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Society honours pair for life-saving actions

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Lifesaving honours have been awarded to the husband and a neighbour of Scotland Rugby Union's first woman president Dee Bradbury after she 'died' at a barbecue.

The quick actions of Dee's husband Nick and neighbour Dr Lindsay Vare were celebrated at a ceremony in Ardoch on Friday when the pair received certificates from The Royal Humane Society for saving her life - with help from a community-funded defibrillator.

Dee and her husband Nick were sitting on the balcony of their Loch Etive home on the evening of June 18 this year when she suddenly slumped forward making a choking sound. She had stopped breathing and had no pulse.

Nick, who dialled 999 and started CPR, was alone until he heard his neighbours' car pull up and shouted for help.

'Thank goodness for the defibrillator, for Nick and for good neighbours...'

Dr Lindsay Vare, who works at The Scottish Association for Marine Science at Dunbeg, and John Howe dashed to get the nearest defibrillator fastened to the wall at Bonawe telephone exchange where vital time was saved because the code number to unlock the box was displayed on its front.

Once back at the scene of Dee's cardiac arrest, Lindsay connected the defibrillator and restarted her heart and took over CPR from Nick for more than 30 minutes until paramedics arrived.

Dee, who stepped down from her role as SRU president this year, was then taken to Oban hospital before being helicoptered to the Golden Jubilee

Continued on page six.



Nick and his wife Dee Bradbury with the defibrillator that helped save her life.

Argyll and Bute to remain in level two

Argyll and Bute is to remain in level two following Nicola Sturgeon's update on Tuesday. Over the last seven days the region has seen 142 new positive cases of Covid.

Glasgow has been downgraded to level three allowing shops to reopen from Friday, however, travel restrictions remain in place, which means people living outside the city should not travel there to do their Christmas shopping.

Bird flu warning sparks poultry alert

Tightened rules means poultry and other captive birds will have to be kept indoors or netted from December 14 in a bid to stop the spread of bird flu. Go to Argyll and Bute Council's website for guidelines on how to keep all types of birds safe, including chickens, ducks and geese.

Rollercoaster ride for Bob in Dubai

Robert MacIntyre moved up to a career high of 59 in the world rankings after finishing tied 19th in the Dubai Championship at the weekend. For full story, turn to the back page.


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OT

New Year jobs worry in council budget plan

Pupil support assistants in Argyll and Bute's schools again face an uncertain future after the council published details of savings options being considered to balance its budget, writes Ellis Butcher.

The scrapping of 38 support assistant posts – a move which would save £209,000 in the 2021-22 financial year – is among the options in a report to be put before councillors this week.

Another savings option is the streamlining of the authority's property estate over a three-year period – a move which, if councillors agree to it as part of the final budget next year, would put 20 jobs on the line.

A proposal to stage more meetings virtually – as has happened with all council and committee meetings since the UK went into full lockdown in March – would save £336,000 in travel expenses.

It's the second year in a row that scrapping pupil support assistant jobs has been included among budget savings options – though the idea was dropped before councillors agreed the

authority's 2020-21 spending plans in February of this year. Should the move to scrap the 38 pupil support posts go ahead, the full-time equivalent (FTE) of 14.3 jobs would be lost.

However, there is better news for school crossing patrollers, whose jobs have been under threat for the last two years as part of the council's attempts to make savings, only to be saved on budget day.

This time round, though, the draft list of savings options for 2021-22 makes no mention of getting rid of school crossing patrollers' jobs.

The proposals will be put before the council's policy and resources committee at its meeting via Skype on Thursday (December 10).

The authority's budget for the new financial year is due to be set on Thursday February 25, 2021.

A report by council executive director Kirsty Flanagan says that when previous savings and potential savings options are factored in, the projected budget gap falls from £6.3m to £4.3m.

Oban sheriff's warning after Boxing Day assault

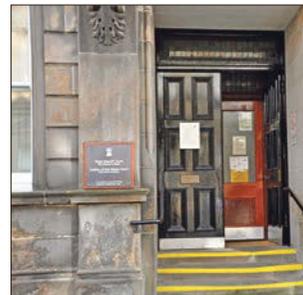
COURT

Oban's Sheriff has warned the community that those who join in assaults on behalf of friends will be held just as responsible for any injuries.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes was speaking as he sentenced two young Oban men for their roles in an 'ugly' assault at an Oban pub on Boxing Day last year.

Calum MacLean, 23, and Craig John Kirkpatrick, 21, pleaded guilty to repeatedly punching a man on his head and body, and knocking him to the ground to his severe injury. It left the injured party with a fractured ankle, off work and suffering lost earnings.

Having viewed CCTV of the incident, Sheriff Hughes said: "This is an ugly incident to watch on screen with two men against one. I'm conscious there was a background here, but it does not excuse this kind of



violence. What I want people in the community to realise is that when someone joins in an assault they become responsible not only for what they do, but what other people do as well. The two of you share the same responsibility for the injury sustained in this matter.'

In defence, the court was told that MacLean was in a relationship with a young woman who had previously been the girlfriend of an associate of the complainer. As a result, there had been some 'animosity,'

between the different parties, said MacLean's solicitor Kevin McGinness.

A week earlier, MacLean, of 37 Catalina Avenue, had been approached by the complainer and two men and threatened while he was on his own, according to Mr McGinness.

On Boxing Day, MacLean and the woman had been in the pub and became aware of the complainer using a mobile phone to take photographs and send them to her former partner, said Mr McGinness.

MacLean subsequently confronted the complainer.

Kirkpatrick, of 12B Mossfield Drive, was advised that his friend was in 'trouble,' and went to the pub, also coming into contact with the complainer, said his solicitor Jane McLaren. She said the incident was 'nothing to do' with Mr Kirkpatrick who had been drinking for some time that day. Four char-

acter references were submitted on his behalf detailing how well thought of he is. He had no previous convictions.

MacLean had not intended the victim suffer such a severe injury and had 'stopped' when the complainer was at his most vulnerable, the court heard.

The Sheriff acknowledged that MacLean was usually a 'productive and decent' member of society.

In sentencing both men, each was ordered to pay the victim £1,250 compensation. MacLean was given a community pay back order of 200 hours of unpaid work over 18 months. He must also be under the supervision of social workers for a year and will have his liberty restricted between 8pm-5am for six weeks.

Kirkpatrick was ordered to do 120 hours of unpaid work over 12 months in addition to the compensation order.

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Later NHS appointments restored

Argyll patients are set to benefit from later NHS appointment times once again.

A system failure within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde led to patients from Argyll being given appointments that were too early as no consideration had been given to travel – either by car or by public transport.

Regional Highlands and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant MSP says she is encouraged that the fault has been recognised and wants to see the 10.30am policy to become common knowledge.

Constituents contacted Mrs Grant complaining about early appointment times they were given by the NHS authority. She raised the issue with the Chief Executive of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and it was thought the system was running effectively, however there were changes made to the booking system due to Covid-19 and that this change has caused the system to falter.

MSP Mrs Grant said: 'I'm grateful to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for admitting the fault and moving quickly to resolve the issue.'

Glencoe pays final respects to mountaineering legend

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Mourners lined the main road through Glencoe on Friday to pay their last respects to mountaineering legend Dr Hamish MacInnes OBE BEM as the hearse carrying his body passed through the village.

Dr MacInnes, who lived in the village, died at home last month at the age of 90 and his funeral service was held in private at Glasgow Crematorium.

However, before the service, the funeral cortege carrying Dr MacInnes' body left the funeral parlour in Inverlochy, making its way to Glencoe, passing through the village, which included a pause for reflection outside the famous mountaineer's home.

As well as a mountaineering pioneer of Scottish and international renown, Dr MacInnes



was also a world authority on mountain rescue techniques, author of the International Mountain Rescue Handbook and the designer and manufacturer of the MacInnes Stretcher and all-metal ice axe.

Born in Gatehouse of Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire, in 1930, Dr MacInnes' exploits included the first winter ascent of Crowberry Ridge Direct and of Raven's

Gully on Buachaille Etive Mòr with Chris Bonington in 1953.

He pioneered climbing routes on the Glencoe cliffs for winter work with Glencoe School of Winter Climbing and for many years was the leader of the area's mountain rescue team. Dr MacInnes is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern mountain rescue in Scotland, setting up the Search

The hearse carries the coffin of Dr Hamish MacInnes through his home village of Glencoe on Friday. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Abrightside Photography.

and Rescue Dog Association and the Avalanche Information Service. He was deputy leader on Bonington's successful Mount Everest Southwest Face expedition of 1975, which included Dougal Haston and Doug Scott.

In a statement on the day he died, November 23, Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team (GMRT) leader Andy Nelson offered the team's own tribute, saying Dr MacInnes had brought together great mountaineering men and women, helping to establish GMRT and innovated rescue systems and engineering aids to climbing and rescue, now distributed throughout the world. He

added: 'Most of all, Hamish was a man of the Glen, still walking out until very recently, loving where he lived. He had time for all the community and embraced any opportunity for a blether, equally about local projects and legend of far flung escapades. In these difficult times, he would still encourage us to seize the day, because 'life is for living.'

Paying its own tribute online, Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team added: 'A mountaineering legend, he gave much to Scottish and worldwide mountain rescue. From the rescue stretcher we use today, the MacInnes Mark 6, to the invention of the Pterodactyl ice axe, we have much to thank him for. We would like to celebrate his achievements and remember the countless numbers of folk saved on the mountains due to his innovation and tenacity.'

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OT

Call to reopen Ganavan toilets at weekends

A plea has been made for the public toilets at Ganavan Sands to be opened at weekends.

Oban Community Council heard that Dougie Graham, who runs a snack van at the site, had offered Argyll and Bute Council to open, clean and close the loos, which traditionally get locked up at the end of October.

But the offer had been turned down by the council, said community council convenor Marri Malloy, who questioned councillors who represent Oban on the local authority.

'Can I ask the reason why?' she said. 'I know that people who do the walk on Saturday, they had the keys to get into the toilets, so why was Dougie refused when he was wanting to do it off his own back?'

Councillor Kieron Green, a member of Argyll and Bute Council, said his understanding of the situation was that the arrangement would have required the council to provide a 'little bit' of a reduction in the costs of the licence for the snack van but agreement could not be reached.

Roddy McCuish, depute provost for Argyll and Bute Council, told the meeting there was 'no reason whatsoever' why the toilets could not be opened at no cost to the council and could potentially generate a small income. He said he had identified funding to do so and suggested opening Friday to Sunday or Saturday to Sunday.

It was suggested a letter be written to Argyll and Bute asking for an explanation.

Councillor Elaine Robertson said she, too, wanted to see the toilets opened at weekends and was waiting to hear back from Argyll and Bute Council.

Duncan Martin, vice convenor of the community council, agreed to write a letter.

In August, the council's business continuity committee agreed to an officer's recommendation to keep 35 public conveniences open until the end of October. Beyond that, only a 'core set' would remain open across the region, it decided. Strict new guidelines now demand more extensive cleaning of public toilets which has driven up costs.

Men spotted stealing sleepers from village

COURT

Two men from Glasgow have appeared in court for stealing thousands of pounds worth of timber railway sleepers from a village on the A85.

Oban Sheriff Court was told 180 sleepers valued at £8,500 had been left unsecured on hardstanding near the car park at Loch Awe railway station but in early October, a total of 166 disappeared.

The theft came to light on October 4 when a supervisor spotted two men and a white panel van reversed up against the sleepers. They appeared 'panicked' and got into the vehicle and sped off, procurator fiscal David Glancy told the sentencing hearing on December 2.

Around 80 sleepers were discovered missing at that point and police inquiries in the community found that a white van

had been seen there on two days.

On October 7, Police Scotland officers on duty in the area saw a van fitting its description coming out of the access road to the station. The vehicle was stopped and searched and 20 sleepers were discovered.

Declan Ray Clarke, aged 29, and Kevin Kerr, aged 40, both of Drumchapel, were arrested.

The pair pleaded guilty to a charge that on various occasions between October 2 and October 7, they stole a quantity of railway sleepers.

During police interviews, Clarke was 'candid' and 'very co-operative' with officers and admitted having made four separate visits.

Kerr admitted assisting his co-accused on two occasions, the court heard.

It was suggested they had seen an advert on Facebook that the sleepers were there and available

to take for free. But Mr Glancy said while the pair believed they had 'implied permission' it did not square with how they had reacted when they were caught 'red-handed' and made off in the van.

A total of 126 sleepers were recovered from a garden nursery south of Glasgow with the owner admitting he had bought them and was selling them on social media.

Mr Glancy said: 'The recipient should have been a little more diligent in confirming the provenance of them before purchasing them and selling them on.'

Solicitor Brian Lanigan, representing Clarke and Kerr, both of 116 Glenkirk Drive, Glasgow, said of the 180 sleepers, 166 had been recovered, including those at the garden centre.

This had meant a net loss to ScotRail of £1,000 from the

£8,500 total value. Mr Lanigan said Clarke had lost his job during the pandemic having always been a working man and was struggling to provide for his partner and three children.

He was not a 'dishonest' person and had managed to secure employment since the incident and was regularly working between 6.30am until 10pm, he said.

Kerr, a father-of-four, was on benefits and was the main carer for his partner and before the theft had not offended since a road traffic offence in 2004, said Mr Lanigan.

Sheriff Hughes said he took account of the men's co-operation and guilty pleas.

Clarke was ordered to pay £1,000 compensation for the thefts, while Kerr was ordered to complete 140 hours of community work in recognition of his 'limited involvement'.



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Taynuilt seeks school crossing patroller

Taynuilt is to get its school crossing patroller back.

Youngsters and families walking to the village primary school were left to cross the busy A85 themselves when the crossing patrol was removed years ago.

Villagers were so worried about traffic speeding past, they put up a fake police figure in a bid to slow drivers down.

Christmas Eve is the deadline for applications for the 10-hour permanent post being advertised by Argyll and Bute Council.

The hours to be worked are Monday to Friday 8.30am to 9.15am then 2.35pm to 3.50pm in return for a living wage pay.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the job should contact Ailsa McCuaig, School Crossing Patrol Co-ordinator on 01546 604894.

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'Disappointment' after new year parking bid fails

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Councillors representing Oban have voted down a suggestion to extend free car parking across the town into the New Year.

Argyll and Bute Council agreed to allow a fortnight of free car parking at its off-street car parks from December 11 to Christmas Eve – including Oban.

But an SNP amendment to extend that until January 3 failed when it was defeated 16 votes to 15.

Now questions have been asked about why only two of the eight councillors who represent Oban, Lorn and the Isles on Argyll and Bute Council, were prepared to support the New Year extension.

The issue came up at a virtual meeting of Oban Community Council attended by some of those councillors who voted



The New Year free parking bid was narrowly defeated.

down the proposal. Councillor Kieron Green, an independent, explained he voted against due to a lack of information about the financial impact of the idea.

He said waiving charges at off-street council car parks would also hit income of on-street car parking and councillors were in the dark about the total cost to the council.

'I really just wish that it would have been raised earlier so that we would have had the

financial details necessary to really be able to pass it,' said Councillor Green, who said despite his vote, he regarded it as a great idea.

Councillor Elaine Robertson said she would have 'loved' to have supported the amendment but could not for the same reasons.

Marri Malloy, chairwoman of Oban Community Council, said it was 'too late now' as the vote had already been taken.

Councillor Robertson explained that when councillors were faced with a financial decision with no supporting background information it put them in a 'very difficult' position.

'The disappointment was that it wasn't actually flagged up earlier and there wasn't more detail around it,' said councillor Robertson, also an independent.

However, councillor Roddy McCuish told the meeting

that he voted in favour and councillors sometimes had to make 'brave' decisions.

He said car parking income was always low at the quietest time of the year and any cost would have hardly hit the public purse.

'It would have given something back to Oban which has been paying a vast amount in parking charges into the central pot for years,' said councillor McCuish, an independent on Argyll and Bute Council and its depute provost.

Councillor Jim Lynch, an SNP member, also supported the New Year extension.

If councillors had concerns about the costs involved, they should have called a recess so officers could have got the figures, he said.

'I think it was a meagre thing to offer and we're disappointed it didn't happen,' said Councillor Lynch, who conceded the amendment had

been tabled late in the day having been raised at an SNP group meeting prior to the full council meeting taking place.

BID4Oban will foot the £2,000 bill to allow free car parking in off-street council car parks in the town from December 4-11.

With the free fortnight from Argyll and Bute Council, it means charges are waived at council-run car parks at Albany Street, Corran Halls one and two, North Pier, Lochavullin, Market Street and Tweeddale Street.

Speaking at the community council meeting, Mr Spence said extending free parking into New Year could have proved an extra incentive for people from the surrounding area to visit Oban and use local businesses which had suffered in 2020. I would have to record my slight disappointment that we haven't gone for this option,' he said.



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OT

Lifesaving husband and neighbour honoured

Continued from page one.

Hospital in Clydebank where she was fitted with an internal defibrillator.

Three weeks later she was hospitalised again, this time in Edinburgh in 'excruciating pain' after the lead of the device had burrowed its way out of her heart and embedded itself into her chest wall.

But six months on she says she is now feeling 'perfectly fine' and 'incredibly thankful' for her life.

'I've had tests and everything is working. They could find no reason why my heart stopped.

'Thank goodness for the defibrillator, for Nick and for good neighbours. I don't know anything about the night in question because I was dead but from what I've been told everything just slotted into place from the neighbours coming home just when they did, to them getting the defibrillator to me so quickly and the ambulance only taking minutes to arrive. It must have been local,' she said.

And she added: 'I went a bit bonkers afterwards because of the oxygen deprivation and still have problems with mem-

ory loss and certain mobility skills but other than that I'm fine.'

The defibrillator that helped saved Dee's life is one of four machines in the Ardchattan area co-ordinated by the community council, in particular by community councillor Tony Dalgaty who took on the task that began in 2015.

Mr Dalgaty said: 'Ardchattan Community Council first discussed defibrillators about five years ago. At that time we didn't know much about them but slowly and surely we got there with the help of funding from a variety of sources. Each unit cost about £1,600. We've installed four of them so we raised quite a bit of money. We are just so pleased to have done something positive.'

The other three defibrillators are at Spencer Court in Benderloch, North Connel Village Hall and the Forestry Land Scotland workshop at Barcaldine.

Funding included support from Taynuilt Medical Practice, Scottish Sea Farms and help from the British Heart Foundation.

Training sessions on using a



Ardchattan community councillor Tony Dalgaty with Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute Andrew Campbell, Nick and Dee Bradbury and Dr Lindsay Vare.

defibrillator have already been held in the community, with more planned in the New Year.

Dee's husband Nick said: 'We're just so thankful for the defibrillator being there, this box on the wall I always saw and never, never thought we'd be depending on. It would have been a completely different outcome without it.'

Vice Lord Lieutenant of

Argyll and Bute Andrew Campbell, who presented the certificates, said: 'This is quite the happiest event I have been involved in.'

UK-wide concerns about defibrillators being stolen mean it is often the ambulance service that gives the unlocking code to the person making a 999 call in the event of a cardiac arrest but because of Ardchattan's

remoteness, the community council decided to display it on the front of the box to save valuable time and give the best chance of survival.

Dee added: 'The defib is the most useful piece of kit we have in this area and it absolutely makes me furious to hear about them being stolen because you can't use them on someone that's not dead.'

POLICE FILES

About 4.45pm on Friday December 4, in Catalina Avenue, Oban, a 23-year-old man allegedly breached bail conditions by visiting a specific address. About 10.05pm on Sunday December 6, police arrested and charged the man who was held for court. A report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

About 8pm on Thursday December 3, in Shore Street, Oban, a man, 24, allegedly assaulted a woman. He was traced the following day, arrested and charged, and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

About 5.50pm on Saturday December 5, in Longsdale Terrace, Oban, a man, aged 27, was arrested for allegedly behaving in an abusive manner. The man was charged with the offence and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Anyone with information on the above, or to any incident, should contact their local police station on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

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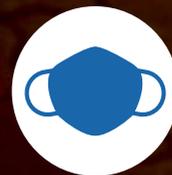
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HANDS



FACE



SPACE

OT

Woman slapped barman

COURT

A woman has been ordered to pay £100 compensation to a barman after she slapped him across the face sending him down a flight of stairs, a court was told.

Suzanne Allison, aged 28, of 26 Catalina Avenue, Oban, appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on December 2 for sentence.

Procurator fiscal David Glancy told the court the incident happened just before 10pm on June 9 2019 at The Cellar Bar on Corran Esplanade. The accused and another person entered the bar. The barman knew them both and asked the other person to leave. At the top of a flight of stairs, the accused became 'belligerent' towards him and slapped his face causing him to fall downstairs.

The barman then ejected her but was struck again as he did so suffering a bump to his head and a cut on his left eye, said Mr Glancy.

Allison pled guilty to other charges relating to February 26 this year. These involved behaving in a threatening manner at 6 McKelvie Road and throwing various items,

resulting in £400 of damage. On the same date, she assaulted a policewoman at the same address. Solicitor Ruben Murdanaigum told the court Allison had never drunk vodka before and had 'over-reacted' on June 9.

She was very sorry for what had happened and accepted her behaviour was unacceptable and had felt very remorseful, he said.

Of damaging the property, she had sent a card of apology and had written to indicate she would be prepared to pay for the broken items, said Mr Murdanaigum.

The court heard Allison had 'underlying' issues but was doing an educational course and she had not tried to justify or minimise her behaviour.

She was co-operating with professionals and was responding positively, he said.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes ordered she pay compensation to the barman.

For the assault and damage, he said she must complete 200 hours of a community payback order and be under the supervision of a social worker for two years and pay £400 compensation for the damage.

'Disgraceful' behaviour of man at Oban Tesco

COURT

A man who threatened to shoot staff at Oban Tesco and assaulted two police officers has been told by the town's sheriff his behaviour can only be described as 'disgraceful'.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes told Robert Brown that given his criminal record, he would be 'entirely justified' in sending him to prison after incidents on May 29 and May 30.

Brown, aged 39, of 17 Combie Court, Glencruitten Road, pleaded guilty at Oban Sheriff Court on September 22 to five charges and appeared before the court for sentencing on December 2.

He was charged with disorderly conduct, two assaults on police officers, breaking a bail condition not to go to Tesco and struggling violently with officers.

Staff at Tesco asked him to leave after he visited the store



on multiple occasions on the same day during lockdown and alarmed staff with his intoxicated state and failure to respect social distancing, the earlier hearing was told.

It led to police being called and a confrontation with them. He was arrested and bailed with a condition not to go back to the store.

But the following day, Tesco staff again reported him in the vicinity which resulted in an-

other confrontation with police in the grounds of the Old Parish Church, Glencruitten Road.

Sheriff Hughes said he had been persuaded only by a 'narrow margin' not to send him to prison.

Instead, he handed down a community payback order which requires the accused to be under the supervision of social workers for two years.

He must also complete 250

hours of unpaid work within 18 months. Sheriff Hughes warned Brown: 'If this order is not completed then it will be revoked and you can expect a custodial sentence.'

Solicitor Ruben Murdanaigum said the pre-sentence report was 'very good' and had highlighted the various issues Brown had been facing and was coping with.

His life had not been 'very good' and he had a 'long list' of previous convictions, yet prior to the relapse he had managed to stay out of trouble for a considerable time, said Mr Murdanaigum.

Brown had been actively involved in the town's Oban Addiction Support and Information Service for many years, until its sudden closure, the court heard.

Mr Murdanaigum said it had left his client with very little support in his life and he had relapsed as a result.

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Tricky times during Covid muddy the water for Atlantis Leisure

Positivity, realism and dogged determination to make things work are the key elements to keeping Oban's community-run leisure centre going through increasingly uncertain times, writes Fiona Scott.

This was the view voiced by Atlantis Leisure board chairman Neil Matheson who addressed a belated 2019 annual general meeting on Monday November 30.

Significant investment in 2019 meant the centre entered 2020 on a good footing, with the board and staff looking to continue to build on their work in improving and extending the first class fitness centre already on offer. Enter Covid.

Mr Matheson told the online gathering: 'These have been tricky times for Atlantis and no-one had read the manual.'

'We are so grateful to the team for the massive effort they have made to keep things going but sadly we had to lose some staff, which made things even more challenging.'

'We were not entitled to many of the grants on offer as we had enough money to survive through the three-month stipulation and we were very limited on what we were able



to do. What we did and are still doing is to work out how to live with it and how to work our way through it.

'We remain positive, realistic and doggedly determined to make things work.'

Treasurer Andrew Mead reported that although the centre had been closed, or running limited sessions throughout the year, as far as finances went Atlantis Leisure was in a reasonably good position with a reserve fund of £140,138 available to keep the service afloat.

'We are not here to make a profit, we are here to provide a service and I'm sure everyone will do their very best to continue doing that,' he said.

Among the many success stories Atlantis Leisure has achieved in 2019 were hosting two dance shows, a second fantastic gymnastics competition, the hugely successful Oban High School 'LockIn', run in partnership with local

youth charity Hope2Oban, and Summer Sensations.

An integral part of the year was delivering ongoing plans to improve the fabric and facilities of the centre, which meant a range of projects were delivered during the year, including the installation of a full new online 'Scuba' booking system; welcoming Beth and Iain Macdonald who took over the lease of Café Atlantis; investment in the gym with new lighting, matting and improved flooring and décor; a new pavement at the rear car park; renewal of corridor flooring; a full upgrade of the building's lighting system to LED; redevelopment of the soft play and upgrading of the dance studio and beauty therapy room.

As well as one-off events, business as usual proved no less busy or evolving, with a number of core offers seeing significant growth and development of lifeguard training, Oban Swim School, Oban Gymnastics School and the StayActive programme run in conjunction with Healthy Options. Another new initiative was the Oban Health Partnership.

Hatchery's first smolts delivered worldwide

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



The first young salmon reared at Scottish Sea Farms' new hatchery at Barcaldine have been harvested and delivered to customers around the world.

The fish were transferred a year ago from the £58 million state-of-the-art hatchery near Loch Creran to the company's Loch Nevis C farm.

The smolts, with an average weight of 178g when put to sea, are more than double the weight Scottish Sea Farms would expect to achieve using conventional hatchery methods and reached market size two months quicker.

Freshwater Manager Pål Tangvik said the bigger and healthier smolts are down to the hatchery's recirculating aquaculture system, giving much greater control over the key growth factors of water quality, oxygen levels,



Scottish Sea Farms Pål Tangvik, Jim Gallagher and Noelia Rodriguez with Loch Nevis C fish.

temperature, light and speed of flow. Mr Tangvik said the smolts require less time at sea but are better able to withstand the natural challenges of the marine environment.

The 17,500m² hatchery at Barcaldine has scope to produce up to 10 million smolts annually. The young salmon are transferred directly from the hatchery to a well-boat before being transported to one of the salmon grower's 42 ma-

rine farms. Of the 5,200m³ of freshwater required per day, up to 99 per cent is recirculated – a saving of more than 20 times the freshwater consumption of conventional methods.

This water is cleaned every 30 minutes via a complex system of filters and UV light with no chemicals. It is kept at a constant temperature via a combination of heat pumps and heat exchangers using less energy than traditional kero-

sene boilers or electric chillers and can also recover heat from waste-water for reuse. A biomass system run on locally-sourced wood chip provides heating and hot water throughout the rest of the hatchery. Scottish Sea Farms managing director Jim Gallagher said: 'When it came to transforming our freshwater farming, it seemed only natural that we do so in the greenest way possible: from reducing our use of fossil fuels or finite resources such as freshwater.

'We're also able to capture any waste material which is removed by waste management company Rock Highland which recirculates it as nutrient-rich agricultural fertiliser to aid crop development.'

Oban man to be tagged after recovery relapse

COURT

An Oban man will be tagged after he pleaded guilty to attempting to break into a business.

Stephen McLaughlan was spotted inside the secured yard of Howdens Joinery in Sinclair Drive, Oban, at 9.15pm on June 22 this year.

Residents and a passing motorist raised the alarm after he was seen repeatedly kicking and pushing the front door to the warehouse, a court hearing in November was told.

McLaughlan, of Flat B, 6 Corran Brae, appeared at Oban Sheriff Court for sentence on Tuesday December 3.

He was given a restriction of liberty order which means he must stay at home between 9pm to 5am for two months.

Solicitor Kevin McGinness told the court his client was a 38-year-old father and had been successfully battling past addiction issues.

He had made the mistake of consuming alcohol and valium that day but it was



a 'one-off relapse', he said. McLaughlan deeply regretted the incident and regarded it as a significant setback on his road to recovery but had successfully found work starting in the New Year, said Mr McGinness.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes said he was satisfied the incident was neither a 'planned nor serious' attempt to break in due to the amount of noise which had been made.

But to reassure the community, the accused was required to have his liberty restricted and to complete 120 hours of a community payback order within 12 months.

FESTIVE SIDE DISHES

Recipe Brought to you by BID4Oban

Cranberry Sauce

Cranberry Sauce is the traditional accompaniment for roast turkey and is a must for Christmas dinner. This is extremely easy to make and can be made ahead of Christmas day.

Ingredients

250g fresh or frozen cranberries

100g sugar

Large Orange – Juice and rind

Dash of port - Optional

Method

Grate the rind of the orange. Squeeze the juice of the orange and place in a saucepan with cranberries, rind and sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stirring well. It is a personal choice as to how smooth you want the sauce, so it is ok to have a sauce with a mixture of whole and smooth cranberries. Taste the sauce for sweetness. Again, this is personal choice some people like it tart and some sweet so add more sugar if required. Prior to serving add a couple of dashes of port.

Roasted Parmesan Parsnips

Roasted parsnips are great at any time, but this quick and easy recipe goes great with any roast. If you want this can be prepared in advance and roasted at the last minute.

Ingredients

Parsnips – as many as you want

Parmesan Cheese – Freshly grated

Flour – Tablespoon

Olive oil - Tablespoon

Method

Peel the parsnips cut and quarter to desired length. Parboil for five to seven minutes. Drain and dry and place on a baking tray with some olive oil. Sprinkle with flour and parmesan cheese and salt and pepper to season. Place in an oven at 180 – 200 degrees until golden brown.

Roasted Vegetables

This recipe can save a lot of time at Christmas. Quick and easy and a favourite with everyone.

Ingredients

Turnip

Carrot

Parsnips

Brussel Sprouts

Shallots or Red onion

Chopped parsley, sage & thyme, basil.

Olive oil.

Prepare all the vegetables and chop to the desired size. Place on a good ovenproof baking tray or similar. Add the herbs and olive oil, salt and pepper. Mix and integrate all ingredients. Place in an oven at 180-200 for 30 minutes until cooked through. Dependant on the quantities used this may take longer to cook.

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OT

Woman who stabbed brother avoids prison

COURT

A woman has avoided prison after being found guilty of stabbing her brother in her caravan.

Samantha MacDonald, 36, will be tagged to remain at home between 9pm and 5am for two months.

The accused, of 6 Ledaig Travelling Persons' Site, Ledaig, appeared before Oban Sheriff Court for sentencing on Wednesday December 2.

She was found guilty at a trial on November 3 after denying a single charge that she did repeatedly strike her brother with a knife on January 21 2019.

At the time of the incident, she had been drinking alcohol for five days and had not taken her medication which made her vulnerable to hallucinations, the court heard.



Giving evidence, MacDonald told the trial in November: 'I didn't do it. I know I didn't.'

Her brother denied she had stabbed him and dismissed the injury as a 'scratch'.

Mr MacDonald claimed he injured himself on gardening equipment in his caravan and had gone to his sister's caravan where

she had bandaged him up. The accused's partner Anthony Murray, 41, also denied she had stabbed her brother.

At the sentencing hearing, solicitor Ruben Murdanaigum, said the accused suffered from mental health issues and her 'coping strategy' had been to turn to alcohol.

Despite her difficulties she had been volunteering at Hope Kitchen in Oban which submitted a supportive letter on her behalf to demonstrate the progress she had made since the incident nearly two years ago.

Mr Murdanaigum told Sheriff Patrick Hughes: 'I'd invite my lord to look at Miss MacDonald as she is today and on the basis of her commitment to the community, despite what has happened.'

MacDonald was from a family which 'stuck together'

and a social work report had recommended her suitability for a community payback order, said Mr Murdanaigum.

Sheriff Hughes told the court that the seriousness of the offence could not be underestimated. However, Sheriff Hughes said he recognised the importance of her role as a carer.

The letter from Hope Kitchen had also acknowledged the 'very impressive' work she was doing to help others, he said. As a result, a custodial sentence could not be justified. 'The biggest problem you have and what is a trigger for you is alcohol and you must control it to stay out of prison,' said Sheriff Hughes.

He ordered that she remain under the supervision of a social worker for three years and that she completes 240 hours of community service within 18 months.

Massive barrier plan for Old Military Road

A new temporary barrier is to be built next to the Old Military Road (OMR) to help provide fresh protection to the closure-hit route, writes Ellis Butcher.

The 'bund' will be 570 feet long and 19 feet tall and will be positioned next to the OMR at the foot of the vulnerable channel formed by landslips in August and September. The aim is to help protect the OMR from another major landslip and keep the vital diversion route open when bad weather hits the hillsides and shuts the A83.

BEAR Scotland said the barrier would be formed using a 'modular system' favoured by the military and will be largely backfilled with material from previous landslides.

The news was revealed at a meeting of stakeholders last Thursday, led by Michael Matheson MSP, the cabinet secretary for transport, infrastructure and connectivity.

He said: 'I was delighted to have the opportunity today to discuss with local stakeholders and businesses our continuing

work in delivering landslide mitigation measures at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and the Old Military Road.

'At this meeting, I announced that I have instructed our contractors to commence construction of a new 175m debris bund above the Old Military Road, with the aim of completing works before Christmas, weather permitting. This will provide greater resilience to the local diversion, helping to ensure continuity of access to the region.'

In addition, BEAR Scotland said a design team is continuing to assess the viability of the alternative route through Glen Croe with further information expected next week.

The OMR remains in use as a local diversion but has required teams reviewing the weather forecast and conditions daily.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's north west representative said: 'Installation of this new bund will give us the opportunity to use the local diversion route with greater confidence once it is complete later this month.'

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SCOTTISH FIELD

January issue



Exclusive
So that was
2020 feature

So that was 2020...

Interviews with top authors, actors & singers...
James Cosmo talks fishing & Father Christmas...
Stuart Hogg on horse riding... Father of fantasy
fiction.. Wonderful world of owls... SF Quiz of
the Year... Recipes from The Seafood Shack...

Urgent larch tree felling will change well-loved landscape

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



A disease attacking larch trees has been identified at 20 news sites across the west of Scotland, including Loch Fyne, Loch Awe, Lochaline, Kintyre and Mull.

Forestry and Land Scotland's (FLS) West Region team is drawing up long-term emergency plans to deal with its spread but has warned it will involve 'substantial changes to some well-loved landscapes over the next four years'.

The steps being taken to halt *Phytophthora ramorum* include more tree felling, new forest roads needing to be built as well as existing roads upgraded and harvesting facilities constructed. FLS is also working on replanting plans to reduce the visual impact as much as possible.

Of those 20 sites identified in the survey, 12 have to be felled



Diseased larch trees in well-loved landscapes will need to be felled before spring next year.

by the middle of February next year with the remaining nine sites being felled before the end of March 2021.

Andy Hunt, FLS's West Region Manager, said: 'It's a real blow to have so many sites to deal with. It's going to substantially tax our resources and challenge our planning and delivery teams. As well as dealing with these sites of infection, we're also getting our normal operations back on track after lockdown. It's going

to be a long haul that will see substantial changes to some well-loved landscapes over the next four years but it's urgent work that we have to do if we are to slow the spread of the disease to other sites where larch is present.

'As we get this work started, we will have to close some sites for public safety and we will make people aware of the closures before we start work. We appreciate this might cause some inconvenience for local

people and visitors but would urge everyone to observe the on-site safety signs.'

The team will work on the removal of infected larch trees following requirements of the Statutory Plant Health Notices that have been served by regulator Scottish Forestry.

Mr Hunt is also asking for the public's help to control the disease spread by following Keep It Clean advice.

'Spores that cause this disease can be carried to unaffected sites in mud and forest debris so please take a few minutes to brush or wipe off boots, bike wheels, tent pegs and even your dog's paws before and after a visit to any woodland in the area. Everyone working together will have a positive impact on our forests, help to slow the spread of tree pests and diseases and buy the time to research and develop actions to ensure the long-term health of our woodlands,' he added.



Kees van Rein presents £200 cheques to Morven Finlayson of the Salvation Army and Catriona Petit of Hope Kitchen.

Oban Rotary boost for Salvation Army and Hope Kitchen

Oban Rotary Club president Kees van Rein has presented £200 cheques to Morven Finlayson of the Salvation Army and Catriona Petit of Hope Kitchen to help with their Christmas appeals.

President Kees said: 'The Rotary Club of Oban is delighted to present these cheques in support of the fantastic work that is being done.'

'It has been a very hard year for so many in our community and the Rotary Club of Oban is delighted to support these vital initiatives.'

'It is heart-warming to hear from Morven and Catriona that both organisations have been

inundated with support, not only from Oban Rotary Club but from organisations and individuals from all over Argyll and the Isles.

'It is good to know the Salvation Army and Hope Kitchen will be flat out over Christmas and New Year giving help and support to everyone, but particularly to the older, most vulnerable and youngest members of our community.'

He added: 'The generosity, love and care shown by the people of Argyll and the Isles in this difficult time is truly uplifting and shows what a special place we live in. We look forward to better times in 2021.'

You can make a difference

Home-Start Lorn Give a little love – volunteer with Home-Start Lorn



Volunteering with Home-Start Lorn: can be fun, rewarding and sometimes emotional. As a home-visiting volunteer you spend a couple of hours each week with a family and you get to know them well.

What we offer volunteers

An excellent training course which addresses topics such

as; values and attitudes, mental health awareness, domestic abuse, confidentiality and child protection. Ongoing training and learning opportunities & frequent one-to-one support and supervision as well as regular group meetings with other volunteers. We have had speakers from Autism Argyll, Women's Aid and Allenergy

What the families say

'We were introduced to Home-Start Lorn when we moved to Scotland where we had no friends or relatives. We are grateful to Home-Start for extending their support to us at our time of need. It is due to *Susan's(our volunteer) commitment that my family and I have been able to integrate in this new environment. We're

truly inspired by Home-Start personal's dedication to making a difference in our life.

You have touched our hearts and our gratitude is overflowing. Bless this organisation and all the people who support it and work with it.'*Name changed

What volunteers say

Having recently retired I was looking for a volunteering experience within our local community. My criteria was to find something interesting, useful, challenging, rewarding and most of all fun. After a little research I found it... Home-Start Lorn.

I completed an application form, had a friendly interview with our local coordinator and in no time at all found myself on the Preparation Course. The course was well structured and provided a very clear insight into the key elements required for Home-Start Volunteers. It was presented in a very supportive, relaxed, friendly atmosphere and was so enjoyable.



Meeting my first family was incredibly nerve wracking!! Even now meeting a family for the first time gives rise to "butterflies!" However, within a few visits a mutual friendly, caring, trusting relationship is formed. It's such a privilege to be invited into a home to share all the ups, and downs, of family life.

For me the most rewarding part of Home-Start Volunteering is spending time with my family.... playing with the little ones, cooking and baking with mum, going for walks to the park, enjoying a coffee at a local cafe, chatting about anything and everything.

Throughout my time with Home-Start I have been fully supported by our local co-ordinator and fellow volunteers. I have been given the opportunity to take part in various courses ranging from Bookbug to Coping with Depression. My life has been so enriched by my Home-Start experiences. I love it!

**Want to find out more-
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OT

SNP elects Russell as party's new president

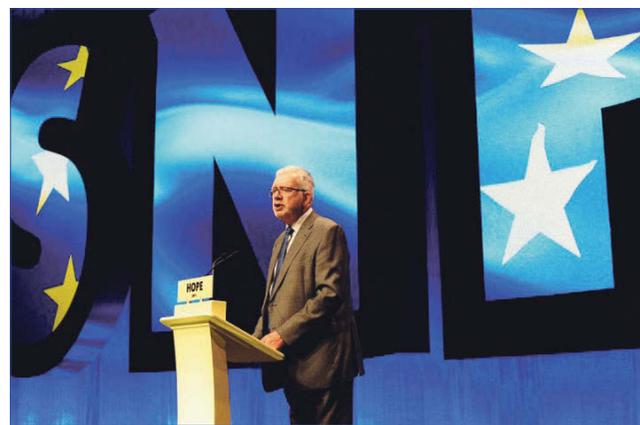
by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell has been elected president of the Scottish National Party.

In a three-way contest at the SNP National Conference, which also involved former British Ambassador Craig Murray and ex-MP Corri Wilson, Mr Russell, 67, gained almost 70 per cent of delegates' votes.

The role has previously been held by leading nationalist figures including former Highlands and Islands MEP 'Madame Ecosse' Winnie Ewing; 1970s parliamentary leader Donnie Stewart and one-time party chairman Billy Wolfe. It is a non-executive position which the party's constitution describes as being 'in recognition of distinguished



Mr Russell gained almost 70 per cent of delegates' votes.

whose contribution has been vital in securing our progress.

'I will do my very best to measure up to the standards of service and effort they set over the years and I look forward to working with all party members to further our cause and achieve the aim for which the party was founded 86 years ago – to achieve independence for Scotland.'

Mr Russell becomes the first party president from Argyll and Bute and remains a member of his local branch, based in Strachur on the Cowal Peninsula. He is also the first SNP president to have served in a Scottish Government. Mr Russell added: 'These are crucial times for Scotland and for

service to the party'. The holder also becomes a member of the party's National Executive Committee.

Mr Russell, who steps down from Holyrood ahead of next year's election, is the serving Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for the constitution, Europe and external affairs.

He said: 'I have been a member of the SNP since 1974 and am very honoured and grateful for the overwhelming support of the party in choosing me for the position.'

'The presidency is a post that has been held by some of those whom I most admire and respect in the movement and

everyone who lives here. The pandemic is far from over but we do need to start thinking about rebuilding and recovery and the matter of who leads that process must be resolved in Scotland's favour. Only independence can secure that and the ability to decide for ourselves how we go forward.'

'A significant and clear election victory next May is needed for that process to get under way and electoral success comes from unity of purpose. The SNP must have every member working enthusiastically and well together and my first priority will be to support the new office bearers and NEC in ensuring an open, democratic, focused and unified approach to the coming campaign.'

The SNP recently selected Jenni Minto, of Islay, to run as its candidate for Holyrood.

Oban town centre blighted by bin problem

The appearance of Oban is being blighted by a 'mess' of bins everywhere, councillors have heard, writes Ellis Butcher.

The issue came up at November's virtual meeting of Oban Community Council.

Member Sue Barnard said she was concerned the bins on the streets gave a 'really bad impression' but accepted there was a shortage of places for people to store them.

'It's a real mess and I don't know if something can be done about it or not, but it really gives a bad impression,' she told the meeting.

Member Grant Nicholson agreed and said whenever a new business opened up another bin appeared on the street because there was nowhere to store it indoors.

Andy Spence, BID4Oban's chief executive, said Argyll and Bute Council had been approached with a proposal for a new bin store to be built in Stevenson Street: 'Providing that is successful, we would be looking to roll that out across the rest of the town,' he said.

Local accountant Brona, new Partner in Borders firm

Tax expert Brona MacDougall, has just been appointed as a Partner in one of the largest accountancy firms in the South of Scotland.

Brona, who previously worked in Oban as a chartered accountant, joined Hawick based accountancy firm JRW two years ago. The company, which has offices throughout the Scottish Borders as well as one in Edinburgh, has a diverse range of clients all over the country.

The former doctor will continue to be based from her home on the family farm on the Isle of Lismore. As well as being an expert in agricultural finance and taxation, Brona is also a Trust and Estate Practitioner and has undertaken numerous succession plans, tax work on complex agricultural tenancy transactions and inheritance tax mitigation plans for large landed estates. Testament to this expertise, Brona has recently taken over authorship of the prestigious Bloomsbury Professional publication 'Inheritance Tax in Scotland'.

With a considerable amount of experience in dealing with international tax matters and the tax affairs of seafarer's, Brona has been successful in some complex offshore disclosures and regularly deals with non domicile and residence issues.

JRW Partner Brona MacDougall said:

"After only two years, I am delighted to have become a Partner with JRW and to have the opportunity to grow the firm's presence here in the Highlands and Islands.

Living on the family farm with my husband and two little boys, means that I bring a considerable amount of valuable experience to my farming clients. I enjoy being able to take a holistic approach to my work, as my Trust and Estates qualification gives me a good understanding of the legal aspects of will writing and succession planning.

Naturally, many people are curious about my previous role as a doctor and as irrelevant as it may at first seem, I believe that my experience in medicine brings with it many benefits. A good bedside manner in tax matters if that makes sense.

Whether that's advising a farmer, landowner or seafarer; or indeed any private individual or business owner, the favourite part of my job is working with people, understanding their individual situations and being able to forge relationships with them.

I care about my clients and I look forward to growing business together for many years to come."



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Taynuilt scientist to join deep sea study

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



An international team of scientists spanning 45 institutions in 17 countries, including two in Scotland, has called for a decade-long programme of research into the 'deep seas'.

The authors include Professor Bhavani Narayanaswamy of the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Oban who said: 'The deep sea is by far the largest ecosystem on planet earth with a plethora of species and a variety of different habitats.'

The vast expanses of water and seabed hidden more than 200 metres below the ocean surface - to depths of up to 11,000 metres - are recognised globally as an important frontier of science and discovery.

Despite the fact they account for around 60 per cent of earth's surface area, large areas



Professor Bhavani Narayanaswamy.

as remain unexplored. Yet the habitats they support impact on the health of the entire planet.

The programme - which scientists have named Challenger 150 - will coincide with the

United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development which runs from 2021 to 2030.

Led by members of the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, the authorship reflects the gender and geographical diversity such a programme demands, with authors from the six inhabited continents of the world.

Professor Narayanaswamy, who lives in Taynuilt, said: 'A global programme is required to not only learn more about this ecosystem and to put measures in place to manage it in a sustainable fashion, but to also train the next generation of researchers, the future custodians of the deep sea.'

Dr David Bailey from the University of Glasgow, the other Scot involved in the programme, added: 'I am proud

to be associated with this vision for a future programme of research and education.'

'I believe it will uncover many secrets of the deep ocean, bring them to a wide audience and inspire the protection needed.'

Kerry Howell, Professor of Deep-sea Ecology at the University of Plymouth (UK) and lead author of the research publications, said: 'Our vision is for a 10-year programme of science and discovery that is global in scale and targeted towards proving the science to inform decisions around deep-ocean use.'

'We believe the United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science provides the perfect opportunity to achieve that.'

Endorsed by the authors of the current studies, more information about Challenger 150 is available at <https://challenger150.world>.

Former home of Lord Butler for sale on Mull

Frachadil House, the Isle of Mull holiday home of former government minister Lord Rab Butler, is for sale for offers over £625,000.



Lord Butler, Baron Butler of Saffron Walden, served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1951 to 1955, Home Secretary, 1957 to 1962, Deputy Prime Minister, 1962 to 1963) and Foreign Secretary, 1963 to 1964). Rab and his second wife Mollie Butler bought Frachadil in 1961 and holidayed in the house for 20 years, often visiting three times a year until he was too ill to travel.

The book 'August and Rab, A Memoir', written by Mollie Butler in 1987, includes the following reference: 'Rab and I spent 20 summers there and very often went up in winter and at Easter, in fact so much did he love it that my occasional suggestion of a holiday in France or Italy generally went unheeded.'

'It is difficult to convey in words the magic of that place;

its hold upon our hearts was absolute.'

The property is situated in an elevated position close to Calgary Bay and is one of only a few houses on Mull enjoying views of the Small Isles of Eigg, Muck, Rhum and Canna.

The Isle of Skye and the lighthouse at Ardnamurchan Point, the most westerly mainland point in Great Britain, are also visible from the house.

Dating from the 1600s, Frachadil House is an impressive B-listed country house offering privacy, land, beautiful views and a wonderful Hebridean lifestyle.

Nicky Archibald of Galbraith, who is handling the sale, said: 'This is a superb island home, benefiting from a picturesque and tranquil setting, surrounded by delightful grounds with a walled garden and woodland.'

Part of the house has been let successfully as self-catering accommodation and another part of the house welcomed bed and breakfast guests.

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LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HBMaking the case for
community defibrillators

Our story this week highlighting the quick actions of Nick Bradbury and neighbour Dr Lindsay Vare in saving the life of his wife, Scotland Rugby Union's first woman president Dee Bradbury, after she 'died' at their Loch Etive home is really something to celebrate.

The pair were awarded certificates by The Royal Humane Society for their life-saving efforts and we offer them our congratulations. But it could have turned out differently had not a community-funded defibrillator been installed close by.

The defibrillator that helped saved Dee's life is one of four machines in the Ardchattan area co-ordinated by the community council. The other three are at Spencer Court in Benderloch, North Connel Village Hall and the Forestry Land Scotland workshop at Barcaldine.

Dee Bradbury's story is a timely lesson that all our communities should have these defibrillators in their villages and we should make sure we know where they are, because you never know when you, a family member or neighbour might depend on it.

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 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.



The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.

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Fear for forest ecosystems

We worry about the potential for damage to our delicate forest ecosystems and toss and turn at night about ancient Kilmartin Glen being permanently removed to extract sand and gravel ('Row over Kilmartin Glen quarry extension').

Yet the few of us who worry about Argyll's future in the face of climatic uncertainty have little hope of real and lasting change in how agencies like Forestry and Land Scotland (FALS) 'manage' our environment.

FALS is about to begin forest removal in Knapdale as part of its Land Management Plan (including at Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and has submitted multiple planning applications for many kilometres of forest track to be built: I would urge people to go and look at some of the damage already inflicted in order to really appreciate the scale of ongoing ruination and to decide for themselves whether Forestry and Land Scotland really is competent to do this without a lasting contribution to landscape degradation.

I am not against forest management, but it must be done properly and with care; I don't believe FALS will do either.

Nick MacIneskar, Tayvallich.

Let's not turn on each other

In these challenging times we should not turn on each other. I am sure Scottish Water can speak for themselves but they are ordinary workers trying to put food on the table for their families and are not operating outwith the protocols agreed by the Scottish Government.

The last time I looked, water was an essential service and, back in June, the Scottish Government worked very closely with the wider construction sector on protocols for getting construction and civil engineering projects back up and running.

While the Scottish Water project is a £2.7million investment to improve much-needed facilities, the article is silent on the £6.3million ACHA external wall insulation project on site in the town at the moment. This project is providing much-needed employment for 90 workers and I am sure businesses will know how much is being spent in the economy from accommodation, food, fuel and so much more. This project tackles the scandal of fuel poverty.

Covid-19 and irrational scaremongering should not get in the way of people's and communities' needs. The construction sector has gone through rigorous health and safety checks and protocols regarding Covid-19. The workers on the ACHA contract are largely operating externally in the open air but where, on occasion, access is required to a property, that is done in a coordinated and

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Chaidh a ràdh rium gun robh an colbh seo car dubhach air an t-seachdain seo chaidh, gabhadh mo leisgeul ma bha sibhse cuideachd den beachd sin! Ged a tha iomadh dùbhlán agus 's dòcha adhbhair iomagain san t-saoghal aig an dearbh àm chan eil teagamh nach e seo ràith fìor dheagh naidheachd a' chreideimh Chrìosdail, agus cha bhiodh dùil ri dubhachas sam bith an lùib sin, am biodh? 'S iomadh facal a chaidh a sgrìobhadh air mar a tha ana-caitheamh ga dhèanamh air ciall agus teachdaireachd spioradail na Nollaige leis mar a tha saoghal coimearsalta a' sior ghreimeachadh air gus bathair de gach seòrsa a reic. Ann am beachd mhòran tha creideamh a' chalpachais a' dubhadh sàr sgeul dòchais àm na Nollaige agus iarrtas an Ràith an t-Subhachais a' fàgail mhòran fo uallach agus ann am fiachan fad ùine às a dhèidh. Leis gum bheil a' bhliadhna seo air a bhith cho tur neo-àbhaisteach thug mi sùil air ais air dè bh' air m' inntinn air an aon t-seachdain an-uiridh.

Aig co-labhairt eadar-nàiseanta anns an Spàin an uairsin bha luchd-iomairt dìon na h-àrainneachd a' gearan gun robh iad sgith de bheul-brèagha bho dhùthchannan an t-saoghail agus iad a' guidhe ghnìomhan susbainteach gus bacadh fhaotainn air teasachadh na cruinne. Bha ceannard UEFA ag aideachadh gun robh gràin-cinnidh ann an saoghal spòrs bhall-coise a' dol am meud. Agus bha eas-aonta mì-iomchaidh am measg cheannardan dhùthchannan NATO an dèidh seachdadh bliadhna den bhuidheann, is cuid aca a' call sealladh air prìomh

safe way. The Oban Times, in recent weeks, has quite rightly praised the town's resilience and innovation in the face of Covid-19. We should not allow that good work to be undermined by trying to encourage turning on those who are simply trying to make a living for their families and supporting the town's economy.

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive, ACHA.

Prayer can bring peace

We know there are many people having a difficult time during this pandemic, who are suffering from anxiety, fear, despair, and depression. Might I suggest that there is only one sure antidote to this situation and that is prayer – it can do wonders! The person who prays sincerely from the heart will encounter an inner peace, even joy. You don't

chuireadh sith na buidhne. Bhuail e orm gum bheil an dleastanas sin aig NATO na sheòrsa de bhanachdach sìthe!

Cha robh dad togarrach anns na h-aithrisean sin, agus cha mhotha na sin a thachair gnìomhan sònraichte bhon uairsin a bheir misneachadh mhòr sam bith a thaobh dìon na h-àrainneachd, neo cur às do ghràin-cinnidh. Ged is dòcha gun do thachair adhartasan air choreigin bha a h-uile càil air fhalach fo sgàile a' choròna-bhiorais fad faisg air naodh mìosan, agus sunnd is spiorad an t-sluaigh ga shìor mhùchadh. Ach abair deagh naidheachd a-nise is a' chiad bhanachdach dearbhte agus libhrigeadh oirre a' tòiseachadh, is co-dhiù aon tèile cha mhòr deiseil cuideachd! 'S e an cunnart a-nise gum bi daoine air am mealladh le misneachd agus gun trèig iad na modhan a thathas a' moladh a dh'fheumar a chleachdadh airson deagh ùine fhathast. Mar sin tha faiceall chiallach deatamach, ach tha togail iongantach anns an deagh naidheachd seo dha mòr-shluagh an t-saoghail nach cualas a leithid theagamh bho nochd fios air crìoch an Dàrna Cogaidh bho chionn seachdadh is còig bliadhna air ais! Ged a bhios dùbhlain romhainn fhathast tha sinn gun teagamh air gluasad gu ruige ràith ùr dòchais, agus gum meal 's gun caith sinn uile sin!

The continuing Covid scourge had made the "festive season" seem something of a misnomer until now, but news of progress with vaccines has brought a worldwide season of hope! May all best wishes for health be granted!

have to be 'religious' or of a certain religion. We are all God's children because He created each one of us individually and if anyone who seeks him sincerely in prayer, God will answer that person, who will experience 'the peace that is beyond all human understanding' which, of course, is God coming to live in their heart.

Even if you are a non-believer or doubt the existence of God, you can always say, 'God if you are there please come and help me'. Give it a go – and, of course, dipping into a bible will enrich your prayer enormously.

Calum MacFarlane-Barrow, Dalmally.

Embrace open debate

Unfortunately, Mr Adam's research has failed him (Oban Times, December 3). I am not a consultant

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working for the salmon farming industry and certainly not a hired gun.

My background is 100 per cent aquaculture. For the last 25 years I have been supplying retail market data to a variety of seafood companies, including some that farm salmon. My focus is how can we increase fish consumption amongst the British public.

In 2010, I was invited by the chief inspector of Billingsgate market to speak at an event at Fishmongers Hall to discuss interactions between wild and farmed salmon. I was asked as a personal favour because the arranged speaker was unable to attend.

Although, this was not my subject, I thought it went well until the Q&A when the mainly angling audience were abusive and aggressive demanding that I admit that salmon farming was responsible for the declines of wild fish. This pricked my interest because their view of salmon farming was so different to mine and this led me to start privately researching the subject. I continue to do so today. No one pays me to undertake this work.

Over the last 10 years, I have found major discrepancies in the narrative put forward by the angling sector. What is most interesting is that I have tried extensively to speak to these organisations to discuss my findings. They refuse to meet, which is surprising given they claim to want to safeguard the future of wild salmon and sea trout.

When I see claims about salmon farming that are incorrect, if I have time, I do respond as Mr Adam has observed. I am sorry if Mr Adam, like the angling sector, doesn't want to hear the other side of the story.

Mr Adam highlights a scientific paper from Norway published in the ICES Journal of Marine Science and said that I must be aware of their findings. Actually, I attended an ICES meeting in Copenhagen which considered these very issues and where I met some of the authors of that paper. Interestingly, they weren't very happy to have their findings challenged. They do rate escaped salmon as the highest threat but much of their findings are based on mathematical models rather than actual hard data.

I would like to give a very simple example from the same paper as to why I have reservations.

Which would Mr Adam consider a bigger threat to the wild salmon population: a mathematically estimated 39,000 salmon deaths or the confirmed deaths of 135,413 salmon? My view would be that the loss of 135,413 fish to a salmon population must be a much greater threat, yet the scientific paper claims that the loss of the lower number is the much bigger threat, even though they cannot prove that one fish died, let alone 39,000. The former is their unproven estimation of salmon deaths due to sea lice. The much greater number is the number of fish killed by anglers and this is not considered a threat at all.

Mr Adam should not be frightened about open debate but should embrace it.

Dr Martin Jaffa, Callander McDowell.

DISTRICT NEWS



Port Ellen's Early Learning Centre enjoying an outdoor lesson on the seashore.

Islay schools' top marks for STEM learning

Learning links with a distillery on Islay and the seas around Hawaii have earned two island schools top marks for learning.

Bowmore Primary School and Port Ellen Primary School on Islay are among 19 places of education awarded a full Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Nation Award, by Education Scotland.

To earn the award, Bowmore Primary School has been looking at tackling gender stereotypes and promoting equality in relation to STEM, while Port Ellen Primary School has marine biology links with Orkney, Hawaii and the Maldives. Both schools are developing a distillery project together that is rooted in the heart of Islay's economy and traditions.

In September 2019, Education Scotland launched the STEM Nation Award programme as a pilot to promote and build on the learning of those subjects and since then more than 70 schools and early learning and childcare

settings countrywide have got involved. The schools had to look at how STEM worked in their classrooms, identify the best bits then look for ways to develop it before presenting that information to a panel backed up with improvement plans, photographs, video links and examples of engagement with partners and the school community through social media. The final stage was virtual validation conversations.

Validators for the STEM Nation Award praised Bowmore and Port Ellen primaries for how they have embraced partnerships in their community, across Scotland and beyond.

Education Scotland's Strategic Director Alan Armstrong said: 'Both schools have demonstrated rich, engaging and varied STEM experiences for learners.'

Argyll and Bute Council's Policy Lead for Education, Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, added: 'Argyll and Bute has a track record for excellence in STEM learning experiences in our schools.'

SALEN



Salen fire unit bought 20 Christmas trees and lights for the village on the Isle of Mull, which they put up recently.

TOBERMORY

Railings are big improvement

Tobermory's new railings are a big improvement along the town's waterfront.

Work is still ongoing but it is looking good so far, says Mull councillor Mary-Jean Devon.

'It's a huge improvement. The old railings were dripping with rust,' she said.

As well as railings, the flood defence has also been upgraded.

Money from the town's infrastructure fund is being used to pay for the work.

At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Safety first

Here's a confession: I have been thinking about becoming an Airbnb host, at least for a few days each month, to bring in a little extra moolah now I am no longer working full-time.

However, I read the page one lead last week with great interest. Some of our civic leaders asked those people offering Airbnb and other accommodation not to do so at the moment, for obvious reasons.

It's a message I will certainly take on board. I still hope to join the Airbnb revolution but I'm happy to wait until next year when – hopefully, now we have a vaccine on the way – a 'new normality' becomes part of all our lives.

It's a tricky one, though. The West Highland economy remains brilliantly resilient, as I've noted here before – but it needs visitors if some businesses are to survive.

Chatting to BID4Oban boss Andy Spence the other day, he is still hearteningly bullish about the town's prospects; a position I share.

I'll just have to hold off from joining the hospitality sector.

All ends in cheers!

Some of you may be aware of my penchant for a pint now and then. So it was that I found myself the other day sitting out in the covered beer garden of the splendid Lorne pub in Stevenson Street.

It was, mind you, bitterly cold, although the chill was offset by the overhead heaters. As one wag in our company observed, we used to mock smokers for their stoicism – or lily-livered weakness – in braving all weather conditions to indulge their habit. And there we were, swaddled up to the nines in order to enjoy, if that's the apposite term, a beer or few and the craic that goes with it. Irony? Hmm.

As a footnote, I should voice my personal thanks to young Shannon for her superb service on that occasion.

Working on her own, she kept all of us old curmudgeons well supplied with appropriate libations, and with a cheery disposition to boot.

What do you think?

Send your comments to editor@obantimes.co.uk

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BUSINESS NEWS

Islay's Emma named AITC vice chairwoman

An Islay guest house operator has been named the new vice chairwoman of Argyll and The Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) following its annual general meeting.



Emma Clark joins Iain Jurgensen from Portavadie, who will continue for a further year as chairman, in leading the group, a strategic destination management organisation which works to promote the area locally and nationally.

Those who attended the online meeting on November 24 were given an update on the team's activity over the last year but attention focused on the future.

Emma, who said she was 'delighted' to accept the invitation to serve as vice chairwoman, is picking up the cause for tourism on Argyll's 23 inhabited islands, with a 'very strong' focus on collaboration.

She said: 'Along with my colleagues within AITC, I look forward to ensuring Argyll and the Isles are seen as leading the way as a destination and, more importantly, used as an example of how successful collaborative work can break down any barriers to successfully trading and welcoming visitors by our industry colleagues. My goal is to ensure this is done by working together with each geographical area within Argyll so no-one is left behind and we all get the same opportunities that we are already seeing for 2021 through the work of AITC. I look forward to working with Iain and the team and, in turn, all our members and future members of AITC to ensure the future is bright for us all.'

Iain welcomed Emma into her new role saying: 'The AITC board is delighted to welcome Emma to the role of vice chairwoman. She has been a director on the AITC board, representing Islay and Jura, for more than two years. Emma brings with her immense enthusiasm and a passion for tourism, along with her unwavering entrepreneurial and innovative approach which will be an asset.'

Carla sings praises of Masterchef team

EXCLUSIVE
by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



A Mull chef and restaurateur has been speaking about her experience starring on the hit BBC One television series Masterchef: The Professionals.

Carla Lamont bowed out in episode 12 on Thursday night. Despite having no classical training and rubbing shoulders with a Michelin-star master, she reached the quarter finals of this year's competition to find the next superstar chef from a starting field of 32.

Carla, 56, said: 'It's impossible to prepare yourself for it. It's the pressure you put on yourself and I wasn't alone in that. I deal with stress every day and cheffing is one of the most stressful jobs in the world.'

She added: 'The time constraints on the programme are insane. The idea is it's supposed to challenge you. Your brain just freezes and any thoughts you have go out of the window and thank god I have years of experience. I can now say I did it and lived to tell the tale.'

Given her time on the show again, Carla said she would have practiced more in advance and would have learned how to operate an induction oven, which she had no previous experience of using until the show and which ultimately led to her exit.

Originally from Victoria, Canada, she and husband Johnny, a fisherman, co-own and run the 18-seater Ninth Wave Restaurant on the Isle of Mull. Built 12 years ago at Fionnphort from 'nothing but their imagination', it has put the island firmly on the UK culinary map by becoming a major dining destination and winning several major 'restaurant of the year' awards and food and drink accolades. Despite being a fan of the series, which is now in its 13th season, there is no way Carla could have taken part in any other year because she would have been too



Carla's tip for the final on December 17 is Bart Van Der Lee who she described as 'quality, 100 per cent quality.'

busy in the restaurant. Yet for her, the pandemic created space for a 'magical opportunity' to try out for the series and the tough challenge helped bring a 'silver lining' to a turbulent 2020.

Despite scores of applications, gutsy Carla impressed programme makers with her natural verve and unconventional CV and she believes she is the oldest contestant to appear on the show.

As she puts it, she started her kitchen career 'slinging pizza at the age of 14 as a weekend job' before turning to full-time restaurant work in Victoria, British Columbia.

Twenty six years ago she moved from Canada to the Isle of Iona to take up a job as third chef - rising up the ranks to head chef and meeting her future husband in the beer garden of a local pub.

As well as surviving in what was then a male-dominated kitchen environment, Carla said it made her 'twice as tough' and she credits that to having three older brothers.

It all gave her a worldly experience like few other applicants and despite admitting to hav-

ing 'shouted at the television' during previous series, she now fully appreciates the pressure cooker atmosphere the contestants face.

Filming took place at a secret location in London at the end of the first lockdown. Asked to name her favourite part, she praised 'the whole experience' and said she loved the opportunity of working alongside professional chefs and said everyone was so kind.

Judges Marcus Wareing and Monica Galetti and presenter Gregg Wallace were 'amazing', she added. She cooked for the UK's toughest restaurant critics Jay Rayner and Grace Dent, creating a pigeon benedict and Isle of Mull crab cheesecake.

'Of course their job is to criticise you and they are tough cookies but they all want you to succeed, everyone involved in the show from the producers to the cameramen,' said Carla.

She has been inundated with well wishes, some of them so kind and supportive that they nearly moved her to tears by praising the fact she was different.

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Highlands gift initiative offers recipients A Whale of a Time

A new gift box service dedicated to showcasing products from the Highlands and Islands was launched last week, writes Fiona Scott.

A Whale of a Time brings together products from independent businesses from Orkney, Wick, Moray and Inverness, to Lochaber, Wester Ross, Harris, Lewis, Islay and Skye. The range of eight gift boxes has been created to introduce recipients to products made in the region

Founded by Helen Ross and Eilidh Marshall, who run Inverness-based PR agency Whale-like-fish, A Whale of a Time aims to connect Highlands and Islands businesses with consumers throughout the UK.

Speaking at the launch last week, Helen said: '2020 has been a difficult year for everyone.

'There are so many independent businesses in the Highlands and Islands making brilliant products, so we're excited to bring some of them together in our gift boxes'

'However, adversity is the mother of invention and we were inspired to create something that would help businesses in the Highlands and Islands get their products out there and spread a little bit of joy to people all over the UK.

'By selecting some of our favourite local products and bringing them together in our curated gift boxes, we hope these gifts will help connect people again, even if they can't be together in person.'

Eilidh added: 'There are so many independent businesses in the Highlands and Islands making brilliant products, so we're really excited to bring some of them together in our gift boxes.

'We've made each box with the aim of creating an experience that the recipient will love, whether it's to spend quality time with the family, to help them relax or so they can celebrate a special occasion. Each box can be personalised



Helen Ross and Eilidh Marshall with their Whale of a Time gift boxes.

with your own special message. We really hope you love them as much as we do.'

Producers included in A Whale of a Time gift boxes include Loch Ness Spirits, Badachro Distillery, Inverness Coffee Roasting Co., Pixel Spirits, Mix'd, Atlantic Lights, Bruichladdich Distillery, Island Bakery, Lucy Wagtail, Shore - The Scottish Seaweed Company, Pencil Me In, Cath Waters, Isle of Skye Seaweed Co., Ashers, Selkie Soap Co., Ablekids Press, Made

in the Highlands, Camella Crafts, Love Tonic, Chocolates of Glenshiel, JP Orkney, Baile Mor Books and The Hebridean Tea Store.

Find out more about A Whale of a Time at www.awhaleofatime.co.uk

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Changes afoot for Fort William firm



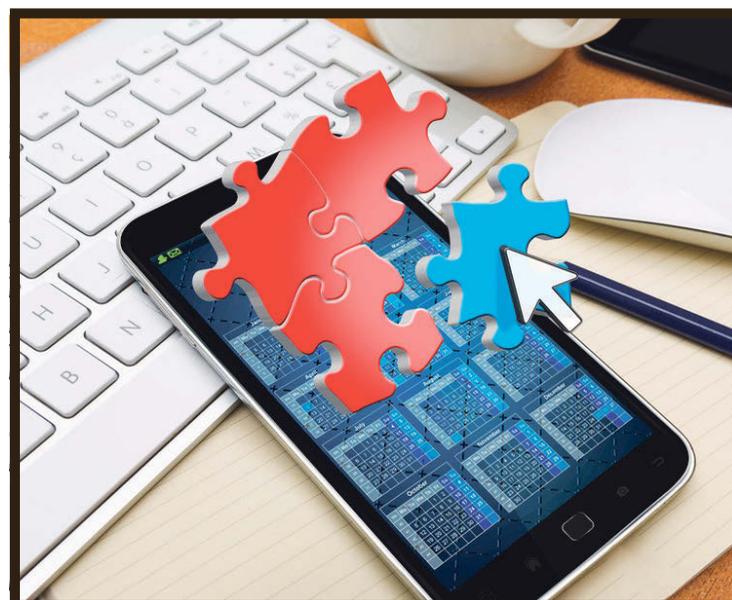
A Fort William-based low carbon energy firm, HWEnergy, is rebranding to AMP Clean Energy at the end of the year.

From its early beginnings in Lochaber in 2003, HWEnergy has become a key player in the renewable energy industry in Scotland, becoming one of the most significant employers in the area, currently employing more than 60 staff in engineering, management, finance and support roles.

Since becoming part of the AMP Clean Energy Group in 2017, HWEnergy has expanded across the UK, currently providing operation, maintenance and fuel services to more than 1,000 biomass heating boilers on behalf of a wide range of businesses, public sector and other organisations and has recently also diversified into the maintenance of flexible power generating 'peaking' plants.

With the Scottish and the UK Governments both committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions, HWEnergy - as part of AMP Clean Energy - aims to continue to be at the forefront of the low carbon economy. HWEnergy will remain a Scottish-based company with its headquarters in Fort William with the same team in place. It will change its name on January 1 2021. Bruno Berardelli, managing director of HWEnergy, said: 'This is a really exciting development for our business. With the full power of the AMP Clean Energy Group behind us, we can continue to support our much cherished client base, whilst also bringing the benefits of low carbon heat to even more businesses and organisations throughout the UK at a time when a lot of focus is being diverted towards the green recovery.

'We are very proud of our heritage and of the fact we have been able to build a national operation from Fort William over the past 17 years, servicing clients as far afield as Shetland to Cornwall. We will continue to expand, support existing local employment and create new opportunities as part of AMP Clean Energy.'



Wylie & Bisset giving free business advice to steer Scottish businesses through the Coronavirus crisis

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Merry Christmas

Your personal Christmas messages for 2020

more messages on page 27

SHEILA MAITLAND

WISHES ALL HER FRIENDS FROM MUSIC, NURSING, MEDICAL, ROTARIAN, HEALTH & HEALING ALL THE BEST FOR 2021

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Iain & family, 14 Millpark Place

To all my friends & relations in the Oban & Fort William area, I wish you all a very happy Christmas & virus free New Year. My love to you all, Audrey (Granny MacDougall)

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Mary Friel

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Margaret Cameron, Cruachan Cottages Taynuilt

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all friends in Oban, Loch Awe, Dalmally, Inveraray & Tyndrum, I won't be sending cards this year from Alice Girvan, Inverness.

HENRY & ETVIE BLACK

wish relatives, friends & neighbours a merry Christmas. Keep healthy everyone & have a great 2021

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Penny MacPhail

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Peggy MacCuish

Best wishes for 2021

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Rosemary MacIntyre, Oban & Kilmore

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Kathleen McLennan (Bridge of Orchy)

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Mairi & Norman MacLeod

Bill & Kathleen Reilly

would like to wish all our relatives, friends & neighbours a merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

WIN £200 WORTH OF SHOPPING TROLLEY DASH

COURTESY OF TESCO OBAN

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
Winner must be at Tesco, Lochside, Oban, PA34 4HP for 9.30am January 18th. 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.
DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS
Digital subscribers who have an active subscription covering the period from December 11, 2020, to February 1, 2021, can enter the competition by sending their name, address and email address that they subscribe with to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban PA34 4HB by 10am Thursday January 7. Only one entry per subscription permitted. Entrant must be able to attend the trolley dash in Oban on the January 18, 2021.

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&C's for exclusions). All you have to do is collect 4 tokens over four weeks starting on 10th December, get them to us by 10am Thursday 7th January 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 4 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. The editor's decision is final.

NOW OPEN
WE CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW
YOU AROUND



Highland Soap Co.
SCOTTISH HANDMADE SOAPS & SKIN CARE

A touch of Highland Luxury

Last week, Highland Soap Company invited customers in to experience their brand new visitor centre, shop and café in Fort William. Set up more than 20 years ago, founder Emma Parton has worked to ensure that the skin care products are sustainable, organic and from fresh wild harvested local ingredients. Visitors are able to see demonstrations, and make their own soaps to take away with them afterwards. Essences include, bog myrtle, rose, wild nettle, honey, hebridean seaweed, rosehip, raspberry etc.

Emma says: 'The new visitor centre is such an exciting step for Highland Soap, we really wanted to show off our products at their best, and our new home certainly achieves that.'

This multi-million pound development sits alongside the A82, with a spectacular view of Ben Nevis. The 13th-century Old Inverloch Castle sits alongside, with the River Lochy at the rear and six acres of landscaped park around it. A gorgeous setting. Originally Old Inverloch Farm, the front of the building has been rebuilt to exactly the same image as the old byre.

The company has five shops, Pitlochry, Spean Bridge, Oban, St Andrews and on the Fort William high street. It also has a thriving online business and its range of products are available in many upmarket gift shops and hotels.

The double height cafe, with seating for 80 inside, has a thoughtful menu that uses fresh seasonal ingredients, almost all are sourced from our local area. All cakes and sweet treats are baked daily by the talented chefs. The shop has a lot more than Highland Soap products – Christmas gifts, pottery, books and gourmet foods not found elsewhere in Lochaber.

Co-founder Archie MacDonald says: 'This site allows us to really grow the business. Highest quality organic soaps and shampoos, combined with the reputation the highlands has for clean air, open space and beauty, seems to be a popular combination for customers, especially now.'

An exciting next step for this ambitious West Highland company.

'the new visitor centre is such an exciting step for Highland Soap, we really wanted to show off our products at their best, and our new home certainly achieves that'



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We are delighted to have been involved in redeveloping the former British Alcan Recreation Club site into the Highland Soap Company's new larger manufacturing premises, retail shop and larder cafe.



The Highland Cinema - Dualchas Architects
Photographs - Iain Ferguson



Ardnaheoe Distillery - CMA Architects
Photographs - Konrad Borkowski



KOSH Bonar Bridge - Adams & Sutherland
Architects Photographs - Anthony Coleman

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Building The Highland Soap Company's Future – On Great Foundations

For decades I have driven along the A82, seen the mown field, watched people walk their dogs and occasionally glimpsed an over or two of cricket being played. My grandfather, Rory MacDonald had told me that in the 1820s our ancestor Long John had been the tenant farmer when he had founded the distillery. When I heard the building was up for sale, along with a lease for the surrounding land I was immediately interested. Highland Soap was growing really fast, with new shops opening and a thriving wholesale and internet business. Our site at the Auction Mart was too small and knowing what other soap companies were doing around the world, Emma Parton, my business partner and founder of Highland Soap, and I could see the huge potential of combining manufacturing with a visitor centre, a flagship shop and café with an amazing view of Ben Nevis.

Having secured the property, surveys showed that the building was beyond saving. Galbraiths, the specialist property consultant worked with us to keep the same shape but create a bright attractive building that perfectly suited the image of the Highland Soap brand. The construction company 3b was well on with building The Highland Cinema and had earned the respect and trust of the client, and had a big enough team and expertise to take on our project at Old Inverloch Farm. The same could be said of David Narro, the engineers. Locally-based Leiths supplied hundreds of tonnes of concrete and BSW most of the timber.

Of course there were complications, Covid amongst them. The bridge across the smelter tailrace could only take 18 tonnes, electricity and water could no longer be supplied by the smelter, a pipe to take the sewage up to the Scottish

Water mains on the wrong side of the A82 was needed and there was thousands of tonnes of gravel, stone and waste wood that needed handling by Danny Anderson, the digger man and his colleague Jamie from Acharacle. We have worked with Historical Environment Scotland to improve parking and the aspect from the gorgeous Old Inverloch Castle, which is a fantastic asset to have beside us, as is the river Lochy alongside the building.

It is wonderful to have it all finished – we raised a dram in thanks to the hundreds of people involved in building the new Highland Soap Visitor Centre when we cut the ribbon on December 4. Sláinte.

Archie MacDonald



Archie MacDonald



Emma Parton



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Fill your boots – and your bottles! Discover Fort Will

If you are asked to 'Bring Your own Bottle' most people would take it that they are heading to a party or some form of social gathering, but with the Highland Soap Co. this invite underlines their commitment to eco friendliness and zero-waste products.

Highland Soaps' brand new, purpose-built facility next to the 13th-century Old Inverloch Castle combines a production



area with visitor centre, shop, cafe, and an expansive venue for events, both inside and outdoors. One of its many well thought out innovations is the option to fill your own empty bottle from a range of liquid hand washes laid out in 'industrial' sized containers, saving on packaging and plastic waste.

To help decide which of the many quality products suits you best there is also a try-before-you-buy area, with a beautiful large sink and line-up of soaps with which to wash hands and enjoy the various seductive aromas.

Fort William residents may think the new building looks quite familiar, as it was quite deliberately designed to appear similar to the old farmhouse and former BA Social Club on whose site it was built. The flat area of the bowling green has also been preserved as an outdoor function space, now with an attractive grassy bund on three sides to give some protection from the vagaries of Lochaber weather, but still retaining the spectacular views of Ben Nevis and its foothills.

This area adjoins the outdoor seating area of the cafe (complete with quirky, traditional red phone box) and has been designed to allow a site for a large marquee while still retaining a natural, grassy area giving people space to mingle and chat.

Catering is another factor which has been very carefully considered, with an extensive modern kitchen able to easily serve functions of around 200 people, as well as providing the day-to-day requests of customers enjoying the cafe.

Bright, airy and sharing the spectacular views of the hills, the cafe is laid out to make an attractive and comfortable space for visitors, snuggling in to Chesterfield sofas in addition to stylish tables and chairs.

If you have ever wondered how soap is actually made there is also the opportunity to watch this process from a viewing window in the shop, where the care and attention (not to



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LEITHS

Highland Soap Company's fabulous new shopping and eating destination

(mention the science) which goes into every Highland Soap Co. product can be seen as it is carried out by their experts.

On so many levels a visit to Highland Soaps' new building is guaranteed to be a pleasing experience, from actually seeing the production process, to trying out the range, shopping, taking some relaxing time-out in the cafe, or even just enjoying the views. A definite 'must go to' on everyone's list not only this Christmas, but at any time of year.



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Old Inverlochy Farm – a glimpse into the past

What for many years has been known locally as The BA Social Club was, until about 1970, part of The British Aluminium Co. farm enterprise. Old Inverlochy Farm was worked in conjunction with Claggan and Achintee, and had been bought from Lord Abinger when all the land for the hydro scheme to power what was then known as 'The Factory' was acquired in 1926.

Almost 200 years ago, Long John Macdonald the distiller grew barley at the farm. The Kennedy family from Lochside were tenants before and during the war, and it was taken in hand in the late '40s and run as a dairy farm with a herd of Ayrshire cattle. The farm received a near miss during a bombing raid in 1943. All the land which later became a football pitch and mini golf course was cultivated along with The Black Parks and produced excellent crops of oats, turnips and hay. The farm griever was Willie Henderson and the cottage beside the castle was occupied by a family called MacLean who helped run the dairy.

Old Inverlochy Castle was built in the 13th

century by John 'the black' Comyn, Lord of Badenoch and Lochaber, and, in the 1950s, the BA entered into a Deed of Guardianship with the Ministry of Works under the terms of which the latter took on responsibility for maintenance. What used to be known as the Milton Hotel was built on a small triangular field beside MacBraynes bus depot, and the rocky knoll known as Tomnahara between there and the entrance to the Goods Yard was where Iain Lom was said to have witnessed the closing stages of the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645.

The BA Club, which was a much-valued local amenity, hosting everything from weddings to local bands, closed some years ago and the sports fields fell into disuse. The former farm buildings were structurally poor and there was no alternative except to demolish them.

With the opening of the Highland Soap Visitor Centre, we see a new chapter in the history of an area so closely connected with Lochaber's past.

Richard Sidgwick



A family run business established in 1972 and based in Falkirk - we specialise in the design, manufacture and installation of commercial catering equipment for the UK and Export markets.

We are delighted to have been the project lead company for The Highland Soap Company's new commercial kitchen.

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Highland Soap Co.
SCOTTISH HANDMADE SOAPS & SKIN CARE

We would like to thank our contractors, suppliers, fantastic team and wonderful customers for making it happen! We are delighted with our new venue and look forward to serving the good people of Fort William and beyond for many years to come.

With grateful thanks, Archie and Emma

allround signs

allroundsigns.co.uk

Annat Industrial Estate
Corpach, Fort William PH33 7NA

Wishing
The Highland Soap Company
well in the new venture,
from the team at
All-Round Signs.



Frazer Coupland, CEO of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce said:

"I am once again delighted to welcome investment into the Lochaber economy. The Highland Soap Company's transformation of this area with a new-build factory, shop and café will be a great addition to our local infrastructure.



"It will not only provide new jobs and enable the business to grow and develop their ambitious plans, but is another much needed venue for the local community and for visitors.

"As we look ahead to rebuilding our visitor economy, a high quality attraction like this can only be viewed as positive as we encourage them to stay longer, spend more time and then return. For those of us lucky enough to live in the Outdoor Capital of the UK we now have another high class venue where we can spend our much valued leisure time."

From Concept to Completion

Proud to design and project manage The Highland Soap Company's new production plant and visitor centre



From the redundant BA Club in Fort William, Galbraith have steered the design, planning and construction from inception to completion

Our Building Surveying and Project Management team work throughout the UK and Ireland. [Visit our website for a list of contacts](#)

Galbraith

Cafe culture in Lochaber



ALVANCE British Aluminium congratulates 'The Highland Soap Company' on the opening of the Soapworks Shop & Larder Café, a former BA Social Club.

It's great to see the building has undergone lots of renovation and turned into a great place for local people and tourists to visit.



1920



2020

More Christmas messages will be published next week



Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Alan Logan

PAUL & GEMMA CUMMINS KELVINDALE, GLASGOW
wish friends, former neighbours & colleagues a happy & healthy festive season

SEASONS GREETINGS
and love to all friends in Oban & Mull from Pearl & Colin.
Keep safe.

Happy Christmas & a happier New Year
to my friends & neighbours in the caring village of Furnace from Edith MacKellar

BETTY MACLACHLAN, SPEAN BRIDGE
wishes her family, friends & neighbours a merry Christmas a Happy New Year

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all our friends, neighbours & ex colleagues from Bob & Morag Miller, Plean, Stirling

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from John MacVean, 15 Lynn Court, Oban

BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS & THE NEW YEAR
to all our friends in Mull. Hope to see you soon from Daisy & Peter in Spain

The Reverend Archie Lamont now of Torosay Court
would like to wish his friends & family a joyous Christmas & a Happy New Year

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Alex Fletcher, Bunessan, Mull

Jimmy & Kay Harrison
would like to wish all our relatives, friends & neighbours a merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all our friends & neighbours from Moira & Douglas, Oban

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Allan & Margaret Black, Salen

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Jessie and John, Balindore, Taynuilt

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all my relatives & residents of Lynn Court, from Catriona Campbell

Jan & Brian Wilkinson, Taynuilt,
wish all relatives & friends a peaceful Christmas & all the best for 2021

We're giving you an extra week!



Your personal Christmas messages

A

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all my relatives friends & neighbours from John Smith, Oban

B

SEASONS GREETINGS
to all my relatives friends & neighbours from John Smith, Oban

C

JOHN AND JANE SMITH, OBAN
would like to wish all their relatives, friends & neighbours a merry Christmas

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Published on 17th December

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It's hard to imagine now, but there was a time when Christmas was hardly celebrated in Scotland.

Many businesses did not even consider it a holiday until 1965 when Royal Mail stopped delivering letters and parcels on Christmas Day.

However, it all changed and, as we know, Christmas has become the biggest annual commercial celebration - some would say too commercial and beginning far too early.

Many attribute the change to Queen Victoria and her marriage to Prince Albert for introducing some of the most prominent aspects of Christmas. In 1848, the Illustrated London News published a drawing of the royal family celebrating around a decorated Christmas tree, a tradition that was reminiscent of Prince Albert's childhood in Germany. Soon every home in Britain had a tree covered with candles, sweets, fruit, homemade decorations and small gifts. Giving presents had traditionally been at New Year but moved as Christmas became more important to the Victorians. Initially these were modest - fruit, nuts, sweets and small handmade trinkets - and usually hung on the Christmas tree. However, as gift giving became more central to the festival, they became bigger and shop-bought and were either placed under the tree or in stockings

The roast turkey, too, has its beginnings in the Victorian era. Previously other forms of roasted meat such as beef and goose were the centrepiece of the Christmas dinner. Turkey was added to this by the more wealthy sections of the community in the 19th century, but its perfect size for a family gathering meant that by the beginning of the 1900s it became the dominant dish, except in some rural areas where deer, hares, pheasants, duck and other birds were plentiful.

Recently, when I was working in the wonderful Oban Times archives - one of the richest sources of West Highlands and Islands history from 1863 to the present - my eye caught the following headline: 'Morven [sic] December 1892. Mr T V Smith of Ardtornish, in keeping with his usual generosity, has through his much esteemed and respected manager, Mr W Elliot, liberally sup-



Deer stalker Archie Gillies, Inverailort, edges forward ready to take the shot. Note how well his tweed blends into the background. Right: A red deer hind and its yearling in their autumn coats. Photographs: Iain Thorne.

plied the most of his tenants and estate workers with venison and game. Such gifts are not only appropriate but also helpful to enable them to keep Christmas with good cheer?

Mr Smith (1925-1906), a London distiller and owner of the 39,000 acre Ardtornish Estate, employed more than 100 men and women, so his venison list was enormous. This was an opportunity to thank not only his own employees but the wider community which helped oil the wheels of a vast supporting organisation

throughout the year. After Mr Smith died, his successor, Mr Gerard Craig Sellar (1871-1929), a grandson of Patrick Sellar of Clearance infamy, kept the tradition going, as did Mr Owen Hugh Smith who bought Ardtornish from Sellar's trustees in 1930.

The following is taken from a list given to the estate stalker in 1936 and is a piece of social history worth quoting in full for future students studying the management of large private Highland estates.

Persons to receive haunches of venison: Station Master, Oban; James Skinner, goods agent, Oban; Dr Millar, Aline Park; the crew of the SS Lochinvar, followed by locals: A Cameron, gardener; gardener's bothy; Mrs Henry, gardens, Wm Slaven, Hillside; James Scouler, the Lodge; Hugh MacGillivray, Achranich; Donald MacKichan, Castle Cottage; William MacGillivray, Larachbeg; John Mowat, Lochaline; William Macphee, Kinlochaline, Charles Ives, Ferry Cottage; James Balfour, Hillside; Donald Black, Lochaline; William Wilson, Lochaline; William Lawrie, Larachbeg; Sam Henry, Acharn; William Robertson, Acharn; Donald Mackay, Ullin; Allan Livingstone, Crosben; Donald Cameron, Ardtornish Bay; John Munro, Kennels; Allan MacPherson, Claggan; Donald Sinclair, Lochaline; A MacFadyen, Altachonaich; Charles Christison, Craighbea; Edward Swinton, Achranich; Duncan J MacIntyre, Lochaline; Mrs McCorquodale, Lochaline; A Mason, Kinlochaline; Mrs Connell, Lochaline; John MacColl, Craighdarroch; Mrs Livingstone, Larachbeg; Miss Nichol, Old Ardtornish; Hugh Sinclair, Piermaster; Mrs MacIntyre, Lochaline; Mrs MacDonald, Ardtornish Bay; Mrs Currie, Lochaline; John MacGregor, Lochaline; Mrs MacDougall, Lochaline; Miss McKinney, Lochaline; Dugald Cameron, Inniemore; Charles MacNeill, Beach; Neil MacGillivray, Craighdarroch; Duncan MacVicar, Lochaline; Alexander Sinclair, Lochaline; the Poorhouse; Malcolm Gillies, Knock; Mrs Mitchell, Post Office; Miss Robertson, School house, Claggan; S Mackenzie, Achnaha; Gideon Palmer, Keil; Ralph Palmer, Achabeg; Alexander Kennedy, Fiunary, Archibald Henry, Savary; John Macfarlane, porter, Oban; Colin Cowan, boat hirer, Oban; Nurse MacAskill, Knock; Donald Cameron, Achnaha; Mrs Livingstone, Lochaline. The following were to receive venison if there was sufficient: N Mackinnon [St Kildan], Larachbeg; Widow Gillies [St Kildan] Lochaline; Donald Gillies [St Kildan], Larchabeg; Ewan Gillies [St Kildan], Savary; John Gillies [St Kildan], Larachbeg; Duncan

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Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday December 10, 2020 are listed below with differences for major ports listed underneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Thur	02.00	3.2	07.28	1.5
	14.08	3.6	20.40	1.5
Fri	02.55	3.4	08.34	1.3
	15.05	3.8	21.32	1.3
Sat	03.39	3.6	09.34	1.0
	15.52	3.9	22.19	1.1
Sun	04.21	3.9	10.28	0.9
	16.37	4.1	23.03	0.9
Mon	05.02	4.0	11.19	0.8
	17.20	4.1	23.46	0.8
Tues	05.44	4.1	12.07	0.7
	18.01	4.1	***	**
Wed	00.28	0.8	06.25	4.2
	12.55	0.8	18.42	3.9

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardishaig	-5.35	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Lochboisdale	+0.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Mallaig	+0.25	Dover	+5.30

WEATHER

Thursday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 6°C.

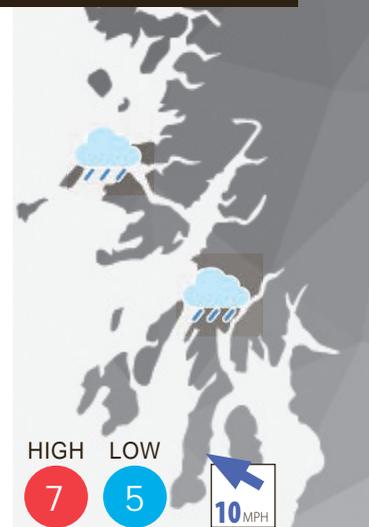
Friday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

WEEKEND OUTLOOK

Saturday
Light cloud and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

Sunday
Heavy rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 7°C to 8°C.

FRIDAY FORECAST



to their workers



MacIntyre, Cui-beg; Angus Maclaren, Boat Hirer, Oban; John Macfarlane, porter, Oban; Colin Cowan, boat hirer, Oban.

Another estate owner who distributed venison on a large scale was Lord Burton, the tenant of Glen Quoich in West Inverness-shire. In 1890, he sent James Henderson, his head stalker, the following list: For the people of Barrisdale (Loch Hourn), two hinds; Kylesmore, three hinds; Skiary, seven hinds and to the people living around Loch Hourn-side, six hinds (shepherd, Campbell, Macrae, McKillop and Mackenzie). Two fencers, Sinclair and Morison, got a hind each; the postman one hind; Donald Roy, one hind; the captain of his yacht, one hind; Donald Cameron of Lochiel's shepherds, three hinds; the path builder living at Kingie, one hind; the people living at Inshlaggan, four hinds; Stewart and Sandy at Garrygualach, one hind; A Cameron, Greenfield, two hinds; Fort William Infirmary, two hinds; Inverness Infirmary, two hinds; Inverness Orphanage one hind; Peter Grant, Inn-keeper, Tomdoun, one hind; W Malcolm [factor] one hind; the Rev Mr McRae, two hinds; Pinkerton [unknown] two hinds; Grant, the gardener, one hind; the Lodge, one hind; people about the square, two hinds; the gamekeepers and stalkers, 18 hinds and 12 to be sent away making a grand total of 79 and all to be of the best yeld hinds. Haunches equal to

six hinds were sent to various people outwith Lochaber including: Mr Forbes, Stationmaster, Inverness; Mr McLaggan, Stationmaster, Perth, and Andrew Dougall Esq, the Highland Railway Company, Inverness. Mr Innes, the innkeeper at Fort Augustus, was later added to the list. Four haunches were to be despatched every week in December to Lord Burton at his estate Rangemore, in the County of Stafford.

The late Mr Christopher MacRae, head stalker on Kingairloch estate from 1917 to 1946, told me there were 17 households on Mr Arthur Strutt's venison list, not including the Corran-Ardgour ferrymen; the Fort William and Oban hospitals, the local nurse, police, ambulance drivers, doctor, vet, postmen, fox hunter, inn-keeper, blacksmith, station master, coal men, car hirers, estate factor and suppliers of goods, many of whom continued to be recipients of these gifts up until the death of Arthur Strutt's widow in 2000.

The late Mrs Cameron-Head of Inverailort's list was equally long and added to whenever there was a death and a subsequent funeral anywhere between Glenfinnan, Morar, Arisaig, Mallaig and Lochailort.

No doubt it was the same all over the west coast.

I would be pleased to hear from any reader who may know of other lists.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This fetching photograph was taken at the river race in Glen Nevis in August 1995. But who are the two 'ladies'? If you know them, or recognise yourself, we'd love to hear from you. You can email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk

Benbecula road gang remembered

We had a couple of emails regarding the photograph of these fine chaps, which we published in the paper on November 19.

Reader Neil MacDonald, the nephew of the late Donald Neil MacRury, who features in the photograph, wrote in saying: 'I have a copy of the original photograph which I believe was in The Oban Times in the late 1960s and quote the actual details as follows: "The last few weeks have been busy ones for these Uist roadmen as work has progressed rapidly on a resurfacing programme to bring the island's road into top standard for the start of the season."

'The men, left to right facing, Iain C MacKay, Donald MacAulay, Donald Neil MacRury, Kenneth MacMillan and Ronald Anderson, were pictured while working on a Benbecula section of the road which links North and South Uist.'

We also received a message from Angus MacAuley, who thinks the photograph depicts



the Benbecula road gang from the 1970s. He gave a bit more detail of where the men came from, saying: 'Left to right, Iain Coll MacKay (Torlum), Donald MacAulay (Hacklett), Donald Neil MacRury (Bridge-end, Kilerivagh), Kenny MacMillan (Hacklett), and the far right I'm not sure but could be either Alastair 'Painter' or Ronald Anderson? Donald MacAulay, my father, was the gaffer.'

Thank you both for getting in touch.



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OT

Shop local, support local, use local



MADE WITH LOVE IN ARGYLL

When Janice Stewart, of Phoenix Fabrics,

noticed an empty retail premises at the Railway Pier in 2017 she took the opportunity to establish Made in Argyll, and

bring diverse, locally made quality crafts at affordable prices to locals and visitors alike. There are now 40

crafters who supply the shop with amazing items as well as taking a turn at manning the shop, giving customers the chance to meet them and offer valued feedback.

This year started exceptionally well for Made in Argyll having undergone a complete makeover ready for the season ahead.

We were so pleased with our professional new look, and looked forward to a busy year,' said Janice, 'then along came the Coronavirus!' 'We took the decision to close a day before we were required to. March to July was a very long time and, knowing folk who had been affected by the virus, it was also



quite scary.'

Prior to reopening in July every effort was made to ensure the safety of both customers and crafters and all the team could do was wait and see whether folk would come back.

Janice added: 'Thanks to the local people, trade began again.'

'Many customers from outside the area bought

gifts and had them posted and also some purchased gift cards to spend when it was safe to come back to Oban again.

'Trade has continued to be brisk and with the continued support of our amazing customers, we look forward to a safer, happier and busier 2021.'

For more information on Made in Argyll got to

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A WARM WELCOME AWAITS AT JULIE'S

Julie's Coffee House is a well established coffee shop in Oban's town centre.

Karen MacLean took over the business three years ago with the aim to continue it's great reputation. Popular with locals and visitors to the town, the venue offers a cosy friendly atmosphere when you enter the shop.

Whether you are looking for a coffee fix or something that little bit more Karen and the team have you covered offering full breakfasts, light lunches and a

huge selection of fresh home baking.

This past year has challenged the cafe's adaptability skills and Karen said: 'We have had to adjust to new working ways, ensuring we have put in all the appropriate safety measures to comply with the covid 19 guidelines.'

'It has been a very apprehensive year for us all but we are incredibly thankful to the locals for supporting us through this tough time.'

'We took part in the governments 'eat out to help out' scheme throughout the month of August which was really successful in getting

us back and up running again.

'I am very thankful to our team here at Julie's who have pulled together and done a great job to create a friendly and safe environment for all to enjoy.'

Looking ahead she added: 'It has been an unprecedented year which has tested us all but we are excited for the future. We look forward to better times where we can increase our capacity and welcome more of you into our wee coffee shop.'

Current opening hours at Julie's Coffee House are Monday - Saturday 10-4.



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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Stewart finds his way to releasing seven-track EP

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A North Connel rapper has been using his love of music to combat mental health struggles throughout lockdown and tell of his journey to find himself again.

Finding My Way is the new seven-track EP from STEWXRT, known to his friends and family as Stewart McAllister, and it has already caught the attention of singer and platinum recording artist Shereen Cutkelvin, who selected the track Sunset Dreaming to play on BBC Radio's Introducing in Scotland at the end of November.

'Music has always meant something to me, even before



I started making it myself, and I found a great escapism in it from a young age, whether that be from making music

or listening,' said Stewart, a former Oban High School pupil who is currently studying business through New College

Stewart McAllister's new EP has already caught the attention of BBC Introducing in Scotland.

Lanarkshire. Now aged 20, Stewart started rapping seriously at the age of 16 after sending a track he had recorded on a very bad computer microphone to local rapper Kevin Irvine (K9 Kev) and receiving some very positive feedback.

'This gave me the confidence and belief I could actually release music and rap in a Scottish accent,' added Stewart, 'something that a lot of people may not be used to.'

The youngster has now been releasing music for the past three years under the name 'S-Mac' but has now reinvented himself as STEWXRT having

got himself through one of the worst times of his life.

'I've always struggled with mild anxiety and insecurity about myself but through lockdown things got progressively worse to the point where I felt I hardly knew myself and struggled to find an identity in the alienated world we've all become used to,' he explained.

'I guess when you're at the very bottom and feel worthless the only way is up and I learned to channel all the negative emotions I had into my music and create a positive. Hopefully it will inspire others who feel the same.'

'Music has always helped with my anxiety, giving me a platform to vent how I feel.'

Finding My Way was released on November 25 with the track

subjects chosen especially to sum up how Stewart has felt during the past few months.

'The fact is I lost myself for a while and needed to find my true self again,' he said.

'The tracks talk about my anxiousness and uncertainty about the future, the prejudiced opinion of people around me who think it's strange that someone from a small town like Oban wants to be a rapper and my struggle with the developing laziness and unwillingness that occurred during lockdown.'

People can access Finding my Way on all major platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes and Soundcloud under the artist name STEWXRT or by clicking the link <https://linktr.ee/STEWXRT>.

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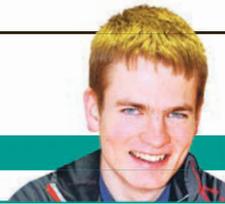
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Robert in lockdown

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



This is usually my favourite time of year in Glasgow: Christmas markets, Christmas nights out, and Christmas Shopping. Well, if I'm being honest, maybe not so much Christmas shopping...!

At the weekend, my phone rather unhelpfully chose to remind me of last year's brilliant night at The Vatersay Boys in the Barrowlands. Nights like that with pals are special, particularly at this time of year, and I think their absence has given me a greater appreciation of them. I can't wait for them to return.

For more than 150 years, the Glasgow Skye Association Annual Gathering has been one such brilliant night. I used to mark it in my calendar as the last event worth waiting for down in Glasgow before heading up the A82 for the remainder of the festive period. This year, like everything else, it was a virtual, online event.

The association's Facebook page played an hour's worth of footage from the 130th Gathering back in 1995. The programme had been made at the time by Abu-tele for the BBC and funded by CTG, and was introduced by Cailean Maclean. What a remarkable bit of archive footage it was. I challenge you to name me a better line up than: Alasdair Gillies, Alasdair Grant, Arthur Cormack, Blair Douglas, Calum Ross, Donald Archie MacKinnon, Donald Murray, George Clavey, Ishbel Lamont, Kenna Campbell, Kirsteen



Former Mòd Gold Medalist, Darren MacLean, cooking up a storm with his copy of the Trad Music Lockdown Cookbook.

Grant, Maggie Macdonald, Mary Ann Kennedy, Seumas Campbell, Wilma Kennedy, accompanist Alan Kitchen and the Glasgow Skye Association Pipe Band. It was wonderful to look back at performances from these greats of the Gaelic music world (some of whom, of course, are sadly no longer with us) and a perfect way to spend a Saturday evening in Tier 4 lockdown.

On a similar note, I was delighted to be involved in another virtual gig recently for St Andrew's Night. Donnie Maroot teamed up with CalMac to put on a virtual, pre-recorded Care for a Cèilidh, during which viewers could donate to the Eilidh MacLeod Trust. It was a pleasure to be involved alongside musicians including former Traditional Musician of the Year, Hannah Rarity; Heisk's Sally Simpson; Mànràn's Ewen Henderson; Skerryvore's Martin Gillespie; world cham-

pion Highland Dancer, Rachel McLaggan, and vocal and guitar duo, The Laurettes.

Every single one of us was just delighted to be playing some form of live music again – even if it was only to a room of cameras – and, of course, it was great to be part of a fundraiser for such a good cause.

Donnie's fundraising efforts continue apace with the release of the Trad Music Lockdown Cookbook.

Pictured is former Mòd Gold Medallist Darren MacLean cooking up a storm with the cookbook, which also includes recipes from members of all your favourite traditional bands. If you want a really good laugh, you can read my attempt at a Salsa. As in the garnish; not the dance.

Search Trad Music Lockdown cookbook on Facebook and message them to get your copy.

So far, the first set of sales have raised £5,000 for Eilidh's Trust. Great stuff!

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ONIEL KALJUYA | LINDY SERKIS | SIÂN PHILLIPS | LESLIE CARO

THIS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 11 DEC	16:30
A Christmas Carol PG	16:30
Space Dogs 3 U	16:45
Lost at Christmas 12A	19:15
The Sleeping Car Murders 15	19:30
<i>Compartment Tueurs</i>	
SATURDAY 12 DEC	14:30
Spotlight: Puss in Boots U	14:30
Space Dogs 3 U	15:15
Harry Potter: Deathly Hallows P1 12A	17:45
A Christmas Carol PG	18:00
SUNDAY 13 DEC	13:00/16:30
Spotlight: Puss in Boots U	13:00/16:30
Space Dogs 3 U	13:45/16:15
Lost at Christmas 12A	19:00
A Christmas Carol PG	19:30
MONDAY 14 DEC	14:30
The Sleeping Car Murders 15	14:30
<i>Compartment Tueurs</i>	

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MONDAY:	8am-12pm 5pm-7pm 12-3pm 4.45pm-5pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast show with Stephen Drive time with Marcus Lunch with Bob G Talking Papers Drive Times with Marcus Highland Fling with Rosemary John McLuckies Show David Cullen Show
TUESDAY:	8am-10am 10am-12.30pm 1pm-3pm 3pm-5pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Ken Hunter Macky on FM Mental Musings with Mer & Vicky Drive Times with Bob G Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers Scottish Sounds with Archie Cameron
WEDNESDAY:	8am-10am 10am-1pm 1pm-3pm 4pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Comfort Zone with Lesley Doug in the afternoon Drive Times with Campbell Country meets Rock N Roll with Len Gordon's Grooves
THURSDAY:	8am-11am 11am-2pm 3pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm-10pm 10pm	Breakfast Show with Andy & Sarah Lunch Show with Steve Drive Time with Stephen Christine's Collections Ann's Ceilidh Margo Till Midnight
FRIDAY:	8am-10am 10am-1pm 1pm-1.15pm 4pm-6.45pm 6.45pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm 10pm	Breakfast Show with Jay The One with Allan Talking Papers Teeny & Tiny Show with Harry Sports View with the Dream Team Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig Evening Show with Peter Rainnie Late Show with Jay.
SATURDAY:	8am-10am 10am-1pm 3pm-6pm 6pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Saturday Morning Live with Linda Jukebox Jamboree with Ken Mc Sports View with the Dream Team Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling Evening Show with Dave Hobbs
SUNDAY:	9am-11am 11am-2pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Sunday Morning with Breege Sunday Brunch with Stephen New Country Show with Dave & Murdoch Drum & Bass with Graham.

Victory Hall presents Christmas at Home

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



In defiance of Covid, the Benderloch's Victory Hall team has arranged to have a virtual Christmas concert delivered to your home this year.

Christmas at Home with McGoldrick, McCusker and Doyle, the Benderloch gig, will be available on Tuesday December 29 at 8pm, with ticket fees split between the band and the venue.

Best known for their work with Bob Dylan, Mark Knopfler and BBC Transatlantic Sessions, as well as artists including Solas, Capercaillie and Kate Rusby, the multi-award winning trio have recorded a 45-minute set of Christmas tunes, as well as some firm favourites.

Whether performing material such as the medieval-based song Curroo Curroo, John Shehan's hauntingly beautiful melody Christchurch, or the majestic O Holy Night, their decades of renowned musical expertise creates a magical and lasting impression.

Michael McGoldrick ex-



McGoldrick, McCusker and Doyle will be performing at a Virtual Victory Hall concert this month.

home. It will be great to see everyone over Christmas and we will get the social media going once you have your ticket.

'It's going to be a great Christmas and no matter where you are, you can be in Benderloch at the Palladium for the gig.'

Tickets are £12 but there is an option to pay £15, £20 or £30 if people choose to. This is aimed at those who are buying for multiple members of a household or just want to contribute a bit more.

To book go to myplayer.uk/christmasathome and find the Benderloch date on Tuesday December 29.

Once you have bought your ticket you will receive an email with information about how to watch the show in the comfort of your home.

Each ticket will allow one more screening within seven days. Tickets are only valid for one device at a time and cannot be shared.

plained: 'We felt we wanted to connect with people at this time of year and had been looking for a way to do this.'

'This November we were supposed to be performing in Switzerland and the Czech Republic and John Doyle had flown over from his home in the US.'

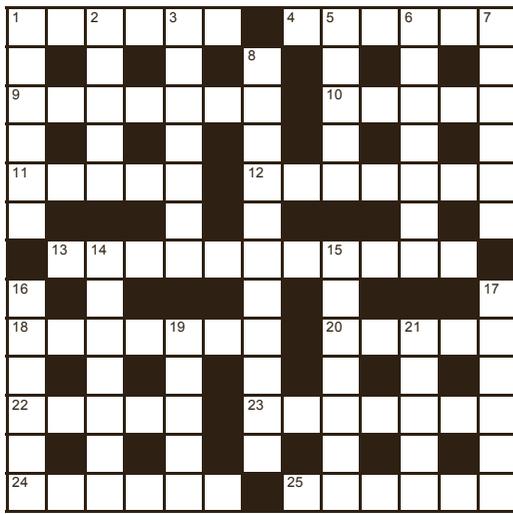
The tour was cancelled at short notice so we thought this is our chance to use the time to record something special.'

The performance will last about 45 minutes and will be followed by a question and answer session.

'All you need then is a turkey sandwich, a cup of tea, or something a little stronger and we are off,' said one of the Victory Hall events organisers, Joy Cameron.

'Come and join us on your laptop, your PC, your phone, you can even play the gig through your music system at

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Patch (6)
 - 4 Containing lime (6)
 - 9 Method of defence (7)
 - 10 Utopian (5)
 - 11 Guffaw (5)
 - 12 Mid 90s music (7)
 - 13 Rubber holder (7,4)
 - 18 Quiet (7)
 - 20 Rubble on a mountainside (5)
 - 22 Some church music (5)
 - 23 Untouched (7)
 - 24 Movement of a whirlpool (6)
 - 25 Kickoff (6)
- Down**
- 1 Wheedle (6)
 - 2 A Jewel (5)
 - 3 Gate lock (7)
 - 5 Way out (5)
 - 6 Reduce (7)
 - 7 Spiritual Islamic leader (6)
 - 8 Shed maybe (11)
 - 14 Clawed water dweller (7)
 - 15 Where to catch transport (3,4)
 - 16 Russian science-fiction writer (6)
 - 17 Door to door seller (6)
 - 19 Set free (5)
 - 21 Program on tv again (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Tunes in care homes set to bring loved ones online ceilidh cheer over the festive season

Online music outfit Tunes in the Hoose has launched an initiative to get toes tapping in every care home in Scotland this Christmas by putting on a virtual ceilidh.

To achieve this ambitious goal the original traditional Scottish music community, born out of lockdown, are asking the public to help.

Tunes in the Hoose producer Martin MacLeod said: 'We are keen to work with the Care Inspectorate - although they are terribly hard to get a hold of - to send links out to as many homes as possible, but there is a chance a percentage could be missed.'

'To combat this, we asking for help from the public to spread the news to those working in the care sector or any community that may benefit from the show.'

Care homes will be required to make arrangements for the

virtual ceilidh to be viewed on either a television or on phones/tablets.

'This year has been incredibly difficult for the country, but particularly for our care homes,' continued Martin.

'Many residents have lost contact with the outside world, having been separated from their loved ones, and we want to remind them they haven't been forgotten.'

Special

'With the inevitable restrictions on visits and festive parties, we want residents to experience something really special this Christmas, so we are producing a unique virtual ceilidh to be played in every care home in Scotland.'

The exact launch date will be announced soon.

For more information or to request a link, go to www.tunesinthehoose.com/carehomeceilidh



Martin MacLeod junior and senior are bringing their 'Tunes' to care homes this Christmas.



A daily walk this Christmas will help beat any winter blues.

Walk this way to ensure winter health

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Families across Argyll are being encouraged to get moving this Christmas by pledging to walk once a day.

Scotland's walking charity Paths for All has highlighted the importance of a daily walk to keep up physical and mental wellbeing during the winter.

The plea comes as the charity launches its Walk Once a Day campaign as well as a new online hub giving lots of ideas, activities and information designed to motivate everyone to get outdoors with nature spotting tips, podcast recommendations, location advice, community and festive walks and creative walking.

The winter initiative will also offer incentives to those who take up the challenge to walk once a day throughout December and January.

Dr Gregor Smith, Scotland's chief medical officer, said: 'Regular walking is a powerful tonic. It helps to boost our immune system and those of us able to should strive to get the benefit this winter.'

'A 30-minute daily walk is one of the best ways to look after yourself and it's something we can do from our own front door.'

'During periods of physical distancing, isolation and

uncertainty, many have experienced increased feelings of anxiety, stress or worry. Daily outdoor exercise, while adhering to guidelines, is an important way to improve physical and mental wellbeing.

'We would encourage those who are able to get outdoors this winter to do so, even if it is for a short walk to the shop or to school.'

Research shows that half a million older people regularly

'Walking is one of the best things that people can do for their health...during Covid it is more vital than ever'

experience periods of isolation, going at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone.

Getting out for a daily walk allows interaction with neighbours, others in the community and can create a sense of connection and community belonging, even while social distancing.

Dr William Bird, founder of Intelligent Health and the Beat the Street game said: 'When I talk to patients on a day-to-day basis, most of them ask for advice on how to avoid getting Covid-19 or

how they can improve their chances of fighting it if they do catch it.

'Walking is always one of the best things that people can do for their health, however, during these times of Covid-19, it's more vital than ever. When you go for a brisk walk, this stimulates the creation of natural killer cells which are part of the immune system. They sit at the nasal cavity and are ready to mop up any virus including Covid-19 and kill it before it has a chance to replicate and get into the cells.'

'Not only that, but walking in green space and nature have a positive impact on the brain and also reduces stress and its negative impact on the immune system.'

UK-wide research by King's College London during lockdown revealed 49 per cent of people in the UK have felt more anxious or depressed than normal, with walking shown to be an effective method to prevent and manage mental health conditions. Surveys have shown that Scots have increased their walking during this unprecedented time more than any other part of the UK.

For more information on Paths for All and the Walk Once a Day this Winter campaign, search pathsforall.org.uk/walkonceaday

M'ALBA

MY ALBA

DIARDAOIN 10 an Dùbhlachd

THURSDAY 10 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Calanais – Full Circle (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19.30 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20.00 An La (rpt)
- 20.30 Eorpa (rpt)
- 21.00 An Lan- A' beartachadh an Lain (rpt)
- 22.00 Bill W
- 23.40 Brisdeadh na Cloiche (rpt)

DIHAOINE 11 an Dùbhlachd

FRIDAY 11 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 An La - News
- 19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
- 19.30 Cearcall (rpt)
- 20.00 Ceolmhor@Piping Live! (rpt)
- 20.30 An Lot (rpt)
- 21.00 NEW Na Trads 2020
- 22.00 Twin (rpt)
- 22.45 Dhan Uisge (rpt)
- 22.55 Binneas na Trads (rpt)
- 23.00 Func (rpt)
- 23.30 Orain Oir (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 12 an t-Samhain

SATURDAY 12 December

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 17.45 An Là – News
- 18.00 NEW Scottish Premiership - Aberdeen v Ross County
- 19.45 Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 19.55 Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 20.00 Cearcall (rpt)
- 20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)

- 21.00 NEW Na Trads 2020
- 22.40 Port – Druthag Bheag Eile (rpt)
- 23.00 Scottish Premiership – Aberdeen v Ross County (rpt)
- 00.45 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (highlights) (rpt)

DIDÒMHNAICH 13 an t-Samhain

SUNDAY 13 December

- 16.00 NEW SWPL – Glasgow City v Rangers
- 18.05 Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 18.15 An La – NEWS
- 18.30 Seachd La – News Review
- 19.30 Alleluia! (rpt)
- 20.00 Eorpa (rpt)
- 20.30 Dreach Ur Na Nollaig (rpt)
- 21.00 Bill W (rpt)
- 22.40 Port-Druthag Bheag Eile (rpt)
- 23.00 Twin (rpt)
- 23.45 Belladrum - Cridhe Tartan (Highlights)

DILUAIN 14 an t-Samhain

MONDAY 14 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 TGaisgich na Stoirme (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 20.00 An Là – News
- 20.30 An Lot (rpt)
- 21.00 Sgeulachdan a' Ghlasaidh - Trusadh (rpt)
- 21.45 Dirlo - Am Fear Maireann (rpt)
- 21.55 Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 22.00 Julie Fowles – Ceol Aig Baile (rpt)
- 22.30 Seoid a' Christmas (rpt)
- 23.30 FUNC (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 15 an Dùbhlachd

TUESDAY 15 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming

- 19.05 Calanais – Full Circle (rpt)
- 19.35 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 20.00 An Là – News
- 20.30 Dreach Ur Na Nollaig (rpt)
- 21.00 Opry le Daniel (rpt)
- 21.50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)
- 22.00 Sgeulachdan a Ghlasaidh – Trusadh (rpt)
- 22.45 Dirlo - Am Fear Maireann (The Survivor) (rpt)
- 22.50 Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 23.00 Ceolmhor@Piping Live! (rpt)
- 23.30 Alleluia! (rpt)

DIADIADAIN 16 An Dùbhlachd

WEDNESDAY 16 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 18.40 An Là – News
- 18.50 NEW UEFA Women's Champions League – Glasgow City v Sparta Prague
- 21.00 Orain Ghaidhlig Beethoven (rpt)
- 22.30 Ludwig Mor nan Oran (rpt)
- 23.25 Julie Fowles (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 17 an Dùbhlachd

THURSDAY 17 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 NEW Eorpa
- 21.00 Moulin Rouge Ecosse (rpt)
- 22.00 Func (rpt)
- 22.30 Orain Oir (rpt)
- 23.00 Freiceadan Ura Na Banrigh (rpt)
- 23.50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)



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OLDS ROTARY CHRISTMAS LUNCH



The Rotary Club of Oban are really sorry that the OLDS Christmas Lunch can't go ahead this year due to Covid-19, however we want you to know that we are thinking of you at Christmas even if we can't meet in person.

We would invite you to enter our free Christmas Draw to receive your own Rotary Christmas Card and small gift, together with entry into our Christmas Hamper Raffle.

We have six hampers ready to be delivered by our Super Special Socially Distanced Secrete Santa.

Please contact MacQueen Brothers on 01631 564848 between 9am and 4pm to take part.

The Draw will be open till 4pm on Monday the 14th Of December. Don't delay, apply today and **GOOD LUCK** in the Raffle.

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Around the markets

United Auctions, December 5, Dalmally: sold 467 Store cattle and 36 Breeding cattle. Bullocks sold to £1340 for two, 661kg, CharX and one, 634kg, LimX from I R Morrison, 13 Eoligarry, Barra to average £690.09 (+£48.96) and Heifers sold to £1220 for three, 203kg, Bluegrey's from J & J MacPherson, Balliemanoich Farm, Dalmally to average £618.70 (+£20.74). Bullocks sold to 285.4p/kg for a pen of eight, 240kg, CharX from Laggan Farms, Killinlochnoch Farm to average 232.63p/kg (+9.98p) and heifers sold to 601p/kg for three, 203kg, Bluegrey's from J & J MacPherson, Balliemanoich Farm to average 230.29p/kg (+14.13p). A good selection of quality bred cattle greeted a strong force of buyers and all classes sold at very favourable rates for sellers and in keeping with other principal mainland centres. As this sale concludes all Dalmally & Oban sales for this year, United Auctions wish to thank everyone for their patronage during 2020 and we wish you all a prosperous 2021.

Eoligarry, Barra; £930, 16 Carnoch; £900(2), Craignafeoch. LUINGx - £705(4), Luss Estate. SIMx - £1300, 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £900, £810(3) Dalmore. WBSHx - £760(3), Balliemanoich. Heifers - AAx - £720, Glenfeochan Estate. BSHx - £970, £860, Ashgrove. BRBx - £900, Lephinchapel. BLG - £1220(3), £1190(2), £1000, Balliemanoich Farm. CHARx - £780, Fearnoch Farm. LIMx - £890, 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £870, 16 Carnoch; £860, £850, 10 Eoligarry; £850, Duncroisk. SIMx - £810, Frackersaig Farms. WBSHx - £1040(3), Ardchatten H F. Breeding Cattle - Cow & Calf - £1050, Keppoch Farm. Incalf Heifers - £1650(LimX), £1550(SimX), £1500(SimX), Dall Farm; £1450(SimX), Duncroisk; £1400(BSHx), £1300(2)(SHx), Braes of Ardeonaig; £1200(BRBx), Succoth Ardeonaig. Incalf Cows - £880(SimX), Craig Farm. Bulling Heifers - £950(BRBx), £880(AAx), Succoth Ardeonaig. Leading Prices per Kilo Bullocks - AAx - 236p(2), Steall; 235p, Achnacree more; 233p, 13 Eoligarry; 233p(2), Steall; 232p, Blarchascaig. BSHx - 255p(2), Tiretigan; 234p(2), Shellachan; 230p(2), Tiretigan; 223p, Dalmore; 223p(2), Stronmagachan. BRBx - 274p(5), Lephinchapel. BLG - 234p(7), Balliemanoich. CHARx - 285p(8), 284p(5), 275p(2), Laggan Farms; 271p(5), Kildavaig; 269p, Fearnoch; 258p, Mus-

dale; 252p(5), Laggan Farms; 252p, 250p, Musdale; 250p, Fearnoch; 246p, Musdale; 246p, Fearnoch; 242p(6), Laggan Farms. LIMx - 275p(2), Barbreck; 274p(3), 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 272p, Barbreck; 264p(2), Kiloran Farms; 263p(2), Tullochcan; 259p(4), 10 Eoligarry; 256p(9), Keppoch Farm; 253p, Ardchatten; 252p(2), Ellary Estate; 252p, 5 Eoligarry. LUINGx - 254p, Airds Bay; 253p(5), 252p(5), 251p(7), Oransay; 239p(4), Luss Estate. SALx - 247p(3), 236p(2), Brenchoille; 236p, Machrins. SIMx - 262p, Tigh Na Cille; 252p(2), Achnacree more; 250p, Cairnbaan; 245p(2), Frackersaig; 239p(3), Luss Estate. Heifers - AAx - 247p, Glenfeochan Estate; 246p(6), Blarchascaig. BSHx - 239p, Scallasaig; 234p, Achallader. BRBx - 319p, Lephinchapel. BLG - 601p(3), 513p(2), 431p, 296p(2), 234p, Balliemanoich. CHARx - 258p(6), Kildavaig; 246p(2), Musdale; 237p(2), Tullochmhor; 234p, Fearnoch; 233p, Escart. LIMx - 265p, 10 Eoligarry; 261p, 16 Carnoch; 252p(2), Tullochmhor; 247p(2), 239p, 237p(3), 10 Eoligarry; 236p(3), Kiloran Farmers. 235p(2), Otter Estate. SIMx - 253p, Drimmin Estate; 251p(3), Machrins; 248p, 2 Kiel Croft; 244p, Frackersaig; 239p(2), Scallasaig; 236p, Kiloran Farmers; 233p(7), Luss Estate; 233p, Scallasaig. Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd,

December 4, Fort William: sold 61 store cattle, 6 OTM cattle and 545 sheep. Bullocks (39) sold to 257.1p per kilo for a 210kg Charolais cross from 3 Rhubana View, Morar, and £1,100 gross for a 595kg Charolais cross from Achnacree, Spean Bridge. Heifers (22) sold to 226.4p per kilo for a 265kg Beef Shorthorn cross from Grianan, Glencoe, and £690 gross for a pair of 370kg Limousin crosses from Fersit, Roy Bridge. OTM cows (6) sold to 138.0p per kilo for a 500kg Shorthorn cross from Annat, Banavie, and £790 gross for a 690kg Aberdeen Angus from Steall, Fort William. Store lambs (319) sold to £72.50 gross for Texel crosses from 19 Blarmafoldach, Fort William. Feeding sheep (226) sold to £100 gross for a pen of Cross wedders from Meall Mo Chridhe, Kilchoan. Other leading prices per head & per kilo: Bullocks - 201 - 250kg - 3 Rhubana View, £540, 1 Kinsadel, Morar, 225.5p; 251 - 300kg - Cul-A-Bhile, Bohuntin, £590, Alltour, Spean Bridge, 210.9p; 301- 350kg - Dalreoch, Roy Bridge, £710, Fersit, 225.8p; 401kg and over - 118 Achnaba, Kilchoan, £820. Heifers - 201-250kg - Cul-A-Bhile, £440, 3 Rhubana View, 222.2p; 251-300kg

- Grianan, £600, 1 Kinsadel, 223.5p; 301-350kg - Fersit, £680, 200.0p. Other leading prices per head Lambs: Chev - Drumbuie, Drumnadrochit, £70.50; TexX - Traigh Farm, Arisaig, £67.50; Cross - Insh Farm, Spean Bridge, £66; BF - Ardtornish Farms, Morven, £65, Insh Farm, £60; Lly - Torlundy, Fort William, £59. Feeding sheep: Cross ewe - Meall Mo Chridhe, £96.50; TexX wdr - Meall Mo Chridhe, £95; Chev ewe - Glentruim Farms, Newtonmore, £84.50; Lly ram - Steall, £76; BF - East Croft Roy, Newtonmore, £70.50. United Auctions, December 1, Oban: sold 579 store cattle and 14 Breeding Cattle. Bullocks sold to £1280 for a 306kg, LimX from A & I MacInnes, Ruai, Tirie to average £673.90 (+£6.67) and Heifers sold to £2100 for a 306kg, LimX from the same home to average £693.85 (+£65.14). The same Bullock topped the sale per kilo selling at 418.3p/kg to average 237.39p/kg (+12.65p) and the same heifer topped the sale at 686.3p/kg to average 256.93p/kg (+31.59p). A good show of quality bred cattle sold well and to a strong force of buyers. An increased number of calves with future show potential sold extremely well, in particular heifers, giving purchasers a second option for top class breeding animals. A feature of the

salewas the consignment of cattle from Ruai, Tirie which proved to be in high demand. LEADING PRICES PER HEAD BULLOCKS - AAx - £950, 11 Eoligarry, Barra. BSHx - £925, Glenbeg. BRBx - £1100, £900(2), Strathnafanaig. CHARx - £885(3), Ballochgair. LIMx - £1280, £1120, Ruai, Tirie; £1080, Achnacree Beag; £1000, Tyree; £1000, Barcaldine HF; £980, Low Dunashery; £980, Woodend; £950, Balligarve; £950, Achnacree Bay; £910, Achnaba; £900, Strathnafanaig; £900, Ardtur. LUlx - £750(2), Scammadale. SIMx - £1010, Achnacree more; £970, Keil, Duror; £950, Achnacree more. SHx - £885, Balure of Shian. HEIFERS - AAx - £980, Ruai; £885, Keil, Southend. BRBx - £1750, Ruai; £1550, Tyree; £1550, Strathnafanaig; £1500, Lephinchapel; £1320(2), Tyree; £1320, Strathnafanaig; £1250, £1180(2), Ballochgair. LIMx - £2100, £2000, Ruai; £1650, Woodend; £1420, Ruai; £1350, £1250, Tyree; £1100, Ruai; £1050, Tyree; £1040, Achnacree Beag; £1000, Achadhbeag; £980, Balnagown; £950, Ruai; £940(2), Achnaba. BREEDING CATTLE - INCALF COWS - £900, 6 Goular, North Uist; £850, 239 Bruernish, Barra.



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- 1 x sliding gate

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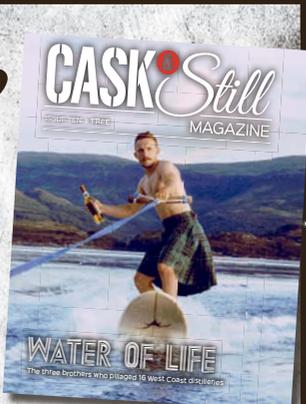
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CASK & STILL MAGAZINE




First Registration of a Croft

Ian Dugald Campbell has registered their croft 4 Kirkapoll, Tiree on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 23rd August 2021.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C7316.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

First Registration of a Croft

Mr John MacColl MacCormick has registered the croft known as Achadh Aghrian, Kinlochlaich, Lismore & Appin on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 2nd September 2021.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C7349.

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

1. T Barnes, Rhemore, 0.036 ha, Amenity Ground, (107031)
2. G Cameron, 45c Ormsaigmore, 0.084 ha, Site for a dwelling house (107257)

Comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 08/01/21 at info@crofting.gov.scot / Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW.

DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED

1. M Holmes, 1 Upper Carnach, 0.01 ha, Amenity ground, With fencing conditions (106029)

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

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 MOORING, BENDORAN BAY, ISLE OF MULL

Notice is hereby given that Mr. C. J. Streather has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of mooring deposit at:

Location	Latitude	Longitude
Bendoran Bay	56°19.229' N	06°16.238' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at <https://bit.ly/36IN5wv>

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made by email to: MS.MarineLicensing@gov.scot within 28 days of the date of this notice, quoting reference: 00008876 and Mr. C. J. Streather.

Fair Processing Notice

The Scottish Government's Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT) determine applications for marine licences under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. During the consultation process any person having an interest in the outcome of the application may make representation to MS-LOT. The representation may contain personal information, for example a name or address. This representation will only be used for the purpose of determining an application and will be stored securely in the Scottish Government's official corporate record. Representations will be shared with the applicant and/or agent acting on behalf of the applicant, any people or organisations that we consult in relation to the application and, where necessary, be published online, however personal information will be removed before sharing or publishing.

A full privacy notice can be found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Licensing/marine/PrivacyNotice>. If you are unable to access this, or you have any queries or concerns about how your personal information will be handled, contact MS-LOT at: ms.marinelicensing@gov.scot.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Argyll and Bute Council
PLANNING

The applications listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be viewed electronically through Argyll and Bute Council website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically at this time. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail: planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk or tel. 01546 605518.

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
20/01886/LIB	Replacement of timber section of bridge and reinforcement of stone section of bridge	Bridge North East Of Auch Lodge, Bridge Of Orchy, Argyll And Bute
20/02002/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land North West Of Fishnish House, Craignure, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
20/02065/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of ground mounted solar array and septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land North Of Barran Caltum Cottage, Glencruitten, Oban, Argyll And Bute
20/02050/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of 3 Heylipol, Heylipol, Isle Of Tiree, Argyll And Bute

Written comments can be submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> or to Argyll and Bute Council, Development Management, Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT 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 on the Councils website. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll Et Bute visit us at:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
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Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>;

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
20/04418/FUL	Bramble Brae, 5 Cuilcheanna Onich	Siting of pod for holiday letting purposes
20/04227/FUL	Cross Bothy Glenacross, Morar	Change of use of farm building to residential
20/04304/FUL	20 Hillview Drive Corpach	Conversion of garage to form self-contained residential unit
20/04597/PIP	Land 115M NE of Aspen Lodge Glenmore, Acharacle	Erection of house
20/04705/FUL	Land 180M SE Of 1 The Corries Caledonia Park, Invergloiy	Retention of bellmouth and access track
20/04297/FUL	Glencoe Mountain Resort Kingshouse, Glencoe	Demolition of existing fire damaged building and erection of replacement cafe

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of The Oban Unit (TS Pharos) of the Sea Cadets Corps will take place on Monday 11th January 2021 at 1900.

Due to COVID restrictions this will be a virtual on-line meeting. Notes – Anyone wishing to attend the meeting MUST submit their details to the UMT Chairperson before 1600 on 8th January 2021, so they can be invited into the call, login details for the call will NOT be made public. Individuals who are seeking election to the UMT must have their nomination proposed and seconded. Nominations can only be accepted if they are submitted on the official nomination form which can be obtained from the UMT Chairperson. Fully completed nomination forms need to be received before 1600 on 8th January 2021. The UMT Chairperson – Richard Dobson MNI – rickdobson63@gmail.com

Proposed Division of a Croft by Owner-occupier Crofter

Angus Ross is applying to divide the owner-occupied croft at 1 & 2 Muirshearlich, Kilmallie into two new crofts.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.gov.scot within 28 days from the date of the advert.

First Registration of a Croft

Mrs Irene Gordon Piggot has registered her croft 4 Airds Bay, Airds Bay in the Parish of Ardchattan & Muckairn on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 30 August 2021. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C7344

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PERSONAL NOTICES

THANK YOU

I wish to express my most sincere thanks to my lovely family, friends and neighbours for all the kindnesses, good wishes, flowers and cards I received whilst in hospital and on my return home. A special thank you to Corran ferrymen for my morning paper.

Morag MacKintosh
Corran

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RECRUITMENT



Care Home for the Elderly

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North Argyll Eventide Home requires an experienced dedicated individual to fill the post of Office Administrator/Finance Officer, with financial and some secretarial responsibilities. This position covers a wide range of duties including production of monthly management accounts, online banking, negotiation of costs for contracts and equipment, and participation and minute taking at board meetings. This is a permanent flexible post, approximately 20 hours per week, and remuneration will be between £16,000 and £18,720 depending on ability and experience. The individual concerned should be fully conversant with Sage Accounts software, be able to work on their own without supervision, be practical and organised, and have good written and spoken skills. Previous experience in a similar post, perhaps running a small business, is essential.

Applicants for this position should send a copy of their CV together with a covering letter to the Home by email at naehltd@gmail.com. The closing date for applications is 20th December 2020.

North Argyll Eventide Home Association Ltd
North Argyll House, Bealach an Rìgh, Oban,
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Tel: 01631-562168

Website: northargyllhouse.org

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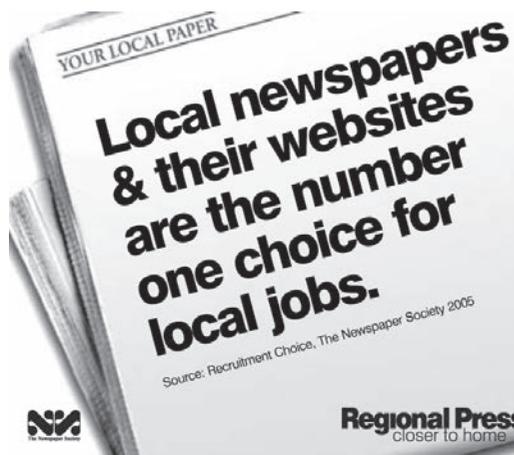
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amacpherson@fes-group.co.uk

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A team member of the Stores department and site engineering support team. Supply input to site stores policies to ensure compliance with all legislative and corporate requirements. These activities should support the sites reliability based culture and the promotion of Glensanda as a world leader in the development of best practice. This will incorporate the management of all activities undertaken by the department members and any contractors in the execution of their duties.

Responsibilities

- Ensure that all activities for Stores department are carried out complying to company safety standards
- Ensure that the correct safety documentation is in place for departmental tasks
- Participate in Interactive Safety Tours on Stores activities
- Assist in the management of stock levels in conjunction with other departments to ensure adequate stock to support the site requirement, ensuring the minimum amount of disruption.
- Ensure that the department maintains a high standard of housekeeping, keeping areas clean, tidy and hazard free
- Deal with all daily issues professionally and liaise with stores and site management on a regular basis
- Carry out the daily activities of Stores personnel
- Using E1 and Coupa work order process allocated to correct cost centres and create purchase orders.
- Contribute to the Engineering team and ensure interdepartmental cooperation.
- Fully comply with site safety rules and company safety standards at all times.
- Management of Stores consumables inventory checking and processes
- Managing all aspects of the sites material supply chain including logistics.
- Management of site procurement standard
- Liaising with key suppliers and A.I. procurement department
- Alignment with national supplier contracts
- Maintain stock accuracy by completing stock check cycle counts
- Achieve best value purchasing with no compromise on quality

Person specification

- Highly organised with demonstrable planning and delivery capabilities
- A highly motivated individual with drive and enthusiasm
- Ability to work as part of a 24 hour, 7 day a week operation
- Good understanding of health and safety
- IT literacy and ability to work to deadlines.
- Experience in management of safe working practices
- Knowledge of HGV operations and securing loads on mobile equipment
- Self-motivated, with initiative and a proactive approach
- Experience of stores procedures and logistics
- Recognition of environmental impact and working knowledge of appropriate environmental legislation
- Strong communication skills with the ability to build effective working relationships with others
- Detail and results orientated with strong personal values to succeed

Please submit your CV and covering letter to Paul Kersley, Engineering Manager (Mechanical) email paul.kersley@aggregate.com
Closing date for applications: 22nd December 2020
Glensanda Quarry Operations,
Rhugh Garbh Depot, Barcaldine, Oban.
Telephone +44 (0) 1631 568111
www.aggregate.com

DEATHS

BUCHANAN – Suddenly at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on December 5, 2020, in the excellent care of Ward B, Archie 'Achnaba', 84, much loved husband of Ann for 52 years, treasured father of William and Morag, respected father-in-law of Helen and Donald, very proud Grandpa of Mairi, Isla and Donnie, and brother of the late Elizabeth and Dorothy. Interment private due to restrictions, on December 15, 2020. For people wishing to pay their respects, Archie will make his final journey from the farm at 12.30 p.m., and make his way to Achnaba Cemetery. Family flowers only please.

CAMPBELL – Catherine, formerly of Killiechranan, Isle of Mull and latterly of Aberfeldy, passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 29, 2020. Loving wife of Hector, much loved Mum to Ian and May and dearly loved Granny to Alice. Private funeral due to current Covid restrictions.

FITTON - Mark, very suddenly at home on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 with Denise at his side. Beloved son of the late Fred and Betty Fitton of Cheadle Hulme near Manchester. He will also be greatly missed by his many friends in voluntary organisations.

HEALD-SMITH - Geoffrey Heald-Smith passed away peacefully on November 30, 2020, aged 90. Remembered by his two children, Emma and Mark. Funeral to be held on Thursday, December 17 at St. John's Church, Bilton, Harrogate at 11a.m. Live online link through Zoom, please contact St. John's Church for details.

LIVINGSTON - Ian 'Livy', 1941-2020, beloved husband of Margaret, father to Ian, Graeme and families. 'Livy' passed away peacefully on Monday, November 30, 2020, after a long illness, bravely borne. The funeral took place on Friday, December 4, 2020, privately in Weymouth, Dorset.

STRACHAN - Agnes, wife of the late David passed away on November 20, 2020, mother

of David, John and Andrea, friend of Margaret Pearson for 60 years. A great help with my young family.

STEINER - (Oban). Dr Eleanor Margaret Murray Steiner, peacefully at Oban on November 29, 2020, loving and beloved wife of Mark, mother of Jan and grandmother of Ellen, Sarah and James. Now passed to the silent land but whose Physician's compassionate Highland cadence remains affectionately remembered and grieved by those who knew Dr Eleanor. Arrangements by John Fraser & Son of Chapel Street, Inverness.

TAYLOR - Christina (Chrissie) née MacRae, aged 91, peacefully at the Belford Hospital, Fort William on Sunday, November 29, 2020. Beloved wife of the late Charlie. Loving mother to Sheila, Bill and Charlie, loving grandmother and great-grandmother. Private funeral service at Clachan Duich Burial Ground, Kintail on Friday, December 11. Sadly missed.

WATT - Arthur. Peacefully in his sleep on Monday, November 30, 2020, Arthur,

loving husband, father, brother, grandfather and friend. Always loved, never forgotten.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GALBRAITH - The family of the late Brenda would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for all the support and kindness as well as cards and flowers. Thanks also to everyone who attended the service at Calgary and especially to the Rev Liz Gibson and undertaker Billy McClymont. To all at Calgary Tearoom for a lovely lunch afterwards. Thank you to the local nurses and all at Mull & Iona Community Hospital for their compassionate care.

ROBINSON - The Robinson family wish to thank all our friends and neighbours and for their kindness, cards, messages, phone calls, flowers and the "soup runs" - all of which have sustained and inspired us, including Pauline in her last days. Your thoughts and generosity have overwhelmed us. And thanks to the many who lined the A82 between Arkaig Cottage, Fort William and Nursery Park, Spean Bridge in Lochaber weather. In particular, we would like to recognise the team who cared for Pauline throughout her short illness: Drs. Craig Macmillan and Leslie McGlynn of Glen Mor Practice, District and Macmillan Nurses, our Occupational Therapist, Pauline's carers, Lochaber Care and Repair and Shopmobility Fort William. Many thanks to Manson & MacBeath Undertakers and McDonald & Sons for flowers. And finally, to Fiona Young who wrote and played "Mrs Pauline Robinson" - her tune - at the end of the funeral service.

MEMORIALS

BUCHANAN - In loving memory of Chrissie, a dear mum, who died December 9, 2016.

Our thoughts are ever with you Though you have passed away. And those who loved you dearly Are thinking of you today. Loved and remembered every day.

- Michael & Sharon x

GALBRAITH - Loving memories of our mum Val, who died December 10, 2019.

We will always remember your special smile

Your caring heart, your warm embrace you always gave us.

Will always remember you mum because there will never be anyone to replace you in our hearts.

Also remembering our loving dad, who died March 2, 2019.

- Sonny, Sandy, Jayne, Wendy and families.

Granny your smile was made of sunshine and your heart was solid gold

Your eyes were as bright as shining stars

We will love and miss you always Together with grandpa again.

- Lisa and Abby.

GALBRAITH - Precious of memories of Val, a much loved sister-in-law and aunt, Always remembered.

- Jean, Marion and family.

GALBRAITH - You are always in our thoughts and we miss you every day.

- Big Peter, Peter, David and families.

HAY - Memories of Robert, died December 13, 1998.

As it dawns another year Thoughts of you are always near.

- Kate, Elaine and families.

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

Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

- Malcolm and Murdo MacDonald.

MACGILLIVRAY - Precious memories of our dear mother

and mother-in-law Margaret (Maggie Moss), who passed away December 11, 2019. A much loved granny and great-granny. No tears, no verse, no words can say

How much we miss you every day.

- All the family.

MACKAY - Alex (Kaiser) who climbed the stairway to Heaven on December 11, 2000.

Joined by his brother Ian (Sparks) in Heaven on April 8, 2008.

Margaret (Kais) who was reunited with her sons on February 27, 2020.

Always remembered with much love.

Gus am bris an latha

- Mary, Aulay, Jamie, Denise, Scott and Nicola x

SANDISON - In memory of our precious son Liam Sandison

We will always love and miss you, Liam

With every passing day

The longing just to see you,

Will never go away.

We love and miss you always Liam

- Mum, Dad, Aaron and Cameron xxxx

SANDISON - In loving memory of our darling grandson Liam, sadly taken on December 10, 2006, age 4.

The years we spent together

Those happy days we knew

Are lived again so often

In memories of you

Always in our hearts

- Granny and Granda, Claggan.

SANDISON - In loving memory of Liam,

You left us with the memories

And we love you dearly still

No matter how much time goes by

You know we always will

- Love always Auntie Linda and Uncle Angie.

STEELE - Remembering Gordon Steele, in God's arms free from pain.

From all his family, home and abroad and very sadly missed.

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GRADUATIONS



HANNAH MCDIARMID

Congratulations to Hannah McDiarmid who graduated in December from the University of Aberdeen with an MSc in Translation Studies (English & Gaelic) with Distinction. Hannah is the daughter of Margaret and the late Mike McDiarmid, Torvaig, Portree and granddaughter of the late Johnnie and Katie McDiarmid, Torvaig, Portree and the late Jimmy and Susie MacDonald, Caol, Fort William.



CHERYL CLARK WOODS

Mr Stephen and Mrs Jacqueline Woods would like to congratulate their daughter Cheryl Clark Woods on her achievement on obtaining her degree with distinction in nursing from Caledonian University of Glasgow 2020 and has now started her career at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in A&E, well done Cheryl x.
Very proud of you.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

The great Advent hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' evokes a deep longing for the angels' message 'all is well' as they sing on a dark night over a troubled world.

This year, those words come to us even more powerfully, as we sit with so much pain and struggle.

The pandemic has brought many words and phrases to the fore. 'Lockdown' and 'furlough' have taken on new meanings for all of us; 'pandemic' and 'unprecedented' have become bywords for the trauma we are experiencing. We have watched challenges to democracy and integrity and possibly recognised more deeply the value of community.

What relevance then is an ancient hymn in our complex emotions of loss and lament, challenged lives and restricted celebrations?

Maybe the words of this sixth-century text actually sum up all that the world so desperately needs: wisdom, justice, freedom, light, love, salvation, hope.

In these weeks before Christmas, we share the hope of better times to come and cheer each other as homes and streets are brightened

with festive decorations. Maybe we will also remember as hearts are lifted, that even without physical touch, love still exists. Maybe, in so missing touch and closeness, we will have rediscovered its importance.

Maybe, in knowing love is still present, even if at a distance, or over virtual connections, we can begin to understand that the unseen God is present in the inner being of our lives.

This year, God may tiptoe more quietly into Christmas celebrations without the rousing carols or crowded gatherings, but God still comes – offering hope, peace, joy and love.

I pray, that as the light grows, we may also feel something of that promise growing in our lives.
The Very Reverend Canon Margi Campbell, Provost and Rector of St John's Episcopal Cathedral, Oban.

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Rollercoaster ride in Dubai for Bob

Robert MacIntyre moved up to a career high of 59 in the world rankings after finishing tied 19th in the Dubai Championship at the weekend.

However, the Oban star will look back on his final position with a touch of regret after his sensational golf over the first three days put him on course for a much higher finish. Opening rounds of 66 and 68 saw Bob nicely positioned in the chasing pack going into day three and for just over two hours it looked like the left hander was going to rewrite the record books as he went to the turn in an astonishing 29 shots.

Five birdies and an eagle in his first seven holes saw Bob romp through the field and for a fleeting moment the prospect of only the second sub-60 round ever recorded on the European Tour seemed real.

But a double bogey on the 11th hole stalled momentum and brought an end to Bob's hot streak. He would eventually sign for a rollercoaster 66. A closing level par 72 meant Bob's final total of 16 under par left him nine shots adrift of Frenchman Antoine Rozner who recorded his maiden tour victory with a closing-day 64.

This week sees the Race to Dubai finale, the DP World Tour Championship. With an \$8million prize fund and huge world ranking points up for grabs, the tournament is Bob's final chance this season to break into the world's top 50 and secure a place in April's US Masters.

Players 'race' to reach Lapland by Christmas

Glasgow Mid Argyll shinty players are taking a 3,600km road trip from Glasgow to Lapland during the four weeks leading up to Christmas and need help.

The Hughenden outfit is raising funds to buy a portable defibrillator for use at future shinty matches in Glasgow and have set up a Just Giving page in conjunction with the charity Lucky2BHere.

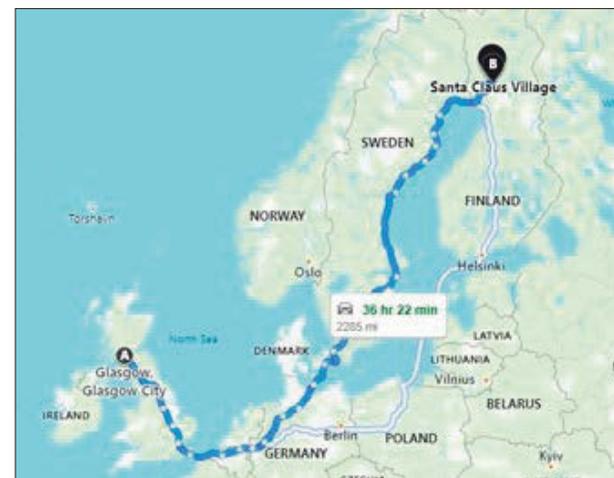
'Unfortunately, as we enter Covid-19 tier four lockdown restrictions, our trip is now a virtual' event, said a GMA

spokesperson. 'For us to complete the challenge we are calling on all players, members, partners, families and friends of the club to get involved by walking, running, cycling, golfing, swimming (or whatever form of exercise you can contribute) to clock up the distance and help us reach Lapland by Christmas Day.' Distances can be logged on the GMA Strava group - on people's own Strava webpage or mobile app, tap on Explore > Clubs and search for 'GMA Shinty Club'. If participants

are not Strava users, they can log their distances by email to Neil McLay: neilmclay62@gmail.com.

'We will track our virtual progress over the four-week period with prizes awarded for the furthest distance travelled each week by individuals within each of the club teams - men's first team, men's second team, women's team, juniors and the 'Auld Yins', captained by Alan Harrison,' added the spokesperson.

The journey began on Friday November 27.



Saints Central Scottish tip top in club derby

Oban Saints	5
Oban Saints GG	0

Oban Saints Central Scottish League side and their Greater Glasgow (GG) League counterparts played out an entertaining friendly at Oban High School last Saturday afternoon.

Despite the final scoreline, this was no walk in the park for the senior of the club's two sides with the youthful second string ensuring their more experienced opponents had to work hard for their victory.

Referee Pat O'Donnell ensured the current match day protocols were enforced for the 1.30pm start. Saints kicked off



Cammy Hill outjumps the Saints GG defence to open the scoring. Match report and photographs: Derek Black.

attacking the school end and straight from the referee's first whistle took the game to their Greater Glasgow opponents.

Gavin Forgive took a corner kick and aimed for the back post where his perfect delivery was met by Cammy

Hill, who leapt above the GG defence to head home from four yards.

Having provided the assist for the opening goal, Gavin Forgive opened his own account in the 16th minute, rounding off a patient build up with a sweet curling finish to put the senior team two-up.

Saints stretched their lead further in the 40th minute.

Cammy Hill held the ball up well on the edge of the GG box and laid off to Gavin Forgive who turned onto his right foot and sent a shot from 23 yards arching away from Murdo MacKenzie's right hand into the top corner of the net.

MacKenzie made another

good save in the 57th minute but was powerless to stop Cammy Hill from finding the net for a second time from the resulting corner kick.

Around 80 minutes, David Beaton's pace took him away from the defence and his early shot from 19 yards gave Murdo MacKenzie no chance and made the final score 5-0.

Full match report at www.obantimes.co.uk



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Memento for retiring Glenfinnan chairman



Glencoe says farewell to climbing legend

Season's greetings
see pages 18 and 27 for your personal Christmas messages to friends and family, near and far

Jahama 'zero progress' sparks land transfer row

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Jahama Highland Estates, which runs more than 114,000 acres included in the 2016 purchase of the Lochaber smelter at Fort William, is under fire this week, accused of doing virtually nothing on serious community land transfer.

Four years ago this month Jahama's parent company, GFG Alliance, agreed a £330million deal to buy the smelter, two hydro schemes and estate lands from Rio Tinto.

In a scathing attack this week, Highland councillor Ben Thompson, Caol and Mallaig, told the Lochaber Times: 'It is four years to the day since the first minister [Nicola Sturgeon] confirmed, here in Fort William, that a community land transaction would take place, covering some of what is now known as the Jahama Highland Estate, to benefit the people who live on or near the estate.'

'In four years since that speech, we've seen zero

'It is four years to the day since the First Minister confirmed a community land transaction would take place...'

progress. It is especially frustrating because the Scottish Government indirectly owns at least 75 per cent of the company which owns the estate.

'They have huge influence to make a transaction happen.'

Mr Thompson said he was regularly contacted over inequalities between Highland areas, including when it comes to the benefits of residents owning land around their towns or villages, citing Inverness as an example.

'Lochaber residents deserve the same,' he said. 'It is an accident of history we don't.'

'It is long since past time to put it right. The commitment

Continued on page five.



Early hours blaze destroys historic Fort building

Firefighters from Fort William were joined by colleagues from Kinlochleven and Oban in the early hours of Monday morning after fire broke out in this historic building in Fort William's West End and destroyed a takeaway, barber shop and beauty salon. For the full story, turn to page four. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Six months of Fort road works

Permanent repairs and improvements to the masonry revetment on Achintore Road in Fort William are due to start in mid-January and last six months.

Trunk roads operator BEAR Scotland says a single lane closure and 24-hour two-way traffic lights will be needed, with the work carried out in four phases.

The works are currently estimated to take six months, with the provision these will be halted over public holidays such as the Easter weekend and the Scottish Six Days Trial motorcycle event.

KFC sign erected for new Fort outlet

Fast food giant Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) is now in the final phases of work to ensure its new outlet in Fort William is ready for opening by the end of the year.

Workmen have been spotted erecting the famous KFC signs and branding bearing the likeness of founder Colonel Sanders.

The company told the Lochaber Times last month that the long-awaited opening of its Fort William branch will take place before the end of this year.



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Glencoe pays final respects to mountaineering legend

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Mourners lined the main road through Glencoe on Friday to pay their last respects to mountaineering legend Dr Hamish MacInnes OBE BEM as the hearse carrying his body passed through the village.

Dr MacInnes, who lived in the village, died at home last month at the age of 90 and his funeral service was held in private at Glasgow Crematorium.

However, before the service, the funeral cortege carrying Dr MacInnes' body left the funeral parlour in Inverlochry, making its way to Glencoe, passing through the village, which included a pause for reflection outside the famous mountaineer's home.

As well as a mountaineering pioneer of Scottish and international renown, Dr MacInnes



The hearse carries the coffin of Dr Hamish MacInnes through his home village of Glencoe on Friday. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

and Rescue Dog Association and the Avalanche Information Service. He was deputy leader on Bonington's successful Mount Everest Southwest Face expedition of 1975, which included Dougal Haston and Doug Scott.

In a statement on the day he died, November 23, Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team (GMRT) leader Andy Nelson offered the team's own tribute, saying Dr MacInnes had brought together great mountaineering men and women, helping to establish GMRT and innovated rescue systems and engineering aids to climbing and rescue, now distributed throughout the world. He

added: 'Most of all, Hamish was a man of the Glen, still walking out until very recently, loving where he lived. He had time for all the community and embraced any opportunity for a blether, equally about local projects and legend of far flung escapades. In these difficult times, he would still encourage us to seize the day, because 'life is for living.'

Paying its own tribute online, Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team added: 'A mountaineering legend, he gave much to Scottish and worldwide mountain rescue. From the rescue stretcher we use today, the MacInnes Mark 6, to the invention of the Pterodactyl ice axe, we have much to thank him for. We would like to celebrate his achievements and remember the countless numbers of folk saved on the mountains due to his innovation and tenacity.'

was also a world authority on mountain rescue techniques, author of the International Mountain Rescue Handbook and the designer and manufacturer of the MacInnes Stretcher and all-metal ice axe.

Born in Gatehouse of Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire, in 1930, Dr MacInnes' exploits included the first winter ascent of Crowberry Ridge Direct and of Raven's

Gully on Buachaille Etive Mòr with Chris Bonington in 1953.

He pioneered climbing routes on the Glencoe cliffs for winter work with Glencoe School of Winter Climbing and for many years was the leader of the area's mountain rescue team. Dr MacInnes is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern mountain rescue in Scotland, setting up the Search

Rixson calls for cash boost for unpaid carers

Thousands of unpaid carers in the Highlands should be given a cash boost according to the Scottish Liberal Democrat candidate for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, Councillor Denis Rixson.

The Lib Dems are calling on the UK Government to raise the Carer's Allowance by £1,000 a year to help support the 4,375 unpaid Highland carers during the pandemic.

The Lib Dems' proposals centre on increasing Carer's Allowance from its current rate of £67.25 a week to £87.25, in line with the £20 a week uplift in Universal Credit announced at the start of the pandemic.

Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig ward, Mr Rixson, who will contest the seat currently held by Kate Forbes at next year's Holyrood elections, said: 'The tough financial hardship carers face isn't fair by any measure. They have been struggling for too long, often turning to foodbanks to feed themselves and their loved ones.'

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Forbes hits back at Tory criticism over A82 survey

Lochaber constituency MSP Kate Forbes has hit back at criticism from fellow Holyrood elected member, Conservative Donald Cameron, after the latter said road-users in the region needed action from the SNP Scottish Government and not more surveys, writes Mark Entwistle.

Highlands and Islands MSP Mr Cameron was referring to the recent online survey calling for local residents to help prioritise which stretches of the road they think are the worst and should be prioritised for improvement works.

Ms Forbes recently said the survey had already prompted hundreds of responses, but Mr Cameron was not impressed, saying: 'We don't need to be told what the problems are with the A82. What we do need is for SNP ministers to recognise that after 13 years in power there is an urgent requirement to make good the years of neglect that have led to repeated road closures and constant uncertainty for local residents and businesses.'

'Kate Forbes is the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and has

the means to take action. She should get on with fixing our roads without further delay.'

But Ms Forbes refuted the criticism, telling the Lochaber Times this week: 'There has been progress on the A82, with plans to upgrade the stretch from Tarbert to Inverarnan. This survey doesn't hinder those plans.'

Campaign group the A82 Partnership also expressed surprise that Ms Forbes thought another survey was required to identify the priorities.

In an email to Ms Forbes, the campaign's Stewart MacLean told the MSP that both trunk roads operator BEAR Scotland and Transport Scotland, already had a wealth of information on accident locations and the location of fatalities, adding: 'What we require is serious investment in the A82 and not another survey.'

However, Mr Maclean later confirmed the campaign had received 'a very prompt response' from Ms Forbes advising them the survey did not undermine any other work that is being done to improve the A82.

Historic building gutted by early hours blaze

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

One of Fort William's historic buildings in the town's West End has been almost totally destroyed by a blaze which broke out in the early hours of Monday morning.

Fire appliances and crews from Fort William, Kinlochleven and Oban rushed to the town's Station Square after the alarm was raised around 3.55am.

Firefighters battled flames and smoke throughout the night, but the Pier Head chip shop and takeaway, the John Wilson Barber Shop and a beauty salon were gutted.

Fire crews remained at the scene for a number of hours after the fire was extinguished to monitor the building for remaining hotspots.

In a statement, Police



Firefighters examine the ruined remains on Monday.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

barber shop thanked residents for their messages of support: 'Dear people of Fort William, thank you so much for all your kind words. It means a lot.'

'I am heartbroken with losing the shop and thanks for all the nice offers which I will think over and decide what to do.'

By Tuesday, Mr Wilson was saying he was hopeful he could be back trading soon at an alternative location.

Aylie McMinn, owner of the Aylz, Nailz and beauty salon, which was also damaged in the fire, posted on social media: 'Just wanted to say thank you to everyone who has reached out with offers of help, support and spaces to use in the meantime. You have no idea how much it means.'

Scotland, which had officers on site assisting the firefighters, told the Lochaber Times: 'Around 3.55am on Monday December 7, police were called to a report of a fire in Station Square, Fort William.'

A spokesperson for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service added: 'Operations Control mobilised three fire

appliances and one height appliance to the scene and firefighters worked to extinguish the flames. There were no reported casualties.'

The A82 southbound dual carriageway was closed to ensure the emergency services had room to operate.

Posting on his Facebook page on Monday, Mr Wilson of the



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Jahama 'zero progress' sparks land transfer row

Continued from page one. The Scottish Government made to support a land transaction must happen if our kids and grandkids are going to enjoy the benefits other Highland areas have. Four years is long enough to wait for action.'

Responding to this week's criticism, Julia Stoddart, Jahama's chief operating officer, said: 'We are open to exploring proposals for community transfers brought to us by community bodies. Since acquiring the land, Jahama Highland Estates has made progress on several community transactions, including the transfer of Lower Falls car park, a long-term peppercorn lease to the Nevis Landscape Partnership.

'We are also in the process of transferring Island Parks under a peppercorn lease to a charitable organisation in Kinlochleven for a public recreation field. Other proposals continue to be negotiated.'

But Mr Thompson was

dismissive of Ms Stoddart's assurances. 'I don't think a quarter-acre car park really cuts it to be honest,' he said.

And John Hutchison, chairman of East Lochaber and Laggan Community Trust, which originally lost out to GFG Alliance in its attempt to acquire the estate lands, said the response from Jahama did not fit the reality of the situation.

Despite some discussions in 2017 and a meeting in 2018, Mr Hutchison said the intervening two years had seen nothing but silence from the company.

'Both the community and the Scottish Government have expectations there will be a significant land transaction but four years on we are no further forward,' he said.

Constituency MSP Kate Forbes MSP said: 'I agree with Ben Thompson...As far as I am aware, the commitment made by the first minister still stands to support community buy-outs.'

Emergency plan to tackle tree disease

Emergency plans are being drawn up to try and slow down the spread of a disease which is attacking larch trees in the Western Highlands, including some in Lochaber.

Forestry and Land Scotland's (FLS) West Region team is taking urgent action after this year's national tree health survey revealed the West Region has 20 new sites where Phytophthora ramorum has been confirmed.

Of those sites, 12 have to be felled by the middle of February 2021, with the remaining being felled before the end of March 2021.

Affected areas in Lochaber include those near Lochaline, Invergarry, Fort William, Corran and Ballachulish.

Andy Hunt, FLS's West Region Manager, said it was a real blow to have so many sites to deal with. 'It's going to substantially tax our resources

and challenge our planning and delivery teams,' he said. 'As well as dealing with these sites of infection, we're also getting our normal operations back on track after the Covid-19 lockdown.

'It's going to be a long haul that will see substantial changes to some well-loved landscapes over the next four years but it's urgent work that we have to do if we are to slow the spread of the disease to other sites where larch is present.

'We will have to close some sites for public safety but will make people aware of the closures before we start work. We appreciate this might cause some inconvenience but we would urge everyone to observe the on-site safety signs.'

The team will work on the removal of infected larch trees as per the requirements of the Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) that have been served



Sites in Lochaber – marked in red – where the disease has been discovered.

need to be built, existing forest roads upgraded and harvesting services constructed.

FLS is also working on replanting plans to reduce the visual impact.

Mr Hunt added: 'We would also ask the public help control the rate of spread by following our 'Keep it Clean' advice. The spores that cause this disease can be carried to unaffected sites in mud and forest debris so please take a few minutes to brush or wipe off boots, bike wheels, tent pegs and your dog's paws before and after a visit to any woodland in the area.'

'Everyone working together to adopt new habits will have a positive impact on our forests, help to slow the spread of tree pests and diseases and buy time to research and develop other actions that we can take to ensure the long-term health of our woodlands.'



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What does 'managing staff' mean to you?

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Good management also means good leadership – looking after your staff, retaining the best people, motivating and empowering your staff team to pull together all helps to deliver the goals of the business. It sounds simple on paper, but we all know it's not that easy in practice. Today's managers have a lot to contend with and taking time to develop the 'soft skills' of managing people can be overlooked as a 'nice to have' when they are in fact business essentials.

At the Chamber we know how important it is to look after your staff and lead effectively in ways that empower and motivate others. That's why we launched

our tailored 'One Lochaber' leadership programme for our Lochaber businesses last year. This homegrown and locally delivered management training accredited by the renowned Chartered Institute of Management (CMI) has been specially designed to be accessible to everyone in Lochaber, no matter what the industry or business size.

This year-long course was originally delivered by expert leadership trainers in monthly group sessions but, due to the current situation, the course has been adapted so students can learn in short, fortnightly interactive Zoom sessions.

The course is easy to follow and instantly applicable to every business, with friendly guidance every step of the way. We've had great feedback from the first year's cohorts who are due to graduate with their Level 5 CMI qualification at the end of the year. One attendee even calls it 'the most useful course she's ever attended'. To complement the Leadership Programme we have also launched a new Mentoring Programme.

To find out more, email members@lochaberchamber.co.uk to arrange a chat or visit www.lochaberchamber.co.uk

Sweet smell of success for Highland Soap Co

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Customers flocked to The Highland Soap Company's new visitor centre, shop and cafe on the outskirts of Fort William after it opened its doors for the first time on Friday.

The multi-million pound development sits alongside the A82, set between the River Lochy and the 13th century Old Inverloch Castle with a spectacular view of Ben Nevis.

The site was originally a farm, then used as the location of the popular British Aluminium Social Club before finally falling into disrepair and subsequently being acquired as the new home of the soap-making firm.

The company also has five shops – Pitlochry, Spean Bridge, Oban, St Andrews and on Fort William's High Street – and a thriving online business, and its range of products is available in many upmarket



The Highland Soap Company's new visitor centre in Fort William.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba. photos

gift shops and hotels. The new visitor centre also boasts a 100-seat café, while its shop has a lot more than just Highland Soap products, stocking Christmas gifts, pottery, books and gourmet foods.

The business was founded more than 20 years ago by Emma Parton, while her co-owner Archie MacDonald's

ancestor, the distiller 'Long John', was tenant farmer on the same site 200 years ago.

At the new premises, visitors are able to see demonstrations and make their own soap to take away with them afterwards.

After a hectic few days following Friday's opening, Ms Parton told the Lochaber Times: 'It has been the most exciting few

days. Over the weekend we had queues outside the building, a full car park and really complimentary customers.

'We have had to pull in more staff and are now looking for more to keep up with demand, which is great for us and the local economy.'

For more on this story turn to page 21.

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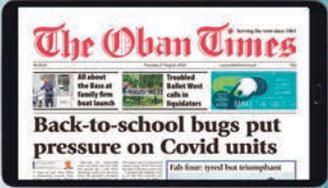
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Cameron welcomes Gaelic pledge

Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron has welcomed the Scottish Government's plan to convene a national summit on the future of Gaelic.

Mr Cameron urged Deputy First Minister John Swinney to take action during the summer following the publication of a report on the language's prospects – The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community – by the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The Scottish Conservative MSP said: 'I am pleased Mr Swinney has now positively responded to my calls earlier this year for a national summit on the future of Gaelic. If we don't act soon, it may be too late to save it as a living community language.'

'Ultimately the future of the language rests in the hands of people in the Gaelic-speaking areas. But there is also a role for government in securing this language for the nation. Any summit must be followed up by a plan which makes a positive difference.'

Project gathers stories from the West Coast

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The Coast that Shaped the World is a community-led story gathering project looking to build up a bank of stories covering the West Coast of Scotland from Wester Ross and Lewis in the north to Arran and Kintyre in the south.

These stories will be narrated through a website, interactive app and innovative exhibition material to encourage locals and visitors to explore the roads less travelled across the islands, peninsulas, and coastline of the West Coast.

Taking an online and on the ground approach, the story gathering website – coast.scot – has been launched along with a team of 32 story gatherers, who will be working within their communities to gather and uncover stories, tales and



hidden gems to be shared. Nothing is too big or too small, too detailed or too vague. Collectively these stories and memories will help paint a multi-layered picture of this stunning part of Scotland and help people better understand why it is what it is today and how much this part of Scotland has had an impact across the

globe. This will be promoted as part of the celebrations to mark the Year of Scotland's Stories in 2022.

The Coast that Shaped the World project is part of a new £5 million Scottish programme of projects to invest in the Highlands and Islands to provide more and better quality opportunities for

The Strome Ferry on Loch Carron, 1969. Photograph: Am Baile.

visitors to enjoy natural and cultural heritage assets. The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund is led by NatureScot and is part-funded through the European Development Fund. The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund will encourage people to visit some of the more remote and rural areas and create and sustain jobs, businesses and services in communities.

The purpose of the fund is to promote and develop the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the Highlands and islands in a way that conserves and protects them.

The project is managed by the Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research at West Highland College UHI and

four creative consultants have been appointed to help deliver the project – ruralDimensions, Lateral North, Whereverly and Soluis Heritage.

Match funding for the project has also come from Caledonian MacBrayne and West Highland College UHI, giving the project a value of more than £500,000.

NatureScot Project and Funding Officer Susan Webster said: 'The Covid-19 pandemic creates uncertainty and significant challenges to everyone, so it's heartening to see this wonderful project contributing to the recovery in remote and rural areas of the Highlands and Islands.'

'Gathering these stories will be a great benefit to visitors keen to learn more about this area's fabulous heritage and attractions, while also protecting the amazing history of these unique communities.'

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New lease of life for Harris school

A community project to create a multi-use hub for local people and visitors in South Harris has been awarded £41,700 by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

The old block at Leverhulme Memorial School is now in the hands of the community and plans are progressing to create much needed local services such as a community café, gym, Post Office, laundrette, charity shop and an exhibition space for the historical society.

Leverhulme Community Hub received the keys for the block last week, 100 years after the village of Obbe (An t-Òb) was renamed Leverburgh by the industrialist Lord Leverhulme who built the old school building in 1925.

Angus Macleod, chairman of the Community Hub, said: 'The creation of a multi-purpose facility for use by locals and visitors alike is much needed.'

'As the building purchase is complete, it is a timely occasion as we mark 100 years since Leverburgh was re-named by Lord Leverhulme. We are grateful to HIE for this grant, which has assisted us financially and for the advice we have received from them throughout each stage.'

HIE's investment will help purchase and install com-



The community group's building is highlighted – the remainder is still in use as the local primary school.

mercial laundry equipment, providing a local service and create an income for the community hub.

The money will also support the group to commission professional services to help get the second phase of the project off the ground. Once developed, the new hub will be used by community groups, clubs and visitors and is expected to create four new jobs. Two part-time staff have been recruited, initially working from home and will move to the hub building when it's ready.

Rose Bugler, development manager at HIE's Outer Hebrides area team, said: 'The group's progress despite the pandemic has been impressive and this new facility will strengthen the community's resilience. We are very pleased to provide support and look forward to seeing the project

take shape.' A team of 50 local volunteers have signed up to help with the running of the hub in the future. Local fundraising by the steering group in 2016 has generated £23,000 to date.

Catering equipment has been donated by Macdonald Hotels, The Anchorage Restaurant has donated chairs and tables for the café and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) has donated gym equipment.

Funding of £49,167 was announced in September by the Scottish Land Fund and enabled the building to be bought by the community following a discounted sale by CnES as well as repair works and a part-time post to advance the work in the months ahead.

It is expected that the first phase of work will commence later this month with a view to opening in spring 2021.

Skye estate receives £1M for new major woodland creation scheme

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A total of 372,000 trees are to be planted as part of a £1million scheme to create a new native woodland at Dunvegan on Skye.

After more than a year and a half in development, the MacLeod Estate's scheme has been awarded the grant from the Scottish Government and EU. The project is being overseen by Scottish Woodlands Ltd, which will plant the scheme on the estate's behalf by the end of 2021.

This project is the first phase of the MacLeod Estate's evolving rewilding strategy which estate director Hugh MacLeod has been working on for the last few years.

It is the most ambitious project of its size on Skye,



The MacLeod Estate on Skye is to have another 372,000 trees planted.

with this first phase focusing on transforming the marginal land of Dunvegan's former home farm, Totachocaire, into a 240 hectare (593 acre) native woodland area that will treble the size of the existing contiguous woodlands around the Clan MacLeod's iconic family seat of Dunvegan Castle and Gardens. A total of 372,000 trees will be planted with different species mixtures to suit

the land's terrain and ecology. The carbon offset is estimated to exceed 40,000 tons over 65 years.

This is in addition to the 60,000 native trees planted by the estate a decade ago to replace a monoculture coniferous plantation dating back to the post-war years, with further rewilding and peatbog restoration plans in development.

As the largest native woodland project of its kind on Skye, this will bring the total number of native trees planted on the MacLeod Estate since 2010 to 432,000.

This is a modest start, but the hope is this will encourage others to take on rewilding initiatives large and small to restore parts of Skye's unnatural 'wet desert' landscape which is a legacy of centuries of depredation caused by over grazing and high numbers of deer.

In common with other Highland areas, some aspects of Skye's current lunarscape appearance may be beautiful, but it is not natural. The extensive peatbog on the island is clear evidence of ancient and extensive woodlands. This project aims to restore this piece of marginal land

and the estate hopes that it will have a positive ripple effect for the local community beyond the obvious ecological benefits, creating more jobs in sustainable eco-tourism and more rewilding initiatives to help combat climate change.

Mr MacLeod told the Lochaber Times: 'In a difficult year of persistent bad news, I am thrilled the MacLeod Estate has been awarded this grant for the largest and most ambitious native woodland creation project on the Isle of Skye to date.'

'This is the first phase of our nascent rewilding plans and once the woodlands are established, this will create an extensive and biodiverse habitat to support a number of native species.'

Ben Goldsmith, an environmentalist and CEO of

Menhaden PLC, a London-listed investment firm which focuses on energy and resource efficiency, said: 'Hugh MacLeod's ground-breaking nature restoration project at the historic Dunvegan Castle on Skye is one of the most exciting rewilding stories in Britain today.'

John Laing, chairman of Dunvegan and District Community Council, added: 'The community council welcomes the MacLeod Estate's ambitious plans.'

'We are all aware of the many benefits that woodlands bring to our wellbeing and increasingly to our environment and wildlife. The new woodland will, in time, be a tremendous asset for Dunvegan and for Skye, bringing pleasure and enjoyment for generations to come.'

FESTIVE SIDE DISHES

Recipe

Brought to you by BID4Oban

Cranberry Sauce

Cranberry Sauce is the traditional accompaniment for roast turkey and is a must for Christmas dinner. This is extremely easy to make and can be made ahead of Christmas day.

Ingredients

250g fresh or frozen cranberries
100g sugar
Large Orange – Juice and rind
Dash of port - Optional

Method

Grate the rind of the orange. Squeeze the juice of the orange and place in a saucepan with cranberries, rind and sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stirring well. It is a personal choice as to how smooth you want the sauce, so it is ok to have a sauce with a mixture of whole and smooth cranberries. Taste the sauce for sweetness. Again, this is personal choice some people like it tart and some sweet so add more sugar if required. Prior to serving add a couple of dashes of port.

Roasted Parmesan Parsnips

Roasted parsnips are great at any time, but this quick and easy recipe goes great with any roast. If you want this can be prepared in advance and roasted at the last minute.

Ingredients

Parsnips – as many as you want

Parmesan Cheese – Freshly grated
Flour – Tablespoon
Olive oil - Tablespoon

Method

Peel the parsnips cut and quarter to desired length. Parboil for five to seven minutes. Drain and dry and place on a baking tray with some olive oil. Sprinkle with flour and parmesan cheese and salt and pepper to season. Place in an oven at 180 – 200 degrees until golden brown.

Roasted Vegetables

This recipe can save a lot of time at Christmas. Quick and easy and a favourite with everyone.

Ingredients

Turnip
Carrot
Parsnips
Brussel Sprouts
Shallots or Red onion
Chopped parsley, sage & thyme, basil.
Olive oil.

Prepare all the vegetables and chop to the desired size. Place on a good ovenproof baking tray or similar. Add the herbs and olive oil, salt and pepper. Mix and integrate all ingredients. Place in an oven at 180-200 for 30 minutes until cooked through. Dependant on the quantities used this may take longer to cook.

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LT

Fort William's caring Christine rediscovers her creative side

A Fort William woman who cares for her housebound daughter has had her love of art reignited after using a charity's Creativity in Care pack initiative – with excellent results, writes Fiona Scott.

Christine Muir, 50, had not painted since high school when she was given one of the packs by Highland-wide charity Connecting Carers, and she says it has transformed her life.

Since receiving her pack, Christine, a parent carer to daughter Shauni, 27, who has lived with mental health issues for 12 years and has not left the house for more than four years, has been painting and drawing as well as painting stones for her garden.

But it is her work on upcycling projects that is giving her the most pleasure.

'My Carer Link Worker Lisa MacGillivray told me about the packs so I asked her to send



'It's had a good impact, it's been great. I forgot how much I liked art.'

Left: Christine Muir.

me one,' explained Christine. 'I got it at the end of June and as I was looking for things to do during lockdown I started painting wee stones. I'd put a

cat on or a ladybird at first, just for the grandkids, and then I thought, 'crikey, I've not done drawing since I left school at 16', so I put pencil to paper and

started drawing giraffes and elephants and other animals.'

It was at that point Christine started to search around for things to paint and decided to try upcycling.

She continued: 'I started off with a chair and did my own design on it, a tree and Buddha's face, and it took off from there.'

Christine then decided to open a shop on US e-commerce site Etsy to try to sell some of her upcycling goods, but after a month closed it again.

She said: 'I got a couple of stools from a second-hand shop and did a fair amount of work on them.'

'I took them down as they hadn't sold after a month, but I plan to start advertising my work again soon.'

The packs have also had a positive life-changing effect on Christine in general.

'It's had a good impact, it's

been great, I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I forgot how much I liked art. I've always done arty bits anyway, my own decorating in the house and stuff, but getting back into even the sketching, it's just great. I can get away into my own wee world for a few hours, just away from everything.'

And rekindling her artistic passion has helped Christine with her caring role, which has been made so much harder by lockdown.

Christine added: 'It's a distraction. Even when I'm not doing the actual painting of furniture, I'm thinking what else I can do, or what colour will go with this. It's taking my mind off things, I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I know lockdown's been hard, but if it wasn't for that I might not have got back into art. There's only so much cleaning and

decorating you can do.'

decorating you can do.'



Examples of Christine's work.

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**SCOTTISH
FIELD**

January issue



Exclusive
So that was
2020 feature

So that was 2020...

Interviews with top authors, actors & singers...
James Cosmo talks fishing & Father Christmas...
Stuart Hogg on horse riding... Father of fantasy
fiction.. Wonderful world of owls... SF Quiz of
the Year... Recipes from The Seafood Shack...

Campaigners call for end to 'secrecy' as yard goes bust

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The Action for Arnish campaign has demanded an immediate statement from the Scottish Government on the future of the Lewis yard following news that BiFab, the yard's current tenants, has gone into administration.

The news follows the Scottish Government's decision to withdraw financial guarantees supporting the manufacturing of eight offshore wind turbine jackets for the Neart na Gaoithe (NnG) project.

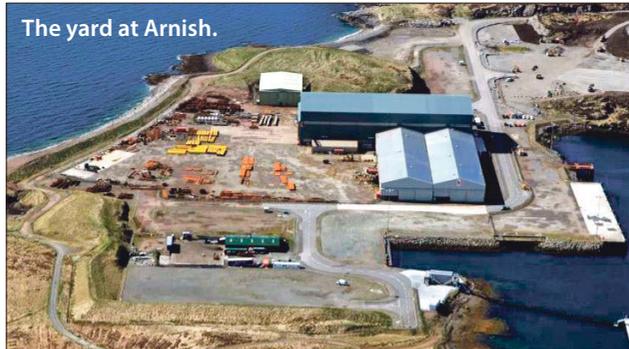
It comes despite the company, which has sites in Fife and Lewis, having been already bailed out to the tune of £52million from the Scottish Government.

In a statement, campaign chairman Iain MacLeod urged an end to what he said was 'secrecy and evasions'.

He added: 'We have been deceived repeatedly over the prospects of BiFab bringing work to the island and there must be no repeat performance.'

'We believe that when DF Barnes took over BiFab, they did so with genuinely good intentions on the basis of assurances given to them by the Scottish Government. These were never fulfilled and so, time and again, BiFab missed out on work while Arnish lay idle. There is now no possible excuse for secrecy around the BiFab, HIE and Scottish Government deal. We know there are others interested in using Arnish and there must be no delay in clearing the way for new tenants to emerge.'

'Having been responsible for the current situation, the Scottish Government and HIE owe it to the island to support whatever investment



The yard at Arnish.

is necessary to make the yard operational once again. The Lewis economy is at an exceptionally low ebb and this is the one available option for creating a substantial number of well-paid jobs which will retain population on the island.'

The group has now written to the Business Secretary in the Scottish Government and the chairman of Highlands and Islands Enterprise seeking meetings and to stress the

need for full transparency in all dealings connected to the Arnish yard. And in a joint statement, the GMB Scotland and Unite Scotland trade unions claimed BiFab going into administration exposed what they said was the 'myth' of Scotland's renewables revolution.

Joint trade union secretaries Gary Smith and Pat Rafferty said: 'BiFab's administration exposes the myth of Scotland's

renewables revolution as well as a decade of political hypocrisy and failure in Scotland and the rest of the UK.'

'The workers and communities dependent on these yards have fought so hard for a future and everyone was hoping 2021 would finally be the turning point. Shamefully the Scottish Government has buried these hopes just in time for Christmas and they have worked together with UK Government in doing so.'

'A decade on from the promise of a 'Saudi Arabia of renewables' and 28,000 full-time jobs in offshore wind manufacturing, we've been left with industrial ruins in Fife and Lewis.'

The joint trade unions say they will comment further in the coming days.

Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan raised the issues at Arnish and BiFab

in a speech to the Scottish Parliament last week. It is frustrating to see BiFab again fall into administration,' said Mr Allan.

'The promise of inward investment and contracts when BiFab was taken over has been followed by a lack of corporate investment. It is ultimately the responsibility of JV Driver, as the majority shareholder, to provide that investment. There is no legal route for the Scottish Government or the UK Government to provide further financial support to BiFab in the absence of a shareholder guarantee and investment from the majority shareholder. The focus now has to be on securing a future for the yard. I will be pressing the Scottish Government, as I did yesterday in Parliament, to ensure all options are kept open so that Arnish can be the integral part of our green recovery that it deserves to be.'

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LT

Work on new Glenfinnan visitor car park completed

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Construction of the new car park at Glenfinnan has been completed, along with two other Highland tourism infrastructure projects which benefited from the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) and LEADER funding.

As well as the community-operated car park, work on slipways at Cromarty and Nigg, together with Skye's Old Man of Storr Footpath Improvement Project, are ready to enhance visitor experiences at all three sites.

The additional parking created at Glenfinnan will cater for 100 cars and 10 motorhomes/buses. This was in response to demand placed on the area by fans of the Harry Potter films to the viaduct and the Jacobite steam train.



In October 2018, The Highland Council in partnership with Glenfinnan Community Facilities Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) secured £269,906 from the first round of the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund managed

by VisitScotland. The fund aims to support projects that focus on improving the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland that have faced pressure on their infrastructure or negative impacts on communities due to significant increases in visitor numbers. The project was matched

The construction phase of the new community car park at Glenfinnan is now finished.

by £115,674 in LEADER funding which is part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). This fund is aimed at promoting economic and community development within rural areas.

Lochaber councillor Allan Henderson commented on behalf of himself and the area's other elected members, Ben Thompson and Denis Rixson, saying the trio was 'thrilled' this work has been completed.

'Glenfinnan has so much to offer for such a small constrained area through the National Trust visitor centre, the iconic monument and viaduct coupled with the loch, the architecture and location of the church,' added Mr Henderson.

'It is a magnet for tourists who will now be able to enjoy it for longer, with less hassle, through this project.'

In addition to the car park, The Highland Council in partnership with Glenfinnan Community Facilities SCIO also secured £53,704 from round two of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund with a successful Crowd Funder to match, organised by the community for the final phase of the Glenfinnan Viaduct project. This will see a new footbridge and path link the new car park to the existing path to the viaduct, preventing visitors having to walk on the main trunk road.

The Old Man of Storr Footpath Improvement Project, designed to enhance visitor access while protecting iconic landscapes and internationally important habitats, is funded by the

RTIF, £184,508, and Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate, £79,075. Skye councillor John Gordon said: 'I am delighted this work has been completed. The work at Storr will make a significant difference to the enjoyment of locals and tourists as it will protect and care for the environment and provide better capacity for visitors at a very busy and iconic site.'

Chris Taylor, VisitScotland Regional Leadership Director, said: 'Tourism has been a huge success story for the Highlands, creating jobs in rural communities and helping underpin vital services. We need the infrastructure to keep pace with that growth and I am delighted RTIF has allowed VisitScotland, working with the Highland Council, to respond to calls for additional and improved infrastructure across Scotland.'

Local accountant Brona, new Partner in Borders firm

Tax expert Brona MacDougall, has just been appointed as a Partner in one of the largest accountancy firms in the South of Scotland.

Brona, who previously worked in Oban as a chartered accountant, joined Hawick based accountancy firm JRW two years ago. The company, which has offices throughout the Scottish Borders as well as one in Edinburgh, has a diverse range of clients all over the country.

The former doctor will continue to be based from her home on the family farm on the Isle of Lismore. As well as being an expert in agricultural finance and taxation, Brona is also a Trust and Estate Practitioner and has undertaken numerous succession plans, tax work on complex agricultural tenancy transactions and inheritance tax mitigation plans for large landed estates. Testament to this expertise, Brona has recently taken over authorship of the prestigious Bloomsbury Professional publication 'Inheritance Tax in Scotland'.

With a considerable amount of experience in dealing with international tax matters and the tax affairs of seafarer's, Brona has been successful in some complex offshore disclosures and regularly deals with non domicile and residence issues.

JRW Partner Brona MacDougall said:

"After only two years, I am delighted to have become a Partner with JRW and to have the opportunity to grow the firm's presence here in the Highlands and Islands.

Living on the family farm with my husband and two little boys, means that I bring a considerable amount of valuable experience to my farming clients. I enjoy being able to take a holistic approach to my work, as my Trust and Estates qualification gives me a good understanding of the legal aspects of will writing and succession planning.

Naturally, many people are curious about my previous role as a doctor and as irrelevant as it may at first seem, I believe that my experience in medicine brings with it many benefits. A good bedside manner in tax matters if that makes sense.

Whether that's advising a farmer, landowner or seafarer; or indeed any private individual or business owner, the favourite part of my job is working with people, understanding their individual situations and being able to forge relationships with them.

I care about my clients and I look forward to growing business together for many years to come."



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The Croftless Crofter

NIC GODDARD

fort@obantimes.co.uk



I think I have been sent a link to news articles about new Rum residents Alex and Buffy by 10 different people in the last couple of days.

The headline 'We've just moved to a remote island we'd never visited' is certainly a newsworthy one.

The couple join the community on the Isle of Rum to take up one of the four newly-built houses on the island which created a similar flurry of media coverage back in the summer when they were first advertised.

There were more than 400 applications, creating a huge task for the small board of volunteer directors and Rum residents who made up the panel deciding who to offer the houses to.

Nine years ago my husband, our two - then young - children and I set foot on the Isle of Rum for the first time. We had just over two hours between boats to walk around Kinloch village, meet two of the islanders and walk a couple of miles into the island to see an eight-acre patch of



The Goddards in 2018 just before leaving Rum.

land which was designated as Croft 3. Back then there was altogether less fanfare about the prospect of a move to Rum and, in fact, the newly-created crofts on the island were advertised several times before all three were tenanted.

I am not sure our couple of hours on the island put us at any bigger advantage than Alex and Buffy in understanding what island life might be like though.

Four months later we were back, towing all our posses-

sions in a horse box behind us, in a laden 4x4 with a new puppy, a hamster and heads full of hopes and dreams.

A few days later, a static caravan arrived, swiftly followed by chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and a pair of pigs. The animals made it on to our croft land before we and our caravan did, but that's another story.

When we moved back to the mainland seven years later, we left behind an unconventional but well established home and

business which had served all four of us - and our croft creatures - very well, meeting our basic needs and much, much more.

There are many parallels between our story and that of the new residents just starting their lives on Rum. The lessons they will learn, the highs and the lows in their early weeks and months will be similar in many ways to what we experienced as we settled in. Inevitably being in fully set up houses with running water,

electricity, log burners and vehicle access to their front doors will be a big contrast to our lives which were powered by solar panels, wind turbines, gravity-fed blue water piping from the river and wheelbarrows pushed up hill.

Arriving alongside other new residents will no doubt help ease the transition and dilute their novelty value as they settle into their new lives.

The logistics of island life - ferry timetables, groceries, working out routine and emergency medical needs - start to fall into place after a while. A winter of wind and rain, a summer of midges and a few experiences of island politics and you are soon settled in.

The perils and the delights of everyone knowing everyone else, the amazing support of the community and the times when you wish for just half an hour of anonymity.

During our years on Rum, we saw many people come and go, spoke with many past and prospective residents. We heard tales from those who have been there for decades

and listened to those who could not wait to leave on the next ferry. Island life can be a heaven or hell, or a bit of both, sometimes even at the same time. Rum is an amazing place to live. A wild, untamed and beautiful island filled with wonderful wildlife and remarkable people. It is an island of opportunity, of possibility and potential. It is a place to take your dreams and to tweak them to fit. A visit to the island before the new residents moved there would not have made much difference in my opinion. The only way to know if you can live on Rum is to go and live there, to forge your own path and make a little corner of it your own for as long as you are there.

Our little corner is still there waiting. We have a leave of absence from our croft as our (now adult) children are both keen to return at some point and continue their own relationship with this most unique place. Maybe some of these new people calling Rum home will be their neighbours one day.

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LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HBRemembering Scotland's
greatest climber

This week Glencoe and the wider mountaineering community paid their respects to a legend of the hills, Dr Hamish MacInnes, who lived in the village and died at home last month, aged 90.

As well as a mountaineering pioneer, known the world over, Dr MacInnes was a world authority on mountain rescue techniques, author of the International Mountain Rescue Handbook and the designer and manufacturer of the MacInnes Stretcher and all-metal ice axe.

He pioneered climbing routes on the Glencoe cliffs, is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern mountain rescue in Scotland, setting up the Search and Rescue Dog Association and the Avalanche Information Service and he was deputy leader on Bonington's successful Mount Everest Southwest Face expedition of 1975.

Here is a man worthy of being celebrated and as Scotland's greatest ever climber we would venture it will not be long before a commemorative statue or similar tribute is considered for his home village as a fitting way of remembering a man whose work will have helped save countless lives on the mountains in Scotland and abroad.

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 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.



The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.

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Fear for forest ecosystems

We worry about the potential for damage to our delicate forest ecosystems and toss and turn at night about ancient Kilmartin Glen being permanently removed to extract sand and gravel ('Row over Kilmartin Glen quarry extension').

Yet the few of us who worry about Argyll's future in the face of climatic uncertainty have little hope of real and lasting change in how agencies like Forestry and Land Scotland (FALS) 'manage' our environment.

FALS is about to begin forest removal in Knapdale as part of its Land Management Plan, including at Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and has submitted multiple planning applications for many kilometres of forest track to be built. I would urge people to go and look at some of the damage already inflicted to really appreciate the scale of ongoing ruination and to decide for themselves whether Forestry and Land Scotland really is competent to do this without a lasting contribution to landscape degradation.

I am not against forest management, but it must be done properly and with care. I don't believe FALS will do either.

Nick MacInneskar, Tayvallich.

Let's not turn on each other

In these challenging times we should not turn on each other. I am sure Scottish Water can speak for themselves but they are ordinary workers trying to put food on the table for their families and are not operating outwith the protocols agreed by the Scottish Government.

The last time I looked, water was an essential service and, back in June, the Scottish Government worked very closely with the wider construction sector on protocols for getting construction and civil engineering projects back up and running.

While the Scottish Water project is a £2.7million investment to improve much-needed facilities, the article is silent on the £6.3million ACHA external wall insulation project on site in the town at the moment. This project is providing much-needed employment for 90 workers and I am sure businesses will know how much is being spent in the economy from accommodation, food, fuel and so much more. This project tackles the scandal of fuel poverty.

Covid-19 and irrational scaremongering should not get in the way of people's and communities' needs. The construction sector has gone through rigorous health and safety checks and protocols regarding Covid-19. The workers on the ACHA contract are largely operating externally in the open air but where, on occasion, access is required to a property, that is done in a co-ordinated and

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Chaidh a ràdh rium gun robh an colbh seo car dubhach air an t-seachdain seo chaidh, gabhadh mo leigeul ma bha sibhse cuideachd den beachd sin! Ged a tha iomadh dùbhlán agus 's dòcha adhbhair iomagain san t-saoghal aig an dearbh àm chan eil teagamh nach e seo ràith fìor dheagh naidheachd a' chreideimh Chrìosdail, agus cha bhiodh dùil ri dubhachas sam bith an lùib sin, am biodh? 'S iomadh facal a chaidh a sgrìobhadh air mar a tha ana-caitheamh ga dhèanamh air ciall agus teachdaireachd spioradail na Nollaige leis mar a tha saoghal coimearsalta a' sior ghreimeachadh air gus bathair de gach seòrsa a reic. Ann am beachd mhòran tha creideamh a' chalpachais a' dubhadh sàr sgeul dòchais àm na Nollaige agus iarrtasan Ràith an t-Subhachais a' fàgail mhòran fo uallach agus ann am fiachan fad ùine às a dhèidh. Leis gum bheil a' bhliadhna seo air a bhith cho tur neo-àbhaisteach thug mi sùil air ais air dè bh' air m' inntinn air an aon t-seachdain an-uiridh.

Aig co-labhairt eadar-nàiseanta anns an Spàin an uairsin bha luchd-iomairt dìon na h-àrainneachd a' gearan gun robh iad sgith de bheul-brèagha bho dhùthchannan an t-saoghail agus iad a' guidhe ghnìomhan susbainteach gus bacadh fhaotainn air teasachadh na cruinne. Bha ceannard UEFA ag aideachadh gun robh gràin-cinnidh ann an saoghal spòrs bhall-coise a' dol am meud. Agus bha eas-aonta mì-iomchaidh am measg cheannardan dhùthchannan NATO an dèidh seachdadh bliadhna den bhuidheann, is cuid aca a' call sealladh air prìomh

safe way. The Oban Times, in recent weeks, has quite rightly praised the town's resilience and innovation in the face of Covid-19. We should not allow that good work to be undermined by trying to encourage turning on those who are simply trying to make a living for their families and supporting the town's economy.

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive, ACHA.

Prayer can bring peace

We know there are many people having a difficult time during this pandemic including those suffering from anxiety, fear, despair and depression. Might I suggest there is only one sure antidote to this situation and that is prayer – it can do wonders. The person who prays sincerely from the heart will encounter an inner peace, even joy. You

chuireadh sith na buidhne. Bhuail e orm gum bheil an dleastanas sin aig NATO na sheòrsa de bhanachdach sìthe!

Cha robh dad togarrach anns na h-aithrisean sin, agus cha mhotha na sin a thachair gnìomhan sònraichte bhon uairsin a bheir misneachadh mhòr sam bith a thaobh dìon na h-àrainneachd, neo cur às do ghràin-cinnidh. Ged is dòcha gun do thachair adhartasan air choreigin bha a h-uile càil air fhalach fo sgàile a' choròna-bhiorais fad faisg air naodh mìosan, agus sunnd is spiorad an t-sluaigh ga shìor mhùchadh. Ach abair deagh naidheachd a-nise is a' chiad bhanachdach dearbhte agus libhrigeadh oirre a' tòiseachadh, is co-dhiù aon tèile cha mhòr deiseil cuideachd! 'S e an cunnart a-nise gum bi daoine air am mealladh le misneachd agus gun trèig iad na modhan a thathas a' moladh a dh'fheumar a chleachdadh airson deagh ùine fhathast. Mar sin tha faiceall chiallach deatamach, ach tha togail iongantach anns an deagh naidheachd seo dha mòr-shluagh an t-saoghail nach cualas a leithid theagamh bho nochd fios air crìoch an Dàrna Cogaidh bho chionn seachdadh is còig bliadhna air ais! Ged a bhios dùbhlain romhainn fhathast tha sinn gun teagamh air gluasad gu ruige ràith ùr dòchais, agus gum meal 's gun caith sinn uile sin!

The continuing Covid scourge had made the 'festive season' seem something of a misnomer until now, but news of progress with vaccines has brought a worldwide season of hope. May all best wishes for health be granted.

don't have to be 'religious' or of a certain religion. We are all God's children because He created each one of us individually and if anyone who seeks him sincerely in prayer, God will answer that person, who will experience 'the peace that is beyond all human understanding' which, of course, is God coming to live in their heart.

Even if you are a non-believer or doubt the existence of God, you can always say, 'God if you are there please come and help me'. Give it a go and, of course, dipping into a bible will enrich your prayer enormously.

Calum MacFarlane-Barrow, Dalmally.

Embrace open debate

Unfortunately, Mr Adam's research has failed him, The Oban Times, December 3. I am not

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a consultant working for the salmon farming industry and certainly not a hired gun.

My background is 100 per cent aquaculture. For the last 25 years, I have been supplying retail market data to a variety of seafood companies, including some that farm salmon. My focus is how can we increase fish consumption amongst the British public.

In 2010, I was invited by the chief inspector of Billingsgate market to speak at an event at Fishmongers Hall to discuss interactions between wild and farmed salmon. I was asked as a personal favour because the arranged speaker was unable to attend.

Although, this was not my subject, I thought it went well until the question and answer session when the mainly angling audience were abusive and aggressive demanding I admit salmon farming was responsible for the declines of wild fish. This pricked my interest because their view of salmon farming was so different to mine and this led me to start privately researching the subject. I continue to do so. No-one pays me to undertake this work.

Over the last 10 years, I have found major discrepancies in the narrative put forward by the angling sector. What is most interesting is that I have tried extensively to speak to these organisations to discuss my findings. They refuse to meet, which is surprising given they claim to want to safeguard the future of wild salmon and sea trout.

When I see claims about salmon farming that are incorrect, if I have time, I respond as Mr Adam has observed. I am sorry if Mr Adam, like the angling sector, doesn't want to hear the other side of the story.

Mr Adam highlights a scientific paper from Norway published in the ICES Journal of Marine Science and said I must be aware of their findings. Actually, I attended an ICES meeting in Copenhagen which considered these very issues and where I met some of the authors of that paper. Interestingly, they weren't very happy to have their findings challenged. They do rate escaped salmon as the highest threat but much of their findings are based on mathematical models rather than actual hard data.

I would like to give a simple example from the same paper as to why I have reservations.

Which would Mr Adam consider a bigger threat to the wild salmon population: a mathematically estimated 39,000 salmon deaths or the confirmed deaths of 135,413 salmon? My view would be that the loss of 135,413 fish to a salmon population must be a much greater threat, yet the scientific paper claims the loss of the lower number is the much bigger threat, even though they cannot prove one fish died, let alone 39,000. The former is their unproven estimation of salmon deaths due to sea lice. The much greater number is the number of fish killed by anglers and this is not considered a threat at all. Mr Adam should not be frightened about open debate but should embrace it.

Dr Martin Jaffa, Callander McDowell.

DISTRICT NEWS



Corrigan Contractors recently presented Ardgor Primary School with hi vis waistcoats. Head teacher Louise Maclean said a huge thank you to Shaun and Rachel Corrigan for the waistcoats and their continuing support of the school.



Manja Gibson presents the gift and card to Duncan, marking her husband's 15 years as chairman of Glenfinnan Community Council.

Duncan calls it a day after 15 years at helm

There was a special presentation via Zoom ahead of the start of last week's Glenfinnan Community Council monthly meeting.

The virtual meeting saw retiring chairman Duncan Gibson presented with a memento to mark his 15 years in the 'hot seat'.

Mr Gibson's wife Manja was tasked with handing over the gift on behalf of the community council to her husband. The gift was a plate carved especially from a piece of locally reclaimed oak by Glenfinnan estate manager Alastair Gibson. Jackie Hail, from Glenfinnan, did the special burning of the commemorative letter around the edge.

Duncan and Manja run Glenfinnan House Hotel.

'Over the moon' Ava lights up Upper Achintore for Christmas

Upper Achintore Regeneration Group's 'Draw a Christmas Tree' Competition was narrowly won by nine-year old Ava Wallace, whose winning drawing attracted 191 votes – four ahead of her nearest rival.

The fun competition was organised by the group to set the scene for the festive season and lift the spirits of Upper Achintore's 650 households.

Ava's prize was the honour of performing the tree lights switch-on ceremony which was live-streamed and viewed more than 300 times – ensuring social distancing was adhered to.

The winner and the runner-up will also receive a selection box from the Highland Tenants Network.

Upper Achintore resident Rosie Hancock said:

'The tree looks great. Well done to Ava for the switch-on and thanks to the regeneration group for organising some festive cheer.'

Ava's mum Amie thanked everyone for voting for Ava's tree drawing and said her daughter was 'over the moon' to have won.

Regeneration group chairman Mark Linfield added: 'We are grateful to Alistair MacGregor for donating the tree and thank residents for viewing the event from their homes. Well done to Ava and all the entrants. They were all lovely pictures.'

The group's next virtual meeting is at 6pm on Monday December 14. All residents are welcome and anyone who would like an invitation to attend should email the group at uarg19@aol.com.



Ava Wallace pushes the plunger to switch on the Upper Achintore Regeneration Group Christmas lights, left and above.

Photograph Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

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Lochaber Local

A taste of local luxury this Christmas

Download the free new salmon recipe app with great ideas on how to make quick, tasty and healthy meals with fresh and smoked salmon. Each recipe has easy to follow, step-by-step instructions, as well as a shopping list of ingredients. View high-quality images of the finished recipes and galleries of some of the stunning locations in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland where MOWI farms their salmon. The app also includes information about the company, Mowi Scotland, their teams and sites, as well as information on what they do. They grow their salmon in the

remote and pristine waters of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland. They provide jobs and support fragile rural economies in some of the most remote communities in the country. From a whole roast salmon to smoked salmon or kedgerree for Christmas morning the recipes are quick and easy to follow. Make sure you have salmon somewhere on your menu this Christmas holiday. Thanks to chef Roy Brett, Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation and Mowi employees worldwide who contributed the recipes.



Visit <http://app.mrnhrv.st/> for some online inspiration or search 'Mowi Salmon Recipes' from the app store on your phone or tablet.



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Bargains galore at the Granite House this Christmas

December seemed like a long way off when we closed our doors at the start of lockdown in March and yet here we are gearing up for the festive season (almost) like any other year. After an extremely challenging year for independent retail we are approaching the final few weeks of 2020, a year which I think we'll all be glad to put behind us, and we are delighted to say that Fort William locals have really come out in force to support their local high street. Christmas is always a busy time for us and over the past 43 years we have enjoyed helping locals get their Christmas presents and this year is no exception. The support we've received has been overwhelming with most customers saying they're making a real effort to shop local. We're doing what we can to help too; with enhanced cleaning and social distancing measures as well as opening 7 days in December and late night shopping on Fridays until 8pm. Much of our stock is also available on our website www.granitehousefortwilliam.co.uk and we have home delivery or free click and collect in store options. With new stock arriving daily, and everything from jewellery and watches, to toys, clothing and candles, there really is something for everyone! Thank you so much for your support this year! Katherine, Gillian and the Granite House Team X



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MacLellan and Forbes form strong striking partnership

S Lochaber Thistle 4
Rothesay Brandane 1

A strong South Lochaber Thistle ran out on the right end of a 4-1 score line against Rothesay Brandane in a friendly encounter in Kinlochleven last weekend, with goals from Iain MacLellan (2), Dave Forbes and Martin Munro.

MacLellan, on his return to the club, looked in top form and turned out a man-of-the-match performance.

The former Highland league striker forged a dangerous partnership with founding father and evergreen forward Dave Forbes in the Jags front line.

It took only 15 minutes for MacLellan to open his account for the afternoon. A Martin

Munro corner was flicked on to towering midfielder Andrew Maclean and MacLellan touched back inside and fired into the roof of the net.

Forbes followed his partner onto the score sheet only three minutes afterwards to make it 2-0 to the home side.

MacLellan was set free by the midfield and when his shot was saved by the Rothesay keeper, he squared the ball to Forbes, who made no mistake.

MacLellan bagged his brace as the first half wound down to the break. Full back Sean Noble impishly scampered along the wing after some tight interplay between Forbes and Maclean. When the ball arrived at the back post, MacLellan made no mistake.

The second half saw Rothesay rewarded with a goal after a

free kick outside the box was rifled in and met with a dainty glancing header to reduce the arrears to 3-1.

The scoring was concluded by skipper Martin Munro exchanging passes with MacLellan then skipping in off his wing and scoring with trademark aplomb.

Manager Alan Gray made a raft of substitutions as the game went on, allowing players including Liam Gilchrist, Bradley Cameron and Cameron Melrose much-needed game time.

He said: 'We are very grateful to Rothesay for making the trip and we are looking to returning the favour in the near future.'

South Lochaber Thistle will take on Dunoon away next week in another friendly encounter.



Iain MacLellan scores SLT's first goal.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

Non-stop Logan leads adventures for mental health

Talking about mental health issues needs to be less of a taboo subject according to a Fort William resident who took on a huge challenge recently to help raise money for charity Lochaber Hope, writes Mark Entwistle.

Logan Barker intends to launch a new business this spring - Logie Adventures - with the aim of inspiring others to explore the outdoors and equip them with the knowledge to do so safely.

To help raise its profile,

he came up with Non-stop November, designed to raise money for Lochaber Hope and awareness of mental health, continuing along the theme of Movember - the leading global organisation committed to changing the face of men's health.

Mr Barker explained: 'During the month of November I set myself a challenge each week.'

'My idea was to keep people engaged and entertained throughout so I didn't let people know about challenges

until a few days before and kept people updated through live updates on Facebook during challenges.'

'The first challenge was a Movember marathon - I ran 26.2 miles round Lochaber. Second was Sea to Summit where I kayaked, cycled and hiked 43 miles, including a trip to the summit of Ben Nevis.'

'The third was A Wee Cycle up the Glen which saw me and two friends cycle 71 miles coast to coast along the Great Glen Way from Fort William

to Inverness in one day. The fourth challenge was Conquer the Cowie, where I ran and cycled from 8am to 8pm completing 48 miles during 15 laps over the top and round the cow hill.'

'The day after, four friends and myself hiked a four-person pedal bike/go-kart to the top of the cow hill then drove it down to Claggan Park.'

'I urged people to join in and complete as many walks, cycles or runs on the cow hill choosing a route that suited them

before the end of November and we collectively achieved 48 loops, approximately 192 miles.'

'Each challenge had a metaphor linking it to mental health. This was to highlight the fact that my challenges may have seemed extremely difficult to the outside world but in truth people go through a lot harder challenges in their head every day.'

'Hopefully people can adopt a new approach at dealing with mental health as it

shouldn't be a taboo subject. The Just Giving page I set up for Lochaber Hope is still running and will continue until December 14.'

'If people wish to donate, the link can be found on my Facebook page Logie Adventures.'



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