whisky is one of the key attractions for international holiday makers.'

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Oban man was eyewitness to Flannan mystery

by Valerie Forsyth
editor@obantimes.co.uk

This month we look back at the Flannan Isles mystery from the eyewitnesses account of Oban's Neil MacPherson.

The Flannan Isles Lighthouse mystery has intrigued people for nearly 120 years. Built in 1899, just a year later it became one of the biggest mysteries never to be solved in Scotland.

The week before Christmas, the steamer Archtor reported the light was not operational and this was passed onto the Northern Lighthouse Board.

The lighthouse tender Hesperus finally arrived at noon on December 26 as it had been storm-bound for 11 days. The three keepers – James Ducat, Thomas Marshall and Donald McArthur – had disappeared. Joseph Moore, the relief lighthouse man, was landed but he soon reappeared waving frantically.

Neil MacPherson of Oban, who for 39 years was chief steward of the Hesperus, later stated the meals had not been touched in the living room and a big chair had been overturned near the table. They searched the other apartments and found everything to be in order. They proceeded up to the light and it was then they realised the three keepers were missing. They searched the rock but there was 'no solitary clue' as to what happened.

On its previous visit, the crew of the boat had found nothing amiss with the keepers.

Until he died, Mr MacPherson believed that something happened to make the keepers rush outside, and a giant wave washed them away.

Theories he was aware of was that they had a quarrel and had fallen 200 feet to their deaths, while another was claimed they had been 'driven mad by the eerie solitude', caused by isolation for six weeks followed by being marooned for 11 days by the storm, and committed suicide. Another was that an earthquake had occurred. On hearing the noise, they had rushed outside but were swept away by a giant wave that followed.

'My thoughts are ever

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'My thoughts are ever on the hills'

(A Mackenzie, Lament for the Deer)

There cannot be many deer stalkers in Scotland who have not heard of Frank Wallace and Vincent Robert Balfour-Browne. By deer stalkers, I mean professional hill-folk who still respect and value the importance of these ancient animals and carry out their work in a decent and time-honoured sportsman-like manner, unlike some today who look on them as little more than vermin, picking them off at the roadside, out of season and during the hours of darkness using thermal-imaging equipment.

Frank Wallace (1881-1962) was a dedicated stalker and author who specialised in painting and writing about red deer, stalking scenes and wildlife. He held annual exhibitions in Edinburgh and London often in conjunction with his school friend and contemporary artist and writer, Vincent Robert Balfour-Browne (1881-1963).

Together they were simply the best Scottish sporting and wildlife artists of any period and arguably the finest painters of red deer. Their lovely sketches and watercolours can be found in estate game books and in many private lodges up and down the country.

On the rare occasions when they come on the market, they fetch eye-watering sums. Lucky are those who have one or more of these beautiful art works hanging on their wall to enjoy.

For many years Wallace and Balfour-Browne leased and stalked deer forests in various parts of the Highlands for sport and sketching purposes. Balfour-Browne's most outstanding work was done in the Blackmount area of Argyll, while Wallace preferred the west and particularly the hills and corries of Old Corrimony which became available to him when in 1912 he married Elizabeth Macpherson, whose family acquired the estate before the 1745 Jacobite rising.

Their love of the area was evident when they spent part of their honeymoon at a curious little three-story tower house on the island of Loch ma Stac, high in the moors between Glen Moriston and Glen Urquhart. A feature of the top storey of this now ruined building were magnificent murals of stags and hinds by



Wallace which have long since disappeared. Other aspects of Frank Wallace's career are of great interest today. Because of his knowledge of deer and hunting he was asked by the government to organise the British sections of an international hunting exhibition in Berlin in 1937, which was a massive propaganda event supervised by Field-Marshal Hermann Goering.

Goering, head of the Luftwaffe and one of the most powerful figures in the Nazi Party, was also an enthusiastic sportsman and Reich Master of the Hunt. He instituted reforms to the German forestry laws and acted to protect endangered species. He became interested in Schorfheide-Chorin Forest, now a UNESCO biosphere reserve, where he set aside 100,000 acres as a state park. There he built an elaborate, 200-room hunting lodge, Carinhall, in memory of his first wife, Carin von Fock.

Wallace's task was to collect the best trophies by British sportsmen, take them to Berlin and hang them in the exhibition halls. In all, he collected 343. Hitler toured the exhibition but on the day of his visit Frank Wallace was absent. Later he was invited to Carinhall for lunch and left a fascinating account of what

he saw. 'When the other guests had arrived, Goering appeared. The chief impression he made on me was that of tremendous reserves of energy and power, held under control. His light-brown hair, worn much longer than is usually the case in Germany, is brushed straight-back from his forehead. In spite of his bulk, due to a war wound, he walks with a light, springy step. Below his wide brow clear blue eyes, normally rather cold in expression, look directly.

'On this occasion Goering wore a sleeveless green jerkin, with stags' teeth set in silver as buttons. Loose, brown buckskin breeches were tucked into soft green leather boots, with fawn-coloured feet. His shirt was of white silk, with rather loose sleeves and a wide collar, under which showed a blue-and-red striped tie. The Cross of the Order 'Pour la Merite' (the German VC) hung at his throat, and round his waist was a green leather belt, from which was suspended a gold-hilted hunting-knife in a red sheath. On the left of his chest was the badge of the Deutschjagerschaft (the German Hunting Society), a stag's head with a swastika between the horns. The latter were of gold, and the swastika set with emeralds and diamonds. On



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r on the hills'



Deer from a painting by V R Balfour-Browne, one of the finest painters of deer in the world (The Balfour-Browne estate) and pencil sketches of deer, 1912, by Frank Wallace. (The Wallace Family)



Nazis invaded Poland, causing both France and Britain to declare war on Germany. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa all followed suit over the next few days. This created the potential for a food crisis in the UK.

Frank Wallace knew so much about deer and the land they occupied, he was appointed as Deer Control Officer for Scotland from 1939 to 1945. During the war, when many stalkers had been called up to fight, this resulted in deer numbers rising to unprecedented levels in some parts of the country. His remit was to reduce their numbers to prevent damage to agricultural crops and to act as an adviser on deer control. He was also to liaise between executive local committees and the Department of Agriculture.

'Apart from the value of his expert knowledge,' said the press officer at St Andrew's House, 'the arrangement will be advantageous from the point of view of co-ordination of policy with regard to agricultural production on the one side and the supply of venison as an article of food on the other.'

Wallace travelled extensively throughout the world, including the Far East, studying deer and other mammals, which he wrote about with tremendous passion and sensitivity. He published many books on the subject, including: Stalks Abroad, Big Game of Central and Western China, British Deer Heads, Hunting and Stalking the Deer (with Lionel Edwards), Happier Years, A Highland Gathering, A Stuart Sketch Book (with Lionel Edwards), Big Game and Hunting Winds. He also contributed to: The Gun At Home and Abroad, British Sports and Sportsmen, the Keeper's Book and African Big Game.

his fingers were many rings. It was very much the sort of costume a boy would imagine, playing at Robin Hood.

'Lunch was served in a room oblong in shape. Cabinets, sunk in the wall, contained silver, china and porcelain models, lit by soft cornice lighting, for it was a dull day. Down the long table graduating to each end stood large silver bowls of brown and gold chrysanthemums. Porcelain models of different species of deer were arranged between these. Exquisite glass bore Goering's arms, as did the very simple silver beer mugs. In the house were rugs and carpets made from bark, chair covers and cushions copied from German 13th-century designs, sporting pictures by Lobenberg, Paussinger and other well-known artists, and many objects too numerous to tabulate.'

To prevent Carinhall from falling into the hands of the advancing Red Army, it was blown up on April 28, 1945, at Goering's orders by a Luftwaffe demolition squad. The art treasures were evacuated beforehand to The Berghof, Adolf Hitler's home in the Obersalzberg of the Bavarian Alps near Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, Germany.

Two years after the Berlin exhibition, the

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



We go back to October 1996 and a photograph from our archives that says: 'Mrs May Kobiela, left, from Connel, was the lucky winner of our wedding feature competition. She received a canteen of Viners cutlery from David Hamilton of House and Home, Oban.'



This photograph dates back to the autumn of 1996 and shows staff at the Kinlochleven smelter but has no other information. Can anyone enlighten us?



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Please support New Hope's Christmas donations appeal

There is no getting away from the fact that excitement is building during this season of Advent and the run up to Christmas.

In Oban, the town's winter festival, which has just concluded, got everybody in the mood for the festive period.

However, it is easy to overlook the fact that not everyone has a joyful time. For some people, Christmas can be a trying and lonely time.

That is why we applaud Oban's Hope Kitchen, which is issuing an appeal for donations to enable the charity to organise food parcels for the less fortunate among our communities. Manager Catriona Petit has also asked kind-hearted locals to consider small presents such as toiletries and pet food.

In this season of goodwill, we would encourage as many people as possible to respond to Catriona's appeal.

Good luck, lads, with charity swim challenge

We take our hat off to the two young boys from Kerrera who are planning a 600m open water swim from the mainland to the island.

Make no mistake, this would constitute a daunting challenge for anyone, let alone a couple of nine-year-old lads.

However, Olly Vollum and Eachann McGregor-Louw are up for it and aim to be the youngest swimmers to ever cross the Sound of Kerrera.

They will, of course, be supported by their families and friends, some of whom will also do the swim while others will be alongside Olly and Eachann in safety boats.

As the mercury plunges, this will be a very chilly challenge indeed and we wish them good luck.

Booming world population is cause of climate change

While it is encouraging that the younger generation have recognised the seriousness of climate change (Letters, November 28), they offer no solution.

What effect do they believe playing truant from school will achieve, other than undermining their education? What steps are they themselves taking to reduce the generation of greenhouse gases?

For example, are they driven to school in their parents' large cars?

What steps do they think the government can take to improve matters?

Much is made of the need to reduce the production of greenhouse gases from energy generation, from vehicles and even from cattle.

However, politicians are loathe to tackle the underlying problem that is due to the ever-expanding world population. Whatever the technology involved, the production of greenhouse gases is directly related to world population so unless this is also tackled, attempts to save the world will be in vain.

Perhaps the biggest contribution the youngsters from Lochaber can make is to limit the size of their future families.

Professor Colin Davidson,
Tigh nan Eile, Ardfern.

Thanks to Lochaber residents for assistance

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone in Fort William, and the wider Lochaber area, who have helped me so much with the research for my new book. The book, a series of stories from Lochaber's past, will be published at Easter in conjunction with the Highland Bookshop.

Thank you everyone, it's been a real pleasure to compile it and I hope everyone enjoys the stories I have chosen.

Mark Bridgeman, by email.

Lismore ferry service is generous but under-utilised

Lismore residents are alarmed that the northern passenger ferry service to Port Appin might be under threat as Argyll and Bute Council assesses how it will find yet more savings in future budgets (The Oban Times, November 28).

YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to showcase these each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send it to editor@obantimes.co.uk

obantimes.co.uk, post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Alternatively, hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or to our office in

This is understandable, but only given that the service was developed in times of plenty. In current times of continuing austerity, we need to contextualise the provision of what might be considered a generous service by those who are likely to lose social care, waste collection, etc.

The 2011 Census indicates that the island's population is 192, which is 0.2 per cent of the county's total. It has 12 scheduled daily crossings to Port Appin (together with a 13th,

though this is by request in winter). In addition, it has four scheduled daily crossings to Oban on Monday through Saturday, and two crossings on Sunday in winter.

Simple arithmetic indicates that, assuming the whole population leaves for the mainland six days a week, the number of residents per ferry crossing averages 12.

It is, however, unlikely the island is fully evacuated daily and this means the number on any one ferry is much less. Indeed, it is

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High Street, Fort William. This week's photograph was sent in by Mairi MacDonald who said: 'This is looking down to Ardgour from the picnic site before the Corran ferry.'

more than likely that many crossings are passenger-less.

The question for Argyll and Bute Council is, therefore, whether to rationalise the current generous and underused ferry provision without cutting the connection, or reducing and eliminating other types of service that might provide for the needs of a larger fraction of the county's population.

Professor Emeritus Ian Reid,
Ardconnel Road, Oban.

Council leader should learn courtesy is a two-way street

Reading the letters page in The Oban Times of November 21, I take comfort the council leader has taken the time to put pen to paper regarding those who did not have the courtesy to send correspondence directly to herself.

Has the leader considered that courtesy is a two-way street and, since taking over as leader, I have not had the courtesy of a reply to any correspondence addressed to herself.

In future, I will correspond via The Oban Times letters page in anticipation of a response.

Colin N Kennedy,
Highland Corrie, Isle Of Coll.

League tables are not only measure of pupils' success

There is no doubt that the schools listed in the recently published top 10 secondary state schools league in Scotland are all excellent – doing a great job in helping young people prepare for life.

Whilst this league table is determined by the proportion of students at Scottish state secondary schools achieving five or more Higher passes in 2018 and the proportions gaining five or more National 5 qualifications and two or more Advanced Highers this, in my view, is not the only measure of success by which we should rate achievement.

Each school has a different starting point regarding the demographics and the harsh realities that the students and their families might face.

I believe young people learn in many different ways and so many of them are developing the Meta Skills for life and work through non-traditional learning methodologies both in and out of curriculum.

The recent credit rating of our Company Programme at SCQF level 6, in the main which is extra-curricular, could see up to 1000 students gain a qualification in enterprise not recognised in the above figures.

Let us all be cognisant of not just qualifications but the wider forms of learning that our young people experience and the benefits that this brings to businesses of the future.

Geoff Leask,
Chief Executive, Young Enterprise Scotland (YES), Glasgow

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Chuala mi tric nam òige gun robh an ùine a' ruith nas luaithe mar is sine tha duine a' fàs agus tha mi a-nise a' tuigsinn sin!

Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh seo air latha san cuala mi nach robh ach ceithir seachdainean chun na Nollaige, agus tha uimhir ri dhèanamh agus ri tachairt roimhe sin 's gur gann a chreideas mi gun amais mi fhìn, neo an saoghal, air cothachadh ris.

Is chan eil air fhàgail cuideachd ach trì seachdainean air a' char a-muigh airson tiodhlac Nollaige a cheannach, agus an t-seann sgeul ga faighneachd agus an aon fhreagairt a' nochdadh. Dè tha thu 'g iarraidh? Chan eil feum agamsa air tiodhlac sam bith!

Mar a bhios fios agaibh uile sin am freagairt as miosa a gheibh neach, mar mise, nach eil idir measail air a bhith a' ruagail mhiltean tro bhùithtean gleansach a' lorg deàlradh sàr-smuain air dè ni tiodhlac fhreagarrach.

Tuigidh mi gum bheil cuid ann, theagamh fiù 's mòran, ris an còrd an trusadh sin ach 's fheàrr leamsa fios a bhith agam dè tha mi ag iarraidh agus a dhol dìreach

ga lorg. Saoilidh mi gur e sin as fheàrr dhan chuid eile den t-sluagh cuideachd oir nuair a theicheas mise dhachaigh bidh aon bhodach greannach nas lugha mun casan fhad 's a tha iadsan a' siubhal 's a' ceannach le toileachas.

Ach feumaidh mi a ràdh ged nach eil meas sam bith agamsa air a bhith a' siubhal bhùithtean chan eil dad agam an aghaidh a bhith toirt seachad thiodhlac, neo gu dearbh gam faotainn.

Tha cuid, le ìre de cheartas, a' togail dragh mun dòigh sam bheil saoghal coimearsalta air teachdaireachd an t-Soisgeil a chur an dàrna taobh, ach nach eil an sgeulachd sin cuideachd air a bonntachadh air tiodhlac dhan chinne-daonna.

Anns an t-seadh sin saoilidh mi nach eil cron sam bith ann an tiodhlac Nollaige, fhad 's a chumar rian orra agus air na tha ga chosg nan lùib.

Bidh cuimhne aig cuid agaibh, mar a th' agamsa, air an luach a chuireamaid air dèideag bheag air choreigin (air a cheannach, a sporan a bha gu math gann aig amannan, bho leithid JD Williams) anns an stocainn

madainn na Nollaige, agus 's dòcha orainsear is beagan seòclaid na lùib.

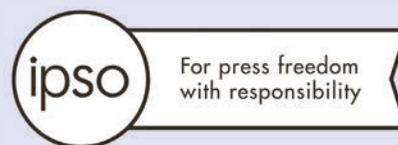
Tha sporain ghann mun cuairt fhathast agus cha bheag an dòrainn a th' aig cuid de phàrantan a' feuchainn ri sonas Nollaige a bhuileachadh air an cuid chloinne.

Aig an aon àm bidh feadhainn eile a' frasadh thiodhlac chosgail air na teaghlaichean acasan, 's theagamh gun mhothachadh aca air a' bhuidhe aige sin air faireachaidhean an fheadhainn aig nach eil uimhir.

Bha tiodhlac na ciad Nollaige dhan chinne-daonna gu lèir, agus tha fhios gur e an aon fheallsanachd is còir a bhith a' cuartachadh gach latha Nollaige, agus gach latha eile.

The spirit of Christmas is founded on a philosophy of benefit to all mankind, and that has to be a most laudable philosophy for life.

Allan Campbell is president of An Comunn Gaidhealach and a member of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.



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

TAYNUILT

There will be a candlelight supper tonight (Thursday December 5) in the Taynuilt Village Hall.

The event will start at 7pm, with a suggested donation of £5, and will feature Christmas carols, traditional and modern Christmas readings, the candlelight supper, as well as singing and musical recitals.

APPIN

Appin Historical Society's pre-Christmas get-together will take place this Saturday (December 7).

It will feature the society's annual general meeting, the Our Trip to Rajasthan: Midge Gourlay event, as well as drinks and nibbles.

It starts at 2.30pm in the Port Appin Hall and everyone is welcome. There will be a £3 charge for non-members.

ISLAY

There will be a table top sale in the Islay High School assembly hall on Saturday December 14.

The sale will be on from 11am until 3pm and costs £5 per table, with all proceeds going towards the 2021 expedition to Mongolia and China.

Refreshments will be available.

PORT APPIN

The Pierhouse Hotel in Port Appin is hosting an evening of festive cheer to thank the community.

Fiona, Caroline and the team will welcome members of the community on Thursday December 12 at the restaurant with complimentary mulled wine, mince pies and canapes. The event, which will run from 6pm to 8pm, is described as a 'seasonal thank you to the Appin and Lismore communities for your ongoing support'.

Writing online, The Pierhouse said: 'We'd love to see you at our festive evening. Please let us know if you can make it. It serves as a big thank you to the community for your support this year, so come along a for a mince pie and some

Clean up after mindless minority



Residents, business representatives and Keep Oban Beautiful joined in to pick up the cans, bottles, debris left behind after the recent firework display.

Thanks to the power of social media, a group of Oban-loving individuals got together last week to clear up the mess left by a thoughtless minority at McCaig's Tower.

Following a plea on Facebook, local residents joined business representatives and Keep Oban Beautiful to pick up the cans, bottles, debris and other miscellaneous rubbish, including a backpack left behind after the

recent fireworks display. The picture shows smiling faces but Keep Oban Beautiful's Maurice Wilkins is not amused at 'having to clean up someone else's garbage again and again and again', while nearby residents told of noisy drinking parties up at the tower and of bottles being thrown down into the gardens below.

'If it's not possible to educate those responsible, then the authorities ought to take action to stop

this brainless behaviour,' added Mr Wilkins. The tower is not alone as a choice of venue for drinking parties, as Jacob's Ladder, the Hydro and other locations suffer the same way.

Mr Wilkins added: 'The town ought to be aware that should the numerous civic-minded people who give up their time decide to call a halt to cleaning of streets, tourist spots and beaches, then Oban would be in a sorry state.'

mulled wine to get in to the festive spirit.' To RSVP call 01631 730302 or email reservations@pierhousehotel.co.uk

LISMORE

The Lismore Community Trust will host its annual general meeting today (December 5) in the island's hall. It will begin at 7pm and there will be a chance to discuss the future of the Lismore shop/post office.



BENDERLOCH



Lochnell Primary School pupils will be spreading some festive cheer next weekend when they sing carols at a Christmas fair which will take place at the New Victory Hall on Friday December 13. Santa's Grotto will be open from 7pm and there will also be craft stalls and a lucky dip.

KILMORE

Kilmore and District SWI held their annual open evening on Wednesday November 13.

Local members and guests from Kilbrandon and Oban SWIs enjoyed an entertaining demonstration of flower arranging from Margaret Whitton.

Using a variety of containers ranging from a cereal packet to an old boot Margaret made it all look so easy.

The winners of the night's competitions were: an object in black and white – first Sona Campbell, second Jennifer Shaw and third Margaret Whitton; a vegetable quiche – first Liz Clunie, second Anne Tully.

Margaret Whitton and Fiona Dickie at Kilmore and District SWI.



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At random



MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

Appin finds litter-pick is a load of rubbish!



Strath of Appin Primary School carried out a litter pick in their area on Friday November 22. Children, staff and members of the community got together to tidy up the Appin area. A primary seven spokesperson said: 'We did a community litter pick to try to get rid of rubbish on the cycle path and in the playground. We found quite a lot of rubbish and we found a big black bag thing, a tyre and a metal object. It looks a lot better around the area now.'

Hats off to Taps Aff

I may be a relative newcomer to the Oban area but already I have become a firm fan of the winter festival.

The team behind the November events do a brilliant job and the festival now draws people from near and far to the town.

Among the numerous attractions this year was a food and crafts market at the Corran Halls which I dropped into on the final Saturday.

There were lots of great items on offer on the many stalls but I was in for an unexpected treat with a dance performance on the main stage by a group calling themselves Taps Aff.

According to their Facebook page (tapsaffoban): 'We are a self-taught dance troupe who met through our love of tap dancing.'

'We have become firm friends on our journey. We love learning new routines and each one of us has some input into our performances.'

The half a dozen or so women and one guy put on a thoroughly entertaining couple of routines that were met with well-deserved warm applause.

Just one of the highlights for me of what was a splendid 10 days in Oban.

OBAN

Held in Oban Parish Church and introduced by Reverend Dugald Cameron, Hand Bells and Christmas Carols formed a much rejoiced part of Oban Winter Festival.

The event featured the Muckairn Ringers, conducted by Rev Margaret Millar, with Fumiko Miller and Mairi Harrower performing a duet, and Ken Harrower on piano. The Ringers also performed a selection of poems in the theme of bells and Christmas.

The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyed by an appreciative audience. A delicious afternoon tea was served by parish church choir members Babs MacIntyre, Sandra Clark and Marie MacGilivray.

Donations were accepted for charities and organisers were delighted collect £200 with £100 each going to the Ringers and Carr Gomm.



Let there be light

Following my grumbling last week about the poor state of street lighting in Oban town centre, I received an email on Thursday morning from Andy Spence, the estimable chief executive of BID4Oban.

Andy said: 'I did report these faults to A&B last week. Thanks for highlighting the issue. I have followed up this morning and the lights have still not been inspected. Along with Argyll Square there are numerous faults across the town. I will raise more incidents in the hope some action will be taken.'

With the dark winter days, the lack of effective lighting is a public safety issue and needs to be addressed quickly, so come on, Argyll and Bute Council, and get a wriggle on.

What do you think?

Write to me at mlaing@obantimes.co.uk or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB, or call 01631 568021.

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OUTDOORS

New book guides gardeners through the plastics maze

Tackling the use of plastics in gardens is a thorny issue but now a new book plots a path through the confusion, highlighting progress, revealing where problems lie and giving gardeners guidance and a wealth of practical ideas.

Plastic-free Gardening is the first guide of its kind, showing gardeners a way to cut back on plastics.

Written by Fiona Thackeray, pictured, head of operations with

Trellis, Scotland's therapeutic gardening charity, it includes tips and techniques on how to reduce or eradicate plastics as well as giving lists of stockists and suppliers for containers and equipment made from alternative materials.

It also provides up-to-date information on which plastics can and cannot be recycled, and how the gardening industry and local authorities, which handle kerb-side collections are responding to the challenge.

It is a timely message for anyone who has ditched supermarket shopping bags and recycles drinks bottles and milk cartons, but who has been overwhelmed by the tide of containers, plant labels, tools and compost sacks that seem to be an inevitable part of gardening.

Plastics have invaded every corner of the garden, and it is not just pots – from the linings of foil seed packets to outdoor clothing, packaging for plant foods and fertilisers and in crop-protection materials such as fleece, cloches and polytunnels – plastics proliferate.



Tup of the morning but a waste of a day

Notes from a wild island

STEPHANIE COPE

stephaniecope.glenorm@gmail.com



I fall for it every time and that's what disappoints me. Feeling my stomach roil as the pickup crested yet another nauseating hump, I cast my mind darkly back to other, similar trips.

They begin with the promise of a lovely day out, accompanied by an almost imperceptible sideways glance. Like a zebra returning to that same old crocodile-raddled waterhole, I am initially suspicious.

But assurances of together-time, romantic walks, a pub lunch and sweeping expanses of west coast scenery quickly allay my fears. It would be nice to spend a day on the mainland after all. And who doesn't enjoy the homely solace of a pub fireside on those chilly autumn afternoons?

It usually takes 24 hours for the rot to set in: Alex has a compulsive desire to be early for everything. In this case, the ferry timetable had been amended.

So, in order to nip out to the farm beforehand, our lovely day out had commenced at the eye-watering hour of 5am. And we needed to collect a couple of tups while we were over there – wouldn't take long.

Slumped against the open window and gasping like a carp, my last few bubbles of good cheer fizzled into irritation.

Beyond, Ardnamurchan had been gilded by the thin November sun. The quiet mood of the forest was mirrored in the limpid, gull-grey waters of Loch Sunart. As the oakwood eased into its winter sleep, fissured hands were falling open; sloughing leaves from their bony fingers like dry skin.

Once you pass the rumpled hide of Ben Hiant, the road between Kilchoan and Lochaline clings to Sunart's shores like a ribbon. Only on the final approach does it stray from the shelter of the vast deciduous woodland, onto



One of my fragrant travelling companions.

'My dreams of steak pie deteriorated into a limp bacon roll, which I was made to eat as we were driving'

the wind-whipped uplands of Morvern. Remote homesteads cower at the feet of imperious hills, and above, eagles circle languidly like motes of dust.

As we reversed up to the livestock trailer, petulant thuds rattled the steel. Occasionally, ridges of thick horn surfaced like ammonites above the rim. Blackface sheep are seldom quiet. Unlike other breeds, they are not easily charmed by offers of food, pedicures or having their horns buffed to magnificence with pig oil.

On the preceding afternoon, this pair had

flattened a polytunnel and significantly dinged a caravan: they were not keen to join us in the pickup. This was a pity, because 60 enthusiastic girlfriends awaited each of them.

At length, after some judicious prodding, the tups leaped aboard in a flurry of lunging horns, clattering hooves and wildly swinging testicles. Four angry eyes glared through the mesh partition; rectangular pupils pushing hard against amber irises.

The vehicle bounced alarmingly.

I have always been a poor passenger. But Mull's meandering single-track roads (and the need for frequent braking) have generated an almost pathological fear of travelling shotgun.

Driving the circumference of Loch Sunart had exacted a heavy toll, and I was glad that the return trip would be punctuated with a lunch stop. Homemade steak pie beckoned – and perhaps a nice cold pint. My mouth watered at the prospect of crisp vegetables and buttery mash.

But the sideways glance was back. Because of the amended timetable, there was a large gap between sailings. If we made good progress, we could board the earlier boat rather than hanging around. And that really would be better, wouldn't it?

The corruption of our daytrip was absolute: I'd been fooled again.

With the heady waft of tup testicles in my nostrils, we retraced the entire three-hour rollercoaster.

My dreams of steak pie deteriorated into a limp bacon roll, which I was made to eat as we were driving for fear of losing time. I was permitted to have a cup of tea, but I spilled most of that as we rounded the frequent bends.

The tups argued with each other, with their straw and with the pickup. Each time one urinated, a fresh, hot wave of tup smell percolated through into the front.

Alex hummed along with the radio; pleased to have beaten the clock once again. Tinged with green, I eyeballed him menacingly.

Yes, it was another lovely day out.

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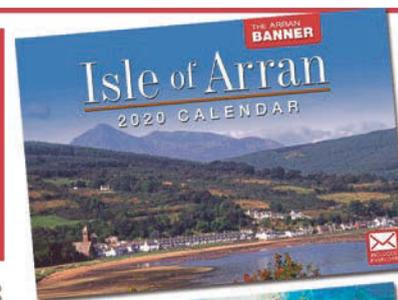
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This week's walks

Islay's roadside verges set for floral enhancement

by Fiona MacGillivray
editor@obantimes.co.uk

The Islay Natural History Trust has just released its report on Islay's roadside verge project a collaboration with the Islay Development's Pollinator Initiative.

It has been a two-year study funded by The Botanist Foundation (Bruichladdich Distillery) and supported by the European Social fund and Scottish Government.

Just under 100km of verges throughout the Rhinns of Islay were surveyed during the summers of 2017 and 2018 recording flowering plants and associated pollinators (butterflies, bumblebees, honey and solitary bees, flies and other flower visiting insects).

Every 200m section of verge had a separated survey count with a quadrat recording flower species



and the numbers of flowers available for insects and counting the number of insects visiting flowers in each section.

The project employed one full-time botanist for four months and supported two part-time roles through the summers with assistance from four volunteers. Identification of bumblebees was a real learning bonus for enhancing expertise on the island for a tricky set of species.

The wealth of the biodiversity

of flowering plants was analysed according to location and associated habitat and management. All routes were surveyed twice across the season resulting in 877 quadrats forming 9,307 species records for the biological records database over 86 1km OS map grid squares.

A total of 167 flowering species were identified, the most diverse sections went through natural habitats, but where verges were left to develop regularly over time, these provided more flowers.

Grazing and early mowing frequently resulted in lower flowering abundance, though grazed swards actually provided some of the most diverse species compositions.

The full report can be seen on the Islay Natural History Trust website (www.islaynaturalhistory.org) and Islay Development Initiative (www.islaydevelopment.com).

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
Saturday December 7, Cullipool, Luing.

Limited parking is available near the ferry slip at Cuan at NM753143. After the short but interesting ferry crossing, take the path N to Cuan Point and then follow the coast S along the W side of Luing down to Cullipool. From here follow the road to Bardrishaig and then take the track heading S. After about 3km the track turns E. Turn right at a junction and shortly afterwards meet the road at NM738091 and follow it to the village at Toberonochy. Retrace steps to the church and graveyard. Follow the road N back to the ferry.

Grade: L. Distance: 15km. Height to climb: 200m. Map(s): LR49/55, EX359. Meet at: Ballachulish TIC NN083584 at 0840. Cuan ferry slip NM753143 for 1030 sailing. Start of walk at 1100. Leader: Ronnie Forbes 01866 822 611.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Full walk details at www.nevis-hillwalking.club. If anyone would like to go on a walk, contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on

01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevis-hillwalking.club

Sunday December 8, Beinn Bhan, Glen Loy.

A Corbett in a commanding position at the junction of two huge glacier-carved glens, now occupied by Loch Arkaig and Loch Lochy. Visit the historic Moy turn-bridge over the Caledonian Canal at the end of the walk. See details at canmore.org.uk.

Start near Inverskilavulin, by the bridge over the River Loy, NN125831. There is limited parking space in the vicinity. Head N towards the lodge as far as the bridge over the Allt Coire Mhuilinn. Follow the W bank of the burn upstream until the ground steepens. Continue up NNE staying above and to the W of the burn, to about NN132846 at 430m alt. Turn NW up the steep SW arm of Coire Mhuilinn, keeping to the left of the rocky ground indicated on the map. A cairn at 770m alt marks the start of a plateau, which curves E, rising slightly to the main summit trig point at its far end, 796m. If the weather is clear, it is worth continuing E down to a small summit, 594m, for some fine views over the Great Glen. Descend SSE to Monadh Beag, 542m, then E curving S down to the B8004 at Moy, NN164832. Transport required.

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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Oban publisher celebrates winning Saltire Award



Kay Farrell and Alan Windram were named joint winners of the Emerging Publisher award.

An Oban publisher was celebrating at the weekend after winning a top literary award.

Alan Windram of Little Door Books was named joint winner of the Emerging Publisher of the Year award, together with Kay Farrell of Sandstone Press.

The Saltire Literary Awards were presented at a ceremony in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, on St Andrew's night (Saturday November 30). The evening was presided over by BBC presenter Cathy MacDonald.

Speaking about his win this week, Alan told *The Oban Times*: 'It is such a great honour to receive the Saltire Award for Emerging Publisher of the Year alongside Kay Farrell. It has been an amazing year for me

and for Little Door Books, winning the Bookbug Picture Book Prize as an author at the start of the year and now a win for us as a publisher.'

'As with everything, this is very much a team effort and I would not be up here accepting this award if not for the constant love and support of my wife Susan.'

'We are so privileged to be able to work with wonderful authors and exciting new illustrators as we aim to bring beautiful books to children here in Scotland and the rest of the world.' The prize was presented in partnership with Publishing Scotland.

Sandstone Press was called to the podium a second time, when the Inverness-based publisher was named Publisher of the Year.

This has been a notable year for Sandstone, which also saw it winning the Man Booker International Prize.

The Saltire Society Scottish Fiction Book of the Year Award went to *Nina X* by Ewan Morrison, who is originally from Caithness.

Sarah Mason, programme director for the Saltire Society, said: 'Scotland's National Book Awards 2019 have again shown the astounding literary talent of Scotland and we congratulate all our recipients and shortlistees.'

'As well as being a vital opportunity for the Saltire Society and its partners to celebrate and recognise creativity in literature and publishing, the awards raise their wider profile both na-

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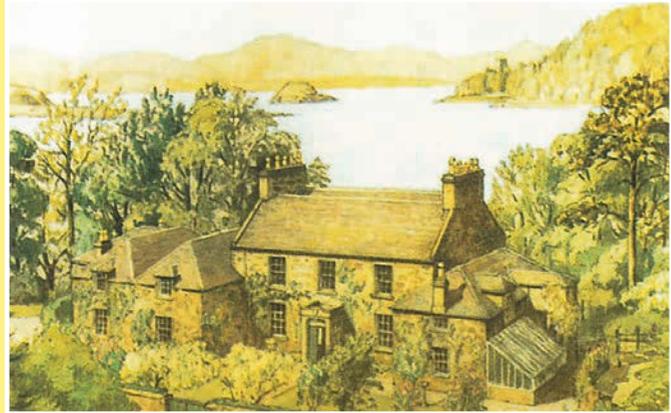
Above, Sandstone Press publishing director Moira Forsyth with founder Robert Davidson.

tionally and internationally. 'The breadth of talent shown by the winners of the Saltire Society's Awards show that Scotland's literary scene is in very safe, very gifted hands.'

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon added her congratulations, saying: 'The Saltire Literary Awards do an excellent job of recognising our talented writers and authors. I'd like to offer my warmest

congratulations to all of the award winners.' The winners of each category received a bespoke award created by Inverness based-artist Simon Baker of Evergreen Studios.

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DIARDAOIN 5th An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 5th December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Calanais – Full Circle (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Eorpa/European Current Affairs
21:00 Benny (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: An Sgrudaire
22:15 Elena Baltacha (rpt)
23:30 The Quay Sessions – Lucy Spraggan (rpt)

DIHAOINE 6 An t-Samhain FRIDAY 6th December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's Programming
18:35 Machair (rpt)
19:00 An Là – News
19:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
19:30 Cearcall (rpt)
20:00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
20:45 Binneas – Na Trads (rpt)
21:00 Elena Baltacha (rpt)
22:20 Trapped (S2) (rpt)
23:05 Luingeann Lannsaireachd/Surgery Ships (rpt)
23:50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 7 An t-Samhain SATURDAY 7th December

16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's Programming
17:45 An Là – News
18:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – Motherwell v Hearts
20:00 Machair (rpt)
20:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)

20:30 Cuimhneachan/Remembrance (rpt)
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Na Trads 2019
23:15 Luingeann Lannsaireachd/Surgery Ships (rpt)
00:00 Belladrum 2019 (Highlights) (rpt)

DIDÒMHAICH 8 An Dùbhlachd SUNDAY 8 December

16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's Programming
18:15 An Là – News
18:30 Seachd Là – News Review
19:30 ÙR/NEW: Alleluia! (rpt)
20:00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)
20:25 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)
20:55 ÙR/NEW: Na Trads 2019
22:15 Piobairean Bhoirnis/ Pipers of Bornish (rpt)
23:10 Trapped S2 (rpt)

DILUAIN 9 An Dùbhlachd MONDAY 9 December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)
19:30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 Dealbhan Fraoich (rpt)
21:00 Trusadh – Iolair Suiil na Greine (return of the Sea Eagle) (rpt)
22:00 Breabach@Blas (rpt)
22:30 Opry le Daniel (rpt)
23:20 Dhan Uisge (rpt)
23:25 An Sgrudaire (rpt)
23:45 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 10 An Dùbhlachd TUESDAY 10 December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Calanais – Full Circle (rpt)
19:30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)
21:00 Cluinneam!/The Switch On (rpt)
22:00 Bill Lawson – Sar Shloinntear (The Genealogist) (rpt)
23:00 Trad fest (rpt)
23:30 Alleuia! (rpt)

DICIADAIN 11 An Dùbhlachd WEDNESDAY 11th December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 An Lot (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Opry le Daniel
21:50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – St Mirren v Motherwell

DIARDAOIN 12th An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 12th December

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Calanais – Full Circle (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Eorpa/European Current Affairs
21:00 Benny (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: An Sgrudaire
22:15 Elena Baltacha (rpt)
23:30 The Quay Sessions – Lucy Spraggan (rpt)



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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

Trail West at 10

Trail West recently announced on social media that they will be cutting back on pub gigs as they prepare for their 10th anniversary celebrations next year, for which they have some big plans.

They are, therefore, going to be taking a break from playing in the Park Bar which has been their regular haunt for the best part of a decade and, thus, played their last gig there for the time being last Sunday evening.

It was a tremendous night with great music from a band that have truly written themselves into the history of the famous bar. All the best to them for their anniversary year.

Jura gathering

I was recently speaking to Charles Renwick from the Jura Association and he was telling me of the success of their recent gathering concert and dance which was held on November 8 in the St Vincent Bowling Club.

The guest artist was



Trail West finishing off the Mòd last October. The band celebrate their 10th anniversary next year.

Ruairidh Cormack, who sung at no fewer than three gatherings over the course of the month of November.

The band was David MacDonald on the box along with his wife Fiona and their young teenage children, both playing the fiddle and calling themselves the MacDonald Cèilidh Band. It was their first family gig on the mainland.

The attendance was modest but those who were there were very supportive resulting in a very successful and enjoyable night for the association.

Glasgow Skye weekend is here

The weekend of the Glasgow Skye annual gathering has finally arrived. Dinner will be held on Friday December 6 (the evening before the concert and dance) in Glasgow University Union at 7pm for 7.30pm.

The following evening, Saturday December 7, the Glasgow University Union plays host to the annual concert. The line-up includes singers such as Wilma

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Kennedy, Rachel Walker, James Graham and Arthur Cormack.

The concert begins at 7.30pm, and after the concert, about 10.30pm, the dance will begin with the Robert Nairn and his dance band.

Clydebank cèilidh

The Clydebank Highlanders will hold their December cèilidh on Friday December 13 in Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, at 7.30pm.

Centenary cèilidh

As part of their centenary season, Comunn Tir nam Beann Dùn Èideann is hosting a cèilidh on Saturday December 7 in the Augustine United Church, by George IV Bridge, in Edinburgh, at 7.15pm for 7.30pm. Gaelic singers will be Gillebrìde MacMillan and Bria Mason. Neil MacLure will be the piper for the evening and John Archie MacMillan the Fear an Taighe.

Members £5, non-members £6, children under-16 free if accompanied by an adult. No booking required.



Funds raised for Ceòlas' Buttons and Bows project

Ceòlas has been successful in fundraising for the continuation of the Buttons and Bows project, which seeks to reinvigorate the fiddle and buttons box traditions in Uist amongst a younger generation.

More than £6,000 in funding has been secured from local councillors, the Western Isles Development Trust and the Co-op Community Fund. Ceòlas have also been selected for a further fundraising round by the Co-op Community Fund.

This new funding will allow the Buttons and Bows project, which provides weekly tuition to more than 50 children in Uist, to continue to run for another year. The project had previously delivered free-of-charge tuition to children since 2015.

Ceòlas would like to thank the funders for their critical support for this project, which would have otherwise have been forced to close, as well as those Co-op members who chose to support the charity.

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FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER	Le Mans '66 12A	12:00/19:00
	Frozen 2 PG	16:30/17:15
	The Good Liar 15	19:30
SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER	The Addams Family PG	11:30 ★/20:15
	Frozen 2 PG	12:00/14:30
	The Good Liar 15	16:00
	Tosca: Live From La Scala	17:00
	Le Mans '66 12A	18:30
SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER	Frozen 2 PG	12:00/14:30/17:00
	Kids Club: How The Grinch Stole Christmas PG	12:30 ★
	The Addams Family PG	14:45/17:00
	Le Mans '66 12A	19:15
	The Good Liar 15	19:30



Top 10 REASONS TO SHOP LOCAL

- 01 STRENGTHEN YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY
- 02 REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS
- 03 SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROUPS
- 04 KEEP OUR COMMUNITY UNIQUE
- 05 CREATE MORE QUALITY JOBS
- 06 GET BETTER SERVICE
- 07 INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY
- 08 ENCOURAGE LOCAL PROSPERITY
- 09 PUT YOUR TAXES TO GOOD USE
- 10 BUY WHAT YOU NEED. DON'T BUY THE HYPE!

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This fantastic new production of Giacomo Puccini's Tosca follows the publication of musicologist Roger Parker's critical edition for Ricordi. The Music Director Riccardo Chailly presents Puccini's work in the light of this most recent research, building on the great success of La Scala's Turandot, La Fanciulla del West, Madama Butterfly and Manon Lescaut. Giacomo Puccini's masterpieces have so far been presented in versions that often bear the burden of tradition.

MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER	Frozen 2 PG	12:00/16:30/17:15
	Le Mans '66 12A	19:00
	The Good Liar 15	19:30
TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER	Frozen 2 PG	12:00/16:30/17:15
	Le Mans '66 12A	19:00
	The Good Liar 15	19:30
WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER	Le Mans '66 12A	12:00 ★/19:00
	Frozen 2 PG	16:30/17:15
	The Good Liar 15	19:30
THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER	The Peanut Butter Falcon 12A	14:30 ★
	Frozen 2 PG	16:00/16:45
	Le Mans '66 12A	19:00
	The Good Liar 15	19:00

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Author Liz feels intimate connection on Isle of Iona

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Science and nature came together on Iona over the past month when author Liz MacWhirter took up a residency in a shepherd's bothy.

Having enjoyed immense success with her debut novel *Black Snow Falling*, an Elizabethan fantasy aimed at young adults, Liz travelled to the island in order to 'find some head space' that would enable her to pull together all the elements of her next literary project.

'My next novel will be partially based on Iona so I thought it would be a great idea to spend some time there,' she explained.

Born just outside London, Liz lived more recently in Edinburgh before marrying her husband, Rupert Smith, and moving to the Borders last year.



It took a few days to get used to living on her own in a remote setting with neither a toilet nor running water in the shepherd's hut. But it was the darkness of the island that

caused the biggest problem for the self-confessed city girl. 'When you live in a city you tend to associate darkness with danger,' she explained. Having been introduced



Author Liz MacWhirter spent a month on Iona in John MacLean's shepherd's hut, working on her new novel. She held an open studio on the island before heading home at the end of last month.

which embodied the long-held belief that the earth was at the centre of the heavens.

It was an experience which perhaps helped her combat her fear of the darkness.

'Eighty per cent of my brain loved it but 20 per cent was on alert,' she said.

'That eventually stopped though and I became totally absorbed in the island, a place where I could feel intimately connected to the the earth's turning.'

For several years now, artists of all mediums, from around the world, have been coming to spend time at John MacLean's hostel

at Lagandorain to pursue a project or work towards completing a sustained piece of work.

To date there have been visual artists, poets, writers and photographers, with each residency concluding with an Open Studio for islanders.

'These are a great success and add something special to the life of the island over the long winter months,' said John.

'It has been a pleasure and inspiration to have Liz at Iona Hostel. My particular interest is in literature and it's been fascinating to observe her work progress.'

Black Snow Falling has been nominated for the 2019 CILIP Carnegie Medal, the Historical Association's Young Quills Award and was nominated for the EIBF First Book Award. It was the Scottish Book Trust's Book of the Month in December 2018.

Sausage casserole



Ingredients

- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Low calorie cooking spray
- 300g button mushrooms
- 300ml vegetable stock
- 1 tsp sweetener
- 4 carrots
- 12 Slimming World Syn-free Pork Sausages
- 1 tsp freshly chopped rosemary and 2 tbsps freshly chopped parsley
- 4 celery sticks

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C Fan/Gas 5. Chop the carrots, celery and onion, place in a large pan with the herbs and stock. Season well, bring to the boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer gently for 5-6 minutes.
2. Place the sausages on a baking sheet, spray with low calorie cooking spray and bake for 15-20 minutes. Remove from the oven and cut into thick diagonal slices.
3. Halve the mushrooms and add to the vegetables with the sausages, tomatoes and sweetener. Season well, transfer to an oven proof dish and bake for 10-12 minutes until bubbling. Serve immediately.

• Syn FREE • 45 minutes • Serves 4

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Curtain rises on Ballachulish panto



The cast of *The Swan Princess* are ready to entertain audiences.

Tickets are still available for Lochaber Showstoppers' latest pantomime, *The Swan Princess*, which takes to the stage in Ballachulish for three nights starting this evening (Thursday December 5).

The gang promise their usual mix of song, dance, West End pizzazz and the oldest, corniest jokes in town.

A loose retelling of Tchaikovsky's ballet, *Swan Lake*, with a considerably less flexible cast, *The Swan Princess* has been written by former member Ryan Laskey and will be performed in Ballachulish Village Hall tonight, tomorrow and in two performances on Saturday.

Tickets are available from The Quarry Centre, Ballachulish, The Granite House, Fort William, or at the door. Doors open 6.30pm, curtain up 7pm (Saturday matinee 2pm).

The show's director, Sheena Coull, told us: 'The gang's been working really hard whether they're learning lines, sewing costumes, designing sets and lighting or a million other jobs.'

'We're really enjoying getting together and rehearsing and I can honestly say we're going to have a show fit for the West End ... of Ballachulish!'

Thrills and spills at Islay Sessions

Last weekend saw the ninth Islay Sessions, started by the late Fraser Shaw and his great pal Grahame Allison, for whom he worked, writes Angus Rice.

The format has changed little over the years except for the size of the audiences, with all concerts full to capacity. People are now travelling from the mainland and much further afield to enjoy the music.

More than 60 per cent of the audiences were from afar, bringing a much-needed boost to the economy of the island, but it would be good to see more local support.

The first of the intimate concerts in the conservatory of the Port Charlotte Hotel was on Friday night featuring Vox – namely Calum MacCrimmon, (of Breabach), LB Salter, Kim Carnie and Innes White.

Their musicality and vocal harmonies were a joy to listen to. A great session in the bar followed, with all the visiting musicians joining in.

Saturday dawned with a few bleary-eyed musicians about. However, after a good breakfast they were ready for the day's workshops, with tuition available in fiddle, accordion and guitar. LB Salter held a workshop in the afternoon on mandolin which was followed by a 'slow session' in the bar with the participants.

Saturday night's concert in Bruichladdich hall was all set to go when a last-minute problem arose – 'Islay time' came into force when a young lady arrived asking for assistance. Never one to ignore a lady, we put things on hold, plucked six members from the audience and went to the rescue of a member of the

audience's car that had landed in the ditch while being parked! With all returned to their seats, Calum struck up the pipes and opened the concert.

First to appear were Charlie Stewart and Innes White, who rendered a selection of lively and beautifully controlled tunes. They were followed by the Kim Carnie band – Kim's wonderful voice and the musicality of her band were jaw-dropping. Following a short interval, and of course the raffle, Eabhal came on to the stage. They are a young band but their driving style soon had feet tapping and hands clapping. The night concluded with another great session in the hotel bar.

First up on Sunday saw a good crowd gathering at Fraser's seat outside Bruichladdich distillery for the now annual dram to Fraser's memory. While a poignant occasion, there was a lovely warm ambience and good to see more folk gathering.

The finale came on Sunday night for the second concert in the conservatory.

Claire Hastings, albeit a year late (she had lost her voice last year), was here to entertain. The purity of Claire's voice, her style and choice of songs had everybody captivated and, I can assure you, Claire, it was well worth the wait.

Sponsors are so important to be able to put on such an event and we thank and salute you for your generosity, not forgetting those who do not wish to be named. Thank you for allowing the Sessions to continue.

Next year's dates for your diary are November 20, 21, 22. See you then!

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WHAT'S ON

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THURSDAY 5TH DECEMBER

Oban Men's Shed
Salvation Army Hall
9:00am - 12:00pm
Oban Health Walks
Oban Congregational Church
10:00am - 12:00pm
Recovery Cafe
New Hope Kitchen. 12.30pm
Slimming World - Fort William
Salvation Army Hall
3:00pm, 5:00pm & 7:00pm
Tel; Gillian 07796 040803
Spotlight - Camelot
Corran Halls. 7.30pm
Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Royal Hotel. 7.30pm
Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY

FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER

Reminiscence Group
Oban Library. 12pm-1.30pm
Hope Kitchen Music Group
Salvation Army Hall. 1pm-4pm
Parsley's Cat Cafe
New Hope Kitchen. 2pm
Spotlight - Camelot
Corran Halls. 7.30pm
Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
Creel. Open till 2:00am

SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER

Parkrun

Ganavan Sands. 9.30am

Gaelic Bookbugs

Furan Centre. 10.30am

Christmas Fayre

Connel Village Hall

11:00am - 3:00pm

Reminiscence Group

Oban Library. 12pm-1.30pm

Community Cafe

Salvation Army Hall

12:00pm - 2:00pm

Spotlight - Camelot

Corran Halls. 7.30pm

Live Music & Entertainment @

Markie Dans

Tweed. Open till 2:00am

SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER

Morning Service - Refreshments follow

Salvation Army Hall

11:00am - 12:00pm

Live Music & Entertainment @

Markie Dans

QUIZ NIGHT at 9:30pm

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MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am - 12:00pm

Slimming World Fort William

Salvation Army Hall

9.30am & 11.30am

Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

Fellowship Meeting

New Hope Kitchen. 2pm

Slimming World - Lochgilphead

Union Street/Argyll Street

5:30pm & 7:30pm

Tel; Rhona 07880 878906

Martyn's Monday Club

New Hope Kitchen. 7pm-9pm

TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am - 12:00pm

Carers Coffee Morning

North Argyll Carers Centre

10:30am - 12:00pm

Martyn's Monday Club Ladies

New Hope Kitchen. 7pm-9pm

WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am - 12:00pm

Slimming World - Oban

Glencruitten Church Hall

9:30am, 11:30am, 5:30pm & 7:30pm

Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

Open Day

Greenshoots Garden

10.30am-3.30pm

Hope Kitchen Beach clean

(meet opposite the View). 10.30am

Knitting Group

New Hope Kitchen. 2pm

Inveraray Accordion & Fiddle Club

Inveraray Inn. 7.30pm

Mànran to stage anniversary fes

Folk supergroup Mànran will mark next year's 10th anniversary with a homecoming two-day festival - on a shinty pitch.

After performances in more than 30 countries over the past decade, the seven-piece band will head back to Fort William in April.

At the foot of Britain's tallest mountain, Ben Nevis, Mànran: 10 by the Ben will take over An Aird shinty field.

Friends joining the band's milestone celebration will include long-time cohorts and internationally acclaimed Skerryvore, who will be headlining the first night, on April 10. Caledonia legend Dougie MacLean will also take to the stage on the Friday, as well as contemporary folk group Breabach and local singer-songwriter Keir Gibson.

Donnie Munro will play on the Saturday night, April 11, as well as instrumental group Flookand, local superstars The Glenfinnan Ceilidh Band, with Mànran closing the festival with the launch of their new album, as well as playing a host of material that spans their decade.

Mànran will be launching their new album at the festival

Gaelic songstress Kim Carnie and guitar-maestro Aidan Moodie will also be introduced as the band's newest members.

Mànran founding member and musical director for the festival Gary Innes, said: 'I'd also like to express my sincere thanks to Fort William shinty club and committee

for agreeing to host the two-day festival.

'Having a music festival in Lochaber is something that I feel has been missing for years and it's going to be brilliant to work with the club to deliver something that we hope to build on for years to come.'

Tickets, from £65 for the weekend, went on sale in November and are available from manran.co.uk

Mànran bring a two-day festival to Fort William next April, celebrating their 10th year as a world-touring live act.

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details. To list your event, please call 01631 568000

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Published on 12th December

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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

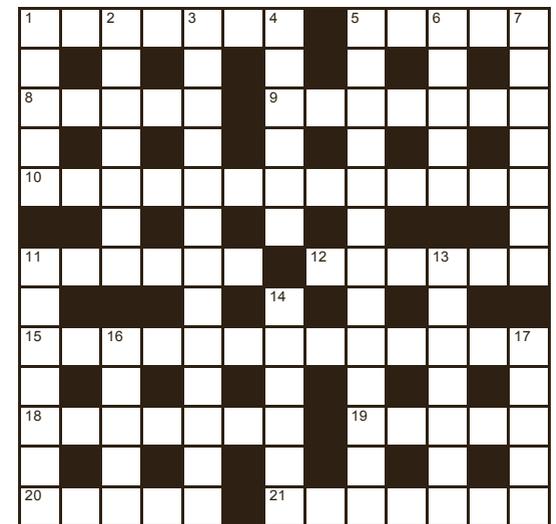
Christine's collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo till midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2.

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 or go in again (2-5)
- 5 Freeze (3,2)
- 8 Warm welcome (5)
- 9 Chief (7)
- 10 Early worship (7,6)
- 11 Digestive (6)
- 12 Insincere speech (6)
- 15 Furniture for storing papers (6,7)
- 18 Found in the ear (7)
- 19 Alcohol (5)
- 20 When a fine layer is seen on furniture (7)
- 21 Fleck (7)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Down

- 1 Kingdom (5)
- 2 Vanity case? (3,4)
- 3 Usually (13)
- 4 Quit (6)
- 5 Calm (13)
- 6 Plaintive poem (5)
- 7 Plan of activities (7)
- 11 Humourless (2-5)
- 13 Family (7)
- 14 Elaborate display (6)
- 16 Place (5)
- 17 The ones here (5)

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club
Inveraray Inn
Wednesday 11th December
At 7.30pm
Guest Artistes
Archie MacAllister Trio
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Source: Consumers' Choice V, The Newspaper Society

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Book on Gaelic bard shortlisted

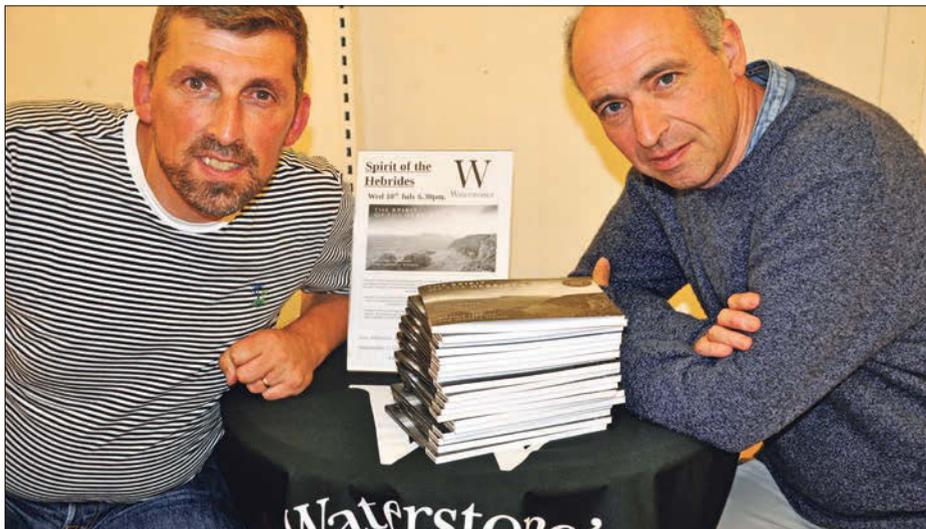
The work of Seil poet Kenneth Steven has been shortlisted for a top literary award, writes Kathie Griffiths.

His words were combined with photographer Alastair Jackson's black and white images of Skye and Raasay landscapes in a book published last year paying homage to Gaelic bard Sorley MacLean.

Now *The Spirit of the Hebrides* has been shortlisted – from 88 titles down to 10 – for the 2019 Highland Book Prize.

The pair's project was inspired by Alastair, originally from Skye, rummaging in his granny's attic and finding an old vinyl of Sorley reading some of his works. The venture expanded when he contacted Kenneth Steven whose work he admired and the two joined their creative skills.

The book was three years in the making, with Alastair



Alastair Jackson with Kenneth Steven's book is up for the 2019 Highland Book Prize.

choosing the already-written poems he felt most reflected what he wanted to say about his landscapes.

Speaking about making it to the Highland Book prize

top 10 list, Alastair said: 'Very pleased with that!'

Among the other nine books up for the book award are Alexander McCall Smith's *The Secret of the Dark*

Waterfall and Stephen Rutt's *The Seafarers – A Journey Among Birds*, which this weekend was named joint winner of the Saltire Society's First Book of the Year Award.



Iain MacPhail and his Scottish Dance Band went down a treat at last month's club night

Archie MacAllister and his Trio return for Inveraray club night

It was standing room only at the Inveraray Inn when Iain MacPhail and his Scottish Dance Band were guest artistes at the November club night.

Supporting players were – Fyne Folk, with Sally Hall, Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard; also playing were Alex MacKinnon, Helen Murray and Willie Buchanan on accordion, all accompanied by Jimmy MacDonald on keyboard; Miller Frondigonn on 'moothie' and Jake and Agnes on 'moothie' and keyboard. All their selec-

tions were much enjoyed. The guest artistes, with Iain on lead accordion, Brian Griffin on second accordion, Judith Smith on fiddle, Ishbel Hodgson on keyboard and George Darling on drums, delighted the audience with a very well rehearsed programme in both sessions, finishing off with a sing-a-long medley.

Chairman Niall Iain MacLean thanked all the artistes for yet another great night of music and the club looks forward next week to fiddle maestro, Archie MacAllister and his Trio making a welcome return.

TAX RETURN DEADLINE 31 JANUARY 2020

The tax return deadline when filing your online Self Assessment for the tax year ending 5 April 2019 is midnight on 31 January 2020



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Savouring taste of Luing with Sue at book launch

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



More than 40 people worked up an appetite for inspiring recipes at a feast of an event hosted by Luing's Atlantic Islands Centre.

Sue Lawrence's book launch of A Taste of Scottish Islands had people's taste-buds tingling on November 23.

One of the organisers, Mary Whitmore, said: 'It was a really well-attended event, with 45 people.'

Sue talked about her new cookbook which highlights Luing recipes in three different sections, Luing beef, Luing Bakery breads and the Isle of a Luing Home Bakers cooperative.

And there were plenty of treats on offer to tempt guests from beef to fish, bread and cakes.



The people who attended Sue Lawrence's book launch on Luing tucked into Luing landed scallops from Eoghann MacLaclan; Luing landed langoustines, crab and lobster from Neil MacQueen; Luing beef from the Cadzow family; Luing bakery Hebridean sourdough bread from Mary Braithwaite; Luing jams from The Island Kitchen; Luing Chutney from Zoe Fleming; Luing eggs from Mike and Jen at Sunnybrae; lemon oat bats, chocolate and banana cake, courgette and lime cake, lemon almond polenta cake (gluten free), celebration coffee cake (plant based), fruit scones and shortbread from Isle of Luing Home Bakers.

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A golden year for Crafts

It is an icon of the West Highland tourism industry, recommended in the Lonely Planet, and has a loyal band of customers from across the globe. As Crafts and Things in Glencoe celebrates its 50th anniversary, owner David Cooper says the secret of this success has been fantastic staff and those loyal customers.

Get Back and ferry boats

On May 23 1969, when the Beatles were number one with Get Back and Harold Wilson the Prime Minister, Tony Cooper and his wife Ursula opened Antiques and Crafts in Glencoe.

They had moved to the village from Crieff and the year before had bought the ruin of a centuries-old byre at Tighphuirst in the village; it took them a year to rebuild.

This was five years before the Ballachulish Bridge opened and cars crossed six at a time on turntable deck ferries.

The first day's takings were £7/13/6d in those pre-decimal days, or £7.67½.

The following year, the couple extended the business by renovating an adjoining house and building a new link between them to become Crafts and Things.

The bridge and the new road configuration followed, increasing traffic and the business thrived. In 1982, the couple retired and sold the business to their youngest son David. A few years later, he married Kshema and together they grew the business to encompass a coffee shop, crafts, clothes and a gallery.

David and Kshema have built on Tony and Ursula's legacy.

One of their aims was to create a meeting place where locals and visitors alike would feel welcome and enjoy the ambiance and in 1986 they opened the coffee shop at Crafts and Things.

A beautiful blend of covetable crafts

The craft shop is in the oldest part of the building, where the byre walls are so thick.

The incredible range of goods is the result of 50 years accumulated knowledge of craft and artisan working in Scotland.

'Rare, unusual, beautiful and affordable,' is the motto on which 50 years of business in retail has been based.

Most of the goods are sourced in Scotland with some from the rest of the UK and around the world, with emphasis on fairtrade policy for the overseas products.

Authentic Harris Tweed is always popular and there is a wide range but there is also a colourful collection of silk scarves from Rajasthan, the sale of which supports a women's co-operative, financing women's health care.

Nearer home, another new line is from a family firm in Fife recycling old whisky barrels into tablemats and clocks.

Crafts and Things just flows from room to room with the gallery above the coffee shop featuring photography and prints from some of Scotland's leading artists fully-framed to hang on the wall or un framed to be rolled into a protective tube and packed in luggage for destinations all over the globe.

In another part of the building, under the arch off the craft shop, clothing and accessories, bags, belts, socks and scarves and hats of all shapes and sizes, sweaters and snoods can be found.

Crafts and Things excels at sourcing new and original designs to sit alongside the traditional and ever-popular.

Good people make a good business

The secret weapon at Crafts and Things has always been its fantastic staff.

After 50 years there are few families in and around the Glencoe area who do not have a link to Crafts and Things. At some time in their lives either they, or a member of their family, have not just been customers but worked there.



The coffee shop and sales force have always been boosted during the holiday season by summer jobs and been the first entry into the world of work for many youngsters and boosted their college fund.

David said: 'All the staff are amazing but it would be remiss of me to not also mention two by name.'

'I cannot overemphasise the huge part Mary Macintyre has played in the success of this business.'

'Her dedication, attention to detail and really hard work over many years has been extraordinary and my wife Kshema and I are so lucky to have her as a manageress.'

'Isobel Gardiner has been in charge of the kitchen here for as long as I can remember.'

'She runs it with great skill and authority and again very hard work.'

David said he is grateful to all his wonderful staff, but especially to those two, 'without whom this business would just not be the same'.

Home-made

All the food sold in the café is made on the premises and alongside the gallons of soup and hot meals that includes an impressive amount of home-baking, by Isobel Gardiner and her team.

There is seating inside and out and always a wide menu; a quick ready of the guest book shows that the baked potatoes are a firm favourite in the cafe, which is light, bright and welcoming.

There is also a wide range of sweets, tablet and shortbread to take home.

If you have any allergic condition and are worried about what anything contains, please ask any of the counter staff.

Coffee and concerts

In autumn, winter and spring Crafts and Things holds evening concerts in the coffee shop.

These are run on a non-profit basis with the performers taking all the door receipts and the venue has become well-established on the music circuit.

So much so that in 2018 it was nominated a 'best venue' at the annual Scottish Traditional Music Awards.

The programme reads like a who's who of the music scene; featuring mainly, but not exclusively, traditional Scottish musicians.

The audience is mainly local but the names who play there also draw audience members from the cities to enjoy world-class musicians in an intimate atmosphere.

You can join a mailing list to find out who will be playing or check out the website, and Facebook page.



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NFUS roadshows meet farming's challenges full on

by Fiona Scott
 fscott@obantimes.co.uk



NFUS director of policy Jonnie Hall, regional board chairman John Dickson and NFUS vice-president Martin Kennedy were in Oban to answer questions.

National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS) ploughed into Oban on Friday night for the 13th of a 15-date policy roadshow.

A good turnout of farming and crofting members from across the region attended the event which saw NFUS vice-president Martin Kennedy, director of policy Jonnie Hall and regional board chairman John Dickson in attendance.

In a week that saw him meet farming and crofting members on Skye, Benbecula, Lewis, Harris and in Lochgilphead, Mr Kennedy said: 'At a time of great change, it has never been more important for the union to meet members to discuss the huge range of issues they face.'

'By the time the roadshows finish next week, we will have

had 15 meetings around the country giving every member the opportunity to discuss the urgent policy matters that will inevitably impact on them in the months and years ahead.

'With great turnouts so far, issues have ranged from convergence, Brexit and future support to climate change,

species management and supply chains, and it is clear every sector faces a period of significant change.'

Mr Hall added: 'Politics and policy are rapidly shaping our industry's future at a time when farming and crofting face unprecedented physical and financial challenges.'

Around the markets

Oban - United Auctions Tuesday November 26 sold 959 sheep of all classes at the last sheep sale of the year at this centre. The 559 lambs averaged £40.42 (+£7.54) and 298 Ewes averaged £34.21 (+£13.65). All classes of sheep sold very well and to an active ringside of buyers.
 LAMBS - SUFFx - £68.00, Mid Farm; £60.00, Daltote; £56.00, Glebe; £55.00, Torbhlaren. TEXx - £72.00, Torbhlaren; £70.00, 15 Keil Croft; £62.00, Wood Cottage Croft; £56.00, 3 Baligrundle; £56.00, Tyree; £55.00, Achaleven. CHEV - £58.00, Gallanachmore; £58.00, 8 Kilkenneth, Tiree; £58.00, Daltote; £55.00, Burnbank. CROSS - £56.50, Kilbride Farm; £56.00, Achaleven; £55.00, Kilbride Farm; £54.00, Killiechronan Estate. MULE - £60.00, Killiechronan Estate. BF - £51.00, Gallanachmore; £51.00, Wood Cottage Croft; £50.00, Treshnish Farm. EWES - SUFFx - £76.00, Mannal, Tiree; £75.00, Mid Farm. BFL - £68.00, Croish, Tiree. TEXx - £73.00, 15 Keil Croft. CHEV - £67.00, Croish, Tiree; £60.00, 8 Kilkenneth, Tiree; £60.00, Wood Cottage Croft; £56.00, Mid Farm. CROSS - £54.00, Torbhlaren. MULE - £47.00, Glenshellach. BF - £47.50, Burnbank; £42.00, Knock Farm; £41.00, Ensay Farm.

Fort William - Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd on November, 29 sold 79 store cattle, 35 OTM cattle and 1,204 sheep.
 Bullocks (56) sold to 228.0p per kilo for a pair of 250kg Limousin crosses from Tigh Airigh, Blarmacfoldach, and £930 gross for a 600kg Simmental cross from Meall Mo Chridhe, Kilchoan. Heifers (23) sold to 196.9p per kilo for a pen of 320kg Limousin crosses from Fersit, Roy Bridge, and £770 gross for a 520kg Charolais cross from Achadhulachraich, Invergarry.
 OTM cows (35) sold to 119.1p per kilo for a 680kg Simmental cross from Moy Farm, Banavie, and £970 gross for an 840kg Shorthorn cross also from Moy Farm. Store lambs (661) sold to £79.50 gross for Cheviots from Dalilea, Acharacle. Feeding sheep (543) sold to £100 gross for a Suffolk ram from Market Stance, Fort Augustus.
 Other leading prices per head and per kilo:
 Bullocks - 201 - 250kg - Tigh Airigh, £570, 1 Kinsadel, Morar, 224.4p; 251 - 300kg - Fersit, £600, 2 and 3 Kinloid, Arisaig, £219.2p; 301- 350kg - Fersit, £655, 201.5p; 351-400kg - 1 Kinsadel, Morar, £725; 401kg and over - Scallastle Farm,

Craigmuir, £800.
 Heifers - 201-250kg - Tigh Airigh, £490, 196.0p; 251-300kg - Moy Farm, £450; 301-350kg - Fersit, £630, 2 and 3 Kinloid, 180.7p.
 Other leading prices per head:
 OTM feeding cows: 73-75 Achosnich, Ardnamurchan, (BSho), £930; Acraichean, Sanday, (ShoX), £910; Steall, Fort William, (AAx), £870; Moy Farm, (SimX), £810;
 Other leading prices per kilo
 OTM feeding cows: 73-75 Achosnich, (BSho), 117.0p; Branault, Achateny, (LimX), 116.1p; Moy Farm, (ShoX), 115.5p; Steall, (AAx), 112.3p.
 Other leading prices per head
 Lambs: Mule - Glentruim Farms, Newtonmore, £77; Chev - 8, 9 and 10 Cuilchenna, Onich, £61; BF - Lochnell Home Farm, Oban, £60; LleyNX - Steall, £60 (twice); Cross - Hillside Farm, Kilchoan, £59.50; SuffX - 4 Glebehill, Kilchoan, £56; EsyX - Tigh Seanaid, Inchree, £52.
 Feeding sheep: Suff ram - Lochnell Home Farm, £95; Chev ram - Keppoch Farms, Roy Bridge, £85; Suffolk gmr - Lochnell Home Farm, £78; Cross ram - Market Stance, £60; LleyN ewe - Steall, £56; BF gmr - Sonachan, Kilchoan, £54; Cross wdr - 2 Blaich, Fort William, £50.

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mind, all Isuzu D-Max models retain the 5 year/125,000 mile warranty** and 5 year roadside assistance across UK and Europe, proving it's truly built by professionals for the professionals who use it.

The range features a variety of trim levels, from the Isuzu D-Max Utility—the ultimate working vehicle, to the XTR—latest edition to the range. All each carefully crafted

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In addition to the core Isuzu D-Max range, Isuzu also features a diverse range of fleet vehicles. Including collaborations with the SSE—one of the UK's largest and fastest growing energy companies, the RAC with a custom built Isuzu D-Max patrol van and BT fleet.

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Closing date: 5pm, 10/12/2019. Interviews will take place week commencing 16/12/2019.
For further information and to apply, please visit our website: www.kilmartin.org/home/get-involved/vacancies/

Argyll Animal Aid will be having an exciting relaunch and restructure in the New Year! We are happy to announce that we are currently recruiting for the following posts:
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Please contact Kristin MacKillop for recruitment pack kristin.mackillop@gmail.com
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PUBLIC NOTICES



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TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

THE A82 TRUNK ROAD (TYNDRUM TO NORTH BALLACHULISH) (RURAL CLEARWAY) ORDER 2019

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS make the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1(1)(c), 2(1) and 2(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which will have the effect of imposing a rural clearway on that length of the A82 Dalnottar - Inverness Trunk Road from its junction with the A85 Tyndrum - Oban Trunk Road north of Tyndrum, in a generally north westwards and then northwards direction to a point 34 metres or thereby south of the centreline of its junction with the Old Ferry Road, North Ballachulish, a distance of 53.85 kilometres or thereby.

Full details of the proposal are contained in the Order which, together with a plan showing the length of road involved and a statement of the Scottish Ministers' reasons for proposing to make the Order, may be examined free of charge during normal business hours from 6th December 2019 until 6th January 2020 at the offices of Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF; and Ballachulish Post Office, Park Rd, Ballachulish PH49 4JS; and Tyndrum Post Office & Village Store, Tyndrum, FK20 8RY. Any person wishing to object to the proposed Order should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the Director of Trunk Road and Bus Operations, c/o Jack Rorison, Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF quoting reference NW/A82/JR by 6th January 2020.

A copy of the Order and this Notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/road-orders/?roadorderregion=1291>

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



CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

Trustees for the I & J MacArthur Pension Fund
1 Barrapoll
(Apportionment), Tیره
0.0508 ha - Proposed
new development
101845

DM Colthart
4 Ardconnel, Kilmore &
Kilbride
0.159 ha - Proposed
new development
101918

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 03/01/20. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW - info@crofting.gov.scot

Our privacy notice is available at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/privacy-policy or on request.

DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED

JS Adam
19 Kilvaree, Ardchattan & Muckairn
101020
0.200 ha
Reason - Proposed new development
Condition - With fencing and use conditions

Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Kathleen M. Lafferty trading as D&K Lafferty & Co. Ltd of 6 Knipoch Place, Oban, Argyll & Bute, PA34 4ED is applying for a licence to use MacQueen Brothers Limited, Unit 4, 7B Glengallan Road, Oban, Argyll & Bute, PA34 4HG as an operating centre for 4 goods vehicles and 0 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Muirshearlich Common Grazing. Appointment of Grazing Committee.

District of Kilmallie.
The Muirshearlich Township and Sheep Stock Club AGM will be held at 7.30pm on 18th December 2019 at Oakwood, Muirshearlich, Banavie, Fort William PH33 7PD at which a new Grazing Committee will be elected.

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AGM**
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2019
Glencruitten
Church Hall
1pm

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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.

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
19/02456/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and formation of vehicular access	Land North East Of Beech Hill View (Plot A), Port Appin, Appin, Argyll And Bute
19/02450/PP	Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse	Point Park Cottage, Taynuilt, Argyll And Bute, PA35 1JQ
19/02276/PP	Erection of garage to store rescue boat	H M Coastguard, School Street, Port Charlotte, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA48 7TW
19/02395/PP	Change of use of land for the siting of 2 pods to be used as temporary staff accommodation with associated parking and installation of septic tank	Islay Airport, Glenevedale, 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 Council's website.

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ELECTRICITY ACT 1989

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

ELECTRICITY (APPLICATIONS FOR CONSENT) REGULATIONS 1990

Notice is hereby given that ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Ltd, (company registration number NI028425 registered address The Soloist, 1 Lanyon Place, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 3LP) has applied to the Scottish Ministers for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate Sheirdrim Renewable Energy Development on land approximately 11 km south of Tarbert on the Kintyre Peninsula in Argyll and Bute (Central Grid Reference 181302, 657098). The proposed Development would have an installed capacity in excess of 100 MW comprising of up to 19 turbines with a ground to blade tip height of up to 149.9 metres, with an installed capacity of around 114 MW and two ground mounted solar arrays with an installed capacity of around 20 MW, producing a combined output of around 134 MW. A battery storage facility would also be installed with storage capacity of around 38 MW of energy. The proposed Development is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an EIA Report has been produced. ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Ltd has also applied for a direction under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted.

A copy of the application, with a plan showing the land to which it relates, together with a copy of the EIA Report discussing the Company's proposals in more detail and presenting an analysis of the environmental implications, are available for public inspection in person, free of charge, during normal office hours at:

Location Name	Normal Opening Hours	Address
Argyll and Bute Council, 1A Manse Brae	Monday – Friday: 9.00am to 4.00pm	1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD

and is also available at the following location, during the opening hours of that facilities:

Location Name	Normal Opening Hours	Address
Whitehouse Community Hall	When the facilities are open for activities	Whitehouse PA29 6XR

The EIA Report can also be viewed at the Scottish Government Library at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ; on the application website at https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/sheirdrim_renewable_energy_development.aspx; or at www.energyconsents.scot. Copies of the EIA Report may be obtained from ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Ltd (telephone: 0141 614 0451) at a charge of £1,000 hard copy and £15 on CD/DVD or USB. Copies of a short non-technical summary are available free of charge.

Any representations to the application may be submitted via the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx; by email to the Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot; or by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation.

Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to representations@gov.scot will receive acknowledgement.

All representations should be received not later than 10th January 2020, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date.

Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the developer will be subject to further public notice in this manner and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

As a result of a statutory objection from the relevant planning authority, or where Scottish Ministers decide to exercise their discretion to do so, Scottish Ministers can also cause a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) to be held.

Following examination of the environmental information, Scottish Ministers will determine the application for consent in one of two ways:

- Consent the proposal, with or without conditions attached; or
- Reject the proposal

General Data Protection Regulations

The Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit processes consent applications and consultation representations under The Electricity Act 1989. During the process, to support transparency in decision making, the Scottish Government publishes online at www.energyconsents.scot. A privacy notice and a fair processing notice are published on the Help page at www.energyconsents.scot. These explain how the Energy Consents Unit processes your personal data. If you have any concerns about how your personal data is handled, please email: Econsents_admin@gov.scot or write to Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU.

www.highland.gov.uk



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://www.highland.gov.uk>; electronically at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, CHARLES KENNEDY BUILDING, ACHINTORE ROAD, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6RQ; 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

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
19/04916/FUL	New House, Roshven, Glenuig	Erect of house, greenhouse, painting studio and car port
19/05099/FUL	Tigh Na Loan Acharacle	Siting of 3 containers and alterations to car parking
19/04683/FUL	Land 300M NW Of Caolasbeg Kinlochmoidart, Lochailort	Erection of 25m mast equipped with 3No antennas and 2No 600mm dishes, formation of compound and 15m access.
19/05164/FUL	Rodane Badabrie, Corpach	Alterations to garage to form family use annexe

Time period for comments is 14 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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GRADUATION

MICHAEL T. NORTON

Recently graduated from Edinburgh Napier University with a Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honours in Television. He is the second son of Yvonne Gorman and the late Alan Norton, Broxburn and grandson of Morvern and the late Andy Smith, Dunbeg.

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DEATHS

BROWN - Rev. Joe Brown MA, (formerly minister of Kilbrandon, Isle of Seil. Peacefully at home on Saturday, November 30, 2019. Beloved husband of the late Lena, father to Rosemary and Logan, father-in-law to Karen, grandfather to Angus, Isla and Charles, husband to Debbie. Funeral service on Thursday, December 12, at 12 noon at Kelso North Parish Church. Interment at Yetholm Cemetery at 1.30 p.m.

CARTER - On Wednesday, November 20, 2019, aged 49 years, Alec, soul mate of Audrey, doting dad of Graeme and Simone, beloved son of Chrissie and the late Murdo Carter and nephew of Flora. Dearly loved and greatly missed by all.

MACDONALD - At home on Thursday November 28, 2019, in her 96th year, Anne née Butt, beloved wife of the late Bobby MacDonald, dear mother of David, mother-in-law of Helen, and grandmother of Ewan and Katherine. Funeral will take place from St. John's Cathedral, Oban on Monday December 9th at 11.00 a.m., thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery.

McAFFER - James. Peacefully at St. Vincent's Hospice, Howwood on December 1, 2019. Jim beloved husband of Sarah, much loved dad of the late Kenneth and Gordon, dear uncle and cousin to the family. Funeral service to which all family and friends are welcome at Woodside Crematorium, Paisley (top chapel), tomorrow, Friday, December 6 at 9.30 a.m. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu to St. Vincent's Hospice, Howwood.

McLUCKIE - Peacefully, with courage and dignity, on November 30, 2019, at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, Bobby, formerly of 3 Dunmar Court, Oban. Now at rest and will be sorely missed. Funeral service will

take place at Oban Parish Church, Glencruitten Road, Oban, on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 11.00 a.m.; thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please, retiral collection/donations will be taken for North Argyll Diabetes Support Group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GIBB - The family of the late Ian would like to thank everyone for their kind expressions of sympathy and support shown to them on his death, for all the flowers, cards, phone calls and home baking and to all who visited us. Grateful thanks to Macmillan staff who cared for Ian over the years and latterly over the last few weeks along with ward B staff at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban. To Ian MacInnes at D&A Munn for the care and compassionate funeral arrangements and to the Rev Margaret Miller for the beautiful service. Thank you to everyone who came from near and far to give Ian a great send off, he would have been so overwhelmed by the turnout. The sum of £952.10 was donated to the Macmillan Day Bed Unit, Oban.

ROSS - Kay, Susan, Craig and families would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many expressions of sympathy and kindness expressed to them following the loss of their much loved Dad, Charlie Ross. Thanks to Rev Canon Dr John Cuthbert for his personal service and to Manson & MacBeath Funeral Directors for their guidance and support, special thanks also to the British Legion, Fort William Branch, for their participation in giving Dad a fitting send off. Finally, thanks to all who came to pay their last respects and who donated generously to the British Legion (Fort William Branch) and the Cheerful Chesters. The sum of £610 was raised.

TURNBULL - Margaret, John, Dianne and Aileen and the extended family would like to say thank you to relatives, friends and neighbours for all their kind messages, cards and flowers received after the loss of our dear wife, mum, gran and great gran, Margaret Turnbull. Thanks to Alyson Stewart for her beautiful heartfelt and comforting service. She gave mum an extra special send off. To Linsay and Laura, thank you for being so strong and sharing your memories with us. We all enjoyed Linsay's lovely recollections of her gran and Laura's beautiful poem. A special thank you to the Railway Club for the beautiful buffet and for providing the venue. A very sincere thank you to Manson & MacBeath for going above and beyond their professional duties. The support and attention to detail for the funeral arrangements were exceptional. We can't thank all of the staff at Abbeyfield Care Home enough for the care and kindness they have shown to our Mum over the past six years. Thanks to everyone that attended the service and graveside and also your kind donations to Abbeyfield Care Home.

MEMORIALS

DEMPSTER - In loving memory of my dear husband Archie Dempster, who passed away December 5, 2014.

Lonely is my home without you
Life to me is not the same
All this world would be like heaven
Just to have you back again.
- Your loving wife Annie, East Bay, Mallaig.

DEMPSTER - In loving memory of Archie Dempster, who passed away December 5, 2014.

In our hearts your memory lingers
Sweetly tender, fond and true
There is not a day, dear father
That we do not think of you.
- From Anne Marie, Archie, Raymond, Ian and their families, Mallaig and Beaulieu.

FAIRLIE - In loving memory of John, who died suddenly on December 7, 2018.

No words can tell, no flowers repay
The loss we had one year today
Till memories fade and life departs
You will live forever in our hearts
Sadly missed.

- Christine and family.
MACDONALD - Treasured memories of our dear brother John MacDonald, Cuilaneilan, Kinlochewe and formerly of Ardochy, Invergarry, who passed away December 3, 2018.

Not just today but every day, in silence we remember.
- Malcolm and Murdo MacDonald.

MACGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of Duncan, who died December 5, 2009.

Taken from us 10 years ago, still missed and loved every day. Always in on our hearts.
- All the family x

MORRISON - In loving memory of Hector, a much loved dad and senair, who died December 7, 2013 and Mary, a much loved mum and granny, who died May 17, 2004.

In our hearts forever.
- Teeny and family.

MORRISON - In loving memory of a dear dad and senair Hector, who died December 7, 2013. Also remembering a dear mum and granny Mary, who died May 17, 2004 and also a dear brother-in-law James Maitland, who died December 23, 2012.

Happy memories silently kept
No need for words, we'll never forget.
- Margaret, Christina, Lorraine and families.

O'BRIEN - Treasured memories of Valerie, a loving wife, mum and grandmother, who died on December 4, 2010.

Will always be remembered in our hearts and will never be forgotten x x x x x
- Billy, Louise, Laurence, Olivia, Amelie and Lucia.

WOTHERSPOON - 30th anniversary. In loving memory of my husband and our dad Kenny tragically taken from us on December 7, 1989.

A happy smile, kind in nature, loving and true
In our hearts you will always stay
Loved and remembered every day.
- Margaret, Kenneth and Cheryl.

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SCOTTISH FIELD
January issue

OUT NOW

Kingdom of Fife
Crowning glory of the east

Kelly Macdonald
Trainspotting to Harry Potter

Profile: Ian Blackford

REFLECTIONS OF ALBA
Stunning photographic essay featuring the mountains of Scotland's wilderness in all its autumnal grandeur

10
Delicious festive cocktails

TIME TO BAN PUPPA FARMS
CAIRNGORMS REINDEER
SPECTACULAR SNOWDROP GARDENS

Cairngorms reindeer... Trainspotting actor Kelly Macdonald... Ian Blackford under the spotlight... The Kingdom of Fife... Glorious winter snowdrops... The Lauderdale Hunt... Christmas cocktails for every party

Fort William photographer's hairy coo snap is MSP's festive card choice

A photograph of a Highland cow in front of a sun-kissed snowy mountain has been selected for Lochaber MSP Kate Forbes's annual constituency Christmas card, writes Mark Entwistle.

The cow was photographed by Kyle Macintyre of Fort William, and hundreds of people across the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency will receive a card from Ms Forbes during the festive season.

In an unusual twist, Mr Macintyre had originally submitted the snap for the MSP's photography competition earlier in the year, where it was picked as a finalist. Kate was so impressed by it, she felt it was perfect for this year's Christmas card.

Ms Forbes explained: 'Every year I send out a constituency Christmas card to a variety of people and groups across Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch. Earlier this year I ran a competition to find a photo to be framed for my office at the Scottish Parliament – and there were many fantastic entries.'

'As winter had not long passed, a number of them had captured some spectacular snowy scenes in places like Ben Nevis and Glen Etive.'

'I thought Kyle's photo of the Highland cow was perfect, and I'm delighted he's agreed it can be on the front of my constituency Christmas card this year.'

This year, the card will raise awareness about an appeal for The Haven Appeal in Inverness.

The Haven Centre will be Scotland's first multi-purpose facility for children and young people



Fort William photographer Kyle Macintyre captured this great image of a Highland cow which MSP Kate Forbes has chosen as her Christmas card for this year.

with severe learning disabilities. It will include a play centre – with indoor and outdoor facilities – respite facilities, supported accommodation, a community café and much more.

Iain Boyd, marketing project co-ordinator for the Haven Appeal, added: 'We were delighted when

Kate Forbes MSP asked us if we would be interested in working in partnership with her to design her Christmas cards.

'This is an excellent opportunity for us to promote the Haven Appeal's message of creating smiles on the faces of the children and young people who most deserve our

help. We hope that these Christmas cards will help to raise awareness of our cause among people across the Highlands and beyond.'

'The Haven Appeal Team would like to thank Kate Forbes MSP and all her staff for giving us this opportunity and for all their help throughout the design process.'

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Isn't Oban looking great? The Christmas trees, decorations and festive lights in our streets and homes really brighten up the place.

The children in our schools are busy practising for their Nativity plays and shows. Some families are planning to travel and celebrate Christmas together. It really is a beautiful time of the year. There is so much excitement just now for so many.

All of this is wonderful but it's also important to remember that it's not yet Christmas!

We have begun the season of Advent. Unfortunately, Advent can be overlooked because we're too busy. If this happens then I think that we lose out.

'Advent' is the Latin word for 'Come'.

So Advent helps us prepare to celebrate well Christ's coming. During Advent, the church encourages us to reflect on why Jesus was born, why God took on our human nature.

We recognise our brokenness but, more importantly, that the Messiah – God's anointed – came to renew us.

The Saviour was born to redeem us. He will return at the end in glory.

In his boundless mercy he wants us to share in the glory for eternity.

Thus Advent is a season of hope. We are never alone. We are always loved.

This December I wish you a good Advent so that you will enjoy a beautiful Christmas.

Bishop Brian McGee

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OT

Oban Camanachd award

Oban Camanachd's end of season prize-giving took place when the club hosted their 130th year dinner dance at the Royal Hotel, Oban, on Friday November 29.

This was a successful evening with music from Gunna Sound and a new awards category was introduced with the players all voting for their player of the year at all levels.

Nonny MacInnes Oban Camanachd First Team Player of the Year – **Daniel Sloss**

The Oban Camanachd first team player of the year award, named in memory of Oban Camanachd stalwart Nonny MacInnes, was presented to Daniel Sloss by Oban Camanachd assistant manager Kenny Wotherspoon. Daniel Sloss has been key in the Oban Camanachd defence this season and he not only represented Scotland U17 in Ireland this year but the 17-year-old was also given a second cap at Scotland U21 level.

Kenny Wotherspoon said: 'My first involvement with Daniel came a couple of years ago with the South U21 squad and you could tell then that he was a terrific talent.'

'He's had a hugely positive season for Oban Camanachd and the biggest compliment we can pay him is that he is usually given a marking job on the opposition's most dangerous forward each Saturday and that's a big responsibility.'

'He's an old head on young shoulders and when he's given a job to do, he does it.'

'He's a really down to earth lad, he's good natured with a very good attitude and I'm sure we'll see lots more from him next season.'

Oban Camanachd First Team Players' Player of the Year – **Garry Lord**

Garry Lord had another excellent year for Oban Camanachd and was close to making the Scotland senior squad for the international against Ireland. His performances throughout a season, where he even chipped in with a goal at Kinlochshiel, were recognised by his team-mates.

Garry Lord was presented with the award by Oban Camanachd first team manager Stephen Sloss.

Jamie Kerr Lochside Rovers Player of the Year – **Lewis Buchanan**

After rattling in the goals this season, Lewis Buchanan received the Jamie Kerr Lochside Rovers player of the year award. His performances in 2019 earned a call-up to the Oban Camanachd squad towards the end of the season.

This award remembers Jamie Kerr, whose father John Kerr made the presentation with Jamie's brother, Lochside captain Jordan Kerr, also in attendance.

Lochside Rovers Players' Player of the Year – **Scott Robertson**

The Lochside Rovers players' player of the year went to Scott Robertson. Having broken into the side as a 15-year-old, Scott Robertson has already been a great servant to Lochside, representing the side on a weekly basis for the last eight seasons and he was a top performer in 2019.

Oban Camanachd U17 Player of the Year – **Daniel Sloss**

Given he was named Mowi National U17 player of the year at shinty's annual awards, there were no surprise as Daniel Sloss was the recipient of the Oban Camanachd U17 player of the year. This is the second successive season that Daniel Sloss has won this award.

Oban Camanachd U17 Players' Player of the Year – **Daniel Sloss**

Daniel Sloss made it a hat-trick of awards on the night as he also took the Oban Camanachd U17 players' player of the year prize following a year which he was again selected for the Scotland U17 squad.

Oban Camanachd U14 Player of the Year – **Louie MacFarlane**

Another one of the club's bright youngsters, Louie MacFarlane was named Oban Camanachd U14 player of the year. As well as playing for Lochside Rovers, Louie MacFarlane's performances last season were also recognised with a place the South U14 squad.



Daniel Sloss, pictured with Kenny Wotherspoon, left, and his dad Stephen, was voted Oban Camanachd Player of the Year, Under-17 Player of the Year and Under-17 Players' Player of the Year. Photographs: Oban Camanachd

Oban Camanachd U14 Players' Player of the Year – **Calum MacMillan**

Calum MacMillan is another of the club's promising youngsters who has forced his way into the reckoning for Lochside Rovers this season and he was a deserved winner.

Oban Camanachd Special Award – **Aidan MacIntyre**

There was also a special award for club stalwart Aidan MacIntyre.

After representing Oban Camanachd for many seasons, Aidan has indicated that he will be stepping back from first team shinty next season but will no doubt step in to help the club should the situation arise.

Unfortunately, work commitments meant Aidan couldn't attend the event but he will be presented with a silver salver at the next opportunity.

Artemis Macaulay Cup draw

The 2020 Artemis Macaulay Cup draw was made following the Camanachd Association AGM in Fort William on Friday November 29.

The much anticipated draw was set to take place on Oban FM as usual but a mast issue took the radio station off-air so the Macaulay Association quickly put alternative arrangements in place.

The Macaulay Cup, first presented in 1947 by then Oban Times editor Flora Macaulay, is the only cup format in senior shinty to be played on a regional basis so guaranteeing a final between a South and North side.

Eligibility is mainly based on the previous year's league placing and there was just one change from the South teams who competed last season as Ballachulish returned to the competition after a year out instead of Col Glen.

There was also just one alteration to the North half of the draw as Mowi National Division champions Fort William replaced Skye Camanachd.

The Macaulay Association were well represented as Davie Thomson drew the home sides with Les Kinvig picking the away sides and Davie Hamilton was also in attendance.

Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic were both given home draws against lower league opposition. Oban Camanachd will be confident of progressing against Bute whilst Oban Celtic start as favourites against Ballachulish. If both Oban sides progress, they will meet in the quarter-finals.

There is also an eye-catching first round meeting between newly promoted Fort William and Kinlochshiel, who have lifted the trophy twice in the past four years, at An Aird.

There is also the prospect of a Badenoch derby between Newtonmore and Kingussie in the quarter-finals although first round opponents Lochaber, who welcome 'More, and Kilmallie, who host holders Kingussie, will have other ideas.

First Round

Saturday 2 May

Kyles Athletic v Aberdeen
Oban Celtic v Ballachulish
Oban Camanachd v Bute
Inveraray v Glasgow Mid Argyll
Lochaber v Newtonmore

Fort William v Kinlochshiel
Kilmallie v Kingussie
Caberfeidh v Lovat

Quarter Finals

Saturday 13 June

Oban Celtic / Ballachulish v Oban Camanachd / Bute.

Kyles Athletic / Aberdeen v Inveraray / Glasgow Mid Argyll.

Saturday 27 June

Lochaber / Newtonmore v Kilmallie / Kingussie
Fort William / Kinlochshiel v Caberfeidh / Lovat

Semi Finals

Saturday 25 July 2020

Oban Celtic / Ballachulish v Oban Camanachd / Bute v Kyles Athletic / Aberdeen v Inveraray / Glasgow Mid Argyll
Lochaber / Newtonmore v Kilmallie / Kingussie v Fort William /

Kinlochshiel v Caberfeidh / Lovat.

The Artemis Macaulay Cup final takes place at Mossfield, Oban, on Saturday August 22. Kingussie are the current holders having beaten Oban Camanachd 3-2 in last season's final.

Camanachd Association AGM report

The much respected John MacKenzie from Newtonmore was elected Camanachd Association Chieftain at a well-attended annual general meeting in the Muthu West End Hotel, Fort William, on Friday November 29.

John MacKenzie is a past-president of the Camanachd Association and has served the game, man and boy, in



Garry Lord was voted Oban Camanachd Players' Player of the Year

winners



Lewis Buchanan was Lochside Rovers' Player of the Year.

many capacities. Richard Gall from Fort William is the new Camanachd Association Vice-Chieftain, edging out David MacMaster from Caberfeidh in a vote to take over from Alex Macnaughton.

Roddie MacCuish from Oban was amongst three additions to the Camanachd Association Board, with Ross Brown and Burton Morrison also installed, whilst Youth Director Willie MacDonald from Fort William was re-elected for a second term.

There were 25 members present with 8 proxies making a voting strength of 33.

President's report

In his second annual report as president, Keith Loades said 2019 will be remembered as the first time in history that the Camanachd Cup final had to be abandoned as torrential rain led to the pitch becoming waterlogged, leaving referee Robert Baxter with no option than to call the game off.

Loades said this was one of several matches affected by adverse weather but acknowledged that there were other factors which caused difficulty for the competition committee and changes may have to be considered if we are to avoid some clubs experiencing lengthy periods without a match next season.

Loades thanked the chief executive Derek Keir and the association's staff and directors for their contribution to the sport of shinty, not forgetting the large number of people who give freely their time to serve on various sub committees.

There were thanks for Jock Turner, an ever-present at board meetings, who stood down after 12 years as Chieftain. Departing Vice-Chieftain Alex Macnaughton was also praised for his contribution.

Finance director Daniel Palombo and fellow board member Wendy Chamberlain both stood down with

Loades again paying tribute. He said: 'The fact that the finances of the CA are in a good place is due, in part, to the expert guidance we have had from Daniel Palombo our Finance Director.

'Daniel, unfortunately, has to stand down after six years as a board member. However, we are pleased that he will remain on the finance committee. Similarly, we are greatly disappointed to be losing Wendy Chamberlain. Wendy has made a valuable contribution but regrettably, due to other demanding interests, has advised us that she cannot continue. We will not lose touch with Wendy and thank her for her offer of continued support when needed.'

Sportscotland, shinty's sponsors and all clubs and the volunteers were recognised and there was special mention for the work undertaken by the Shinty Memories committee of David MacMaster, John MacKenzie, Donnie Grant and Hugh Dan MacLennan, which Keith Loades has now joined, as well as the other volunteers who organise groups across the shinty playing areas to raise the spirits of those suffering from dementia.

CEO report

Chief executive officer Derek Keir's highlights for the year included: the launch of Steven MacKenzie's Surviving & Thriving; 125 Years of the Camanachd Association, 36 clubs becoming accredited, 25 club action plans put in place, two Schools of Shinty established and talks of a further two coming on board, Shinty Ambassadors and the National Disability Festival, Club Culture Workshops whilst membership increased to 3,448 from 2,750 in 2014.

Finance

There was positive news on the financial front as the meeting re-

Continued on page 52

new SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

Win!
THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT
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We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph below. 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.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 2pm Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into any of our offices - The Oban Times, Lochavullin, Oban; The Lochaber Times, High Street, Fort William; The Campbeltown Courier, Main Street, Campbeltown; The Argyllshire Advertiser, Argyll Street, Lochgilphead or the Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Winners agree to have their photograph taken for publicity purposes. Winners' names and home towns will appear in the newspaper. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/destroyed within 30 days of the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.



Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB or hand in to any of our offices as detailed above.

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RECENT WINNERS:

- T Campbell Sept '18 £2500
- S Campbell Sept '18 £2550
- L Currie Nov '18 £800
- L Nicolson Dec '18 £3900

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



The two entries who got nearest the ball and each receive £25 are:
I MacMillan, Fort William & I Mitchell, Tayinloan

OT

Continued from page 51

flected on the 2018 accounts which showed a £15,687 increase in turnover and a surplus for the year of £21,456, increasing the association's reserves to £129,502 at 31 December 2018.

Grant funding decreased by £9,598 and sportscotland continued to be the largest contributor, committing to a further four-year funding package through to 2022. However, local authority-based grants were again reduced due to the continued general squeeze on budgets. Sponsorship income increased by £18,660, largely attributable to the income from new sponsors and increased membership of the Business Club.

Mowi were again shinty's principal sponsors in 2018, as they have been since 1988. This 30-year sponsorship is one of the longest recorded in Scottish sport.

Total expenditure in 2018 was £576,145, an increase of £22,178 on the previous year. Key areas of expenditure remain: competitions, development, wages and office expenses.

Competition costs increased by £12,655 in 2018 and this was mainly due to hosting the international in Inverness.

Membership numbers increased slightly from 3,354 in 2017 to 3,448 in 2018, with a small increase in associated income.

The association confirmed they expect to break-even in 2019 which will maintain current reserves.

Competitions

There were 639 senior fixtures scheduled in 2019 compared to 655 the previous year and 689 in 2017. However, 21 fixtures were unfulfilled due to team raising difficulties, down from 29 in 2018 and 39 a year earlier, with 99 fixtures postponed and rescheduled compared to 92 in 2018.

Of the 99 postponed fixtures, 63 were due to unplayable fields, 13 were due to bereavement whilst a further 13 were walk-overs.

Participation in the senior leagues dropped to 52 teams from 53 in 2018, a result of Lochaber not fielding a second team and Strachur not entering a team whilst Ardnamurchan rejoined the leagues after a few seasons in abeyance.

There were a total 1,267 shinty fixtures over all competitions.

Match officials

The recruitment, retention and development of match officials at senior level remains a critical issue for shinty and is identified as a priority concern in the Strategic Plans for Shinty.

Although some progress has been made, the association



A special Special Award went to Aidan MacIntyre for his years of loyal service to Oban Camanachd.

recognised that the situation remains highly fragile and requires the proactive support of all member clubs to help increase and develop the number of officials regularly active within the game.

A total 36 referees were allocated to senior games during 2019, down from 39 in 2018. Only 25 referees were available on a regular basis throughout the season, down by two from 2018.

There were three referees who previously officiated in 2018 but did not participate in 2019 due to injury for work or family commitments. Two new referees were introduced at senior level during 2019.

The grading of referees in 2019 was as follows: 15 Grade One, 12 Grade Two and six Grade Three.

The Youth/University/WCA Referee course, which was introduced by the Development Team in 2016 to encourage people to become involved in refereeing, continues to engage participants. So far, 74 people have completed the course in 2019 to add to the 161 who took part during the previous three years.

This is a key focus in the strategic plan for shinty and something the association aim to encourage for all new officials, starting their journey as a referee or goal judge. One official progressed from youth games to senior games this year and four others are considering completing the Senior Foundation Course in 2020.

Four area workshops for match officials and assessors were delivered during 2019.

Facilities

The improvements witnessed at Kinlochshiel (new senior pitch), Fort William (new youth pitch) and Newtonmore (new second pitch) in 2019 continue to be encouraging.

The Camanachd Association was instrumental in the formation of a Bught Park user group in 2019 to encourage the improvement and development of the Bught Park facilities. The group secured funding support from Highland Council



Lochside Players' Player of the Year – Scott Robertson.

and Highlands and Islands Enterprise for a feasibility study which is now underway.

The Camanachd Association has also been represented by Euan McMurdo at meetings to discuss Mossfield Stadium in Oban. The association said that at the latest meeting in October, it was decided to form a steering group to form short, medium and long term aspirations and actions.

Communications

It was recognised that positive media coverage gives shinty a key platform for promotion and marketing of the sport, reaching large audiences and engaging both current and new supporters.

The Camanachd Association has, this year, hired a marketing and communications graduate to work with this specific remit. Positive media coverage provides shinty with a fantastic platform for promoting the sport to a wider audience.

BBC Scotland and BBC Alba extended their excellent television coverage whilst the association also acknowledged that shinty benefits from excellent national and local printed media reporting from newspapers including The Oban Times which is a reflection of the important role shinty plays in the life of communities across Scotland.

Norman Strachan's team also helped raise the game's profile, filming a number of matches throughout the year for the association's YouTube channel.

The power of social media gives the Camanachd Association the ability to instantly provide news and updates to its members. It has become the main source of information for younger generations, providing the association with an opportunity to interact with its members in real-time.

Byelaw proposals

There was approval for a proposal put before members that all players in the adult game must be aged 16 years, although clubs can field a player under this age on completion of a parent / guardian



Under-14s Player of the Year – Louie MacFarlane.

form. However the minimum age for participation in the adult game was set at 13 years.

A proposal moving towards the mandatory introduction of the wearing of helmets didn't receive the required support although several clubs are expected to introduce their own measures.

It was confirmed a free-hit for a 'kick' should not be awarded where the ball plays the player.

It had been proposed that each member club must provide the name of a registered and qualified goal judge each season but this matter will be referred to the Camanachd Association board.

The wording on some other bye-laws was tidied up.

MacLeod is new Strathglass boss

Allan MacLeod is the new Strathglass first team manager.

MacLeod takes over from Bruce Douglas and Roy MacKenzie at the Mowi National Division side.

He brings managerial experience to the role having had two stints totalling six seasons leading the Inverness second team, either side of a two-year period in charge of the Inverness first team.

Allan MacLeod previously played for Strathglass between 1997 and 2008 when he was part of a first team which won two North Division 1 titles, a National League and a Balliemore Cup, beating Skye Camanachd in the final.

MacLeod was then at Inverness for 10 years in total but returned to Strathglass at the end of February 2019 to run the Cannich club's second team.

Oban Lorn prize-giving night

Oban Lorn Ladies' prize-giving family night was preceded with a game between Oban Lorn Blue and Oban Lorn Green which finished 3-3. Ellie MacInnes grabbed a hat-trick but her goals were cancelled out by efforts from



Calum MacMillan was the Under-14 Players' Player of the Year.

Izzy Crawford, Kirsty Gray and Alison Noble in a match refereed by Les Kinvig.

The main event of the night was the ladies' prize-giving and the senior player of the season accolade went to the captain Shelley MacCuish.

The U18 player of the year was Izzy Crawford whilst Pamela MacNab was the season's most improved player.

The U14 player of the year award went to Nicola Duncan who also collected the top goal scorer for the season prize.

There referee's player of the year was Karen MacKinnon, chosen by Des McNulty.

As well as having an enjoyable ceilidh, the raffle and bingo raised £575.

Beaully clinch U14 North Division 1**Beaully U14 4 Kinlochshiel U14 1**

Beaully U14 were 4-1 victors in their Mowi U14 North Division 1 play-off clash with Kinlochshiel U14 at the Bught Park.

Both sides competed with their Fort William and Kingussie counterparts in North 1, losing only one match each; away defeats against each other thus forcing a play-off.

Beaully struck first with Scott Cameron scoring on six minutes but Kinlochshiel's Bailey Dacker was on hand to level on 17 minutes.

Two goals in four minutes put Beaully in control. Finlay MacLennan restored Beaully's lead on 45 minutes and Marcus MacRae added a third on 49 minutes.

Scott Cameron scored again on 63 minutes and Beaully ran out 4-1 winners.

Medals, sticks and trophies to welcome New Year in Lochaber

One of the oldest medals in competitive shinty is to be handed over to the West Highland Museum in Fort

William for safe-keeping and display. The medal, awarded to a Brae Lochaber player after the 1897 Camanachd Cup final, which they lost to Beaully, has recently been discovered by a local family.

The medal, and a trophy which is being re-introduced to play amongst young children in the Fort William and Lochaber area, the St Mary's Primary School Challenge trophy will be on display as part of a fund-raising illustrated talk to be held in January.

The illustrated talk – 'The Caman and the Calluinn' – shinty's place in the games and diversions of New Year and thoughts on the history of the shinty stick – will be delivered by Dr Hugh Dan MacLennan, recalling many of the fascinating incidents related to shinty matches at New Year in Lochaber and beyond. The talk will focus on the historical background to these gatherings and recount details of some of the spectacular events which have ensured that New Year shinty matches are one of the most enduring traditions associated with the game. Dr MacLennan will also discuss shinty artefacts held in the West Highland Museum and also the history of the production and manufacture of shinty sticks.

He said: 'The West Highland Museum has a number of interesting and important historical artefacts and remarkably, I discovered that it also holds an image of the 1897 Camanachd Cup final, the second ever match for the trophy, before the medal appeared. That match was attended by a remarkable crowd of 3,000 – about two-thirds of them were not Inverness townspeople – which is very different from local attendances at new year matches – whatever day they were played. New Year, or Old New Year's Day shinty matches have always been a great part of the shinty community's traditions, and this talk will provide an ideal forum to draw all these strands together.'

Dr MacLennan is also keen that people in the Fort William and Lochaber areas will bring old camans and any made locally over the years to show at the evening, when the remarkable history of the making of the caman will be detailed.

The talk, which is being held in the Moorings Hotel, Banavie, on Wednesday January 8 at 7.30pm, will be a fund-raising event for the West Highland Museum and Lochaber District Shinty Memories Group.

Tickets are £5 and available from the West Highland Museum, Fort William.

Calum takes top honours at sailing club prize-giving

Calum Warnock, 17, took top honours in the dinghy section at Oban Sailing Club (OSC) for the 2019 season.

Securing wins in both the Thursday evening and autumn series in the Slow handicap class and winning the Port Beag Plate and the Orienteering Challenge, he was awarded the Forteith Refrigeration Trophy for the best Topper/Pico over the aggregate Points Series. Adding to the first places, Calum also took a second in the Sprint Series in the Slow class and finished third overall in the spring series. He also lifted the Junior Helm Trophy for helming the Sadler 25 Hot Toddy, the overall winning keelboat for the 2019 season.

Calum narrowly eclipsed Liam Campbell who won the double handed challenge, the Sprint Series in the Slow Class and finished second in the Thursday Series Slow Class, the Port Beag Plate and the Orienteering Challenge.

Third overall was Chris Dowd with wins in the Fast class of the Sprints series and the autumn series and a second in the spring series in the fast class. Chris was awarded the Scotwest Windows trophy for the best Laser overall in the Points Series.

Keelboats

Hot Toddy and Elixir of Lorne were the top keelboats for the season finishing first and second respectively. Alison Chadwick's Hot Toddy won the Slow handicap class series well as the Minots Light Trophy, the OSC Challenge Cup and the Dr



Calum Warnock, left, dinghy champion, and Harry Neil, junior member.

Ivor Campbell Cup.

In the Fast handicap class, Eric and Irena Chapman's Elixir of Lorne collected the silverware in both the spring series and the two Tuesday aggregate series for the Bank of Scotland Cup and the Arthur Duthie Cup. Elixir was also first in the autumn points series for the Arthur Graham Rosebowl and won the Oban Boat Club Cup, the Sutherlands Law Quaich and the Victoria Cup.

Billy Forteith's Shadowfax was third overall taking wins for the Forteith Trophy, the Elis Tankard and the Billmeir Trophy. Shadowfax took second in the Tuesday aggregate and two third places in the Spring and autumn series. Ben Miller sailing Shadowfax won the Crew Cup Taraora Challenge Trophy.

Outgoing commodore Iain Campbell said it had been an exceptionally good season of activity both on and off the

SAILING

water and that it was extraordinary what a club the size of Oban could achieve in a year. He thanked all the members who had put in so much time and energy over the season.

The annual general meeting saw a change of format to try to reduce the formality of the club and new members on the committee have already seen new ideas emerging.

Iain said that the fantastic engagement with the members' meeting at the end of October had shared a raft of ideas as to how to move the club forward.

Iain was thanked for all his hard work, as was Andrew Mead, the outgoing treasurer who had also put in many years of commitment to OSC. Andrew McPherson, club secretary said both had played a major part in building up OSC to the fantastic club it is at present.



Keelboat winners.

Dinghy Awards 2019:

- Kat Dowd** - Senior Plate 3rd Jilly Adams Gillespie Trophy 3rd.
- Matthew Houston** - Thursday series slow class 3rd.
- Harry Neil** - Sprint series Slow class 4th Spring series Slow class 5th.
- Ailsa Dowd and Iona Keys** - Port Beag Plate 3rd Double Handed Challenge 4th.
- Gordon Pollock** - Thursday Series Fast class 1st Sprint series Fast class 3rd
- John Forbes** - Senior Plate 1st Sprint series Fast class 2nd
- Joe Penhaul** - Smith Gillespie Trophy 1st
- Rachel Campbell** - Double handed Challenge 2nd Orienteering challenge 3rd
- Sinclair Hennessey** - Spring Series Slow class 1st
- Ewan Dowd** - Gillespie Trophy 2nd Autumn Series Fast Class 2nd Sprints series slow class 3rd Spring series Slow class 4th
- Chris Dowd** - Sprint Series Fast Class 1st Autumn Series Fast Class 1st Spring Series Fast Class 2nd Scotwest windows trophy for best Laser overall points series
- Liam Campbell** - Double handed challenge 1st Sprint Series Slow Class 1st Thursday Series Slow Class 2nd Port Beag Plate 2nd Orienteering Challenge 2nd Overall dinghy champion 2019 - **Calum Warnock** Thursday Series Slow Class 1st Autumn Series Slow Class 1st Port Beag Plate 1st Orienteering Challenge 1st Sprint Series Slow Class 2nd Spring Series 3rd Forteith Refrigeration Trophy best Topper/Pico over points series

Keelboat awards 2019:

- Rhett Butler** - 1st Tuesday aggregate 5th
- Minim** - 2nd Tuesday aggregate 5th Xarifa 2nd Tuesday aggregate 3rd equal
- Kraken** - 2nd Tuesday aggregate 3rd equal
- Sea Fern** - 2nd Tuesday aggregate 2nd
- Seal** - 1st Tuesday aggregate 2nd 2nd Tuesday aggregate 6th
- Mungo Jerry** - Spring series 4th 1st Tuesday aggregate 4th 2nd Tuesday aggregate 3rd
- Nimrod** - Spring series 2nd 1st Tuesday aggregate 2nd 2nd Tuesday aggregate 4th
- Shadowfax** - Forteith Trophy 1st Elis tankard 1st Billmeir trophy 1st 2nd Tuesday aggregate 2nd 1st Tuesday aggregate 3rd Spring series 3rd
- Elixir of Lorne** - 1st Spring series 1st Tuesday aggregate Bank of Scotland Cup 1st 2nd Tuesday aggregate Arthur Duthie Cup 1st Autumn points series Arthur Graham Rosebowl 1st Oban Boat Club cup 1st Sutherlands Law Quaich 1st Victoria Cup 1st Overall Keelboat champion 2019: **Hot Toddy** - Spring series 1st 1st Tuesday aggregate McGilvray 1934 Cup 1st 2nd Tuesday aggregate McGilvray 1924 Cup 1st Autumn points series Lochaber and Lorn Securities Cup 1st Minots Light Trophy 1st OSC Challenge Cup 1st Hot Toddy Trophy 1st Dr Ivor Campbell Cup 1st Junior Helm Trophy Calum Warnock Hot Toddy Crews Cup Taraora Challenge trophy Ben Miller - **Shadowfax**



Junior dinghy winners.

Saints players in Scottish Amateur FA squad



Oban Saints players Lewis Cameron and Scott Maitland, front row left, turned out for the Scottish Amateur International Select in a friendly match against Camelon Juniors at Falkirk Stadium last Tuesday evening. In an entertaining game, the SAFA Select defeated the East of Scotland Premier Division side 2-1. Lewis set up both goals for the SAFA Select. Photograph: Ian Sommerville

OT

GOLF



Junior members along with David Burns and Glencruitten Golf Club committee.

Junior coaching at Glencruitten Golf Club

Robert MacIntyre's coach, David Burns, held the last of his quarterly sessions at Glencruitten Golf Club on Sunday for 12 junior members and coaches. The club would like to thank Oban Rotary for funding these sessions over the past three years. Weekly junior coaching will resume again on March 1, 2020.

BOWLING

Bowling club AGM

Oban Bowling Club president Iain Boyd urged members to encourage others to try the sport at last week's AGM.

Addressing a packed Dalriach Road venue, Mr Boyd, who was voted in again as president for season 2020, said: 'What an honour it has been to be president for this important (150th) year.

'This club is important to me as family ties go away back. I am old Oban through and through and I ask that we all encourage friends and neighbours to try this sport we all love so much and ensure that this

club is here for Obanites in another 150 years.'

Mr Boyd praised all members who had helped out with the various social events throughout the season as well as those who help keep the grounds looking in pristine condition and, of course, everyone who took part, and helped to run the many competitions that took place.

'It is the members who make this club and we hope that the work done this year has helped put the club on a sure footing going forward.'

Mr Boyd also thanked the many sponsors who provided their financial backing.

Office-bearers for season 2020 are as follows: president – Iain Boyd; immediate past president/match secretary/child protection officer – Helen MacLean; vice-president – Semple Barrie; secretary – Anne Stewart; treasurer – Janice Fraser.



Oban Bowling Club president Iain Boyd.

OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

Results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Glasgow Boys 5 Under 13s 0; Under 14s 5, Clydebank 0. Scoring for Saints were Aidan MacDonald, Duncan MacEwan, Cody McCulloch (2) and Zander Craik. Under 15s no game; Drumchapel Ams 4, Under 17s 1. On target for Saints was Ross Higgins.

None of the teams has a game this coming weekend.

Talented swimmers make a big splash on gala day

Oban Otters annual club gala took place on Sunday with over 40 children and young people taking part.

An exceptional amount of young talent was on display at Atlantis Leisure as personal bests were slashed and club records broken.

The club were pleased to welcome back Julie Fairbrass as race starter and events ran smoothly and efficiently with informative background commentary and motivational music provided by Lyndsay Elliott.

New club kit was on display with the Otters and their coaching team thanking D&K Lafferty for their contribution towards this.

This year was a big one for two of the club's most accomplished swimmers – Ella MacKechnie and Sam Coates. Both are now in sixth year at



Sam Coates and Ella MacKechnie with the new trophies gifted by their families for future swimmers.

SWIMMING

Oban High School so may not be competing at future club galas. To mark this moment, their families have gifted new trophies to the club for future swimmers competing in this age category.

Rising star Kai MacKechnie broke three club records and Tayler Robinson broke the club record in the 200m individual medley.

The club were delighted to receive sponsorship for the gala from Puffin Dive, Oban Joinery and MacQueen Brothers.

Although run as a competitive galas, the day centred on the friendships formed between the swimmers who support and encourage each other while enjoying their sport.



Prize-winners at the annual Oban Otters club gala.



Cammy Hill makes the tie safe with the third goal.

Saints march on

Continued from page 56

first change sending on Matt Rippon in the 65th minute after the restorative powers of Davie Buchanan's magic sponge failed to heal Ford's right knee.

Saints made the tie safe with 20 minutes still to play after Cammy Hill's perseverance won a corner kick on the left. Lewis Cameron's delivery looped over the heads of Dene Cassells and Ryan Walker and was met perfectly on the volley by Cammy Hill who side footed past Lewis Milne from five yards.

The home side, one of just four Aberdeenshire sides still involved in the competition, refused to give up and were almost rewarded for their efforts in the 77th minute

when Sean Bremner wriggled into the Saints box only to be foiled by a perfectly timed challenge by Dene Cassells.

Cammy Hill, who lead the line well, passed up a glorious opportunity to claim the match ball when he raced through onto an 82nd minute Matty Kelly pass but sent a poor finish wide of Lewis Milne's right hand post.

David Beaton's busy shift came to an end with five minutes to play when he was replaced by Aaron McKay in a straight swap on the right.

Saints ended the match on the front foot but it was definitely a case of the wrong man in the right place as Myles McAuley turned up in the Rothie box to head a good chance wide of target after



The fixture board outside the impressive Rothie Park.

good work on the right by Matty Kelly, Cammy Hill and Aaron McKay.

Referee Crawford, who had an excellent game, signalled the end of the match after three added minutes, sending Saints back down the long road to Oban in buoyant mood after a hard-fought win over a very good Rothie Rovers side who will once again be challenging for the top Aberdeenshire Amateur Football Association honours.

Saints return to league business this coming Saturday when they welcome title rivals and first time visitors Blantyre RGM to Glencruitten. Taking charge of the Division 1B clash is experienced referee Pat O'Donnell who recently joined Saints in leaving the Scottish Amateur

FOOTBALL

Football League in search of a fresh challenge in the Central Scottish Amateur Football League. Kick-off at Glencruitten will be 1.30pm.

Oban Saints GG team were also in action last Saturday when they came from 2-0 down to gain a creditable 2-2 draw with Kilbarchan Thistle at the Oban Community Pitch thanks to goals from Dean Smith and Daniel Croarkin.

The team are at home again on Saturday when they take on GSM Amateurs on the 3G pitch, 2.30pm kick-off.

Saints are lying in second place in the Greater Glasgow AFL Division Three, four points behind leaders Kirkfield United but have three games in hand.



Saints co-manager Willie Gemmell, gives Matt Rippon some instructions.

Oban Lorne look to stay on course for victory

Sports fixtures up and down the country fell victim to the hard frost last Saturday with Oban Lorne RFC's West Division 2 home tie against Clydebank being one of them. This weekend the Green Machine are on the road with a trip to Stranraer in the offing and, following his team's slight detour to the home

of Wigtownshire RFC last season, head coach Andrew Johnston hopes his team are more on course this time.

'We had a narrow defeat down there last season as we had a navigational error that ended with boys going to Carlisle before getting to Stranraer only 20 minutes before kick off.'

Oban will travel with a strong squad although injuries in key positions could cause problems. Captain Iwan Roberts (ankle) and Finlay Carmichael (shoulder) could be out for the rest of the season, while Eric Roberts, a big presence in the second row, is struggling with a back injury and will probably be

RUGBY

out until after Christmas. Owen McDonald and Daniel Broderick are unavailable due to work commitments.

'These missing players create opportunities for the younger players to step up and stake a claim,' added Johnston.



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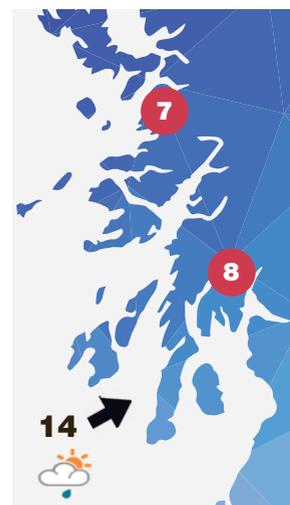


WEATHER

Thursday
Heavy rain and a fresh breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 11°C.

Friday
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C.

Weekend Outlook
Saturday
Light rain and a gentle breeze
Sunday
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.



FRIDAY

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 5, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	06.05	1.9	13.02	3.2
Thur	18.59	2.1	***	**
Fri	01.28	2.9	07.18	1.9
	14.09	3.3	20.08	2.0
Sat	02.25	3.0	08.29	1.8
	14.53	3.4	20.59	1.8
Sun	03.05	3.2	09.20	1.7
	15.30	3.6	21.40	1.6
Mon	03.42	3.4	10.00	1.5
	16.07	3.7	22.16	1.4
Tues	04.18	3.6	10.36	1.4
	16.43	3.9	22.51	1.2
Wed	04.53	3.8	11.11	1.3
	17.19	4.0	23.26	1.0

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

Chain, shackles and buoys all available to purchase.

Oban Lorne look to stay on course for victory

Talented swimmers make a big splash on gala day

Revenge is sweet as Saints march on in Scottish Cup

Rothie Rovers	0
Oban Saints	3
Scottish Cup – 4th round	

Oban Saints made a gruelling 410-mile round trip to the chilly north-east last Saturday afternoon for a Scottish Amateur Cup re-match with last season's conquerors Rothie Rovers.

Thanks to the sterling efforts of the Rothie Rovers committee, Rothie Park survived the deep freeze which wiped out half of the fourth round card, passing an early morning pitch inspection to give the Saints travelling party the green light for an 8am departure from Oban.

Selection blow

Co-manager Willie Gemmell was dealt a selection blow on the eve of the match when illness ruled out midfielder Kerr Newbigging and leading goalscorer Craig MacEwan, forcing Gemmell to include himself on the substitutes bench alongside Ross Maitland, Matt Rippon and youngster Aaron McKay.

MacEwan's goals, however, were not missed with a brace from Cammy Hill, adding to David Beaton's 15th-minute opener, giving Saints revenge for the agonising penalty shoot-out defeat in last season's epic encounter and confirming their place in this coming Friday's fifth round draw.

The woodwork came to the rescue of the Saints back four in the sixth minute when Sean Bremner got in between



Celebrations after Cammy Hill nets the third goal to make the tie safe. Match report and photographs: Derek Black

Scott Maitland and Dene Cassells to flick a long Lewis Milne clearance into the path of Gavin Smart. The Rothie wide man beat Graham Douglas on the corner of the six-yard box and watched in agony as his shot came back off the post. Smart regained possession and sent a cross to the back post where the waiting Bremner volleyed over the crossbar.

Graham Douglas required two attempts to hold a ninth-

minute Keith Walker free-kick with Stuart Gray receiving

Saints will now be looking forward to the fifth round draw which takes place on Friday

ing a telling off from referee Mark Crawford for sliding in

late on the Saints keeper.

Slightly against the run of play, Saints opened the scoring in the 15th minute. Cammy Hill won a throw-in on the left level with the 18-yard line. Hill laid Scott Maitland's throw back to the Scottish Amateur International left back, who sent a tempting cross into the box. David Beaton was first to react, coming in from the right to slam a left foot half-volley past the helpless Lewis Milne.

Scott Maitland also provided the assist for Saints' second goal which came from a quick breakaway five minutes later. Dene Cassells and Steven MacLeod ensured there was no way through for Gavin Smart on the right of the Saints box with their combined efforts eventually blocking the ball behind for a corner kick. Robert King's deep delivery was knocked back into the middle by Jack Brown where Myles

FOOTBALL

McAuley met his cross with a solid header out to the left. Maitland launched the ball long to Cammy Hill who galloped away from the Rothie defence, rounded the advancing Lewis Milne and slammed the ball left footed into the net.

Saints kicked off the second half playing into the very low sun and attacking the car park end of Rothie Park where they immediately made good ground down the very heavy pavilion side touchline. Lewis Cameron, Scott Maitland and James Ford linked up well on the left with David Beaton only inches away from connecting with Maitland's cross at the front post.

Exploits

Lewis Cameron, fresh from his goalscoring exploits with the Scottish Amateur International squad, continued to influence proceedings and appeared to be scythed down just inside the Rothie box in the 53rd minute but Mr Crawford, who was well positioned to make the call, saw no infringement.

An injury for James Ford forced Saints co-manager Willie Gemmell into his

Continued on page 55



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Fort dubbed 'black hole' by mental health circles

by Mark Entwistle
 mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Fort William has been dubbed 'The Black Hole' by people involved in local mental health circles, according to the recently founded groups set up to combat the worrying number of suicides and people suffering from issues such as depression and anxiety.

It was earlier this year that the charity Lochaber Hope hosted meetings to examine the situation which resulted in the setting up of Lochaber MindFit groups for men and women.

These are peer-to-peer support groups for people dealing with mental health issues.

The two groups proved almost instantly successful, with a steady stream of people accessing them.

But Lochaber MindFit this week warned that, with the festive season and New Year approaching, a lot more people will need to reach out for support and to talk.

Lochaber MindFit groups are therefore relocating in January from their current base at CrossFit to Inverlochry Hall, with a ladies' night on Tuesday and a men's night on Monday.

The organisation's secretary, Sharon Wells, told us: 'Everyone who walks through our doors is likely to have been affected directly

'The numbers are too great and the wounds too deep...'

or indirectly by depression, anxiety or suicide, which has become the scourge of Lochaber.

'In mental health circles, our home town has been dubbed The Black Hole. The numbers are too great and the wounds are too deep to put down on paper.

'We can't promise to heal these wounds, but we can pledge that nobody needs to be alone anymore and we en-

deavour to nurture our group to become a safe sanctuary.'

Asked about the worrying Black Hole soubriquet, Ms Wells told us: 'A few of our group facilitators have heard the term used about the Fort William area due to the high number of suicides, particularly among young people.

'That is why we definitely need these groups because every week the number of people we are seeing is just getting bigger - at the moment, we have perhaps something like between 10 and 15 people regularly attending.

'We see people from 18 to 70 years old who need support - the range and individual circumstances are actually mind boggling.

'We provide a safe and welcoming space - somewhere people can talk, get a cup of tea or a hug.'

As well as overall secretary for both MindFit groups, Ms Wells is a facilitator with the women's MindFit group.

She has personal experience

Continued on page three

Mànran to headline Fort festival



Former Fort William star shinty player and musician Gary Innes was back at his old stomping ground this week to announce a new music festival scheduled for next Easter weekend at the An Aird pitch and which will help celebrate the 10th anniversary of his folk supergroup, Mànran. (See page seven for our special interview with Gary and Page 32 for our 10 By The Ben Festival preview.)

Photograph: Iain Ferguson



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LT

Town Team's last festive gathering draws crowds

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

In what was the last Christmas Gathering event that will be organised by Fort William Town Team, crowds thronged Fort William High Street to watch as Santa arrived in style to switch on the festive street lighting.

A beautiful, dry, but cold and crisp evening set the scene as children waited with bated breath to see how Santa would arrive this year after 2018 saw him abseil down the side of a building in the High Street.

They weren't disappointed when, with the help of Lochaber Yacht Club, Santa was brought in from the loch in a boat and paraded down the High Street just in time for the switch-on.

After a few moments of Town Team's 'Elf and Safety' stirring up the children in the square, the lights came on and Santa made his way to Costa Coffee.

He spent the rest of the evening chatting to the little ones, giving away presents and memorising those all-important Christmas wishes.

The High Street was a hub of laughter and conversation as people went late-night shop-



ping in the many businesses which stayed open to support the event.

Some hosted entertainment like Maddie with her balloon modelling workshop; Katie the face-painter; Patrick the

Piper entertained in the street along with choirs; and Mr and Mrs Bubbles, the clowns.

Nevis Radio were fantastic as always, broadcasting from Cameron Square along with Studio Two who hosted



live music throughout the evening.

Town Team secretary Karen Dean said the group is sad that it will not be hosting the annual event again, but that the amount of work involved

has just grown to be too great for just a handful of people.

'But with enough support we are sure a new group can be formed to protect the event for future years,' she told us.

'All of the committee and

Far left, Bailey-Mary and Paige Morrison were the first visitors to Santa's Grotto in Costa Coffee; centre, Mr Bubbles; the town was packed for Santa's grotto; and Bub Sgoil Gaidhlig choir.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

volunteers would like to thank the community for supporting their event this year and previously.

'It has always been a huge amount of fun organising different ways to celebrate Christmas, but we couldn't have done it without businesses and local people offering their help too.'

'The Town Team will miss the hustle and bustle of arranging Christmas but some of the committee are keen to be involved in forming the new group, so hopefully we can look forward to the event continuing to take place in 2020.'

Anyone interested in getting involved for Christmas 2020 should contact Karen on karen@lochview.co.uk.

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The carcass of the young adult male sperm whale lies on Luskentyre beach on Harris.

Photograph: SMASS

Harris sperm whale could have eaten plastic off Lochaber

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The 100kg lump of discarded fishing gear and other rubbish discovered inside the stomach of a dead sperm whale found on a Harris beach could have come from anywhere in the ocean – but could also just as easily have come from the sea off the coast of Lochaber.

So say the experts from the Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme (SMASS), an organisation that investigates the deaths of whales and dolphins, and which conducted the necropsy on the whale on Luskentyre beach to determine the cause of death. The sub-adult male sperm whale had live-stranded and then died on the sandbanks last Thursday morning.

Inside the whale's stomach was approximately 100kg of marine debris – a whole range of plastic, including netting,

bundles of rope, plastic cups, bags, gloves, packing straps and tubing.

According to SMASS, all this material was in a huge ball in the stomach and some of it it looked like it had been there for some time.

In a statement, SMASS commented: 'The animal wasn't in particularly poor condition and, while it is certainly plausible that this amount of debris was a factor in its live stranding, we actually couldn't find evidence that this had impacted or obstructed the intestines.'

'This amount of plastic in the stomach is nonetheless horrific, must have compromised digestion and serves to demonstrate, yet again, the hazards that marine litter and lost or discarded fishing gear can cause to marine life.'

One of those from SMASS involved was strandings co-ordinator Nick Davison, who told the Lochaber Times

this week: 'The rubbish could have come from anywhere – from the seas around the Azores to northern Norway.'

'It did not include just fishing gear but a mixture of plastic waste and, while some had clearly been there for some time, absolutely some could have been thrown away on the coast of Lochaber.'

'A lot of people are pointing the finger at the fishing industry but it is not entirely their fault looking at the sort of plastic consumed.'

And Mr Davison urged everyone who sees rubbish and plastic while out on the shoreline and elsewhere to pick it up and deposit in a bin.

'You don't need to collect a 10kg bag full of old fishing rope, even just one piece of plastic removed from a beach and put in a bin will make a difference. The amount of rubbish and plastic inside this animal was quite shocking to be honest.'

Fort dubbed 'black hole' by mental health circles

Continued from page one of the trauma inflicted when a family member commits suicide, losing her own brother five years ago.

'I suffered from depression as a result of that, although obviously not to the extent he must have been suffering to lead him to do what he did,' she

told us. 'It's why I got involved with these groups, which can help family members affected by such tragic events to get back on their feet.'

'And as we come towards the time of year which is traditionally promoted as the time for being with friends and families, then many of

those who live alone really start to feel it. Those working will have two weeks off, at home, on their own. And if you suffer from depression, it can be a very, very hard and difficult time of year.'

Both the Lochaber MindFit men's and women's groups can be found on Facebook.

Blaich man launches 'match a latte' appeal to aid Lochaber Foodbank

Inspired by a recent trip to Glasgow, a Blaich man has started a 'Match a Latte' initiative to help raise funds for Lochaber's Foodbank, writes Kirsteen Bell.

It was while Richard Airlie-Gilbert was sitting across from a major coffee shop chain in Glasgow's city centre he watched more than 100 people walk in to purchase their £3-plus latte and then walk out, straight past a young woman sitting on the pavement, cup in hand asking for coins.

It prompted him to start the 'Match a Latte' event on Facebook, asking that every time people buy a hot drink in a café they put aside the same amount of money for those who are in need.

He said: 'Anyone who's been to Glasgow recently will have seen the appalling poverty and homelessness. As I went into the coffee shop for my own drink I realised that, if I was going to spend that amount on a hot drink, the very least I could do was offer her the same. That's when it

struck me that we all do this, day in, day out, spending pounds on a luxury hot drink when others can't afford food or shelter.'

Initially the event was to run for four weeks. However, Mr Airlie-Gilbert now hopes to make it an ongoing scheme.

'I realised that if I was going to spend that amount on a hot drink, the very least I could do was offer her the same'

Lochaber Foodbank, which provides food to individuals and families in crisis, has seen a consistent rise in requests for help, with an increase of 18 per cent in the past year alone. They say that the rise in poverty, with one in seven people in Lochaber now affected, is largely due to low wages, seasonal work, Universal Credit delays and sanctions.

Mr Airlie-Gilbert added: 'I spoke to one homeless man who ended up in that position as he'd lost his job, which resulted in arguments at home and in the end his wife put him out.'

'It's coming to the time of year when we all spend silly money, and these are difficult times for everyone. It's important we remember that people who are struggling are not there through choice, it can be because of a mistake they've made, they could be unwell, or it's through no fault of their own.'

'Lochaber Foodbank is a cause I believe in and I just wanted to do something to help and raise awareness.'

Lochaber Foodbank manager Alex McConachie told us: 'It's a brilliant idea, especially at this time of year and to get more people aware of the Facebook appeal.'

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LT

Karen's marathon follows in footsteps of favourite movie

by Nic Goddard
fort@obantimes.co.uk

Karen Penny is on a mission to walk 19,000 miles circumnavigating the British and Irish coastline and is pounding the streets of Lochaber this week when she passed through the peninsula covering Fort William to Mallaig via Ardnamurchan, taking in the most westerly point of mainland UK.

The Lochaber Times caught up with Karen for a chat as she was walking along the beaches of Arisaig and Morar, made famous in the film *Local Hero*, which happens to be her favourite movie, meaning she has felt a real connection with the area.

Karen told us: 'I've enjoyed such great hospitality here. Since I arrived on the peninsula, I have not had a single night in my tent.'

People are so welcoming, I've had offers of places to stay and met



Karen walking the beaches of Arisaig and Morar this week. Photograph: Alison Durbin.

such interesting people. I arrived at Ardgour and passed through Strontian. I walked yesterday to the Ardnamurchan point and saw the lighthouse and I'm heading to Mallaig tonight. So many people have joined me on my walk, everyone is so friendly.'

Karen said she has enjoyed the cold weather that has accompanied her on this part of the walk.

'My rucksack is pretty heavy so I tend to sink on the boggy ground. I've been loving the frozen hard walks this past week!'

Despite already covering some

picturesque parts of the country, Karen confided that she has been blown away by the beauty of Ardnamurchan: 'The sunrises and sunsets have just been magnificent. I've seen stags and seals. This has definitely been the most beautiful part of my walk so far.'

Karen's walk, which will take around four years in total, covers the UK coast, Ireland and the 20 largest islands and will be a record-breaking project as she will be the first woman to achieve this.

Having already taken on several such challenges, including the length of Britain, this is the ultimate walk.

Karen explained: 'Every step, every day is just so wonderful. Every morning I wake and say to myself if today is just half as good as yesterday it's going to be a brilliant day. My walk here through Ardnamurchan has been filled with brilliant days.'

Karen is raising funds and awareness for Alzheimer's Research UK and is already nearly halfway to her £100,000 target.

She has a further week in Lochaber and would love company along the way for any part of her walk. Check out her Facebook page - 'Karen Penny, the penny rolls', for details of her planned route.

Car parking charges are more practical than overnight tax

The tax that would charge visitors a small fee to stay in the Highlands was put up for public consultation in August and the report will be discussed at next Monday's full council meeting.

There is support for adding a pound or two per night stayed in the Highlands as the money is expected to go towards improving tourism infrastructure.

The initial consultation received 5,622 responses to the online questionnaire aimed at residents and tourism businesses, the second part of the consultation was 950 face-to-face questionnaires with Highland visitors.

Convener of the council's Tourism Working Group Bill Lobban praised the high number and 'strong geographical spread' of responses, and thanked those who took part.

He said: 'It was not an exercise just to gather information on people's support or opposition. It also gave those taking part lots of opportunity to help us shape what an optimal levy for Highland might look like, were it to be implemented.'

It is estimated the levy could generate between £5million and £10million every year.



Ben Thompson.

Supporting the idea in principle, Caol and Mallaig councillor Ben Thompson thinks the unique nature of the Highlands needs a different solution. He said: 'We need a method of implementing it that works across the Highlands, as what works in Edinburgh or Inverness might not work well in Glenfinnan or Spean Bridge. We have a huge number of very small family-run B&Bs, and they're the backbone of our rural accommodation. We should be encouraging and helping them, not penalising them.'

His concern is that a levy on overnight visitors per room is a heavy burden on small businesses and it exempts day trippers and motorhome users. Councillor Thompson's

solution would be to charge for parking in council car parks.

He said: 'Today there are several hundred publicly-owned completely free car parks across the Highlands that could raise as much or more as a £1 levy, without any new bureaucracy at all or targeting of small family businesses. Alongside charging tourists to park, we should introduce a Highland parking card for residents that either exempts or dramatically reduces their cost to park.'

In the council's budget, car parking fees are reserved for transport infrastructure, be it improving older elements like roads and bus services, or adding new ones such as motor home waste disposal.

Chairman of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, Allan Henderson, agreed that more money should be spent to support the important tourism sector. He said: 'Tourism is our most important and valuable industry, worth over £1.2 billion per annum to the Highland economy. We have seen significant increases in visitor numbers in recent years and we aim to continue to build on these successful trends.'

“The quality of the workmanship was excellent, they left the place clean and tidy every night and we thought it was extremely good value for money.”



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Red Rebels join school pupils for latest Fort climate strike

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Pupils from Lochaber High School and local residents were joined by three scarlet-clad figures from the Red Rebels group for the Global Climate Strike in Fort William's High Street on Friday.

Heralded by soft pulsing drumming, they processed slowly in single file along the High Street, turning lots of heads as they went.

Once they reached the climate strikers in Cameron Square, they lifted their veils in a powerful dreamlike pose of respect before weaving among the assembled crowd.

The Red Rebels are part of an international creative-activism performance troupe dedicated to increasing people's awareness of the global climate emergency.

Their striking red attire symbolises the blood that



Red Rebels took part in Friday's climate strike event in Fort William High Street.

humans share with other species, and the extreme dangers of global heating that we are currently facing.

The almost mythical beings set out to divert, distract, delight and inspire in synchronised slow motion. But at the same time, they were disturbing and disquieting.

Red Rebel troupes have been performing all over

the world in recent months. Their thought-provoking, visibly arresting spectacle in Fort William last Friday was believed to be the first of its kind in the Highlands, possibly even the first in Scotland.

In a statement, the Red Rebels said they were delighted to be able to support the inspiring young people in Lochaber who are drawing

attention to the climate emergency through the Youth Climate Strikes.

The Highlands and Islands branch of Extinction Rebellion said: 'The Red Rebels joined the Global Climate Strike in Fort William on Friday. A great turnout and a big thank you to the Lochaber High climate strikers for organising the day's events.'

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

On Monday we were delighted to welcome an expert trainer from Healthy Working Lives Scotland to run a special event for Lochaber Chamber businesses.

After members' requests for guidance on how to deal with alcohol and drugs issues at work, this was the second in a series of events to help raise awareness about the issues. Earlier in the year we ran a very informative workshop that focused on raising awareness, and Monday's training workshop focused more closely on training for managers.

Following a short online element, the informal, friendly workshop offered interactive learning and skills training in small groups. The 15 business managers who attended learned the best way to broach the subject when worried about a colleague's suspected substance issues and the importance of being clear and upfront about employers' expectations.

Does your workplace have a drugs and alcohol policy? Have you run a workplace alcohol awareness event? These are simple, practical steps recommended for all work-



places. And did you know that as a member of Lochaber Chamber, you have access to unlimited HR advice and document templates through our fantastic Quest Member services as part of your membership? This incredibly useful resource allows you to access free unlimited HR advice phoneline along with loads of other benefits to help you manage your staff team effectively.

The Chamber team are here to help businesses in as many ways as we can – if you're not sure, just ask! We always strive to help, whether that's with offering business training and seminars, sourcing information, providing access to Chamber trade missions and learning journeys, helping you to make connections or promoting your work – we're here to help you.

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Mixed views over possibility of glass roof on Fort's High Street

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

Fort William is one of the wettest places in the UK, with more than 200 days of rain per year, and this can often mean locals and tourists are scurrying from door to door to avoid a drenching.

At the Question Time event as part of Lochaber Ideas Week, panellist Angus MacDonald suggested a glass roof be installed to protect people from the rain and allow them to enjoy the town centre, whatever the weather.

Mr MacDonald, currently building the Highland Cinema on Cameron Square, suggested a glass covering in a classical style, with posts in the centre could add a lot to the town.

He said: 'It would make the town much more attractive as a location and would likely fill up the empty buildings due to even more people using the High Street. It is a dream of mine.'

It is an idea that has been described as having some mileage but



The street businesses with flats above which could be affected by a covering for pedestrians.

some shop owners, such as Gwyn Moses, co-owner of Gallery in the Fort, are yet to be convinced.

He said: 'It's great in principle, bringing more people to the town, but who pays for repairs, upkeep and cleaning? After 10 years, what's it going to look like?'

'Many businesses here also don't have the luxury of a rear loading bay area and depend on the street to receive deliveries. There are also some very interesting architectural

features on a lot of the buildings that would be obscured by a covering.'

Mr Moses also pointed out that the winds that come up Loch Linnhe could make it a wind tunnel.

A group which wants to encourage people to shop locally rather than online is the Fort William Town Team whose secretary, Karen Dean, thinks it would be better for visitors and enable more community events. However, she highlighted the issue of access.

She said: 'This isn't the first time this has been suggested and historic conversations have always mentioned access for emergency vehicles being the main stumbling point as the walkway cover may not be high enough to allow vehicles through. I would also guess the roof would get in the way of firefighters getting the correct angle with hoses on buildings.'

'From a funding perspective, I'm sure there would be funds available and if the right project team takes this on, they can raise funds for the shortfall if needed.'

Drew Purdon, of the Fort William Retailers' Association, thinks there are many benefits for businesses, but said people had to be realistic.

He said: 'The first step would be to get Highlands and Islands Enterprise to do a feasibility study to see how much it would cost and getting opinions of businesses and people living on the street that it would affect.'

HIE programme manager for Lochaber, Alastair Nicolson called it a 'novel idea'.

WHAT'S ON

Fort William Board Mania table top games club will be running on Sunday December 8 and 15 from its new venue of Fort William FC clubhouse in Claggan. The club runs from 2pm-4pm and is £2 for the first child with £1 each additional sibling – adults are free but must stay to accompany their children. For further info www.facebook.com/groups/fwboardmania

On Monday December 9, Lochaber Sensory Care will have outreach clinic sessions visiting Acharacle Medical Practice from 10.30-11.45am, followed by Dail Mhor Care Home from 1pm-2.30pm.

Lochaber Natural History Society holds its next meeting at 7.30pm on Monday December 9, with a talk Into Morvern's Woods by Alasdair Firth, of Morvern Community Woodlands, in the Ben Nevis Hotel.

St Andrew's Church in Fort William invites members of the public to a 'drop-in' Christmas carols and refreshments' event in the hall on Saturday December 14, from 2-4pm.

The annual Kilmallie community carol service will be held in Kilmallie Community Centre at 6.30pm on Sunday December 15. Come along, sing your favourite carols and hear the Christmas story. Refreshments afterwards. All welcome.

The Nevis Centre in Fort William will host a blood donor session on Wednesday December 18, from 1.30-4pm and 5.30-7.40pm. To book your appointment, call 0345 9090 999 Mon to Thurs, 9am-7pm/Fri 9am-5pm. Bookings must be made by 4pm the day before your session.

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Controversial zip wire project goes before planning board

It is a topic that has divided opinions in Kinlochleven but as the Lochaber Times went to press, the decision on building two zip wires across Loch Leven was due to be concluded.

The Leven Adventure project was recommended for approval to the South Planning Applications Committee by planning officer Lucy Prins and was likely to pass.

It has become such a contentious issue that councillor and Kinlochleven resident Andrew Baxter felt the need to say he would not be making a comment.

Usually vocal on issues in Lochaber, Mr Baxter was unable to comment before the committee debate.

He said: 'I will perform a quasi-judicial role at that meeting, determining the outcome considering all the evidence presented and available online.'

'If I spoke out before then, I would be prevented from asking questions, debating the issue and voting. In fact, I wouldn't even be allowed in the room.'

There have been 85 formal



The zip wire would launch further down the road from the Mamore Lodge which is the white building near the centre of the image. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

objections as well as a petition with more than 1,500 signatures. They focus on the disruption it would cause to wildlife, ancient woodlands and local people.

One objector wrote that the idea it would bring an economic boost to the area in terms of tourism 'it could have the opposite effect'.

Alison Stewart suggested people visiting National Scenic Areas such as Kinlochleven do so to see wildlife, citing Scottish and international statistics supporting the claim.

There have, however, been 109 letters supporting it, citing job creation and the care taken in putting the proposal together to minimise disruption.

Project lead Stephen Connelly told the Lochaber Times plans have been changed to address issues and negative impacts have been found to be 'negligible'.

Lochaber's Gary and Mànran to headline new Fort festival

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

It's been a good few years since Gary Innes wielded a caman on the Fort William shinty pitch at An Aird, but the local traditional music star will grace the ground once again come Easter when he and his band, Mànran, stage a special two-day music festival to celebrate the group's 10th anniversary.

Mànran have been in high demand as a live act across the world, with shows in more than 30 countries recently, but the seven-piece, which includes Gary's fellow native Lochaber lad Ewen Henderson, are coming home to host the star-studded two-day 10 By The Ben Festival in Fort William on Friday and Saturday, April 10 and 11, next year.

Mànran will close the festival by using the performance to also launch their new album, as well as playing a host of



Gary Innes back in the stand at An Aird this week.

material from the past 10 years.

In a special interview this week with the Lochaber Times, Gary revealed just how much he is looking forward to being back on home soil.

'To be honest, I've always felt Fort William has needed a flagship traditional music event for a number of years. We used to have Lochaber Live festival, but that hasn't been going for nearly 30 years,' he told us.

'So, when putting together our 10-year anniversary celebrations for Mànran, both Ewen Henderson and myself, both from Lochaber, and because of my own affiliation with Fort William Shinty Club over the years, felt this would be perfect opportunity to collaborate together and put an event here in Lochaber, in Fort William, and incorporate the shinty club committee as well.

'We're looking at a 3,600

capacity over two days. So a lot of fingers will be crossed for good weather!'

Asked if the intention was to stage the festival annually, Gary explained: 'The idea is very much to grow it. My own thoughts are we are dipping a toe in the water with Mànran and the 10 By The Ben event for our big celebration year and, if it is a success, then the following year we will look to create a new Lochaber musical festival again.

'It would have new name, new branding and won't keep to strictly traditional music, and we would look to open it up to various genres and try to incorporate more local bands and have wider appeal for people.'

Asked if he thought weather-wise, Easter weekend could be a bit risky in this part of the world, Gary laughed: 'We wanted to stay away from the stereotypical summer festival because there so many.

'We felt Easter was a nice time, and the weather can be quite nice then in Lochaber, plus a number of people are traditionally off on the Friday and Monday of that weekend.

'I think Lochaber has been screaming out for event like this for years, and I've been keen on doing something but the time has never felt quite right, though it does now.

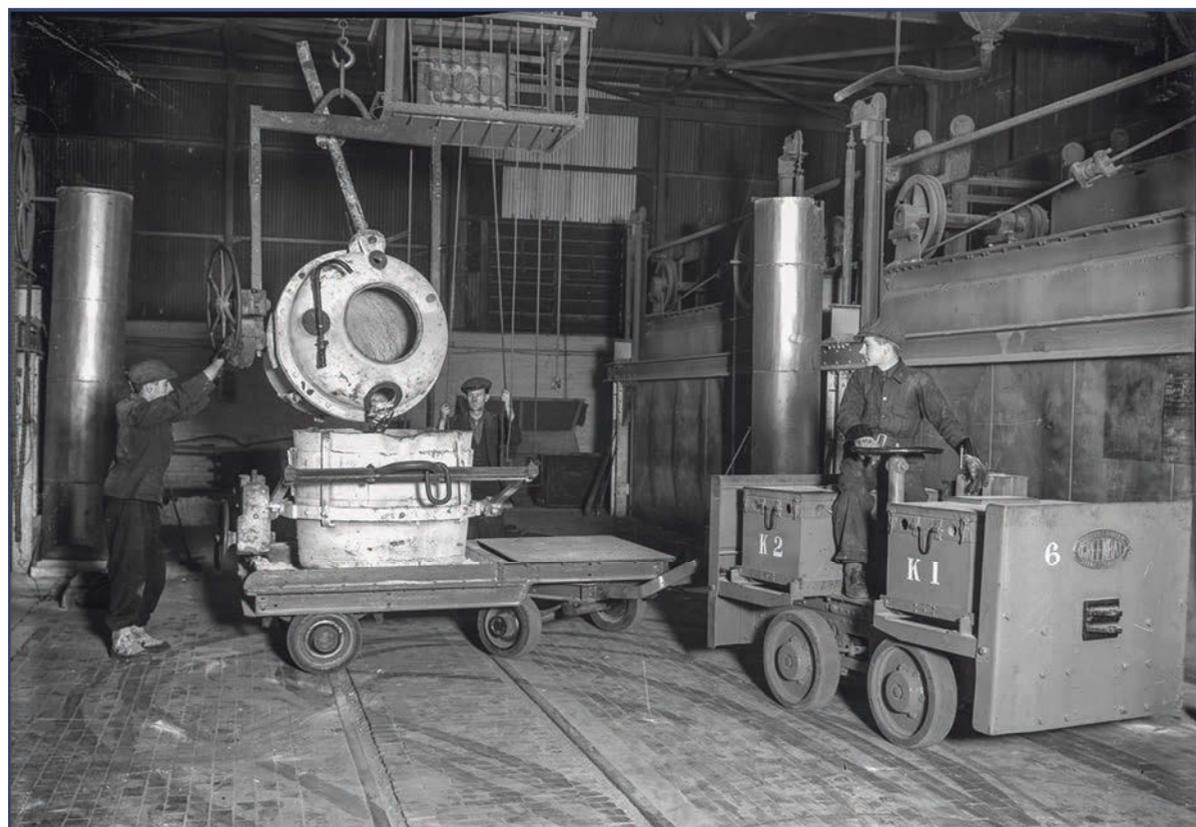
'So we really hope the people of Lochaber get on board and come and enjoy it because it will be brilliant. It's going to be a magic event in terms of the bands and the craic.'

Asked if it felt like a decade that he and the band had been playing together, Gary said it did not feel as long until he looked at photos from the early days: 'The photos don't lie! We're all just fresh-faced young boys in them. When we put the band together it was a bit like a Big Brother [the reality TV show] experiment because we didn't know each other.

'The whole idea was we felt there was a gap in market for a band with Highland and uilleann pipes, Gaelic and English singing, and with drum and bass as there was no band out there like that - and there's still no band with that combo. That was the thinking alongside Ewen Henderson.'

Gary always wanted to make a living playing traditional music and has been doing so since 2003: 'From playing pubs and clubs, ceilidhs and weddings, to travelling the world with Mànran, plus various other projects and my own solo stuff, it's been amazing. But if you'd asked me 10 years ago if I thought all that would've been possible, I wouldn't have said so. It's something I have worked very hard at, but there's always an element of luck.

'I'm very fortunate to be playing music with, and travelling with, such a bunch of lads with a common goal - we love it and want to play music together.'



Lochaber Smelter are reaching out to retired employees to help us celebrate 90 years of operations.

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If you are a retired employee and would like to attend please confirm attendance to Heather Ross **01397 902228**
heather.ross@lochabersmelter.com.



LT

Kinlochleven Primary pupils scoop Lego Robotic Challenge title

Kinlochleven Primary School took the prize in the annual Lego Robotics Challenge, one of a number of transition activities organised to introduce the pupils from the Associated Schools Group (ASG) which will feed into Kinlochleven High School in future, writes Richard Mason.

Kinlochleven, Duror, Ballachulish, Glencoe and St Bride's primaries were all given Lego WeDo kits by the high school and had to make a robot to complete a range of tasks.

There was a mountain rescue circuit, going up a wooden hill, collecting Lego minifigures and then down a bumpy hill with the figures still in place. Other challenges were a speed test, to see which team could make the fastest robot.

St Bride's won the Mountain Rescue Challenge but Kinlochleven were just one point behind. St Bride's also won the speed test but again Kinlochleven were



The delighted Kinlochleven Primary team members.

hot on their heels. To add to the excitement there was a third secret challenge, which the youngsters found out about on the day.

It was called the Lower Challenge. For this, they had to make a raised platform out of paper and one strip of sticking tape to hold a Nokia phone.

One of the Kinlochleven groups did so well it could also hold a Google Chromebook as well

as the phone. This put Kinlochleven into first place, with them taking the overall first prize. They were awarded a trophy which is now on display in the Primary 6/7 classroom.

The Lego challenge was created and organised by Graeme Martin, the technology teacher at Kinlochleven High School. The children thoroughly enjoyed this and it was a great transition activity.

Lochaber Hope seeks volunteers to build skiff

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

The community group that offers help with counselling, mentoring, training and employability will soon be starting work on its 'Build a Skiff' project and it needs volunteers to construct the unique vessel.

This is the inaugural project for the newest service Lochaber Hope is offering, its woodworking focused social enterprise branch: The Workshop.

It is seeking eight volunteers to commit 12 hours a week for six months to create a purpose-built skiff that will be able to accommodate a variety of physical and mental disabilities.

Project lead for The Workshop, Cameron Bauer, has been working hard to get the project going and is seeking volunteers before they officially open soon.

He said: 'The purpose of this isn't necessarily to build

a boat - it's to provide a creative outlet to members of our community who are at risk of suicide and mental health problems, or who have been personally affected by these things; it's a means of providing an opportunity for self-improvement through the production of something which will be used to the benefit of others.

'Through the act of building this boat we intend to encourage open and honest conversation, in a safe and confidential environment, about things that perhaps wouldn't be comfortably discussed elsewhere, and hope that should anyone involved in this project require it, they will seek to avail themselves of the counselling and support services that are currently and traditionally offered by Lochaber Hope.'

There is no need to have any prior experience in woodworking or shipbuilding and drop-in days will be offered if people don't feel they can

commit to the full 12 hours for each week.

The time will be split up throughout the week and all work will take place at The Workshop next to the Lochaber Hope building on Belford Road.

This will be the first project for The Workshop and will begin mid-December or early January once enough volunteers sign up.

This practical and hands-on centre eventually hopes to offer furniture making, power tool classes and general wood working lessons.

The skiff project will be the sole focus of The Workshop to begin with and is open to anyone who feels they could benefit from it and provide some help.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining this project, then simply email Mr Bauer at theworkshop@lochaberhope.org.uk and you can get some more information on what to expect with the project.

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Invergarry school celebrates extension opening

Pupils and staff have moved into a new extension at Invergarry Primary School, with a community open day marking the occasion.

Head teacher Kim Bentley said: 'We were delighted to welcome families and friends from our local community to help celebrate the opening of our new extension which

has made a huge difference to pupils and staff.'

The extension replaces an old classroom unit and provides two classrooms with toilets and a cloakroom area linked to the former school house. The house, which had been vacant for some time, was converted to form an entrance and reception area,

office/meeting room and a fully accessible pupil toilet/changing facility.

The total investment was £800,000, funded from The Highland Council's Capital Programme. The work was carried out by Morrison Construction and delivered in partnership with the council's property team.

Overnight closures on A828 at Duror

Motorists using the main road connecting Oban and Fort William will have to make alternative plans this Sunday and Monday night.

A section of the A828 at Duror is being resurfaced.

The work, scheduled to begin on Sunday December 8 and expected to take two nights to complete, will take

place between 7pm and 6am each night, with surfacing due to be completed by 6am Tuesday December 10.

A signed diversion will be in place via the A85 and A82 during working hours, adding approximately 45 minutes onto journey times. Alternatively, vehicles will be held at the work site

until they are able to be escorted safely through the roadworks during the set amnesty periods at 8pm, 9pm, 10pm, midnight, 2am and 4am. Emergency services will be able to pass through the project at all times.

The A828 will remain open outwith working hours with a 30mph speed limit.



Just after 5am on December 28, 2017, a shooting star from the Quadrantids meteor shower flies across the sky above the Corran lighthouse. All photograph: Courtesy of Steven Marshall Photography.



Salt marsh and the night sky in late October at Sallachan Beach.

At work, rest or play come to Lochaber to see Milky Way

by Nic Goddard
fort@obantimes.co.uk

So clear are the night skies above three Lochaber locations that the Milky Way can be clearly seen with the naked eye.

This has resulted in Resipole Farm Holiday Park in Sunart, and Corran Point and Sallachan Beach in Ardgour being recognised as Milky Way Class sites – meaning the Milky Way can be seen with the naked eye – and awarded the much coveted Dark Sky Discovery status.

The Dark Sky Discovery status for the sites has been awarded to Sunart, Moidart, Morvern, Ardnamurchan and Ardgour Tourist Association (SMMAATA).

The three Lochaber locations join a network of more than 150 sites throughout



the UK which are part of the Dark Sky Discovery Network and will be promoted on www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk. The network is led by the UK's Science and Technology

Facilities Council and aims to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to get out and stargaze.

SMMAATA intends to add night sky watching to the list

of experiences that visitors to the area can enjoy in their promotion of the peninsulas as a tourist destination and ensure local tourism businesses benefit from this

The stunning night sky above Resipole Farm Holiday Park.

growing area of the UK market.

In recent years, significant events such as meteor showers, lunar eclipses, Northern Lights shows and BBC Stargazing Live TV programme have contributed to a growing interest in stargazing and the night sky.

Areas such as Northumberland and Galloway have reported increased visitor numbers due to regional dark sky events – and it is hoped that this area can do the same.

Steven Marshall, vice-chairman of SMMAATA, who prepared and submitted the Dark Sky Site applications,

told us: 'This exciting development will raise awareness of the outstanding beauty that our dark night sky holds and it will be great to share this experience with locals and visitors alike. Promoting it will provide a compelling reason for people to visit us during the darker months of the year.'

Michelle Hilder, chairwoman of SMMAATA, added: 'Our night skies above West Highland Peninsulas are a sight to behold and it is wonderful to get our first three sites accredited.'

'There are several other sites that we are keen to get accredited over the coming months and it is hopeful that this will help promote the area over the autumn and winter months and entice visitors to come and have a unique experience.'

New website launched to boost visitors to Lochaber's peninsulas

A new website for Sunart, Moidart, Morvern, Ardnamurchan and Ardgour launched last week at www.westhighlandpeninsulas.com

The information-packed new site replaces the ardnamurchan.com website and aims to better represent the area with information for

visitors. The site, which runs alongside a Facebook page and Instagram account of the same name, is the result of two years of work by the Sunart, Moidart, Morvern, Ardnamurchan and Ardgour Tourist Association (SMMAATA).

Vice-chairman of SMMAATA Steven

Marshall, who worked on the development of the website and provides many of the images used on the site, explained: 'The way websites are used has changed massively in recent years.'

'They used to be almost like encyclopedias with lots of information, now they

are more like quick reference guides with plenty of pictures.'

'People are now checking websites on the go and want to find information quickly and easily.'

Mr Marshall added: 'We are a small tourist association representing lots of small businesses, but we

wanted to have a big voice. We get a lot of visitors passing through our area and we want to persuade them to stay longer and to come back again.'

'This new website showcases this beautiful, unspoilt area and really shouts about all that we have to offer visitors.'

The website showcases the businesses of the association's members with accommodation, food and drink and leisure activities all promoted, alongside plenty of information for visitors about the area including the unique history and geology of the peninsulas as well as events.

LT

Inverlochy Primary's first maths bee causes real buzz

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

You did not need to be an arithmetical genius to be able to count up the happy smiling faces of the youngsters enjoying last week's maths bee competition hosted by Inverlochy Primary School.

As well as the host school, pupils from Lundavra, Caol, Spean Bridge and St Columba's also took part.

The overall winning team which emerged after a day of competitions was the group from Caol Primary, who joined various individual pupils on the winners' podium.

Inverlochy Primary's Tanya Ross organised the event with a view to raising the profile of mathematics and hopefully also the level of attainment in the subject.

Several well-known local business figures also spoke

to the youngsters at various stages during the day, explaining how maths featured in their everyday working lives.

'Tanya thought the best way of meeting the objectives around raising the profile of maths and attainment was an inter-school maths bee and this was the first time it was held,' explained Inverlochy Primary head teacher Kirsty Clark.

'Lochaber High School's Jemma Calderwood helped set the questions and it was really well attended. It was also about creating opportunities for wider achievement in maths, similar in the way you can already do that in subjects like music, sport and art.

'There was a real buzz among the children and we will look to hold this event again.'



Caol Primary, left, were crowned the Maths Bee medal winners, which was hosted by Inverlochy Primary, top, with pupils from Lundavra, Spean Bridge and St Columba's also taking part.

Photograph: Abrightside photography.

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A Cry For The Wild

HOLLY GILLIBRAND

fort@obantimes.co.uk



The upcoming election must be a climate and nature election. Nothing matters more than limiting the collapse of our life support systems and preserving life on Earth.

Scientists have said that the next 13 months will be crucial for putting policies in place that halt climate and ecological breakdown. It is the government that the British people elect next week that will be responsible for taking the action necessary to do this.

Not only that, but the new government will be in power for five of the 11 years before the climate crisis reaches tipping points beyond which it will spiral out of human control. We have had so many chances but time is running out.

On December 12, it is the environment and not Brexit which must be on our minds. The climate and ecological crises will define the future of my generation and those to come but we cannot vote in this election.

The Conservative Government seems desperate to silence the voices of young people, even saying they would abandon the General

Election if 16-year-olds were allowed to vote.

It is clear our current Tory leaders will not take the ambitious action that we need on climate and ecological breakdown.

Last Thursday, this was apparent for everyone to see when Channel 4 news held the world's first leaders' debate on the climate and nature crisis ... and Boris Johnson didn't deign to show his face.

However, the First Minister of Scotland did. Nicola Sturgeon might cut a confident, articulate and knowledgeable figure if it weren't for the blatant mis-truths she spouted during the debate.

At one point she said peat bogs are not burned on purpose in Scotland, causing outrage in the living rooms of many environmentalists. Despite peat bogs being rich habitats and carbon sinks, they continue to be intentionally burned in Scotland on driven grouse moors.

The Scottish National Party still supports the extraction of North Sea oil and gas, despite having declared a climate and eco-

logical emergency earlier this year.

They have not yet halted the mass slaughter of mountain hares on grouse moors and, although Nicola Sturgeon likes to proudly declare Scotland's tree planting standards, what she doesn't like to mention is the fact that of the 22 million we planted last year, only 35 per cent were actually native broadleaves.

According to a report in Nature: 'Plantations are much poorer at storing carbon than are natural forests,' and when you take into account the regular clearing of plantations, 'the once-stored carbon is released back into the atmosphere every 10 to 20 years. By contrast, natural forests continue to sequester carbon for many decades.'

So, Scotland is planting trees but not the right kind. Non-native coniferous monocultures are not a solution to the climate and ecological crisis but the SNP seems incapable of understanding that.

So, it is up to you: vote for the planet. Vote for the futures of those who can't.

World is his oyster thanks to a Lochaber Land Rover

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

This week we continue our story of an American traveller who bought an old Land Rover from a farmer in Lochaber and took it on an eight-year odyssey to the farthest flung corners of the globe.

Born in New York City in 1970 to an American father and German mother, Christopher Many has always had an unnerving knack of breaking conventional norms and following his own dreams.

After completing an apprenticeship as a boat builder in Bavaria, he hitchhiked a ride with a sailing boat over the Atlantic.

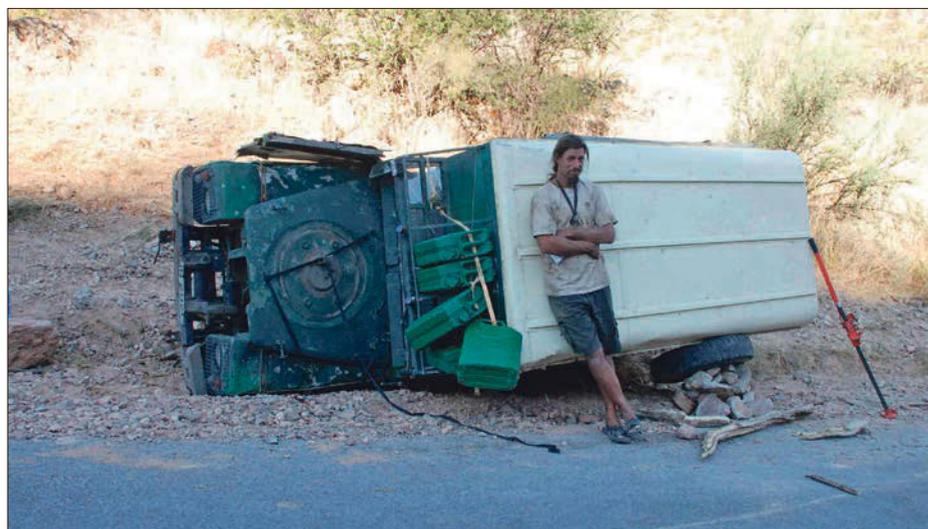
He lived modestly at various locations around the world, alternatively working and backpacking through the Caribbean, Asia, Europe and Australia.

In 1997, Christopher set off on his first motorbike world trip, riding from Germany to New Zealand via India.

Three years later, he returned to Europe, found a job in Scotland as a maintenance manager on the Caledonian Canal at Fort William, and began to save up funds for his next venture.

His book about this journey with the Series III Land Rover, which he paid a Lochaber farmer £700 for and christened Matilda, is called *Left Beyond the Horizon – A Land Rover Odyssey*. (See last week's Lochaber Times online.)

In 2012, Christopher decided to reunite with Puck, and together with his partner Laura Pattara, left on a four-year ride from Europe to Australia.



Christopher and Matilda had a few mishaps to overcome on their eight-year journey around the globe, including the plains of Africa.

His second foray into travel writing, *Right Beyond the Horizon – A Motorcycle Odyssey*, tells the story of his most recent adventures.

And last year, the couple briefly visited Germany to buy an old, decommissioned Mercedes 308D post-office truck, and immediately set off again.

'I've found my passion: 22 years later and I'm still on the road'

The future? Well, that's anybody's guess. Only one thing seems certain. Even after 22 years on the road, Christopher has no intention of settling down with still so much to explore on our wonderfully surreal planet.

'In a nutshell, I'm driven by curiosity. I have a never-ending urge to find out what lies beyond the horizon. Obviously, I've found my passion: 22 years later and I'm still on the road, enjoying every minute.

'OK ... at least the majority of minutes. We live on a wonderfully strange planet, but occasionally it can get rough out there.

'However, for the most part, my overlanding-life is very simple. I sleep when I'm tired, I eat when I'm hungry and I get out the tool box when something needs to be fixed.

'I love the fact that every single day is different and the pace too fast for an acclimatisation process to set in. I have far fewer problems than your average home owner with a nine-to-five job and a family to feed.

'You can easily repair a Land Rover with a few tools, but try to "repair" a misbehaving child with a one-inch spanner and a tin of oil. Forget it. For me, travel is normal. Raising a family would be adventurous and a real challenge. I don't know if I could do it.

'Fortunately, I'm not alone. I have my partner Laura to share the journey with me. We are fully compatible and have similar interests – which is vital when living together

in such a confined space. Matilda was basically a tiny house with only six square metres!'

Asked if he would ever feel



he had seen enough different countries, Christopher said a person could spend a lifetime just travelling through Scotland alone.

'I doubt I will ever settle down. I have so many travel-related dreams, I couldn't realise a fraction of them in the next 100 years.

'Life is extremely enjoyable once you've discovered your passion, no matter whether

this means raising a family, devoting your life to music, the arts, sport, a profession ... or travelling and writing.

'We are currently vagabonding though Europe with our bright yellow van (christened Kevin). And, yes, we will visit Scotland again. Laura has never been to the Highlands, and I am really looking forward to showing her around.'

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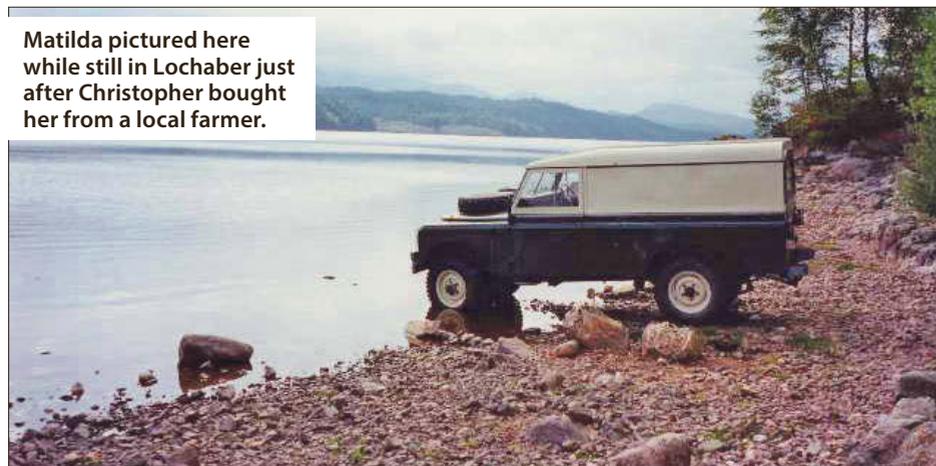
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Matilda pictured here while still in Lochaber just after Christopher bought her from a local farmer.



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Circular energy project lifts top environmental award

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

A project encouraging collaborative solutions to waste management and creating energy won the Partnership Scotland Award at this year's VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards.

The Outer Hebrides Local Energy Hub (OHLEH) project with partners the Scottish Salmon Company (SSC), Pure Energy Centre (PEC), Community Energy Scotland and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar beat off stiff competition to win the award, which recognises organisations working together to improve their contribution to sustainable development.

The first of its kind in Scotland, the OHLEH project involves the transfer of fish waste from SSC's processing plant along with other waste to be broken down to produce bio-gas at a comhairle



Rhona McLeod, broadcaster; Peter Neilson, Glenmorangie; Paul Condy, SSC; Iona Hodge, Local Energy Scotland; David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Gillian Wilson, Community Energy Scotland; Dr Daniel Akilil, Pure Energy Centre; Bob Downes, SEPA and head of VIBES judges.

recycling centre. This bio-gas is then used to generate electricity that drives an electrolyser provided by PEC which produces green hydrogen and oxygen that is used at SSC's hatchery and provides fuel for the council's hydrogen-powered bin lorry.

Craig Anderson, chief executive of SSC, said: 'Winning

the VIBES Partnership Scotland Award not only recognises the commitment and expertise of the OHLEH project partners, but also is a great example of local collaboration which could act as a blueprint for national best practice, not just by the salmon farming industry but across many other sectors.'

David Macleod, head of municipal services at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'This is an excellent achievement by all the partners, coming together to deliver a circular economy project using groundbreaking technology. This further demonstrates that it is possible for us to build a sustainable hydrogen economy in the Western Isles.'

Elizabeth Johnson MBE, business development manager at PEC and director of Scottish Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association, added: 'Winning the VIBES award shows there is strong commitment and an outstanding collaboration from all of the partners, which also includes Local Energy Scotland as a co-funder of the project.'

Now in its 20th year, the VIBES recognise Scottish businesses which showcase best practice and take significant steps to improve or reduce their impact on the environment.



Lifeboat crew, representatives from other local groups, fundraisers and Co-op staff.

Lifeboat gets £20,234 cheque

The end of last month saw the crew of the RNLI's Portree lifeboat together with local fundraisers for the charity join mascot Stormy Stan, at the Portree Co-operative shop to receive a cheque.

Two other charity groups also received their respective cheques.

Each customer of the Co-op with a loyalty card had chosen the three local charities or good causes to receive the cash from its community fund.

As well as the RNLI, the other charities to benefit this year were Skye Stroke Friends and Cuillin FM.

Lochaber girls win awards

Two former pupils of Lochaber High School have been honoured at the recent Scottish Gaelic Awards ceremony in Glasgow during November.

Anna Munro, from Canna, won the award for Gaelic as an Economic Asset, with

her graphic design business, Graficanna, while Dawn MacPhie, from Mallaig, won the award for Innovation in Education.

Dawn said: 'Obviously we are both absolutely delighted to have been nominated, never mind to have won!'

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- Pension Wise from your local Citizens Advice Bureau is the UK government backed scheme that gives you free and impartial guidance about your options. Gillian McInnes Manager of Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau says:

"Choice can be good. But now there are more options available for those with personal or workplace pensions making a decision about what to do with your savings can seem daunting."

"If you are confused about your pension options or simply want to know more, help is at hand. Since April 2015, we have provided one-to-one guidance to thousands of people across Scotland helping them to make better decisions about pension savings in excess of £1 billion."

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Anyone aged 50 or over with a defined contribution pension scheme is eligible for a Pension Wise appointment. Call Pension Wise on 0800 138 3944 or go online at www.pensionwise.gov.uk to book your appointment. Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau to find out more.



LT



Prize-winning elves Phoebe MacDonald, left, and Poppy Geddes brought Christmas cheer.



Seven-year-old Ella Stewart was a visitor to Santa's grotto at the Christmas craft fair.

Rotary Christmas festival draws c

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

It was a cold but bright November morning on Saturday as the festive season opened with Santa leading his team of Cairngorm reindeer through Fort William.

The sleigh was led by the Lochaber Pipe Band, junior cheerleaders from the Ben Nevis Allstars, and Santa was helped by the winners of the Lochaber Times's Paint Rudolph competition.

Hundreds of entries came in for the competition and the winners were Phoebe MacDonald, seven, from Mallaig Primary and Poppy Geddes, eight, from Lady Lovat Primary, who both got to ride with Santa in his sleigh from Cameron Square to the Nevis Centre.

Ken Johnston of the Lochaber Rotary Club said: 'This was the most entries we have ever had for the competition, with 340 coming from all over Lochaber.

'With most of them coming



Ben Nevis All Stars entertained the crowds in Cameron Square.

from the built-up areas it was amazing that the two winners came from the West Coast.'

The Nevis Centre was the site of the Designer Craft and Food Fair, with 72 stalls showcasing Lochaber's wide range of quality crafts and food, Santa's grotto, a bouncy castle, buskers' corner and a grand raffle – so the thousands of visitors were well catered for.

Stallholders reported

healthy business throughout the day, with quality artwork, local cheese, meats and other crafts and food on sale.

Alasdair Ferguson, managing director of Ferguson Transport and Shipping, principal sponsors of the event, said: 'We were once again delighted to continue this year to fund the Cairngorm reindeer parade for the Rotary Club of Lochaber's 12th annual

Christmas festival. The event was a great success building on previous years' successes.

'Every year the Rotary Club works tirelessly to provide the local community with this fantastic event for all the family.

'We are delighted to support them again this year and are willing to continue for many years to come.'

Lochaber Rotary Club president Clive Talbot, while emphasising that the festival is more about a community event and enabling an outlet for local craftworkers, than about raising money, thanked Alasdair for the continued sponsorship.

He added: 'I would like to thank everyone who has made this such a successful day – the stallholders, the Nevis Centre staff, the Cairngorm reindeer company, Phoebe and Poppy, fellow Rotarians and, most of all, the public.

'Thanks again to everyone, and we hope to see you all back next year.'



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crowds as Santa wows youngsters



The Lochaber Pipe Band led Santa's sleigh to the Nevis Centre. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



The 6th Lochaber (The Brase) Scouts had many plastic-free handmade items for sale at the Christmas craft fair.



A colourfully dressed Great Glen Swing Band entertains at the Rotary Club Christmas craft fair.

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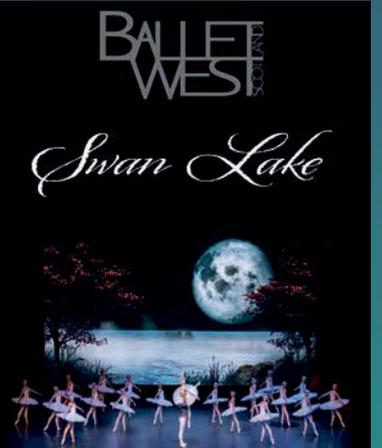


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Glass roof initiative for Fort William has many pros and cons

The prospect of a glass roof being constructed to protect people in Fort William from the elements has certainly been a cause of considerable interest and discussion.

There are, as one would expect, opposing views to the merits or otherwise of such an initiative.

Given that Fort William is among the wettest places in the United Kingdom, there are obvious attractions for those using the High Street. However, there are counter-arguments put forward, including one that it could, in fact, become more like a wind tunnel if the street were to be covered.

Drew Purdon, from the Fort William Retailers' Association, perhaps offered the most sensible comment when he suggested asking Highlands and Islands Enterprise to do a feasibility study to see how much it would cost and to canvas the opinions of businesses and people living on the street that it would effect.

Well done to organisers of festive occasions

There is no getting away from the fact that excitement is building during this season of Advent and the run up to Christmas.

In Fort William, the town's Rotary Christmas festival and reindeer parade has put everybody in the mood for the festive period.

That was augmented by Fort William Town Team's splendid Christmas Gathering which culminated in Santa arriving and the switching on of the festive lights. Crowds of people thronged the town for these events.

We commend the organisers for their hard work in setting up such happy

Booming world population is cause of climate change

While it is encouraging that the younger generation have recognised the seriousness of climate change (Letters, November 28), they offer no solution.

What effect do they believe playing truant from school will achieve, other than undermining their education? What steps are they themselves taking to reduce the generation of greenhouse gases?

For example, are they driven to school in their parents' large cars?

What steps do they think the government can take to improve matters?

Much is made of the need to reduce the production of greenhouse gases from energy generation, from vehicles and even from cattle.

However, politicians are loathe to tackle the underlying problem that is due to the ever-expanding world population. Whatever the technology involved, the production of greenhouse gases is directly related to world population so unless this is also tackled, attempts to save the world will be in vain.

Perhaps the biggest contribution the youngsters from Lochaber can make is to limit the size of their future families.

Professor Colin Davidson,
Tigh nan Eile, Ardfern.

Thanks to Lochaber residents for assistance

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone in Fort William, and the wider Lochaber area, who have helped me so much with the research for my new book. The book, a series of stories from Lochaber's past, will be published at Easter in conjunction with the Highland Bookshop.

Thank you everyone, it's been a real pleasure to compile it and I hope everyone enjoys the stories I have chosen.

Mark Bridgeman, by email.

Lismore ferry service is generous but under-utilised

Lismore residents are alarmed that the northern passenger ferry service to Port Appin might be under threat as Argyll and Bute Council assesses how it will find yet more savings in future budgets (The Oban Times, November 28).

YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to showcase these each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send it to editor@obantimes.co.uk

obantimes.co.uk, post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Alternatively, hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or to our office in

This is understandable, but only given that the service was developed in times of plenty. In current times of continuing austerity, we need to contextualise the provision of what might be considered a generous service by those who are likely to lose social care, waste collection, etc.

The 2011 Census indicates that the island's population is 192, which is 0.2 per cent of the county's total. It has 12 scheduled daily crossings to Port Appin (together with a 13th,

though this is by request in winter). In addition, it has four scheduled daily crossings to Oban on Monday through Saturday, and two crossings on Sunday in winter.

Simple arithmetic indicates that, assuming the whole population leaves for the mainland six days a week, the number of residents per ferry crossing averages 12.

It is, however, unlikely the island is fully evacuated daily and this means the number on any one ferry is much less. Indeed, it is

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DISTRICT NEWS



Lochaber High's class of '97 pupils holds reunion

Members of the Lochaber High School Class of '97, pictured, held a reunion in the Railway Club last month to celebrate many of them turning 40.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Nimblefingers trial run in Arisaig

The Nimblefingers initiative has been involved in a three-week trial with the Arisaig Community Trust's Eco Project, bringing together some of the local supported people from Fort William with others from the Mackintosh Care Home in Mallaig and the Eco Project worker to liaise on recycling activities, writes Mark Entwistle.

Running throughout November, these activities have included recycling waste cloth into 'Feeling Fish' that can be used with youngsters and adults as a help for them to talk about their feelings – this can be very beneficial in situations where, for example,

a young person may be experiencing bullying or isolation from their peers.

The other recycling that has been done is the making of bird boxes, step stools and 'bug houses' out of salvaged wood from pallets and damaged furniture.

Staff from the Montrose Centre (part of NHS Highland Adult Health and Social Care Lochaber) facilitated these activities as part of the supported people meeting their agreed support outcomes through the Nimblefingers project.

The ethos of the Nimblefingers project, which began in 2012, has always been about recycling – which

meshes well with that of the Eco Project – along with the provision of a safe environment for vulnerable and isolated people to explore their potential, providing learning opportunities and for socialising with others outside their normal circle of contact.

The latter being important for developing the self and social skills of each person, along with widening networks of friendship and support – placing people in their communities.

Participants enjoy making crafts with recycled materials.




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Kyle RNLI gears up to welcome Santa

Santa will be welcoming visitors young and old to his grotto in Kyle Lifeboat Station this coming Saturday (December 7). Open from noon till 3pm, the annual festive event is a Kyle tradition and one of the branch's main fundraisers each year. As well as Santa and the usual selection of tea, coffee and home-baking, there will also be a sale of Christmas cards, RNLI souvenirs, face painting and glitter tattoos.

Louise O'Neil (elf) Charlie, Lexi and Hannah MacDer-mid (elf) with Santa at last year's event.



Willie Rennie paid a visit to Fort William cinema while in the area. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Party big guns join Lochaber candidates on campaign trail

Senior Scottish political figures have been out on the campaign trail in Lochaber supporting local candidates ahead of next week's general election, writes Mark Entwistle.

Mike Russell MSP, far right, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, joined Ian Blackford, right, SNP parliamentary candidate for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, at a public meeting in the Nevis Centre last month.

Also in November, Holyrood's Lib Dem leader, Willie Rennie, pictured



above second left, joined Lochaber entrepreneur, Angus MacDonald, second right, on the site of the latter's new cinema project

in Fort William along with Craig Harrow, far right, the Lib Dem candidate for the Ross, Skye and Lochaber seat.



Carly Ferguson and Jody Jordan of Ferguson Transport present a cheque for £500 to Susan Archibald and Sharon Wells, centre, of MindFit. Photograph, Iain Ferguson, alba,photos

Ferguson Transport hands over £500 to Lochaber MindFit

New local mental health charity Lochaber MindFit has received a £500 donation from Ferguson Transport and Shipping to go towards advertising its peer-to-peer group, writes Mark Entwistle.

Lochaber MindFit secretary Sharon Wells told the Lochaber Times that, with the New Year approaching,

the charity believes a lot of people will need to reach out for support and to talk.

'So we are relocating from CrossFit to Inverlochly Hall from January, with a ladies' night on Tuesday, and a men's night on Monday,' she added.

'Everyone who walks through our doors is likely to have been affected directly or

indirectly by depression, anxiety or suicide. The numbers are too great and the wounds are too deep to put down on paper.

'We can't promise to heal these wounds, but we can pledge that nobody needs to be alone anymore and we endeavour to nurture our group to become a safe sanctuary.'

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ATHLETICS

Junior athletes build own training course at Claggan Park

In what looks to have been a first for Scottish athletics, a mini 'pop up' cross country course was built by junior athletes from Lochaber Athletics Club at Fort William's Claggan Park.

The Lochaber junior athletes normally train on the pavements under street lights over winter. But, cross country races are mainly over long grass so getting the feel for the surface is difficult. So, to practice running over long grass and obstacles, the Lochaber junior athletes built their own pop up mini cross country course at Claggan Park.

The youngsters were then able to set this up with the help of the floodlighting provided courtesy of Fort William FC manager Russell MacMorran and the club.

The young athletes, aged between nine and 14, were asked to choose obstacles and cones from a training store and to build a cross country course filled with obstacles and using long grass sections at the perimeter of the grounds. Hurdles were set out in parts of the park and cones were also set out as a winding running slalom section. The long jump



Fort William FC manager Russell MacMorran.

pit was dug over and used as a soft section and then athletes ran through long grass on the right and left hand sides on the outer edges of Claggan Park.

The youngsters trained in three pursuit runs over the course under the floodlights. Two of the older athletes, high school pupils Jamie McConnell and Finlay Dempster, also tested out the course after their own interval training session and felt it gave a real endurance run.

A team of eight athletes from Lochaber will be competing at the North District cross country championships this coming Saturday on the shores of Loch Ness.



Fort William FC.

Ref calls off match at Inverurie Locos

Fort William FC players, officials and fans will be hoping that this weekend's Breedon Highland League home match against Lossiemouth has little of the cold weather drama that saw Saturday's game cancelled less than an hour before kick-off.

When a local referee deemed the Harlaw Park pitch playable after a 9am inspection, Fort players, officials and fans made the three hours-plus journey to Aberdeenshire to face Inverurie Locos.

But with just 50 minutes until kick-off, the match referee postponed the game after the running zones for the two assistant referees were judged as unsafe.

With the outfield playable along the goalmouths and

the area in the shadow of the terracing all having been covered since Thursday morning, it meant the entire playing surface was fine.

But, in a statement issued by Inverurie Locos, the club said it was upon the arrival of the match officials and an inspection that the game was called off.

'Both clubs feel this fixture could have been fulfilled on schedule, but respect that the match referee is the final arbiter,' said Inverurie Locos in their statement.

Fort manager Russell MacMorran said: 'Myself and the lads were extremely disappointed that our fixture against Inverurie Locos last Saturday was called off at the last minute. It's the last thing

you want after a long journey, but, that been said, Locos did everything by the book.'

'They called an inspection in the morning due to concerns regards a small area of the pitch. The pitch subsequently passed the inspection, however the match officials on the day deemed the surface unsafe, particularly the touchlines for the assistant referees.'

'The lads are looking forward to facing Lossiemouth. They're champing at the bit to get going in the league now that all the cup business has been dealt with. Saturday will be interesting and I'm sure it will be a thrilling game with ourselves sitting bottom place and Lossiemouth one spot above us.'

FOOTBALL

One fan posted on social media: 'Would be something of a disgrace to let the away team get to the ground only to call the game off at this time of day.'

'Everyone in Inverurie knew this was sketchy earlier this morning. I walked past the ground at ten this morning and it was white with frost even then and no one was working on it.'

However, the Claggan Park club's Colin Wood took a more philosophical view, responding: 'Fair play to Inverurie for trying to get the game on.'

Fort William vs Lossiemouth on Saturday at Claggan Park. Kick-off 3pm.

LOTTERY NUMBERS

Lochaber club lotteries

Ballachulish Shinty Lottery - This week's (1/12) shinty lottery numbers were 4, 17 and 19. No winners this week, so it's a £400 draw next week.

Caol Community Centre bingo lotto - numbers for 1/12 were 2, 4 and 6. One winner - June Mitchell. £100 next week.

Caol Regeneration Lotto - Numbers for 28/11 were 6, 14 and 15. No winners so £1,300 jackpot for next draw on 5/12.

Fort William Golf Club lotto - numbers for 28/11 were 7, 13 and 17. No winner so £300 available for draw on 5/12.

FOOTBALL

Saints go marching on

While the Fort William match with Inverurie Locos was being called off, 10 miles away in Rothienorman Oban Saints reached the fifth round of the Scottish Amateur Cup with an impressive 3-0 win over Aberdeen Premiership outfit Rothie Rovers.

Two goals from Cammy Hill and one from David Beaton saw the Oban side emerge with a well-deserved victory.

Over 150 youngsters enjoy primary basketball festival

More than 150 pupils from eight local primary schools attended this year's P7 basketball festival, held recently at Lochaber High School.

The event was organised by PE and Active Schools staff with high school pupils helping to run the day.

For many P7s, this was their first visit to the high school. The pupils were split into teams on arrival, giving them a chance to meet, mix and work with P7s from other schools, in preparation for next year's transition up into first year.

The festival was split into two sessions, one in the morning attended by Banavie, Spean, Lundavra and St Columba's RC and one in the afternoon attended by Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, Caol, Inverloch and Invergarry pupils.

Each team was managed on the day by a senior pupil, having prepared for the role as



The afternoon session's winning team.

Photograph: A Brightside Photography.

part of the sports leadership course run by PE teachers Callum Vardy and Alice Currie.

The team managers looked after their players, giving support, advice and feedback. Some of the leadership group took on the extra responsi-

bility of refereeing the games - massive thanks to Ruthven Hamilton, Siobhan Gordon, Josh Lauder, Fraser Clark and Scarlett MacNeil.

During the festival, with matches taking place on three courts simultaneously, each team played six others in a

BASKETBALL

round robin format. Points were awarded for wins and draws and then added up to give the final results.

In the morning session, after a play-off between the two highest scoring teams, the winners' medals were scooped by Arsh Preetkaur, Emma Jane MacDonald Sadler and Sonny Kardas from Lundavra; Sandy Halewood and Lucy Valentine from Banavie and Keline Neville from Spean, managed by Scarlett MacNeil.

In the afternoon, another play-off lead to top spot being taken by Ellie Lynn and James Clark from Inverloch; Matthew Purdon and Jason Finlay from Caol; Emma MacCall from Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar and Gabby Gilca from Invergarry, under the guidance of team coach for the day, Stuart MacQueen.

Award winners at Fort Shinty Club

Fort William marked a successful 2019 shinty season at the club's annual dinner dance at the Alexandria Hotel on Saturday November 30, 2019.

On the park, Fort William won the Mowi National Division with a 100 per cent record whilst also lifting the Liberty British Aluminium Balliemore Cup.

Calum Shepherd was crowned Fort William first team player of the year, receiving the Jack Buchannan Memorial Cup.

Keeper Stuart Disher and the skilful Hamish Shaw were joint winners of The Lundy Quaich for second team player of the year.

Johnny Forster was present-



Fort William Shinty Club award winners – left to right: Calum Shepherd, first team Player of the Year, Johnny Forster, U-17 Player of the Year, Stuart Disher and Hamish Shaw, second team joint Players of the Year.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba,photos



Lady award winners – left to right: Most Improved Player of the Year, Tara Sinclair with joint Players of the Year Beth MacDonald and Zoe Smith.

Laxdale School strikes gold with Sportscotland award

Laxdale School has been awarded the gold Sportscotland School Sport Award 2019-2022.

It is the only school in Lewis and Harris to have achieved this standard. Graham Lindsey and Gary Reid from Sportscotland travelled to Lewis for the official presentation.

Mr Lindsey highlighted the quality of the Laxdale school submission to be of an excellent standard and said: 'The efforts and level of work evidenced had blown the judging panel away.'

He also praised the efforts of the staff, Mrs Lorraine Morrison for leading the project and the school pupils for their 'have a go' attitude.

Eric Macleod from Active Schools liaised closely with



Pupils were on hand for the award presentation.

the school to raise sporting standards and opportunities in a variety of sports throughout the year.

Ms Morrison, the teacher who led the project on behalf of the school, added: 'The

Laxdale School Sporting Aim is to encourage as many pupils as possible to get involved and try whatever sporting opportunities – new and old – which arise and to enjoy themselves.

SHINTY

ed with the trophy for U17 player of the year.

Beth MacDonald and Zoe Smith shared the shield as joint Fort William Ladies players of the year whilst Tara Sinclair collected the shield for most improved player of the year.

The club also celebrated winning five awards, including club of the year, at the recent Mowi shinty awards.

The previous evening, Fort William U14 Youth Coach Richard Shaw was on hand as Cam Stephen picked up the player of the year accolade whilst Rhys Kennedy received the top scorer prize and James Clark collected his award for best newcomer.

SPORTS AWARD

Kerry Macphee spoke at the initial launch to inspire youngsters and parents into action. Born and raised in the islands and competing now as a professional cyclist, she served as the perfect role model in how sporting achievements are possible with hard work and determination.

Ms Macphee made a special guest appearance and congratulated the staff and pupils on their award accomplishment.

'The presentation also included the handover from S1 pupils of last year's School Sports Council and the current P7 Sports Council,' she said.



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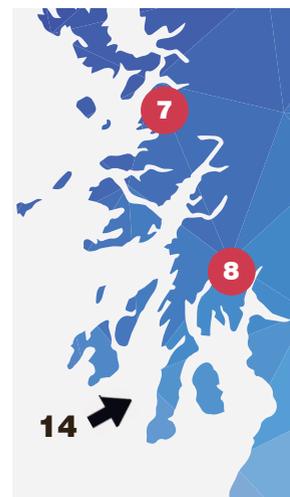
Thursday
Heavy rain and a fresh breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 11°C.

Friday
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C.

Weekend Outlook

Saturday
Light rain and a gentle breeze

Sunday
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.



FRIDAY

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 5, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	06.05	1.9	13.02	3.2
Thur	18.59	2.1	**.**	.*
Fri	01.28	2.9	07.18	1.9
	14.09	3.3	20.08	2.0
Sat	02.25	3.0	08.29	1.8
	14.53	3.4	20.59	1.8
Sun	03.05	3.2	09.20	1.7
	15.30	3.6	21.40	1.6
Mon	03.42	3.4	10.00	1.5
	16.07	3.7	22.16	1.4
Tues	04.18	3.6	10.36	1.4
	16.43	3.9	22.51	1.2
Wed	04.53	3.8	11.11	1.3
	17.19	4.0	23.26	1.0

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

Chain, shackles and buoys all available to purchase.

Award winners
at Fort Shinty
Club

Ref calls off
match at
Inverurie Locos

Lochaber look to give Uni side dose of own medicine in bowl final

With Saturday's away match at Moffat on Saturday called off due to a frozen pitch, it means Lochaber go straight back into facing Glasgow University Medics in this weekend's West Bowl final at Banavie.

Two weeks ago, Lochaber had no answer to the Medics' pace and strong running, particularly out wide, eventually going down 75-5 at the final whistle.

'It will be a difficult game but I think it will be closer than when we last met and cup and bowl games are always different.'



Lochaber RFC.

It was certainly Lochaber's sternest test of the season so far, not helped by several injury woes including centre Callum Boyd, who broke his leg in the previous week's defeat to Loch Lomond, and the pack still missing vice-captain William Stewart.

If the home side wants to have any chance of making this Saturday's clash less one-sided they are going to have to try to close down the gaps out wide, stop giving the ball away too cheaply and improve their first up tackling.

Head coach Gary Hendrie is under no illusions how tough the game will be, but says it will be a different match on home ground at Banavie.

'When we played Medics a fortnight ago it was on a big, wide all-weather pitch.

RUGBY

I think the grass at home will suit us better than them and if we can get a good crowd out in support it always makes a difference,' he told the Lochaber Times this week.

'If we are to have a chance we need to stop giving the ball away as cheaply and our tackling needs to be better.

'We should, hopefully, have a stronger pack for the game and need to work on keeping the ball away from them because they are a very dangerous outfit, with the ability to attack from anywhere on the pitch.

'It will be a difficult game but I think it will be closer than when we last met and cup and bowl games are always different.'

Kick off 1.30pm.

Alleycats remain only team on max points in 10-pin leagues

10-PIN BOWLING

After week four of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats remain the only team with the maximum points in the scratch division and lead with 20 points followed by Team With A Bowling Problem on 16 points and British Legion Fort William on 15 points.

In the handicap division, Team With A Bowling Problem continue to lead with 14 points followed by Alleycats in second place on 13 points with Peaky Bowlers and British Legion Fort William both on 12 points.

Individually this week, the top scratch games came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with games of 198 - which included a run of five strikes in a row - and 189. A

Also this week, Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) had a 176. Pam Weller also had the top two-game scratch series of 387 - the season high, and the top two-game handicap series of 451 whilst Simon Hardiman (Rotovators) had the top handicap game of 234.

The best team scores this week came from Alleycats with the top scratch game of 628, the top handicap game of 801 and the top two-game handicap series of 1225 whilst Peaky Bowlers had the top two-game handicap series of 1575.

Centurion Munro says he feel lucky to be part of Jags set-up

With his double strike away to Calderglen in the Greater Glasgow Division One encounter last weekend, Martin Munro became the first South Lochaber Thistle player to reach the milestone of 100 goals.

Munro, who hails from Corpach, achieved this remarkable feat in only 73 games for the club ensuring that he looks set to hold the record for some time to come. The winger, still aged only

24, had already plied his trade on the shinty field and at Fort William FC under Ally Ewan before joining the Jags in the January of 2017. His arrival had an immediate impact, scoring in the cup final as South Lochaber saw off fierce rivals Newshot on penalties.

Player/manager Alan Gray, who founded the club, said: 'The arrival of Marty was huge for us. Having a player of his quality was a real signal to the footballing community

that we were serious and had ambition as a club.

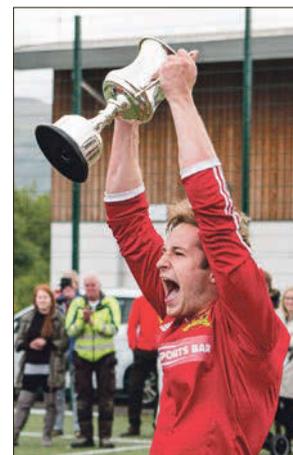
'And, since he's come to us, we've never looked back. He's our captain and the player that we look to for inspiration and he never lets us down. He's got a genuine vision for the game and is always worth listening to. These days he helps out by taking training sessions too and I believe he has a long future ahead of him in the game.'

Munro himself commented:

'I'm delighted to have reached the 100 goals. I've really enjoyed my time with SLT. Winning promotions back to back last year was incredible and I'm really lucky to be part of the great group of lads we have in the squad.'

Martin Munro pictured holding the Greater Glasgow Premier League Division Two trophy aloft back in the summer.

Photograph: Abrightside Photography.



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