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*Merry Christmas* to all our readers

More Christmas messages inside from your favourite local businesses and trades

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The Oban Times  
**2020 CALENDAR**



**2020 wall calendar**

# Sickness outbreak hits Christmas mail deliveries

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Royal Mail admitted this week that postal services in Oban and the surrounding area have been affected by an 'unusually high level of sickness absence'.

The Oban Times believes around 11 employees at the Albany Street depot have been on sick leave over the past two weeks, hitting local deliveries.

While service users understand the high volume of mail at this time of year can cause some disruption, frustration is growing with people complaining of letters and parcels being delivered to the wrong addresses, being left in unsuitable places, such as doorsteps and even a recycle bin, or not being delivered at all.

Lorna MacLennan, who runs the Post Office in Taynuilt, is losing patience with the national company.

'People have been coming in here and asking me to sort it out,' she said.

'It's nothing to do with us.

Royal Mail and Post Office are two entirely different companies with different functions.

'Royal Mail deals with the deliveries and there seems to be some sort of problem at the Oban depot at the moment.

'People are waiting weeks for items that were posted first class.

**'People are waiting weeks for items that were posted first class. I really hope the problem is sorted out soon.'**

'I have put a card in my window with a Royal Mail number to phone but they are still coming in to complain to me. I really hope the problem is sorted out soon.'

When The Oban Times contacted Royal Mail this week, it acknowledged there was a problem and told us it was working hard to get the

backlog of mail delivered in time for Christmas.

A Royal Mail spokesperson said: 'We regret that some customers in the Oban area may have been experiencing delays in receiving their mail. This has been due to unusually high levels of sick absence during the busy Christmas period.

'Our team at Oban Delivery Office have been working extra hours to ensure customers receive their mail as quickly as possible and we are grateful for all their hard work during this busy time.

'We are continuing to provide extra resource to Oban Delivery Office where we can to ensure we continue to provide our usual high levels of service this Christmas.'

The last recommended posting date for first-class Christmas mail is tomorrow (Friday December 20).

Any customers with concerns about their mail should contact Royal Mail customer services by calling 03457 740 740 or by visiting royalmail.com

## Panto time on Seil – oh yes it is!



If your three panto wishes are songs, silliness and slapstick, then Seil has just the show for you. Pantomime players on the island, including lots of young faces, are busy rehearsing for Aladdin of Ardencaple. Due to popular demand, there will be three performances for 2020. Tickets are £5, including refreshments, and are available now from Balvicar Stores. Show dates and times are Friday January 24 at 7pm and Saturday January 25 at 3pm and 7pm. Director John Colston said: 'We've got half the primary schools on the stage for this show.'



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OT

# Priorities for Mossfield are outlined

by David McPhee  
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



A number of areas within Mossfield Stadium have been outlined for improvement at a 'positive' stakeholders' meeting.

The meeting was held in October, but highlighted at the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee on December 11.

It featured representatives from council officers, Live Argyll, BID4Oban, Oban Games, Argyllshire Gathering, Oban Live, Oban Celtic Shinty Club, Oban Camanachd Shinty Club, the Macaulay Association, Oban High School and the Access Forum. After a discussion, the group came up with a number of areas that could be improved.

They were:

- Approach and hard standing behind goal – resurface the access area from the car park including the rear of the goal area.

- Pathway leading to Mossfield Stand – create a level footway leading to the



Martin and Daniel Gillespie.

stand, ensuring area is accessible to all users.

- Event power – installation of event power columns, doubling the existing power to four and new lighting.

- A booking system – a simplified, user friendly and accessible booking system.

- Fencing around the stadium – replace previous fencing destroyed in a fire with a view to preventing vandalism.

- Potential user group – a user group/steering group to continue positive engagement on the use of the stadium as a community asset.

Mossfield Stadium has been used successfully over many years for various sporting tournaments, including

football and shinty, as well as the Argyllshire Gathering. It has also been the home of Oban Live, attracting several thousands of people over its weekend.

However, in June this year, organisers of Oban Live announced that the festival would be taking a break in 2020, citing a lack of development and improvement to Mossfield Stadium.

Organisers, led by Skerryvore's Daniel and Martin Gillespie, said they could no longer keep absorbing the huge costs and risks associated with hosting this event while the facilities deteriorate and costs increase.

Event organiser Neil MacKay attended Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee on December 11. He said: 'I find myself in the unusual position of wanting to compliment a council officer for excellent work. He has managed to achieve what a lot of people could not – getting certain organisations into the one room, which was a very successful meeting.'

# Homelessness in area surges

Homelessness in Oban and Lorn has increased by 16 per cent this year, figures have revealed.

A reported at the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee on December 11 showed that in 2018/19, there were 87 homeless applicants in Oban/Lorn, four from Mull and Iona, and none on Coll and Tiree.

During the same time period, 98 homeless cases were closed in Oban and Lorn and four in Mull.

These figures indicate a decrease of homelessness in Mull, but an increase of 16 per cent in Oban and Lorn over the past year.

The main reasons cited for homelessness in Oban and Lorn last year were 'being asked to leave' and 'disputes with family/relationship breakdown'.

The main reason on Mull, amounting to only two cases, was due to 'loss of service/tied accommodation'. There were five cases of 'termination of tenancy/mortgage due to arrears', in the Oban and Lorn area.

Oban and Lorn also experienced the highest amount of rough sleeping in Argyll and Bute last year after Bute and Cowal. There were six cases of people reporting they slept

rough the night before their presentation and 14 reporting they had slept rough in the three months preceding their homeless application.

There were minimal incidences of rough sleeping on the islands.

Also highlighted in the report were the amount of people currently on the waiting list for a home in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, which currently sits at 565. Broken down, this equates to 476 in Oban and Lorn; 68 on Mull; one on Iona; 10 in Tiree; and 10 on Coll.

By 2021, 371 new homes are expected to have been built in Oban, Lorn and the Isles.



Oban Times staff get into the festive spirit.

## 12 Days of Christmas – Oban-style

With only six more sleeps to go, we thought our readers would enjoy a bit of festive fun leading up to the big day.

Over the past two weeks The Oban Times has teamed

up with an assortment of community groups to put together a whole selection box of melodious treats. We would like to thank all the groups that contributed and

hope our readers have as much fun watching it as we did making it.

Go to The Oban Times Facebook page to view this festive phenomenon.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**Festive Opening Hours**

Christmas Eve 24th December <b>closing 3.00pm</b> Christmas Day 25th December <b>CLOSED</b> Boxing Day 26th December <b>CLOSED</b>	Hogmanay 31st December <b>closing 3.00pm</b> New Years Day 1st January <b>CLOSED</b> 2nd January <b>CLOSED</b>
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# New year brings more help for carers in North Argyll

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



More funding and a new base are set to be just some of the 2020 highlights for North Argyll Carers Centre.

The not-for-profit organisation, which enjoyed its Christmas lunch recently at the Royal Hotel, is looking forward to moving out of its Albany Street premises and into the Rockfield Centre later in the new year.

The move will give the organisation two rooms with office space and a multi-purpose area for meetings, activities and improved facility for one-to-one work, says manager Judith Hawcroft.

January is also set to bring in funding from the People's Postcode Trust and will be used to raise more awareness on carers' rights and what support they can get.

The organisation will be taking information out to areas with a new roadshow to get their message of help across.

There are more than 700



North Argyll Carers Centre Christmas Lunch at The Royal Hotel.

adult carers known to the group and more than 100 young and young adult carers but there will be many more.

'We are aware there are many more who don't identify as carers but need encouraging to come and see how we can help them,' said Mrs Hawcroft.

It is not just caring for family that counts as being a carer – it could be supporting a neighbour or a friend too.

Earlier this month, the TSB

handed over a cheque for £1,225.

Oban's TSB branch manager Karen Sim and a colleague walked into work and back home to help raise funds as part of the bank's Hike It, Bike It and Bake It initiative. A Christmas hamper has also been pulling in more funds with other events and activities the branch organised during the year.

The money will be used on giving carers respite, whether it is trips or days out, spa treatments, supporting them to do activities or getting help with gardening.

'We had a carers' conference in Inveraray where we asked people what was most important to them. The top response was having time out so this money from the TSB is responding to that and giving carers time for themselves,' added Mrs Hawcroft.

Oban Rotary Club has also given financial support to help young carers.

Carer Clark Rydings from

Oban, who supports his wife Mary and also volunteers at the centre, said guidance he has had from the organisation has been invaluable.

'Just being able to go there and speak to people who can give you a bit of guidance is such a big help and means so much. They are so down to earth.'

## POLICE FILES

■ About 1.20pm on Tuesday December 10, on Main Street, Taynuilt, a 45-year-old woman was stopped by police while driving her car. The woman allegedly provided a positive breath test, was arrested and was released on an undertaking to appear at court later.

■ About 1.50pm on Tuesday December 10, on the CalMac Pier, Oban, a 65-year-old man was stopped while driving a car. The man allegedly provided a positive breath test, was arrested and due to the high reading he was detained in custody pending a court appearance.

■ In the early hours of Sunday December 8, a woman was allegedly assaulted by another woman within licensed premises in Oban.

■ About 8.25pm on Thursday December 12 a man was arrested at a Dunbeg address after allegedly being found in breach of special bail conditions issued by Oban Sheriff Court. The man, 29, was arrested and detained pending a court appearance.

■ About 8pm on Wednesday December 11 a charity collection tin was stolen from The Grill House, Combie Street, Oban. After extensive local enquiries a man was traced in relation to the incident.

■ Police on Mull received a report of fraud after a woman transferred a large sum of money to a business account believing it to be genuine and payment for work being carried out at her address. The recipient account turned out to be fraudulent and the woman contacted the police on the advice of her bank. Officers are continuing to investigate the incident.

■ About 5pm on Sunday December 15 a man caused a disturbance at licensed premises and elsewhere in Tobermory. Police attended and the 23-year-old was arrested and detained pending his appearance at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday December 16.

■ If anyone has information in relation to any incident, they can call police on 101, or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



The TSB hands over its cheque to North Argyll Carers Centre.

## Ho, ho, ho ... Santa's here!

Youngsters visiting Santa at Oban's Cuan Mor were on their best behaviour at the weekend.

David Wilson, who organised Sunday's event in aid of Martyn's Monday Club, said he was impressed by all the children who came along with their families to help raise funds for the town's peer-to-peer group.

The amount raised will be announced soon. Photographer Wullie Rogers gave his time for free, taking keepsake photographs.

Oban chef Alex Needham and his daughter Elizabeth were also there helping on the day.



Rhys Muir, four, meets Santa at Cuan Mor raising funds for Martyn's Monday Club.

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OT

# Mull LGBT victim gets compensation

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A former Mull woman has received a five-figure payout from NHS Highland after being discriminated against because of her sexual orientation.

Following judicial mediation, the regional health board agreed to make the payment, issue an apology and write to Unison member Vicky Walker's former colleagues warning of the consequences should there be a failure to adhere to the NHS's stated expectations and values with regard to colleagues and former colleagues.

The case was handled by Thompsons Solicitors for Unison, who supported Vicky throughout her ordeal.

Ms Walker said: 'This marks the end of an incredibly difficult two years during which I suffered relentless harass-



Vicky Walker.

ment and victimisation while working for and since leaving NHS Highland.

'The decision to pursue litigation was not an easy one. However, I felt I had to try to ensure my situation was not repeated for any other employee.

'I would like to thank Unison for their unwavering support and commitment to LGBT rights. I would not have been able to pursue

justice without them. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends, but especially my former NHS colleagues and those members of the Mull community who have stood resolutely on the side of fairness and equality despite some challenging and hostile circumstances.

'It has been a hard journey but I am content that justice has finally been delivered.'

Simon Macfarlane, Unison regional organiser, said: 'It is regrettable we had to pursue litigation in this regard which was stressful for Vicky, and meant justice was delayed and ultimately has cost the NHS a considerable sum of money.

'Time and time again senior management refused to step in on this case and instead stood behind unacceptable practice. This is a pattern we see all too often in NHS Highland and have yet to

see evidence of changed behaviours post the Sturrock report.

'This case shows the importance of being in a union and having access to support and legal representation. Unison is committed to fighting for LGBT equality in the workplace and society.

'Vicky is to be commended for taking a stand and showing such perseverance. We hope this settlement will at last provide some closure and allow her to move on with her life.'

Vicky, who has since left the island, added: 'I am encouraged that NHS Highland wish to learn from my experience and have acknowledged the systemic failures by both HR and management.

'I hope they can now take the necessary actions to ensure the safety of LGBT employees and their allies within their organisation.'



The Classic Vehicle Club gives cheques to Martyn's Monday Club, Blue Triangle, and Brian MacDonald.

## Roads lead to charity for Classic Vehicle Club

Every year, Oban and District Classic Vehicle Club donates a large sum of money to charities and individuals in the area.

This year, the club has split £1,800 between Martyn's Monday Club, Blue Triangle and Brian MacDonald.

Oban and District Classic Vehicle Club, which was founded in 2006, raised the money through membership, donations and fundraising events throughout the year.

Elizabeth Bradley from Blue Triangle, which helps to house homeless people, said: 'I would like to thank the

members of the club from the service users and staff for a very generous donation.'

Former firefighter Brian MacDonald, who was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, also thanked the club, stating it was 'very much appreciated'.

Brian, see right, who moved into a new house on the day he received the cheque, said: 'This will help me to get furniture and things for my house and help my battle through MND.'

Martyn's Monday Club also voiced its thanks.



Founder Nicky Murphy, left, with two Pink Ladies, Maria Mackellar and Marion Mackellar. Maria celebrated her 70th birthday over lunch.

## Pampered ladies are in the pink

This year's Pink Ladies Day was held at the Loch Fyne Hotel in Inveraray on Friday December 6.

The Pink Ladies Day was organised by founder Nicky Murphy with help from hundreds of people who attended afternoon teas, bought raffle tickets, tombola tickets, sponsored a Twilight walk or simply donated money out of the goodness of their hearts.

Nicky said: 'The Pink Ladies Day was founded in 2014 and now, in its sixth year, is established as a date on the calendar that many women really look forward to.

'This event is for women who

have experienced breast cancer first hand and they can bring along a special guest of their own to share the day with. The whole day is completely free and is paid for through various fundraising events and kind donors that give us money out of the goodness of their hearts.

'This year we had 88 women there, all taking time out to enjoy a day of pampering, preening, good food – and wine! – fun and friendship. Some of our ladies have been coming along since day one and are a great inspiration to the women who are there for the first time, perhaps just having completed their treatment.

'This year we had make-up artists, hairdressers, nail technicians, a Kundalini yoga teacher, Pilates teacher, massage therapists, beauticians and a pedicurist. Our volunteers come from far and wide, including Liverpool and London.

'The Pink Ladies Day would not happen without the kindness and dedication of these women, all of whom run their own businesses and they give their skills and expertise at such a busy time of the year for them!

'The staff and management at Crerar Hotels – Loch Fyne Hotel and Spa are also superb.'

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# Brave Brian moves into new home in time for Christmas

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Christmas at home will have special poignancy for former firefighter Brian MacDonald, who is battling motor neurone disease.

The 42-year-old says moving into the 'free-range' house and getting back his independence is one of the best Christmas gifts he could ask for.

Until recently, Brian was bedroom-bound at his mother's Oban home, unable to get downstairs unless he was carried.

Last week his family helped him move into his new place, a one-level cottage as part of amenity complex run by Scottish charity Bield, which helps people live the life they want.

Although the houses are designed for over-60s, Brian's special circumstances ticked all the right boxes and within

just days of hearing one of the cottages was vacant, he had his new home.

'I cried when I got the call saying it was mine. I rang my mum, she was in the hairdressers, and she cried too. I've got my own life back again and my independence - as much as I can.

'My family moved me in, sorted my furniture and even put up the Christmas tree. I've got a massive TV - it's like a cinema in here - and the nephews and nieces are coming round to watch a Christmas film.

'I loved staying with mum but I was restricted to the bedroom because the only toilet was upstairs. To get downstairs I needed two or three people to carry me but now everything's all on one level. I can wheel myself in and out to get fresh air and get down to the shops.

'Everything is so much better. I feel amazing, I have



Brian MacDonald with mum Annie and sister Tia at home in McKelvie Road.

a new lease of life,' said Brian.

Bield is also looking at other changes to help make Brian's life easier but, funding is tight. He also has a driveway big enough for his wheelchair-access vehicle.

Despite the joy of a new

home, Brian said his condition is deteriorating but he will boldly face the new year.

He has lost the use of his left-hand side and now the right side of his body is also becoming weaker.

He said: 'I don't know the

time span of things, it's the big unknown, but my mobility is not good at all. I've still got use of one leg. All this is so raw for my family but we are talking about what the future will inevitably bring. I'm only 42, I was an active man - this should not be happening to me but it is,' he said.

His family's support and four carers visiting Brian each day are all helping him keep up his independence as long as possible.

'I'm so grateful for everything I have. I try to keep smiling and do my best. As long as I can do that and keep talking, I'll be happy with that,' he added.

Brian's shock diagnosis forced him to take early retirement this year after 13 years saving lives from fires in Glasgow.

He had been struggling to lift his left arm in the shower but it was only when he

struggled to pull himself into the driving seat of a fire engine that he went off sick and got help from a neurologist.

In August, he came home to Oban and has been touched by the community's fundraising and generosity, including money from a diecast model show in Benderloch, boosted by a £600 donation from an Islay woman who wanted to help.

Another woman helped buy a rain cover for his powerchair, Tobermory fire station recently sent over a cheque for Brian's MND fundraising and a massive £1,235 was raised at The View in Oban earlier this month in aid of Motor Neurone Disease Scotland.

Donations have also come from Oban Celtic Supporters' Club and the St Vincent De Paul Society.

Funds to help make a difference to Brian's 2020 are still needed.



Nationwide's Shona Fox with just some of the 350 gifts donated so far for the Salvation Army Christmas appeal.

## Presents pile up for Christmas appeal

Hundreds of gifts have been donated to this year's Salvation Army Christmas present appeal with just one more day to go.

Tomorrow, Friday December 20, is the last chance to hand in gifts at the Nationwide branch in George Street.

By last week, more than

350 presents had already been dropped off to bring festive cheer to some of the area's neediest children and most vulnerable adults.

The number of youngsters and adults on the Christmas wishlist has increased in 2019. The appeal also covers the Lochgilphead area with a drop-off point at the Bank

of Scotland in Poltalloch Street.

Organisers work with social workers, child workers and community-based care companies to make sure those who would benefit from the appeal get a gift to open on December 25. Gifts must be new and should be unwrapped.

## TAX RETURN DEADLINE

### 31 JANUARY 2020

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OT

## Well and truly in the holiday spirit

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk



I must admit I'm really looking forward to my holiday this year. Christmas has a really different feel from any other holiday and I have no guilt about putting my feet up and doing as little as possible.

The weather makes it OK to stay in if you feel like it and I've asked Santa for a pile of books which make the house even more enticing. That's not to say I'm going to be completely housebound – it's a time for visiting friends and relatives as well and catching up with people without the hustle and bustle of daily life intruding.

Christmas is really everything a holiday should be. It has excitement, fun, relaxation, good food, beautiful church services to remind you of the real reason for the holiday, and it's also a time to think about others.

Even as I write this, I'm aware that Christmas isn't

### WHERE IS THIS?



a time of joy for everyone, especially those who've lost someone or who are alone and without the money to have the Christmas they would like.

A challenge on Facebook by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership is even more meaningful at this time of year.

It is challenging all of us to commit a random act of kindness and I'm taking the challenge and upping it. Don't make it just one act of kindness: make it two or three. It doesn't have to cost you anything except some

time and thoughtfulness and it could make a huge difference to someone's life.

It's what Christmas is really about, all the other stuff is just a lovely extra which I will enjoy to the full and if I can add a few random acts of kindness to the holiday it will be the icing on the cake. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

Last week's photograph was of course Santa or St Nicholas, if you want to be formal, and for the last photo of the year, I thought I would make it quite difficult.

## Pub regulars embrace Oban RNLI fundraising campaign

Oban RNLI was one of the first lifeboat stations in Scotland to take up the Betty's Pots fundraising campaign, which encourages people to donate 5p coins in mini jam jars to the life-saving emergency service.

The initiative has been well supported in the Argyll

area but has also become a mission for the regulars of the Forester's Arms pub in the landlocked village of Cambusbarron, near Stirling.

Patrons of the pub have now filled numerous jars – including Marmite and garlic containers – with 5p coins but have also contributed

jars full of 20p coins and £1 coins. The Forester's Arms is nowhere near the sea – it is nearly 100 miles from Oban and has no links to the RNLI but the generous regulars have embraced the cause with enthusiasm, led by manager Kirstie Inglis and customer Ali MacFarlane.



Patrons of the Forester's Arms have been donating to Oban lifeboat.

ADVERTORIAL

# City Plumbing: The bathroom experts

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to help them make the most of the space they have,' said Mark, who has 19 years experience in the business.

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'City Plumbing deals with all aspects, from domestic through to commercial, hotels, B&Bs and holiday lets.'

The bathroom showroom, trade counter and store at Glengallan are thriving and City Plumbing and its delivery service is so popular with island customers that a new, shorter vehicle is being brought in for ferry journeys to keep carriage costs competitive.



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Eilidh MacLeod at Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships 2017.

## Piping event honours Barra bombing victim

The world's biggest school pipe band championships have named a new award after a young Barra piper who died in the Manchester Arena attack.

The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships have created the Eilidh MacLeod Endeavour Award to as a memorial to the 14-year-old.

The award will go to groups which show perseverance and resilience in the face of challenges as well as those who demonstrate community contribution, enthusiasm and camaraderie, innovation and efforts to include everyone regardless of circumstances.

Eilidh's father, Roddy MacLeod, said: 'We were incredibly touched when we were asked by the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships if they could name this exceptional award after Eilidh. It really means a lot to our family to have her memory honoured by the piping community like this, as it was such a big part of her life.'

Eilidh started playing the bagpipes when she was eight and every two weeks would set off on a two-hour journey including a ferry ride, to train with Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band in Benbecula.

Together with the band, she travelled hundreds of miles from the Outer Hebrides to compete against other groups from around Scotland in the championships.

Mr MacLeod said: 'It was Eilidh's idea to start learning to play – she loved the sound of bagpipes. She would always stop to watch buskers and pipers in town and had so much admiration for them.'

'She started playing the practice chanter when she was seven and moved on to bagpipes at the age of eight. She was the youngest one in

class when she started. The influence that being a part of a school band had on her was immense – it was shaping her into an amazing young woman.

'It gave her a way to express herself, become more confident and resilient, as well as build long-lasting friendships with other young people from around Scotland.'

'The camaraderie among pipers and drummers is really strong and we could see the positive effect it was having on Eilidh's life. Having to travel all the way to Benbecula to practice meant she was missing some Fridays at school but she was very diligent in keeping up with her school work because her band practice meant so much to her.'

From quartets to pipe bands, the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships showcase the talent of Scotland's young musicians with the aim to promote and celebrate the country's rich musical heritage.

Alexandra Duncan, chief executive of the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust (SSPDT), which organises the event, added: 'Creating the Eilidh MacLeod Endeavour Award was our way of paying respect to Eilidh as an inspiring young woman and a musician – and keep her memory alive within Scotland's piping community.'

'We're really honoured to have Eilidh's family's blessing in establishing this important platform and giving recognition to groups who embody the same traits that Eilidh had shown throughout her life.'

Next year's championships will take place on Sunday March 8 at the William McIlvanney Campus in Kilmarnock.

## Oban shop invites residents to make a wish for Christmas

Mary's Meals is inviting Oban residents to make a wish for Christmas at its shop on Stevenson Street.

Visitors to the shop can receive a specially designed decoration in return for a small donation to the charity, which feeds more than 1.5 million hungry children every school day. People can write their Christmas wish on the decoration – or a wish

for a loved one – and display it in the shop or take it home for their own tree.

Jennie McMaster, who manages the Mary's Meals shop in Oban, said: 'I am very grateful for everything the people of Oban do throughout the year to support Mary's Meals. Together, we are providing life-changing meals for children in some of the world's poorest countries.'

'I hope local residents will celebrate the festive season with us by visiting the shop and making a Christmas wish.'

Each Christmas tree decoration features the shed in Argyll where Mary's Meals was founded in 2002. The charity now feeds hungry children living in 18 countries around the world. The food attracts them into the

classroom, where they receive an education that can, in the future, be their ladder out of poverty.

For other ways to support Mary's Meals this Christmas, please visit [marysmeals.org.uk/Christmas](http://marysmeals.org.uk/Christmas)

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As well as an undergraduate bursary of £10,000 for those choosing to study nursing or midwifery from 2020, a healthcare degree is highly valued, both here in Scotland and all over the world.

It's a stable and valued career for life – more people studying nursing related degrees go on to find a job after their course than any other degree.

The new 'What did you do today?' campaign shows the significant variety of opportunities within all healthcare professions including nursing, midwifery, healthcare science and the allied health professions such as radiographers, dietitians and paramedics, featuring real people sharing their real stories.

If you're a young person or know one who's still trying to figure out their career path, then working in healthcare could be a great route. No two days are the same, it's rewarding, and you get to make a real difference to people's lives.

To find out more about the career paths available and where to study visit [CareersInHealthcare.scot](http://CareersInHealthcare.scot)



OT

# Warmest Christmas greo



**Rev Dugald Cameron,  
Kilmore and Oban.**

What do you hope for from Christmas? A bath bomb and a bottle of Glayva!

I am giving away the manse secrets. Actually though, my wish came true when a couple of years ago I was given a Scotland football top and a book on steam trains – the same presents I received as a nine-year-old!

What do you hope for from Christmas? Could it be found in a present, or something deeper? For Advent and Christmas is a time of reflection – looking for hope. The nights have drawn in and times are dark politically

and ecologically, so we need hope. Hope springs from an impulse of the heart and the search for God springs from an impulse of the heart. They may combine – the heart's desire for God and for hope. Christian faith asserts these impulses for hope find a response from God. God reveals hope through symbols which move us deeply. And these symbols do not arise simply from human speculation. We find God and hope in darkness and light, in mystery and learning, in that which is changeless and yet endlessly creative. We encounter hope having the form of the personal and yet infinite and unbounded. The Christian story is full of these discernments of where hope is to be found. Then they combine, bringing hope in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. And because of this, and these other glimpses of revelation, we have hope. Hope energises us to emerge from the dark into the light.



**Chief Inspector Marlene Baillie, Area Commander for Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Oban, Lorn and the Isles.**

At this time of the year everyone is really busy and there is lots to think about and organise.

It is so easy to forget to do the simple things that could help keep you safe over the festive period. I urge people to take a bit of time to ensure the basics when it comes to home, vehicle, internet and personal safety.

There will be lots of information circulated by Police Scotland over the weeks running up to Christmas which is designed to help

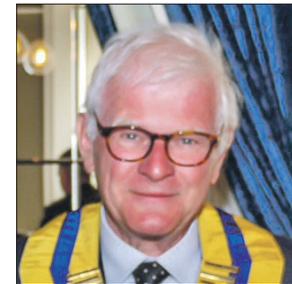
people to avoid becoming victims of crime. I would ask people pay a bit more attention as everyone can be a bit more vulnerable as there is more money in circulation, more alcohol being consumed, more opportunities for scammers and those intent on committing crime.

I would also ask people to be mindful of the role of the emergency services at this time of the year.

Police, ambulance, fire and rescue, Coastguard, lifeboats, care providers and NHS staff will all be working flat out during a period of very high demand. They also work on Christmas and New Year's day helping to keep our communities safe during a time when most are with family and friends.

The festive period, for a number of different reasons, can be a crisis time and without the dedication and commitment of officers and staff throughout the emergency services people

could be at risk of harm. I hope everyone across Argyll and Bute has a happy, healthy, safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



**Douglas Small, president of Oban Rotary Club.**

Oban Rotary Club wishes everyone a very happy Christmas and thanks the Oban community for its generous support in helping us over the past year to raise funds for charitable and deserving good causes. 2019 has seen another successful year for our club.

We have raised £19,000

and have donated the best part of £25,000 to deserving individuals and good causes. We are particularly proud of how we have helped the younger members of the community and some of our older members.

Our senior citizens are looking forward to a Christmas lunch at the Oban Bay Hotel, organised and sponsored by ourselves and Crerar Hotels Trust.

We are proud to have helped younger members in the community. We have sponsored some in their gap year, travelling abroad and helping in underdeveloped countries as well as extending their life experiences through sport and outward bound courses. In doing so we hope to have encouraged confidence in themselves.

We organised the duck race in Oban, supported the Argyll Cycle Club race and ran the Am-Am golf competition. We are particularly grateful to the businesses which



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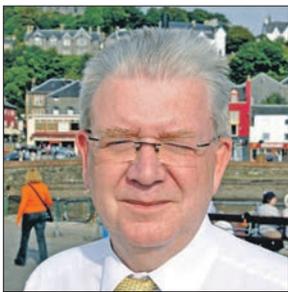
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# etings to all our readers

supported the Am-Am and helped us to raise £11,000. Deserving causes which we have supported over the past year include the Young Carers Initiative in Argyll and the Rockfield Community Centre in Oban. We have organised competitions in primary schools in Argyll and in Oban High School.

On Sunday December 15, we organised a Christmas carol concert for schools and the community. May I again thank everyone who has helped us to raise funds for such deserving causes.



**Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute**  
Even for a politician, 2019 has had too much politics in it. For me, working across the large constituency of Argyll and Bute but also with responsibilities in the Scottish Government that take me to London, Brussels and other places on a regular basis, a few days not on the move is a great treat, as is the chance to turn my thoughts to something other than elections or Brexit.

This is the time to celebrate good news, whether a matter of personal Christian faith, or simply enjoying the company of family and friends - or both - and I am therefore also glad to have the opportunity to wish you all the best for this season and for 2020. I hope the New Year and new decade will allow us all to discover on a local and national level an ability to work with each other without rancour or bitterness, no matter how much we disagree, and with a willingness to build something better than we have now - a community, a village, a town, a county, a constituency or a country that offers support for everyone, equal opportunity and active compassion for those less fortunate.

That surely is the real message of this season despite the political noises around us and it is one that we should all strive to make real in our lives for our own good as well as for the good of everyone else.



**Kay McDonald, BID4Oban.**  
Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year from everyone at BID4Oban.

It's been a really hectic and busy year. It only seems to have calmed down recently and not for very long as we now have the excitement of Christmas and New Year to look forward to.

2020 promises much to look forward to, lots of cruise ships calling again, lots of events and music to look forward to and with 2020 being the Year of Coasts and Waters, I'm sure much of what's being planned for next year will relate to the sea which is such an integral part of life in this area.

I'm hoping for another year in which Oban continues to grow and prosper and where we continue to welcome people from all around the world and try to make Oban a place where locals and visitors enjoy life and everything the town and area have to offer.



**Councillor Elaine Robertson**  
Wishing everyone in Oban, Lorn and the Isles a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



**Bishop Brian McGee.**  
One statement I don't like is: 'Christmas is all about the kids.' It's something I often hear at this time of year.

Don't get me wrong, I loved Christmas as a child and each year I find myself reliving many cherished memories. Now, I love seeing the excitement and joy of today's children. So what's my issue? It's that by equating Christmas only for children we have reduced it to presents, parties, lights and food. But, wonderful as partying is, is this all there is to Christmas? What are we celebrating? It is good family and friends gather for fun, but is there nothing more to Christmas? Without a doubt, Christmas is a most wonderful time of the year. Christmas reveals we are precious. At the first Christmas, God took on human flesh to make us like God. Jesus loved us so much he was born in the stable to redeem us. From that moment, God would be with us in a new way. Christmas is special for everyone. I hope we all can enjoy its social moments but even more the beauty of encountering the love of Jesus in our hearts. Jesus was born for us all and so I wish each one of you, young and old, a happy and holy Christmas.



**Right Reverend Kevin Pearson.**  
Light a candle in a dark room and the flame may appear fragile but it is attractive. In the midst of the darkness, the light provides an oasis of vision, warmth, security and peace. The darkness loses its power to fill us with fear. The flame gives just enough light to take one step at a time, enough warmth to encourage us to move, enough security to make us feel we are not alone and that there is hope. Hope is what Advent is all about. In the darkness of a world in which there is so much suffering, the fragile flame of hope flickers in small acts of kindness and generosity. In the darkness and the shadows we feel inside us, the fragile flame of hope flickers to show us peace comes not from the absence of violence or anger or hatred, hope comes when the fragile light of faith allows us to see

that those shadows are just that - shadows caused by the light of love which burns within us, in the yearning to be held, to be secure, to know we are not alone. That is the love Jesus was born to show in His story. In the love we share, we know God for God's love, whether we are able to recognise that fact, that light or not. Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we remember. It took the might of the Soviet army to build the wall. It was demolished by old women and children, carrying candles. Blessings.



**Councillor Jim Lynch.**  
Christmas is a special time for

all of us, a time to spend with family and friends, reflect on a year passed and plan for the New Year ahead.

I wish everyone across Oban, Lorn and the Isles a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Councillor Kieron Green.**  
As another year draws to a close, I look forward to spending time with family and friends. I want to give thanks to those who will make it possible for us to enjoy being together - running ferries and gritting roads, opening shops, or delivering our gifts, to

name but a few. While people take deserved time off, I pay tribute to people working in hospitals, residential and nursing homes, and providing home care, and of course to the members of the emergency services. I hope they, too, will find time to relax and see those who matter most to them. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2020, whatever it may bring.



**Councillor Andrew Vennard.**  
I wish everyone in Oban, Lorn and the Isles and Argyll and Bute, a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

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OT

# Loved ones remembered at annual Light up a Life event

by David McPhee  
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



Loved ones in Oban were remembered at a special Light up a Life ceremony last Tuesday night.

The annual event, in aid of Oban Hospice, involves surrounding a tree at the Corran Halls in lights, as well as each person turning on a candle to remember those who have passed away.

While chairman of Oban Hospice David Entwistle was too ill to host the ceremony, John MacKenzie took the reins. Mr MacKenzie highlighted the work done at the Dove Centre, stating it is going from 'strength to strength', thanks to the hard work of Peter Darling, Lucy Hind and all the volunteers.

'I would like to say a big thanks to my board colleagues, staff at the Dove Centre and volunteers,' Mr MacKenzie added.



The annual Light up a Life event took place last Tuesday.

DM\_t51\_LightUpALife01

The event featured music from the Catalina Singers, hymns accompanied by James Campbell, a reading from Reverend Robert MacLeod, piping by Angus MacLennan, as well as a prayer led by Donald MacKinnon.

Neil Horne and David Kilpatrick gave speeches outlining the impact the Dove

Centre has had on their lives.

The centre offers support to people who are battling life-limiting conditions.

Therapies, group sessions and one to one support are available for everyone affected by the illness, including families and carers.

Mr Horne said: 'I have not been coming to the Dove

Centre for that long. I had to be persuaded. I eventually went and I don't know when I enjoyed a morning in such a long time. It has got to the stage if I miss a Friday morning, I feel like my week is ruined.'

He said Friday mornings in Dove are filled with grown men who are there to support and help each other.

Mr Kilpatrick said: 'A few months ago I went to Highland Fasteners on the other side of the road from the Dove Centre and I thought I must look in there.'

After being greeted by the staff, he agreed to pop back in on a Friday morning.

'Now it is something to be looked forward to,' Mr Kilpatrick added. 'We chat, laugh a lot and have music.'

Anyone who would like to volunteer at the Dove Centre can do so by dropping in at 24 Stevenson Street, Oban, or calling 01631 561315.



Andrew Spence and Kay McDonald from BID4Oban have noted a surge in sales of Love Oban vouchers this year.

## Surge in support for voucher businesses

Retailers in Oban can look forward to an extremely prosperous new year if recent sales of Love Oban vouchers are anything to go by.

Sales of the gift cards, which can be redeemed at more than 50 local retailers, have gone through the roof this year with a last-minute rush expected to boost them even more before the big day.

The scheme run by Oban's Business Improvement District (BID4Oban) is going from strength to strength since it was launched over six

years ago. BID chief executive Andrew Spence said: 'So far, 2019 is proving to be the busiest years ever for sales of the vouchers.'

'This Christmas, many locals have been taking advantage of the recent promotion. By buying and using Love Oban vouchers you are ensuring that local shops and businesses are supported.'

Vouchers are available to purchase from various businesses in Oban, including the BID4Oban office. Full details on BID4Oban.co.uk

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**The display starts at midnight, from McCaigs Tower.**

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## STAY SAFE AND HAVE FUN!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at BID4OBAN

Oban Business Improvement District

www.bid4oban.co.uk

## New ranger qualification developed by partnership

From February, West Highland College UHI is joining with Fort William-based Nevis Landscape Partnership to offer a new qualification in the great outdoors.

The course should prove attractive to students of all ages and backgrounds who have an interest in our countryside and a desire to contribute to conservation and provision for visitors.

The Partnership welcomed the NQ: Countryside Skills with Ranger Training, saying: 'We are excited to embark on this new structure for our Trainee Volunteer Ranger Scheme, working in partnership with West Highland College UHI.'

'Building on the positive legacy of our previous ranger training programme, working with our partners the John Muir Trust, the Woodland Trust, and Jahama Estates, we are now adding valuable work experience.'

Underpinning the programme will be regular input from an experienced college lecturer, and upon successful completion, in addition to practical and theoretical knowledge, students will gain



Trainee volunteer rangers at work on Ben Nevis.

recognised industry awards, plus a National Qualification.

The course includes skills training, conservation and visitor management tasks led by the NLP volunteer coordinator and landowning partners, giving opportunity to contribute to positive action in the local area, and through engaging with potential employers, enhance their prospects.

Theoretical work covers habitat, an understanding of visitor provision, recreation and access issues, and consideration of land use, management objectives and possible conflicts of interest. Industry awards offer certification in specialist

skills such as dry-stone walling, chainsaw operation, quad bike use, navigation, outdoor first aid and tree surveying.

Course leader Heather McNeill said: 'Employers are looking for staff with an understanding of countryside issues, a range of skills, and the knowledge and confidence to work safely and effectively.'

The course, is based in Fort William, four days per week for 18 weeks, and starts in February. Interviews are in January, and applications are open now at [www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/courses/nq-countryside-skills-with-ranger-training/](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/courses/nq-countryside-skills-with-ranger-training/) or call 01397 874000.

# O'Hara wins new term as MP for Argyll

by Colin Cameron  
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Scottish National Party candidate Brendan O'Hara has been re-elected as the Member of Parliament for Argyll and Bute with an increased majority.

The Argyll and Bute UK General Election count began at Lochgilphead Joint Campus after polls closed at 10pm on Thursday December 12 and was carried out through the night, with the result declared at 5.45am on Friday December 13.

At the end of what can reasonably be described as a low-key constituency campaign in comparison to the rancour and division elsewhere in the country, Argyll and Bute's electorate handed Mr O'Hara a majority of 4,110 votes over his nearest challenger, Conservative Gary Mulvaney.

Returning officer Cleland Sneddon declared the result as follows: Rhea Louise Barnes, Scottish Labour Party – 3,248; Gary Mulvaney, Scottish Conservative and Unionist – 16,930; Brendan O'Hara, Scottish National Party (SNP) – 21,040; Alan Reid, Scottish Liberal Democrats – 6,832.

The total electorate for Argyll and Bute was 66,525 with 48,192 votes cast. The turnout at the polls was

72.4 per cent. A total of 142 votes were rejected. Ten were rejected for voting for more than one candidate and 132 were unmarked or void for uncertainty.

A delighted Mr O'Hara said after the declaration: 'My first priority, as it always has been, is the people of Argyll and Bute, and to make the case for the constituency.

'I am very worried about the future of Argyll and Bute. We have a UK government that is hell-bent on Brexit. Boris Johnson, with his majority, will be looking to take us out of the EU as quickly as possible. A no-deal Brexit is still on the table and, after tonight, is looming large. We should all be very worried at that prospect.'

Asked how he felt, Mr O'Hara replied: 'It hasn't really hit me yet. I didn't think the majority would be what it was, and I think this is a victory for the organisation of the SNP in Argyll and Bute.

'I am very, very happy and very, very tired in equal measure.'

Mr Mulvaney, who received 954 more votes than in the 2017 election, commented: 'I'm pleased our vote has increased, but I've felt like we have been swimming against the tide sometimes. I am delighted, however, that we now

have a majority Conservative government. We need a strong Westminster government to get Brexit done and move forward.'

LibDem candidate Alan Reid was the constituency MP for 14 years from 2001 before being succeeded in 2015 by Mr O'Hara. Mr Reid said: 'I am obviously disappointed not to have won but I would congratulate Brendan on a convincing victory.'

A newbie to the political scene, Scottish Labour candidate Rhea Barnes remarked: 'It's been a well-fought campaign conducted in a well-mannered way and I thank the other candidates for that, and I congratulate Brendan on his election as MP.'

Votes made their way across Argyll and Bute in ballot boxes transported by car, boat and helicopter to the Lochgilphead Joint Campus count centre.

Returning officer Cleland Sneddon said: 'We have a dedicated team of knowledgeable election staff which meant everything went extremely smoothly, despite the unique challenges involved in administering a count on this scale.'

'I would like to thank everyone involved for ensuring Argyll and Bute's UK General Election count went so well.'

## Dedication earns Thomas the Kayla MacDonald Shield

Thomas MacIntyre was the toast of Oban Lifesaving Club last Tuesday night when he was presented with the Kayla MacDonald Memorial Shield, writes Fiona Scott.

A popular member of the club, eight-year-old Kayla, from Dunbeg, died following a tragic accident in a forest near Beinn Lora in July 2017.

Bequeathed by Kayla's family in 2018, the shield is presented annually to a member of the club who has improved not just in swimming but has shown advancement in behaviour, attitude and general life skills – traits perhaps that Thomas, 12, has learned from his big brother who is none other than local golf ace Bob MacIntyre.

A speechless Thomas, who has proved himself worthy in all criteria, accepted the trophy from Kayla's brothers Ruairidh, eight, and four-year-old Ronnie.

Gordon McNab, one of the volunteer teachers at the club, said that Thomas was a worthy recipient of the honour.



Thomas MacIntyre accepts the Kayla MacDonald Memorial Shield from Ruairidh and Ronnie MacDonald.

'Thomas now helps at the club and has matured so much over the past year,' he added.

As well as the presentation of Kayla's Shield, badges and medals were presented to swimmers for their efforts while proud parents watched.

'The club is life-changing in so many ways,' added Gordon. 'And for that I would like to thank the dedicated team of teachers and commit-

tee members. The club is inspirational.' Oban Lifesavers is a community club where swimming and lifesaving skills are taught to more than 100 children, providing them with skills to keep them safe in and around the water.

Pupils become members at the age of five and progress from the small pool, where they learn to swim, to Rookie Lifesaving as they become more proficient.

## Oban business offers Hope with cheque for £500



Hope Kitchen are feeling on top of the world this week after receiving a very generous donation of £500 from McCallum Roofing and Roughcasting, their very kind and generous neighbour. Pictured left to right are Beth Campbell (service supervisor), Cammy McCallum, Jessie Scott and Eileen Hill (Hope volunteers).

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# On your bike! New ebike hire pilot project launches in Fort William

Residents in Fort William are being given the chance to hire electric bikes to improve their fitness, mobility and ability to get about their rural communities more easily in a pilot scheme promoted by HITRANS, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands.

HITRANS has worked in partnership with Nevis Cycles who have volunteered to deliver the pilots as part of European-funded research project. There will be six bikes in the Nevis Cycles shop for residents and tourists to hire and try out a different way of getting around or simply getting fitter and the pilot schemes start in early January 2020.

Highland Councillor Allan Henderson, chair of HITRANS, said: "It's so great to see HITRANS partnering with volunteer local businesses to deliver these pilot projects that will hopefully encourage more people to try out an ebike and potentially opt for a more sustainable way to move around the areas for certain journeys in the future. I'm excited to take an ebike out for a try. Cycling is one of our most effective, healthy and environmentally friendly forms of transport, and we work closely with many partners to encourage active travel in our area and hopefully these ebikes can."

Emma Holgate, director of Nevis Cycles, said: "We have been happy to volunteer to get involved in this research project which seeks to

increase local access to ebikes. We are very keen to get this project started and start collecting people's views on ebikes after they have had a chance to hire them as part of this research project. As a local sustainable business it's great to be able to offer the same type of bike hire as residents in Glasgow and Edinburgh are enjoying through larger urban schemes."

Ranald Robertson, HITRANS partnership director, said: "The ebike scheme has been funded by the North Sea Region G-PaTRA project and Scottish Government's ebike grant scheme which is administered by Energy Saving Trust.

"Paths for All have provided marketing funding support to promote the EU Interreg and Horizon 2020 pilot projects. The European project will focus on improving accessibility to sustainable transport both for residents and tourists. A number of vulnerable groups have been identified, namely elderly people / persons of reduced mobility, local residents who suffer from fuel poverty due to high rural fuel costs and young people who face the challenge of not having access to their own mobility solution, inhabitants in dispersed settlements. Only three per cent of visitors use public transport for mobility."

Alongside the delivery of the ebike pilot schemes, the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership



(HITRANS) are involved in a number of pilot project activities focussing on the delivery of integrated, multi-modal transport solutions, working with both public and private sector partners to deliver a Regional Transport Strategy. The key objectives of the pilot projects will be: integration of lift sharing scheme or car club with public transport; improvement of multi-modal travel information; experimentation of mobility as a service solutions for payment for these services; investigate and address governance issues related to mobility management which could enable the exploration of new business concepts.

## Trial details



Short demonstration trials of the e-bikes are free of charge, with varying rates for trialling a bike for a few hours or a few days. Special introductory trial rates are being offered by Nevis Cycles to residents within the Fort William area, to encourage them to give winter commuting a try. There are a range of e-bikes available to suit all sizes, including step-through city bikes and mountain bikes. HITRANS are hoping to work with local organisations to promote the programme to locals who might benefit from getting out on a bike and being more active.

## NEW! Free active travel map



Neil MacRae, HITRANS partnership manager, said: "Alongside the ebike project, there is also new Active Travel Map for Fort William has been launched, providing local residents and visitors with key information on the excellent opportunities for walking and cycling around the town.

"The map has been produced by HITRANS, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands, and highlights recommended on and off-road routes, transport hubs such as the railway and bus station, information on locations of cycle parking, and bike shops/bike hire."

Frank Roach, HITRANS partnership manager, speaking at the event, said: "The map identifies a practical network of high

quality routes suitable for pedestrians and cyclists that provide convenient and safe access throughout the town, to and from transport hubs, shopping areas, employment centres, and leisure/recreation destinations.

"Transport accounts for 27 per cent of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, so choosing to walk or cycle instead of taking the car for journeys under five miles has a positive impact on carbon emissions, air quality and traffic movements, making our streets more liveable. The Active Travel Map makes it easier for people to make different choices about how they get around and offers ideas for where to take a ebike for a trial."

**NEVIS CYCLES** 01397 705555

4 Lochy Road, Inverlochty, Fort William  
[info@neviscycles.com](mailto:info@neviscycles.com) [www.neviscycles.com](http://www.neviscycles.com)

The free map is available in Off Beat Bikes and Nevis Cycles, and various workplaces around town. A pdf version can be downloaded from the HITRANS website: [www.hitrans.org.uk/hitravel](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/hitravel)





Emma Hill on the xylophone.



Megan Day moved the audience.



OHS Traditional School of Music enthralled the crowd.

## Cracker of a concert

Oban High School pupils and staff wished the community a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year last Tuesday night with their annual Christmas Cracker concert, writes Fiona Scott.

Young talent stepped up to gift their festive offerings to the large gathering in the school atrium. A rousing medley performed by Oban High School's renowned and award-winning pipe band, led by the equally legendary Angus MacColl, signalled the start and end of a most magical musical evening.

Highlights included a stunning performance of Lyndsey's

Tune on the xylophone from Emma Hill; OHS String Group (Velocity/Amazing Grace/Funky Town); Megan Day's moving rendition of Adele's Turning Tables; All the Single-Reed Ladies (An Cluinn Thu Mi Mo Nighean Donn); OHS Chorus (Carol of the Bells/Wonderful Christmas); Traditional School of Music (One Too Many Mornings/Pound a Week Rise); OHS Wind Band (Goodbye Yellow Brick Road/Feliz Navidad); Bethany Dunlop (Somewhere That's Green); Violin Trio, Fiona Cruikshank, Edie Elliott and Gavin Thorpe (Intermezzo).



Fiona Cruikshank, Edie Elliott and Gavin Thorpe.



A festive flautist.

## MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



I am writing this from a very Christmassy Potsdam, a small town 20 miles to the south-west of Berlin. We are not long back from visiting a German Christmas market and a small Advent-calendar-themed gathering where very potent gluhwein was served to accompany a local choir singing songs of the season. This German version of mulled wine, coupled with the mid-winter music and the festive fare has ensured the magic of Christmas is well and truly upon me!

Our journey began with very atmospheric seasonal weather, as we left a snow-covered landscape for Edinburgh Airport in the cold dawn of Monday morning. In the early hours, after packing, when the snow began to fall in huge soft flakes, childish excitement getting the better of me, I scampered out of the house to build my first snowman of this winter! Sincere apologies to any neighbours who may have looked out their bedroom windows at 3am to see a large lunatic in blue dressing gown and yellow wellies rolling snowballs in the garden and singing 'The Boys from the SY Village Byre

were singing Eilean Fraoch, and the bells were ringing out for Christmas Day!

Gigs at this time of year have a very special feel to them, and the two we had just done had left me on the usual slightly-dazed high I feel following the effect of audiences dancing, singing and generally going a bit wild to our racket. The Barrowland on Friday was like no other gig we've done before – the audience was so good that we could probably have left them to do the gig by themselves! They knew the tune sets and song words better than we did and were giving it absolutely full tilt on every one. What a sound and atmosphere they were making.

I had expected Perth Concert Hall on the Saturday to be a much more sedate affair, but they were just as wild and responsive as the Barras crowd. When I got home in the early hours of Sunday morning, I turned on the Christmas tree lights and sat on my own having a good big Talisker in a wonder of Christmas feelings and blurred amazement at the gigs we had just done and filled with excitement for the four festive gigs still to come

in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Inverness and Dunoon.

There could not have been a better time than during this dreamy, Talisker Dark Storm and music-enhanced mood of peace and plenty and Christmas spirit, to come across the new Peat And Diesel Christmas single – A Fairy Tale of Stornoway, a new version of the classic original as only Peat and Diesel could create. It is absolute brilliance and I sat and watched it on repeat for about an hour.

As with so much of their output, they have struck a unique sweet spot of island humour, gentle self-mocking, very clever lyricism, total authenticity, raw talent, rock-star-like charisma, uncontrived identity, unashamed confidence, effortless power of delivery and the extra indefinable ingredient that combines and enhances it all and will continue to grow their already immense popularity.

So to set your Christmas spirit on course, build a snowman, have a mulled wine and a good dram, book a festive gig and download A Fairy Tale in Stornoway.

Merry Christmas to you all and well done Peat and Diesel!

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# BUSINESS NEWS

## Galleon Grill goes on the market

Tobermory's Galleon Grill restaurant is for sale with a price tag of offers over £185,000.

DM Hall has brought to market an excellent opportunity for a chef/operator to acquire the highly successful Galleon Grill restaurant.

Situated in Post Office Brae in the centre of Tobermory, the licensed restaurant, which has a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence, has significant growth potential, according to DM Hall. A self-contained one-bedroom terraced flat can also be made available to the new owners of the Galleon Grill, by separate negotiation.

The Galleon Grill, which can accommodate 34 covers, is a favourite with locals and tourists but trades only from March until the end of October.

Mull's stunning coastlines, outstanding natural beauty and rich Scottish heritage attracts visitors who participate in wildlife spotting and other outdoor pursuits as well as visiting whisky and gin distilleries.

The island has a population of around 3,000 and accommodates a significant influx of visitors, especially in the summer. With the steady rise in winter visitors to Mull in general and Tobermory in particular, however, the opportunities for year-round trading are apparent.

Anyone interested should contact Kerry Boyle of DM Hall at [Kerry.Boyle@dmhall.co.uk](mailto:Kerry.Boyle@dmhall.co.uk) or call 0131 624 6139.



The Galleon Grill in Tobermory on Mull is on the market.

# Cruachan owner bids to be carbon negative

Drax, the company which owns Cruachan power station, Loch Awe, became the first company in the world to announce an ambition to become carbon negative by 2030 when chief executive officer Will Gardiner addressed COP 25 in Madrid on Tuesday December 10.

Drax's ambition is only achievable with an effective negative emissions policy and investment framework. The UK Government is developing those as part of its global leadership in addressing the climate crisis.

Chief executive Will Gardiner told COP 25 Drax has an ambition to become carbon negative by 2030, but doing so will depend

**'Drax now produces 12 per cent of the UK's renewable electricity ... we can do much more.'**

on an effective negative emissions policy and investment framework for new technologies like bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS).

Being carbon negative means Drax will be removing more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than it produces throughout its operations – creating a negative carbon footprint for the company within a decade.

Drax is already running a successful BECCS pilot at its power station capturing a tonne of carbon dioxide every day. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UK Committee on Climate Change agree BECCS is critical to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Sustainable biomass is an important part of the UK's long-term energy mix. Combining this renewable fuel with carbon capture and storage technology on Drax's biomass generating units at its power station in North Yorkshire means the group's operations could capture 16 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year or more – a significant proportion of the UK's



Drax chief executive Will Gardiner.

target. Mr Gardiner said: 'Drax's ambition is to be carbon negative by 2030. Having pioneered the use of sustainable biomass, Drax now produces 12 per cent of the UK's renewable electricity. With the right negative emissions policy, we can do much more, removing millions of tonnes of emissions from the atmosphere each year.'

'The UK Government is working on a policy and investment framework to encourage negative emissions technologies, which will enable the UK to be home to the world's first carbon negative company. This is not just critical to beating the climate crisis, but also to enabling a just transition, protecting jobs and creating new opportunities for clean growth – delivering for the economy as well as for the environment.'

In recent years, Drax has undergone a world-leading transformation, becoming Europe's largest decarbonisation project by converting two-thirds of its coal-fired power stations to use sustainable biomass.

The engineering skill and expertise at Drax

which enabled this unique transformation is now pioneering ground-breaking negative emissions technologies. Earlier this year Drax became the only power generator in the world to have captured carbon dioxide from a 100 per cent biomass feedstock using BECCS technology, through its successful pilot project.

After closing its remaining two coal generating units at Drax Power Station by 2025 and using carbon capture technology on its biomass power generating units, its operations would become carbon negative by 2030.

Drax is a member of the Powering Past Coal Alliance, an initiative launched by the UK and Canadian governments, which seeks to end the use of unabated coal in power stations around the world by 2030.

The Powering Past Coal Alliance wants to accelerate the transition away from unabated coal and Drax is supporting its work to encourage members to scale up their ambitions and to create more collaboration, helping prospective new members to move forwards in using cleaner energy.



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## Oban lifeboat benefits from CalMac staff survey

CalMac staff have helped raise £2,500 to support crew members joining the Oban lifeboat.

The west coast ferry operator pledged to donate £2 to the RNLI for every survey form returned during a recent exercise to gather feedback from staff on what they thought about the company and to provide ideas on how to improve the business.

'We were delighted so many staff took the time to fill in their forms. Not only did we get valuable information about how we can work better as an organisation, but we are able to help out an organisation that does so much to keep west coast waters safe,' said CalMac director of operations Robert Morrison.

Last year CalMac took part in 14 rescue operations with the RNLI and is a valued partner to the emergency services.

'We train regularly for emergency responses with the Oban crews so know them well and, with many of our own staff RNLI volunteers, it was a perfect fit



CalMac's Robert Morrison hands over the staff generated donation to Iain Fulton from Oban RNLI.

when we were looking for an organisation to support. It was also a great incentive for staff to contribute their thoughts to help us improve services,' said Robert.

Oban's lifeboat - RNLB Mora Edith MacDonald - last year responded to 80 emergencies.

The donation will be used to train two new crew members and supply them with the equipment they need to become fully operational.

'The crew are extremely grateful to all the CalMac staff who took the time to fill in a survey

and raise this fantastic sum to support our work. Last year was one of our busiest ever and we are up there with the busiest stations in the whole of the UK, so they can be sure the money will be put to good use,' said Oban RNLI's Iain Fulton.

## New apps make ferry ticketing convenient

New apps mean travellers on Argyll and Bute Council-run ferries can now buy tickets via their phones or other mobile device.

This extends the range of ways to pay to include cash, debit/credit cards on board the ferries or via the council website, making the service more convenient for users.

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Customers create an account by supplying contact details. The app retains information on orders, tickets and use.

Customers use their mobile device and app to display tickets for scanning by ferry staff.

Each ferry requires a separate app. If you would like to book and pay for tickets via the council website go to [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/ferry-travel](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/ferry-travel)



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## The man who brought the Free Church to Oban

by Valerie Forsyth  
editor@obantimes.co.uk

This week we look at the life of Duncan Macarthur, well-known in Oban in the 19th century as he was instrumental in the establishment of the Free Church in the town following the Disruption.

Macarthur was born at Kenmore in Perthshire. He was educated at Perth Grammar School then went on to the University of St Andrews where he studied divinity with the intention of becoming a minister in the established church.

His circumstances changed, however, and he moved to Oban where he became a steamship agent for Hutcheson and Co. He was also involved in establishing a coach service between Glasgow, Inveraray and Oban.

In 1843, Thomas Chalmers walked out of the established church in Edinburgh and set up the Free Church of Scotland. Macarthur followed suit and became an elder representative in the church for the Presbytery of Lorn.

Using his influence, he secured a site in Oban for the Free Church.

On several occasions, Macarthur was elected Chief Magistrate and was a Justice of the Peace, but he was also known as an advocate for emigration to New Zealand. He, along with his wife, three sons and four daughters, decided to make the move to Otago. In November 1860, he was presented with a rifle in a case and a gold watch by his friends and fellow townfolk as tokens of their esteem.

Soon after their arrival at Port Chalmers in 1861, gold was found and Macarthur was one of the first miners at Gabriel's Gully in the Tuapeka goldfield. The family settled in Southland, where Macarthur became a founding member of the Southland Caledonian Society. He was elected to the provincial government of Otago and, for a time, was a member of the executive government. He died at Dunedin on May 25, 1888, aged 82.

Valerie Forsyth is an author passionate about the history of the Highlands and Islands.

# Descended from pi

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There is something about absolute mastery in any profession which is unmistakable when seen or heard.

'Sovereign sway and masterdom', as Shakespeare called it, speaks for itself. For example, an onlooker does not need to have any knowledge of tennis to recognise a master player when Andy Murray comes onto Centre Court at Wimbledon and raises his racket. The authority of absolutism comes through. It is enough to watch him play in a grand slam final to know you are in the presence of greatness.

So it was for me in Ross-shire one evening earlier this year when, after dinner was over and there is that kind of night magic which grows out of companionship, age and good conversation and flourishes best in an old candle-lit house in the Highlands, I found myself listening intently to two pipers I had not met before.

Until that night, I had heard good pipers playing well. But these two were different. Their timing, rhythm and expression were faultless and exhilarating.

Seton Gordon (1886-1977), the distinguished journalist, Highland historian and piping judge who had been taught by the legendary Pipe Major John MacDonald MBE of Inverness, used to quote him as saying: 'You can have wonderful fingers, you can have wonderful pipes, but if you haven't got expression, it is completely useless.'

An accomplished piper has natural talent, dedication, a love of the instrument and, above all, a perfectly tuned bagpipe which, even to the untrained ear, is immediately recognised. The Highland bagpipe is a complex instrument and requires a high level of skill and experience to maintain it. It cannot be left for long periods in a car or a cupboard and immediately produce the range of notes it is capable of.

The late Col Jock MacDonald, of Viewfield, Skye, jocularly told Russell Harty in Inverailort Castle in 1975, when he was making the award-winning documentary about the Glenfinnan Games, that the pipes must be female because to tune them and get them to play nicely you have to coax them, squeeze them and whisper to them how beautiful they are.



The first piper I heard that evening was Scott Burgess Hay from Forres in Morayshire. According to an old saying, it takes seven years of his own learning and seven generations before that to make a piper. If that be true, it is little wonder there are few weddings, funerals and Armistice Day parades he hasn't played at in Morayshire since he was a boy.

Scott's family piping history, I later learned, goes back to the time of the MacDonalds, Lords of the Isles and to tutoring the MacCrimmons, masters of their craft and pipers to the chiefs of Clan MacLeod for an unknown number of generations. His great-great-grandfather, Alexander MacDougall, who spoke Gaelic and English, was born in Sloch, Ardnish, Arisaig, in 1878. He spent time on Inverailort Estate employed as a deer stalker by Mrs James Head before moving to Glen Tanar and finally to Aberdeen to live with his son John at the Station Hotel, Bucksburn, where he died in 1967. He loved music and encouraged his

children to play the pipes. Scott's grandfather, also called John, was a world champion and multi gold medal holder who began playing when he was about 10 years old. He won all of the major piping prizes, including the Gold Medals at the Northern Meeting in Inverness and the Argyllshire Gathering in Oban. He was a leading exponent of the 'Balmoral' style of piping, having been taught piobaireachd by Bob Brown, The Queen's Piper. John had no sons and it was left to his daughter Fiona, an accomplished piper, fiddler and Celtic artist, to carry on the piping tradition by marrying Burgess Hay, Scott's father.

Burgess was named after his father's friend and mentor, John Davie Burgess MBE - and what piper worth a single grace-note has not heard or benefited from the judgement and skill of that exalted figure?

Scott is a highly respected and admired piper who was taught by his grandfather. When he was on Uist studying Scottish traditional



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# ping legends



**Scott Burgess Hay playing a set of Highland pipes he made himself**  
 photograph: HIE and, inset, John MacDougall, left, Scott Burgess Hay's great-grandfather, and his grandfather, also John at Bucksburn, Aberdeen, 1951.  
 Photograph supplied by the Hay family.

pipes, Border pipes to the full traditional Highland pipes. Burgess, who is a precision engineer with more than 30 years' experience, said: 'Our aim is to make the best possible instruments with the finest materials, tools and skills to end up with a product that sounds right and has interchangeable parts.'

'We work together as a team and choose our suppliers carefully. Our African black wood comes from a sawmill in Africa, where the wood is stored for up to five years in controlled conditions before it is sold under special licence. We use titanium as standard due to its lightness and strength and because it does not corrode or tarnish. This material is also found in the medical, aerospace and military industries and for hard wearing precious metal applications. Because we have designed our products and have used the best possible materials and manufacturing techniques, we guarantee our instruments for 25 years.'

Knowing more than most about the global appeal of the bagpipes and being a truly authentic Scottish family with a long history behind them, Burgess, Fiona and Scott are developing plans to open a Highland Bagpipe Centre somewhere between Inverness and Culloden. The project, backed by the local enterprise company and the National Trust for Scotland, would be a hub for their manufacturing business. It would also include a museum, shop, cafe, exhibition and demonstration area providing visitors with an opportunity to try their hand at making and playing bagpipes. The vision is to develop a 100-year family business and show also how Scottish culture and heritage can be packaged to offer a hands-on product that matches consumer demand at home and abroad and in an enjoyable and informal setting.

There would be nothing like it in Scotland or anywhere else in the world. An angler who ties his own trout and salmon flies must find it enormously satisfying to land a fish with one. Scott Burgess Hay should feel equally elated whenever he plays the grounding of a MacCrimmon piobaireachd on a set of pipes of his own making.

Part two next week.

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



Oban High School teachers Mark McShane and John Porter being gunged by pupils as part of a fundraising campaign in 1993.



Also taken in 1993, Councillor Foxley, third right, with Councillor Charles King, second right, and members of Morar Community Council who worked to shape their local plan.

music with the University of the Highlands and Islands, he went to Iain MacDonald of Genuig - one of Scotland's best known west coast pipers - for more tuition.

Burgess and Scott are descended from William Hay of Glenbucket in Aberdeenshire, who fought at Culloden on the Highland side under the renowned senior Jacobite commander Major General John Gordon of Glenbucket. Scott was invited to open the new National Trust for Scotland Culloden Battlefield Centre in 2008 and is now the trust's official piper, helping to promote the culture and history of this national site.

Scott and his family design and make world class instruments, trading under the name of Burgess Bagpipes, specialising in pipes that have a modern look and sound and can be played along with other instruments.

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OT

# LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk) or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

## Volunteers deserve our gratitude at a special time of year

Most of us will celebrate over the next two weeks in familiar fashion the festive season.

For many, that will involve a degree of over-indulgence as we mark Christmas and New Year with parties and large amounts of food and drink.

However, for some people in our communities, it can be a difficult time of year for a variety of reasons.

In addition, there are many among us for whom Christmas and New Year are working days, rather obviously the emergency services, NHS staff and others.

Spare a thought this festive season for all those who will go to work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of us all.

Spare a thought, too, for the volunteers such as at Hope Kitchen in Oban who will be out and about sharing Christmas joy with those in our communities for whom this time of year can be that bit harder.

## Don't miss next week's festive Oban Times

The festive holiday is almost upon us with the vast majority of us looking forward to putting our feet up and celebrating Christmas and the new year.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our readers and advertisers for your continued support and want to reassure you that we at The Oban Times will continue to publish the newspaper throughout the festive season.

However, because of the holidays, your Oban Times will be published on Tuesday next week (December 24) and the following week (December 31) instead of on the usual Thursdays.

Make sure your pick up you copy of The Oban Times to keep up to date with what is happening across the region.

## Approval of zipwire application beggars belief

On May 9 this year Highland Council declared a climate emergency. On December 4, the same council granted permission for a multiple zipwire attraction at Kinlochleven.

I am dismayed that no consideration was given at the council meeting to the wider issue of the implications of allowing a proposal in this location to go ahead.

Local and national opinion, including the Woodland Trust, Mountaineering Scotland and the Ramblers' Association all expressed reservations.

More than 1,600 people agreed: 'Kinlochleven is not an amusement park but is part of Scotland's wild land heritage. Time spent in nature is free for all to enjoy and should not be ruined by a permanent, ugly, expensive structure that will only benefit a small minority.'

Veteran outdoor pursuits authority Cameron McNeish stated via his Twitter account that he is 'saddened to hear of plans for a zipwire in Kinlochleven ... Kinlochleven's potential is better than cheap thrills like that'.

Highland councillors granted permission for this development while repeatedly asserting it is 'difficult to say' what the impact will be, as it is an 'unknown quantity'.

Councillor Andrew Baxter referenced his own recent enjoyable family holiday experience on a zipwire and Councillor Carolyn Caddick based her judgement on her own experience of her children's zipwire in her back garden.

I am flabbergasted our councillors imagine these subjective inanities are relevant to informing the decision-making process.

I am further disappointed that Councillor Baxter, who 'understands the area particularly well' and who was at pains to show his awareness of the controversy surrounding this proposal, saw fit to recommend the constraints on operating hours - proposed by Environmental Health to protect the local community - were lifted, thereby giving residents little respite from the noise and disturbance.

Only one councillor raised the issue of the carbon footprint of the development. There was no debate on the carbon emissions which will arise as a result of the 200-plus visitors per day that the developers claim will come to the village and the huge 35-seater all-terrain SUVs that will be carrying them backwards and forwards through the village at 15-minute intervals.

## YOUR PICTURES



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

[editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk), post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Alternatively, hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or to our office in High

No questions were raised as to how the wires are to be put in place, given that many structures like this drag their cables along the ground before lifting them and attaching them to the towers.

This would have a significant impact on the ancient woodland which the structure will span.

Presumably, this is part of the 'unknown

quantity' which the council is happy not to explore.

Kinlochleven Community Council, the elected body for the village, has remained neutral on the proposal in recognition of the divided opinion surrounding it. However, opponents have been derided, mocked and, in some cases, threatened on social media, with one supporter of the development who holds



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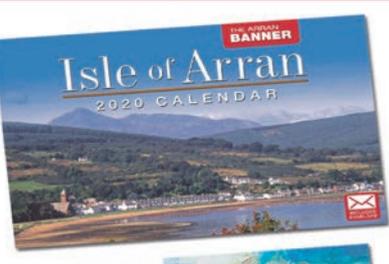
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Street, Fort William. This week's was by Chris Whitelaw who said: 'Love this photograph. It shows the postman returning to Colonsay after braving the strand to deliver mail to Oronsay.'

a prominent role in the community labelling the objectors as 'the most hated group in the village'.

In conclusion, I hope the project's supporters will enjoy a sense of civic pride in hosting this 'attraction' and not run into the well-documented problems that Skye and the North Coast 500 route are experiencing.

My chief concern, however, lies in the fact

that Highland Council has now set a precedent for allowing theme park-style developments in National Scenic Areas; given the growing environmental crisis, the council's support for projects encroaching on Scotland's world class landscape purely for financial gain beggars belief.

P L Clay, Kinlochleven.

## Thanks for generous donations of shoeboxes

On behalf of Blythswood Care, please convey our sincere gratitude to all who so generously contributed to the Blythswood Shoe Box 2019 Appeal and pray that each box will be a blessing to each one who received them.

From the Lochaber area, we were delighted to be able to send 805 boxes up to the Blythswood Depot at Deephaven, Evanton, where they have been transported to Hungary and are being distributed to those in great need.

Renewed thanks to all and every blessing for Christmas and New Year 2020.

Kenny and Barbara Matheson,  
Blythswood Care,  
Lochaber branch co-ordinators.

## Oban panto was a real theatrical treat

Once again, I have been privileged to attend the annual panto put on by Oban's Spotlight Musical Theatre Group.

This year's was Camelot the Panto and the local cast owed nothing to the original professional staging.

Kevin Baker was the producer and Louisa Hyde directed and when these two experienced thespians get together nothing but perfection may be expected.

Several full cast dance scenes filled the stage and well-rehearsed singing complimented dance routines which would not have embarrassed Strictly.

The children in the audience revelled in the pleas for help from the lovelorn hero, and ghosts and witches and covens of evil ladies brought even more excitement. And, of course, there had to be a dame delighting them even more, with outrageous promptings and community singing.

Well done, Spotlight. Oban is proud of you. Long may you continue to delight us all.

Raymond Shaw, Glasgow.

# Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Le ùpraid Taghaidh Choitcinn seachad bidh cuid a' cur fàilte air "tiodhlac Nollaige" tràth ann an riochd Pàrlamaid ùr, agus bidh mòran a bharrachd an dòchas fois bhon deasbad is argamaid a thaobh cheanglaichean na Rìoghachd Aonaichte ris an Aonadh Eòrpaich. 'S e ùine a dh'innseas ciamar a thèid dhan Riaghaltas ùr ach tha amharas agam nach tèid Brexit à sealladh cho luath 's a dh'ìrramaid idir, agus cha mhòtha na sin buaidh an dealachaidh air ar beatha làitheil. Tha biurocrasaidh na h-Eòrpa frionasach, agus aig amannan na thrioblaid, ach 's e mo bheachd phearsanta gun do bhuannaich sinn bhon cheangal, agus bhòt mise gum fuiricheamaid nar ball den aonadh.

Ged nach biodh ann de dh'fhianais ach an caiteachas calpa a ghabh àite air feadh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eileanan thar nam bliadhnaichean, is nach robh air tachairt mura b' e ionmhas Eòrpach, dh'fheumte aideachadh gun d'rinn sinne glè mhath às an t-suidheachadh. Fhuair sinn geallaidhean bho chuid de phàrtaidhean ron taghadh gun cuireadh iad

ionmhas mòr ùr an sàs ann an leasachaidhean poblach, a' cruthachadh chosnaidhean agus spionnadh misneachail dhan mhòr-shluagh. 'S e ùine a dhearbhas sin, agus ma tha co-dhiù cuid den leithid de dh'adhartas gu bhith an urra ri cuimseachadh ùr ann am foghlam is trèanadh òigridh, bheir e bliadhnaichean mòra mu faicear adhartas. Direach ron taghadh thog ceannard aon phàrtaidh poiliteigeach moladh gum bu chòir an lagh atharrachadh gus am faodte tagraiche poiliteigeach sam bith a chleachd fiosrachadh a ghabhadh dearbhadh mar bhreug, a dhiteadh.

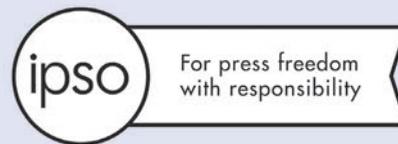
Abair beachd inntinneach! Ach ma dh'fhaodas mi beagan dìon a dhèanamh air luchd nam poiliteigs an seo, dh'fheumte aideachadh gum faodadh tagraiche amasan a shùileachadh ann an da-rìribh ach nach tachradh airson adhbharan air nach robh smachd aige mar Bhall Pàrlamaid. Bhiodh suidheachadh den t-seòrsa sin a' togail ceist a thaobh dè an t-eadar-dhealachadh a tha eadar geall briste agus breug. 'S dòcha gur e am freagairt as fhasa gum bheil geall ga thoirt le amas coileanaidh, agus breug

le amas meallaidh! 'S e an dùbhlán dearbhadh fhaotainn air dè bha san amharc aig an neach a thug an gealladh.

Seachdain Disathairne seo chaidh bha mi aig cuirm dhuaisean cheòl-dùthchail Alba, Na Trads, ann an Obair Dheathain. B' e seo a' chiad turas agam aig an tachartas bhliadhnail seo agus bha e tlachdmhor uimhir a' faotainn aithne uachdarachd bhon co-braichean anns a' ghnìomhachas chudromach seo. Am measg nan duaisean sin bha moladh agus aithne dha feadhainn a thug bliadhnaichean ag obair dha raointean àraid gu saor-thoileach, leithid foillseachadh inbhe na Gàidhlig. Gum meal Anna Souter, à Inbhir Nis agus Barraigh, a naidheachd air duais Bhòrd na Gàidhlig fhaotainn airson faisg air dà fhichead bliadhna de leithid sin de shaothair!

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

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



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

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OT

# DISTRICT NEWS

## OBAN

The Dove Centre in Oban has announced its Christmas and New Year opening hours.

The centre will be open on Monday December 23 and Tuesday December 24, as well as Monday and Tuesday December 30 and 31.

It will then close until Monday January 6.

## ISLAY

A Christmas concert is being held in Islay High School tonight, Thursday December 19.

The event will begin at 7pm and tea, coffee and home baking will be on offer.

Tickets cost £5, or £4 for a concession.

## HELENSBURGH

Plans have been submitted for repairs to Helensburgh's pier, along with the installation of new barriers and benches.

Argyll and Bute Council has applied for planning permission to carry out work on the structure, which has been closed for more than a year because of concerns over its deteriorating condition.

It was estimated in April that work on the pier could cost up to £1 million, while in July it was suggested it could be included in plans for the new waterfront leisure centre.

Operators of the paddle steamer Waverley announced earlier this year the ship would be unable to berth at the pier during its summer cruising programme – although that announcement was later rendered academic after the Waverley's entire 2019 schedule was cancelled when it was discovered she would need new boilers to sail again.

The work for which the council is now seeking planning permission would not change the situation regarding the Waverley's ability to berth at Helensburgh and the part of the pier which has been off limits for many years because of fire damage would remain so.

A decision on the proposed im-

## Dee entertains at Rotary dinner



Top table guests at the Rotary Club of Oban's Charter Night.

The Rotary Club of Oban held its 70th annual Charter Night in the Oban Perle Hotel at Station Square.

The top table for the evening included president Douglas Small and his wife Judith, Inner Wheel's president Elizabeth Mudie and her husband David, district governor Jimmy Johnstone and principal speaker Dee Bradbury, president of the Scottish Rugby Union and former Oban police officer.

Rotarians and guests were entertained by Dee's stories of her time in the Oban police force and from her current position as president of the Scottish Rugby Union.

Rotary president and former sheriff, Douglas Small came to know Dee well during her time as a police officer and shared some memorable moments of some of the town's well-known characters of the past such as Nellie Peace and Joe Tonner and his three-legged

dog. Dee's oldest son Magnus is a Scotland international rugby player and represented Scotland at the recent World Cup in Japan.

Top class music for the evening was provided by Helen Jordan on the fiddle, accompanied by Winnie McNicol on keyboards, with The Hen's March to the Midden and other great tunes getting feet tapping. Accomplished young piper Emma Hill from Connel piped in the top table.

provements, which would restore safe access for pedestrians, is expected from the council in early 2020, with the public currently able to submit comments.

Plans for a new extension to Helensburgh's Victoria Halls have been unveiled – amid concern over current storage arrangements at the popular venue.

Measures are also being proposed to stop young people gathering around the halls' storage containers. This has left club members afraid to use them at night.

A report submitted to Argyll and Bute Council by applicant Live Argyll, the charitable trust which runs the area's council-owned leisure centres, libraries and halls, says it 'cannot be overstated' that these two key issues must be addressed to allow the hall to continue to function and sustain commercial success.

It says efforts must be made to ensure adequate storage provision and address the restricted capacity of the main hall.

Also highlighted in the report is the issue of young people using the area as a shortcut to Hermitage Park – with graffiti and debris widespread.

Live Argyll has now submitted plans to the council, designed by Glasgow-based CMM Architects. A decision from the council is expected by late January.

## KILLIN

At the November monthly meeting of Killin SWI, president Elizabeth Woods welcomed a good turnout of members and friends.

The speaker was Lisa Godfrey, who works for a London-based corporate travel company.

She has worked in the industry for 18 years and has loved every moment.

Her remit is with an insurance company and the skill and expertise she has gained over the years is remarkable.

Lisa has enjoyed travelling extensively including trips to Dublin, Helsinki, Bangkok and Delhi but her favourite was a visit to Kenya.

The vote of thanks was given by Jean Faichney.

Business was discussed, tea and coffee served and the competition winners were announced.

Scenic photo: 1 Catriona Inglis; 2 Cathie Reid; 3 Ellen Stewart. Postcard: 1 Ellen Stewart; 2 Kay Riddell; 3 Lesley Stitt.

Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month and anyone wishing more information should contact Ann Watson on 07796 491362.

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## At random



**MARTIN LAING**

[mlaing@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:mlaing@obantimes.co.uk)

# Christmas cheer comes to Dunbeg



Hardy volunteers braved windy and wet conditions earlier this month to put up a Christmas tree in Dunbeg. And the village held a lights switch-on on Sunday December 8, which featured carol singing, mulled wine, mince pies, music, a pipe band, singing by village youngsters and a visit from Santa. More than 50 people turned out to the event. It was organised by Dunbeg Development Group, which thanked MacLeod Construction, Oban Electrics, D and J Campbell and Tommy Watt for helping with the delivery, the construction of the tree base and the festive lights.



## Top teams

I have watched over recent weeks with something approaching awe the efforts of guys working in the centre of Oban.

For some weeks now, there has been a bit of disruption and noise in Tweeddale Street, Stevenson Street and Combie Street as squads from Scottish Gas Networks and Donald McLean Contractors have dug up the roads to carry out essential gas mains replacements.

In difficult conditions, owing to the sheer volume of vehicles that use these roads, the men doing the work kept traffic flowing with very few delays.

I know this because I use these particular streets all the time.

What's worth even higher praise, however, is that the teams tasked with doing the work have been toiling through absolutely dreadful weather, with torrential rain, gale-force winds and extremely low temperatures.

And they have been working some very long shifts, often to be seen still at their jobs well into the evening after early starts.

These guys have been brilliant and deserve a nod of recognition.

## Unsung heroes

Also worth a nod, I think, as Christmas looms next week, are the often unsung heroes of our emergency services.

While the rest of us kick back and take it easy through the holiday period, our police officers, firefighters, NHS staff, Coastguard, volunteer lifeboat crews and others - apologies if I've missed anyone out - will be turning out for work.

These selfless people will often be the embodiment of cheeriness despite having to work during the festive period. They are such good folk, who toil sometimes under difficult and dangerous conditions to keep the rest of us safe.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the health care workers I have been fortunate enough to encounter this year for their help and professionalism.

They do a fantastic job and, I suspect, would hate for me to name them here.

But you know who you are and I'm very grateful.

## What do you think?

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

# HIGHLAND FASTENERS

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Monday 23rd December	07:30 – 17:00	Sunday 29th December	<b>CLOSED</b>
Tuesday 24th December	07:30 – 13:00	Monday 30th December	07:30 – 17:00
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*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*



The Winter Festival Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to the event and helped to make Festival 2019 such a great success.

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22nd November  
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# ALBA

## Ri thighinn air BBC ALBA...

Coming up on BBC ALBA...

[bbc.co.uk/alba](http://bbc.co.uk/alba)



### Seòid a' Christmas - Christmas Kitchen Coves

20 Dùbhlachd, 9f  
20 December, 9pm

Tha Seòid a' Chidsin a' gabhail orra an car fhèin a chuir air biadh na Nollaige.

*The Kitchen Coves take on a beast of a Christmas Feast challenge.*



### Macleod MP / Maclean KGB

23 Dùbhlachd, 9f  
23 December, 9pm

Dithis a rugadh ann an 1913 le ceangal ri na h-Eileanan ach le beathannan gu tur diofraichte - Ministear Riaghaltais Tòraidheach agus fear le ceanglaichean chun KGB.

*Two remarkable men born in 1913 with deep Hebridean roots - one a radical government minister, the other a notorious KGB spy.*



### Còisir Alba aig Eurovision 2019

24 Dùbhlachd, 8:30f  
24 December, 8:30pm

Prògram aithriseach ùr a' sealltainn mar a chaidh do Chòisir Alba aig Eurovision.

*New documentary showing Joy and the Alba Choir behind the scenes at Eurovision.*



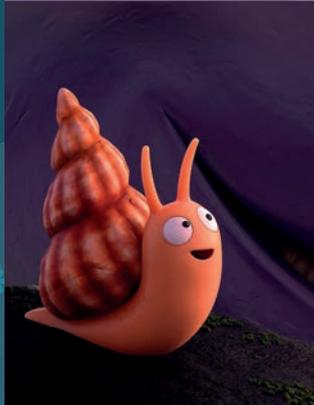
### Sgoil nan Sagart - Priest School

Bho Là na Nollaige, 8:30f  
From Christmas Day, 8:30pm

Sreath ùr a' leantainn Ragnall Caimbeul sa bhliadhna mu dheireadh ag oideachaidh airson na sagartachd.

*New series following Ronald Campbell as he studies in Rome for the priesthood.*

### CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING / PRÒGRAMAN CHLOINNE



### An Fhaochag agus a' Mhuc-mhara / The Snail & the Whale

Là na Nollaige, 5.30f  
Christmas Day, 5.30pm

Prògram stèidhichte air leabhar-chloinne a chaidh a sgrìobhadh le Julia Donaldson.

*An animated adaptation of Julia Donaldson's classic children's book.*



### Gleann na Mùmain / Moominvalley

Bho Là na Nollaige, 6.05f  
From Christmas Day, 6.05pm

Tha na Mùmain air ais!  
*The Moomins are back!*



### Rùn - Private Pet

Là na Nollaige, 6.25f  
Christmas Day, 6.25pm

Dràma ùr mu bhalach bodhar, Sim, agus a charaid ùr: cù leis an t-ainm Rùn.

*New comedy drama about a deaf boy, Simon, and his new friend: a dog called Rùn.*



### Balach aig a' Mhullach - Boy at the Top

Là na Nollaige, 6.40f  
Christmas Day, 6.40pm

Film goirid mu bhalach, le charaidean, a tha a' sreap bheanntan Alba gus a bheil iad air ìre Everest a ruighinn.

*Breath-taking short film about a boy and his friends who climb the height of Everest amongst the Scottish mountains.*



Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC  
A partnership between the BBC and MG ALBA

# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

## Sons of the Hebrides – lives of danger and intrigue

A documentary about a Soviet spy and a respectable Conservative cabinet minister who might have been Prime Minister instead of Mrs Thatcher will reveal that it was the Tory who led the more dangerous life.

Macleod MP / Maclean KGB reveals the parallel early lives of MP Iain Macleod and the Soviet spy. Both men were born in 1913 of Hebridean stock, both went to Cambridge University, and both had strong views about how the world should be. But they took very different paths.

While Maclean was part of the notorious Philby, Burgess and Maclean spy-ring, his 'cover' was that of a high-flying diplomat and he fought his secret war as a Soviet mole in the corridors of the Foreign Office in Whitehall



Cathy MacDonald presents the documentary which will air on December 23 and again on December 29 on BBC Alba.

enemy armoured car, he was evacuated to England just before the fall of France.

Back in Britain, Macleod was selected for an exclusive army 'battle school'. Macleod surprised himself. He recalled: 'I'd never been pushed into competition with people of first-class abilities before and it was there that I found – genuinely to my very great surprise – not only could I keep up but that I could beat them.'

The experience changed the course of Macleod's life. He took part in D-Day, expecting to be killed.

He later said: 'Having being convinced that I would be killed on D-Day, now with a complete absence of reason I was convinced I'd live through the war and that I wanted to take some part in the shaping of my country after it.'

In the 1945, General Election he contested the Western Isles constituency for the Tories – and lost. Winning a London seat in 1950, he rose rapidly through the Conservative ranks and became Colonial Secretary, responsible for granting independence to Britain's African colonies.

The pro-empire right-wingers in the party detested him.

Ken Clarke, the recently retired Tory MP and Father of the House, tells the programme: 'They hated him. He was giving away the empire. Iain went through all this pro-

cess of these great constitutional conferences giving independence to Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya and "letting down our kith and kin in Southern Rhodesia" and not letting the white farmers keep their minority rule indefinitely.'

Macleod – the former professional gambler – eventually became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1970, but after only a month had a major heart attack and died.

Expert interviewees believed that Macleod may be Britain's 'lost Prime Minister'.

Donald Maclean spied for the Soviets for 16 years before defecting to Moscow in 1951.

Macleod MP / Maclean KGB screens on BBC ALBA from 9pm-10pm on Monday December 23 and it will be repeated on Sunday December 29, 9pm-10pm.



Wishing all our customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

SHOP WILL BE CLOSED FROM 22<sup>nd</sup> December to the 6<sup>th</sup> January

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## Skerryvore stop off in Killin

Supergroup Skerryvore stop off in Killin this Friday as part of their massive 360 Tour, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Tickets are selling fast for the December 20 show at the McLaren Hall, hosted by Killin Music Festival. Go to Skerryvore // The 360 Tour // Killin

Twice winners of Scotland's Traditional Music Live Act of the Year Award, Skerryvore have been on a continuing epic journey that has taken them from the remote Isle of Tiree on to international tours that have included performances in Central Park NYC, The Ryder Cup Louisville and the Shanghai Expo, China.

The eight-piece band, a fusion of folk, trad, rock

and Americana, have also just announced their 15th anniversary next year will be celebrated with a special one-day festival branded 'XV' in the grounds of Inveraray Castle.

Taking place on Saturday June 6, the band will welcome to the stage 15 special guests and acts who they have worked with over their 15 years at the centre of the contemporary Scottish traditional music scene.

There are also tickets for tents and campervan spaces and event buses will run from Glasgow, Oban, Dunoon and Lochgilphead directly to the event site and back again at the end of the night. For more information, visit xv.skerryvore.com

## Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

### Hogmanay viewing

How do you like spending your evenings during the festive period? Roasting chestnuts by an open fire, perhaps? Sitting with a wee hot toddy round the Christmas tree?

No such luck for me last Sunday night in Glasgow. I spent the evening trying not to shiver as a film crew filmed me literally walking along an Anniesland road and arriving at the door of a house to deliver a few short lines in Gaelic. More often than not I heard 'Cut!' and had to turn back and do it again. At times I felt like Gaeldom's answer to Ronald Villiers – for anyone who's watched 'Chewin' the Fat!

Within the house, I present a programme called Oidhche Challain le Robert Robertson to be aired on BBC Alba at 10pm this Hogmanay. I am not sure exactly how much I am allowed to tell you about the programme but what I can say is that it draws heavily upon the BBC archives, which turned out to



Members of three different Highland bands on a night out in Glasgow supporting the Doddie Weir Foundation.

be an absolute treasure trove of totally brilliant footage of Hogmanays gone by. If you're looking for something to watch on Hogmanay, and fancy a bit of nostalgia, then tune into BBC Alba. It will make my freezing cold Sunday night worth it!

### Doddie Weir Foundation

I should add that, once I had finished filming, I managed to get a warmth in me fairly quickly by heading to the Park Bar and joining a night out that has become an annual event. Members of

Skerryvore, Trail West, Tide Lines, and various other friends have been enjoying a Christmas night out for the past three years now and it seems to have grown into a big enough event to warrant a mention in the paper! Not least this year because we decided to show our collective support for the Doddie Weir Foundation (the former Scotland rugby player's charity raising awareness of MND) by each sporting his tartan bow tie. On the same evening, Doddie was collecting the Helen Rollason Award at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year ceremony.



Go and check out the charity online. Doddie is doing some wonderful work raising awareness of the illness from which he suffers.

### A wee extra from the Glasgow Skye!

In last week's report about the Glasgow Skye concert, I was so busy squeezing in all the information about who had performed and including short descriptions of what they had sung or played, that I neglected to include a great wee tale that Arthur Cormack told about the late Sorley MacLean.

I understand that the chairman for the evening, Mr David Ross, had spoken more fully about the bard before I arrived, but Arthur's wee quip got me laughing. Sorley's wife was apparently driving them both home one night from a cèilidh when she remarked that she was feeling extremely tired. Sorley had subsequently offered to drive. She had replied: 'Goodness, no! I'm far too tired for that!' We all know the type of driver!

## Festive Menu from 17th Dec to the 6th Jan

### STARTERS

#### SPICED PARSNIP SOUP

with garlic and herb croutons, malted brown bread and butter \* - £5

#### CULLEN SKINK SOUP

with a warm bread roll & butter - £6.50  
Classic prawn cocktail with a balsamic reduction - £8.50

#### CHICKEN, PORK & PISTACHIO TERRINE

with a mango and apple chutney & toasted brioche - £9.50

#### OVEN BAKED CAMEMBERT

served with cranberry sauce and pitta bread - £9.50

### MAINS

#### STUFFED SCOTTISH TURKEY BREAST

wrapped in pancetta with rosemary, bacon and garlic crushed potatoes, braised red cabbage, festive vegetables and gravy - £16.50

#### SCOTTISH SIRLOIN OF BEEF AND WILD MUSHROOM STROGANOFF

served with wild rice - £18

#### SCALLOP, HADDOCK AND SMOKED SALMON GRATIN

oven baked in a cream and leek sauce topped with crispy breadcrumbs served with rustic chips and vegetables - £19.50

#### MUSHROOM AND CHESTNUT WELLINGTON

with sweet potato mash, parsnip puree and braised red cabbage - £12

#### HAND DIVED TAYVALLICH LANDED KING SCALLOPS

with parsnip puree, toast-ed pine nuts, pancetta crumbs, blanched greens and sweet potato crisp - £27.50

### DESSERTS

#### DRAMBUIE CRÈME BRULEE

with shortbread £6

#### CHRISTMAS PUDDING

with a whisky cream £6

#### WEE ISLE DAIRY ICE CREAM

£5.70

#### SELECTION OF SCOTTISH CHEESES AND BISCUITS

£8

### 21st December Quiz night raising funds for the RNLI

£3 per pub quiz entry.

From general knowledge quiz questions and answers to special interest questions, Brian the quiz master has put together a set of easy and hard trivia questions for the pub quizzers.



Tel 01546 870282  
for more information  
and for reservations  
From 17th December  
to 6th January

BOOKINGS ONLY ON  
THE 24th DECEMBER





## Ballet West bring Swan Lake to Corran Halls during New Year tour

Ballet West's new year tour of Swan Lake will be led by principal guest artists Norton Fantinel and his wife Karina Moreira.

The 2020 tour opens at the Corran Halls, Oban, on January 25.

Ballet West, which is based in Taynuilt, Argyll, will present 12 performances in seven venues across Scotland, including Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The production has been adapted by Ballet West's artistic adviser Daniel F Job.

It attracted international acclaim when it was performed by Ballet West's professional International Touring Company in Malaysia in autumn 2018.

Norton Fantinel and Karina Moreira, who are from Brazil, are former soloists with the Ballet du Capitole, Toulouse.

Norton takes on the role of Prince Siegfried and Karina will dance the dual role of Odette and Odile.

They will be supported by a total of nearly 100 young dancers from Ballet West's Upper School in Taynuilt and students from the Ballet West High Performance Lower School in Oban, including 2019 Genée International Ballet Competition medallist Ashton Parker and fellow finalist Caitlin Jones.

In addition, 200 students on the Associate Programmes in Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow will be taking

part in local performances. The tour, which begins in Oban, will visit Livingston, Dundee, Glasgow, Greenock and Stirling, ending at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on February 16.

Gillian Barton, Ballet West's principal says: 'Ballet West's Scottish tours provide an essential element in the training of the dance artists of the future.'

'Our classical ballet tours provide a wonderful opportunity for students to dance alongside experienced professional dancers.'

'The high artistic standards achieved in our productions never fail to attract appreciative audiences of all ages.'



Donna Reed and James Stewart deliver some Christmas cheer at the free screening of *It's A Wonderful Life* on Tuesday December 24.

## Free showing of It's A Wonderful Life

To get everyone well and truly into the Christmas spirit, Oban Phoenix Cinema is hosting a free screening of *THE Christmas film*.

Marketing manager Marco Pacitti said: 'To thank all of our loyal customers, we are putting on a special Christmas Eve screening of

the beautiful classic film, *It's A Wonderful Life* – the ultimate seasonal feel-good film.'

Starring the unforgettable James Stewart as George Bailey, the man who receives the greatest Christmas gift of all, and a superb ensemble cast including Donna Reed

and Lionel Barrymore, this highspirited Christmas tale is directed by the immortal Frank Capra and ranks as an all-time favourite of fans and critics alike.

So do not miss out on this fantastic festive opportunity. The showing is at 5pm on Tuesday December 24.



# WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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**FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER**  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 12:30/16:00/19:30  
Frozen 2 | U 12:45/15:15  
Last Christmas | 12A 17:45  
Knives Out | 12A 20:00

**SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER**  
Stardog & Turbocat | U 11:30★  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 12:30/16:00/19:30  
Frozen 2 | U 13:30/15:45  
Last Christmas | 12A 18:00  
Knives Out | 12A 20:15

**SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER**  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 12:30/16:00/19:30  
Frozen 2 | U 12:45/15:00  
Knives Out | 12A 17:15  
Last Christmas | 12A 20:00

**ALL 3D SHOWTIMES ARE SHOWN IN RED**

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## CATS

SHOWING FROM 3RD JANUARY

**CINEMA GIFT VOUCHERS!**

PERFECT FOR CHRISTMAS

**FREE COMMUNITY SCREENING CHRISTMAS EVE AT 5PM IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE**

Oban Phoenix presents this Free Event. This Christmas we would like to thank all of our loyal customers with a special Christmas Eve screening of the beautiful classic film *It's A Wonderful Life*. Hollywood's best-loved star teams up with America's favourite director to create one of the world's most popular films. *It's A Wonderful Life* is the ultimate seasonal feel-good film. Starring the unforgettable James Stewart as George Bailey, the man who receives the greatest Christmas gift of all, and a superb ensemble cast including Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore, this high-spirited Christmas tale is directed by the immortal Frank Capra and ranks as an all-time favourite of fans and critics alike.

**MONDAY 23RD DECEMBER**  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 12:30/16:00/19:30  
Frozen 2 | U 12:45/15:00  
Last Christmas | 12A 17:15  
Knives Out | 12A 19:30

**TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER**  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 10:00/13:30  
Frozen 2 | U 11:30  
How The Grinch Stole Christmas | PG 14:00  
Knives Out | 12A 16:00  
It's A Wonderful Life | U 17:00

**WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER**  
**Closed Christmas Day**  
**Merry Christmas from all the staff at Oban Phoenix Cinema**

**THURSDAY 26TH DECEMBER**  
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 12A 12:00/15:30  
Frozen | U 12:15  
Last Christmas | 12A 14:30

**ALL 3D SHOWTIMES ARE SHOWN IN RED**

**MAGICAL MUSICALS**

**MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS SUNDAY 29TH AT 5PM**

BFI Musicals! The Greatest Show on screen #bfimusicals bfmusicals.co.uk Supported by National Lottery, BFI Film Audience Network and the ICO.

**MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS**

**MONTHLY MUSICAL**

**KIDS CLUB ★**  
EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT £3 A TICKET

Please be advised, all films and showtimes are subject to change/availability with little or no notice. Booking is always recommended to avoid disappointment. Please check [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk) for more information about film certificates.

# Jacobite train steams onto our TVs on Christmas Day

For something different this Christmas Day, Quest, the free-to-air television channel – is offering an escape from movie re-runs by taking viewers on an immersive trip through the stunning Scottish Highlands along the Highland railway.

Viewers can experience one of the greatest rail journeys in the world – the 84-mile-long Highland railway between Fort William and Mallaig – from the comfort of their own homes.

Sprinkling some Christmas magic onto screens, this slow-TV special will present every moment of the two-hour train journey through Scotland's stunning scenery.

The journey begins at Fort William in the West Highlands, venturing through dramatic landscapes and magnificent locations, such as Loch Morar and the

iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct, toward its final destination, the historic fishing port of Mallaig.

Along the way, the magnificent Jacobite steam train, famous for its appearance as the iconic Hogwarts Express in Harry Potter, will make stops off at the various villages where passengers will board and alight the train.

This one-off special will also showcase the stunning locations along the way, providing insights into the history of this spectacular route.

The West Highland Railway premieres exclusively on Quest at 6pm on Christmas Day (Wednesday December 25).

**The iconic Jacobite steam train is the focus of a new programme on Quest.**

Photograph: Abridgeside Photography.



## WIN £200 WORTH OF SHOPPING



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 four tokens over four weeks starting on 12th December, get them to us by 10am Thursday 9th 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 four tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

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

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Winner must be at Tesco, Lochside, Oban, PA34 4HP for 9.30am January 20th. 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/dispensed 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 13, 2019, to February 3, 2020, 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 10. Only one entry per subscription permitted. Entrant must be able to attend the trolley dash in Oban on the January 20, 2020.





# Stage is set for legendary country show in Oban

Now seen by more than 300,000 fans live and watched by millions on social media, Europe's No.1 multi-award-winning country music show, The Legends of American Country, is returning to the Corran Halls, Oban, on Friday January 10 for a fantastic night of toe-tapping music.

The 2020 tour will showcase highly-acclaimed tributes to Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, Don Williams, Patsy Cline and Kenny Rogers, with new tributes to icons Hank Williams, Charley Pride, Glen Campbell,

Tammy Wynette and Jim Reeves, and, with countless other well known hit songs, this is a must see musical extravaganza.

The show features four fantastic singers who are all accompanied by a superb live band of musicians. Their authentic sound is coupled with an authentic stage set and state of the art production that will transport you, hand clapping and toe tapping, all the way to Nashville and back in one night.

One thing's for sure: if it is country music you like, then this is the only show in town

which has received more than 2,000 five-star reviews.

Country Music Northern Ireland: 'As good as country show that you will see live anywhere outside Nashville.'

CMT: 'Pure raw country at its best'

Hot Country TV: 'Fantastic show of nostalgic country at its best with superb vocalists and musicians.'

Tickets for the Corran Halls show on the Friday January 10 are now available from the venue box office on 01631 567333 and would make the ideal Christmas gift.

# Call to youngsters to ensure their voices are heard

Charity Coram Voice has announced the return of Voices, the annual writing competition for children in care and young care leavers.

The competition, which is now in its fifth year, is now open for entries until February 12, 2020.

The charity, which ensures the voices of children and young people in and around the care system are heard, first launched the competition in 2016 as a platform for care-experienced young people to express their creative talents and to celebrate their voices.

The theme of this year's competition, Dreams, was, as always, chosen by care-experienced young people.

Entries can be in any written form, including poems, short

stories, raps or newspaper articles, with a 500-word limit.

There are four age categories: primary school, ages 11-14, ages 15-17, and care leavers aged 18-25.

Entries will be judged by a panel of authors, poets and presenters, due to be announced shortly, alongside young people who were finalists in last year's competition.

Previous competition entrants said that participating had inspired them to write more, made them feel appreciated and valued for their talents and helped them to express their emotions about being in care.

One finalist in last year's competition said: 'The benefits of the competition are that you get to write down

your thoughts and feelings and people actually read it.' Another added: 'I wanted to express my feelings about being in foster care and get rid of the negative stigmas about being in care.'

Brigid Robinson, managing director of Coram Voice, said: 'It has been fantastic to see the competition go from strength to strength and to read all of the remarkable entries we've received over the past five years.'

'This year's theme is guaranteed to see more creative and inspiring written pieces from care experienced young people, reminding us all of their talent and resilience.'

Entries can be submitted online at [coramvoice.org.uk/voices2020](http://coramvoice.org.uk/voices2020).

# M' ALBA

## MY ALBA

### DIARDAOIN 19th An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 19th December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
19:00 Fuine/Cooking-Classics (rpt)  
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)  
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20:00 An Là – News  
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Eorpa/European Current Affairs  
21:00 Colin Macleod – When it Kicks In (rpt)  
22:00 Luinegan Lannsaireachd/Surgery Ships (rpt)  
22:45 Dhan Uisge (rpt)  
22:55 Skipinnish@Blas (rpt)  
23:30 Func(rpt)

### DIHAOINE 20 An t-Samhain FRIDAY 20th December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
18:35 Machair (rpt)  
19:00 An Là – News  
19:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)  
19:30 Cearcall (rpt)  
20:00 Thuiige Seo – Donald MacCormick (rpt)  
20:30 Dreach Ur Na Nollaig (rpt)  
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Seoid a' Christmas – Christmas Kitchen Coves  
22:00 Trapped (S2) (rpt)  
22:50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)  
22:55 DIY le Donnie (rpt)  
23:40 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan – Breabach (rpt)

### DISATHAIRNE 21 An t-Samhain SATURDAY 21th December

16:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
17:45 An Là – News  
18:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – Livingston v Ross County  
20:00 Machair (rpt)  
20:25 Eurovision Choir Gothenburg 2019

20:30 Stoidhle/The Dressing Up Box (rpt)  
21:00 Folk Prom (rpt)  
22:00 Luinegan Lannsaireachd (rpt)  
22:45 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan – Rachel Sermanni (rpt)  
23:00 Scottish Premiership – Livingston v Ross County (rpt)

### DIDÒMHAICH 22 An Dùbhlachd SUNDAY 22 December

16:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
18:15 An Là – News  
18:30 Seachd Là – News Review  
19:30 ÙR/NEW: Alleluia! (rpt)  
20:00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)  
20:30 Sin Thu Fhein (rpt)  
20:55 Eurovision Choir Gothenburg 2019 (rpt)  
21:00 Colin Macleod – When it Kicks In (rpt)  
22:00 Folk Prom (rpt)  
22:55 Trapped (S2)  
23:45 Mischa@Blas (rpt)

### DILUAIN 23 An Dùbhlachd MONDAY 23 December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
19:30 A' Dol Dhachaigh (rpt)  
20:15 Fraochy Bay (rpt)  
20:00 An Là – News  
20:25 Eurovision Choir Gothenburg 2019 (rpt)  
20:30 ÙR/NEW:Dreac ur Na Nollaig  
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Macleod MP/Maclean KGB  
20:30 Dealbhan Fraoich (rpt)  
22:00 Ceolmhor@Piping Live (rpt)  
22:30 Func (rpt)  
23:00 Opry le Daniel (rpt)  
23:50 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)

### DIMÀIRT 24 An Dùbhlachd TUESDAY 24 December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming

19:00 An Là – News  
19:05 My Life as a Courgette (rpt)  
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20:15 Binneas – Na Trads (rpt)  
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Coisir Alba Aig Eurovision 2019  
21:00 Seoid a' Christmas/ Christmas Kitchen Coves (rpt)  
22:00 Bho Chaorain Gu Consoles (rpt)  
23:00 ÙR/NEW: Alleuia na Nollaige

### DI CIADAIN 25 An Dùbhlachd WEDNESDAY 25th December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
19:00 An Là – News  
19:05 Cuairt Chaiseach/Wallace & Gromit in A Grand Day Out (rpt)  
19:30 ÙR/NEW: Mod nan Cloinne 2019  
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Sgoil nan Sagairt/ Priest School  
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Am Posadh Afraganach/The African Wedding  
22:00 Seoid a' Christmas/ Christmas Kitchen Coves (rpt)  
23:00 Opry le Daniel (rpt)  
23:50 Eurovision Choir Gothenburg 2019 (rpt)

### DIARDAOIN 26th An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 26th December

17:00 Programan Chloinne – Children's programming  
18:55 An Là – News  
19:00 ÙR/NEW: Mod nan Coisirean 2019  
20:30 ÙR/NEW: Sgoil nan Sagairt/ Priest School  
21:00 Am Posadh Afraganach/The African Wedding (rpt)  
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – Hamilton v St Johnstone



[BBC.CO.UK/ALBA](http://BBC.CO.UK/ALBA) | [BBC.CO.UK/IPLAYER](http://BBC.CO.UK/IPLAYER)

Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC | A partnership between BBC and MG ALBA



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# WHAT'S ON

In partnership with Oban Town Diary BID4oban.co.uk

## THURSDAY 19TH DECEMBER

**Oban Men's Shed**  
Salvation Army Hall. 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Oban Health Walks**

Oban Congregational Church  
10:00am - 12:00pm

**Recovery Cafe**

New Hope Kitchen. 12.30pm

**Slimming World Fort William**

Salvation Army Hall

3:00pm, 5:00pm & 7:00pm

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

**St John's Episcopal Cathedral**

Candlelight carol service. 7.30pm

**Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Duns**

FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY

## FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER

**Hope Kitchen Music Group**

Salvation Army Hall. 1pm-4pm

**Parsley's Cat Cafe**

New Hope Kitchen. 2pm

**LAHS Meeting**

St Columba's Cathedral Hall. 7.30pm-9pm

**Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Duns**

Gregor Coleman. Open till 2:00am

## SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER

**Parkrun**

Ganavan Sands. 9.30am

**Community Cafe**

Salvation Army Hall. 12:00pm - 2:00pm

**Taynuilt Christmas Ceilidh**

Taynuilt Village Hall. 7pm

**Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Duns**

Ceol An Aire. Open till 2:00am

## SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER

## Hill Walk

Duror. All day

**Morning Service - Refreshments follow**

Salvation Army Hall. 11:00am - 12:00pm

**Oban Congregational Church**

Family service of carols & readings. 11am

**The Salvation Army**

Worship. 11am

**Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Duns**

QUIZ NIGHT at 9:30pm

£1 per person, max of 6 per team

Win £20 bar voucher

## MONDAY 23RD DECEMBER

**Oban Men's Shed**

Salvation Army Hall. 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Slimming World Oban**

Salvation Army Hall. 9.30am & 11.30am

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

**Fellowship Meeting**

New Hope Kitchen. 2pm

**Slimming World Lochgilphead**

Union Street/Argyll Street

5:30pm & 7:30pm

Tel: Rhona 07880 878906

**Martyn's Monday Club**

New Hope Kitchen. 7pm-9pm

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**Kilmore & Oban Church of Scotland**

7pm for all the family

9pm Kilmore Kirk. 11.30pm Watch night

**Oban Congregational Church**

Candlelight carol service. 7pm

**St Andrews Episcopal Church- Fort William**

Midnight Mass and Blessing of the Crib 11.45pm

**St Columba's Cathedral**

Vigil Mass & Blessing of Crib- 5pm

Carol Service followed by midnight

Mass - 11.30pm

**St John's Episcopal Cathedral**

Crib service- 3pm

Candlelit midnight Eucharist - 11.15pm

**St Mary's RC Church - FW**

Our Lady of the Angels, Mingarry - Mass 4pm

St John's, Caol - Carols followed by

Midnight Mass 11.30pm

**Slimming World, Oban**

Glencruitten Church Hall

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

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**Kilmore & Oban Church**

Christmas Service. 10.30am

**Oban Congregational Church**

Family service. 11am

**St Andrews Episcopal Church- Fort William**

Family Eucharist. 10.45am

**St Columba's Cathedral**

Christmas day Mass. 10.30am

**St John's Episcopal Cathedral**

Christmas celebration Eucharist. 10.15am

**St Mary's RC Church - FW**

St Mary's, Fort William - Christmas Mass

10.15am

St Mary's, Glenfinnan - Christmas Mass

12noon

**The Salvation Army**

Christmas Service. 11am

**Visitation at Taynuilt**

Christmas Mass. 10.30am

**Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Duns**

Disco With Stevo

Open till 2:00am

# Exciting end to William musician

The year is ending in serious style for Fort William rising star Keir Gibson, who enjoyed his first BBC Radio 1 play and sold out his first headline show – all in the space of a week.

DJ Mollie King gave Keir's second single, Hollow, a spin on BBC Radio 1 recently, after station producers got in touch with the 18-year-old to say they wanted to play the track.

The single, which was independently released at the end of November, was played alongside some of the best new releases from artists including Harry Styles, Tove Lo and Grace Carter.

Keir has also sold out his first headline show in his hometown of Fort William, taking place this Saturday, December 21. The past few weeks show exciting promise for the young musician.

Keir will perform his alternative pop for Highland audiences before going on to play Edinburgh's Hogmanay Street Party, joining the likes of Mark Ronson, Soft Cell frontman Marc Almond and Glasgow's The Ninth Wave.

Keir said: 'It feels mad to be played on Radio 1! That is where you want to be and to hear my song on it is pretty surreal. I'm so thankful for all their support, and all of the support I've received so far – it's getting my music to more people, which is just brilliant. I feel like I'm ending 2019

on such a high and am over the moon to sell out my Fort William show as well. It'll be the first time I play with a full band, so people are in for a good night. I can't wait to see everyone who has been listening to my music.'

In the past year, Keir has progressed from playing small support slots, to travelling the country in pursuit of his music, working with some of the best emerging producers in the UK. He bagged slots at HebCelt and Belladrum festivals and supported London songwriter Billy Lockett at Glasgow's King Tuts and Irish act Keywest on their nine-date UK tour.

The result is self-penned songs which showcase a love of production akin to the likes of Maggie Rogers, Julia Michaels and Lauv, with lyrics that showcase a natural talent for honest and engaging storytelling.

His two singles to date have seen numerous playlist additions across the UK and Europe, a positive critical response from major new music blogs, an appearance for Keir on BBC Scotland, and caused many of the UK's A&R community to lift their heads and take note of this rising talent.

With spots on the bills of festivals across the UK confirmed for 2020, the next year looks set to be just as bright for Keir.



Keir Gibson will play his hometown



## Seasonal strings send good tidings to Hope

Lunchtime shoppers in Tesco Oban were in for a treat last Friday when Oban High School String Group set out their stall.

Nine young musicians, and their tutors, entertained the masses with some festive favourites to raise funds for Hope Kitchen.

The supermarket concert went down a treat with customers, with some even stopping to have a singalong on their way in and out.

Events may charge. Please visit [www.obanwhatson.co.uk](http://www.obanwhatson.co.uk) for more details. To list your event, please call 01631 568000

# Well done to everyone this year.



**Slimming**<sup>®</sup>  
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Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### OBAN

Glencruitten Church Hall,  
Glencruitten Road  
Wednesday 9.30am,  
11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel: Gillian 07796 040 803

### LOCHGILPHEAD

Lochgilphead  
Baptist Church  
Union Street/ Argyll Street  
Mondays 5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel: Rhona 07880 878 906

### FORT WILLIAM

Salvation Army Hall  
16 Belford Road, Fort William  
Monday 9.30am & 11.30am  
Thursday 3pm, 5pm & 7pm  
Tel: Gillian 07796 040 803

### CAMPBELTOWN

Masonic Recreational  
Lodge, St John Street  
Tuesdays 1pm,  
5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel: Rhona 07880 878 906



[slimmingworld.co.uk](http://slimmingworld.co.uk)

# year for Fort an Keir Gibson



this weekend in a sell-out gig.

## Your local radio listings

Tune in to 103.3Fm or listen live at [www.obanfm.com](http://www.obanfm.com) or on the Tuneln app. For requests, competitions or questions please call us on 01631 570057 or email: [studio@obanfm.org.uk](mailto:studio@obanfm.org.uk)



**MONDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 9.00 Monday morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds Monday Mix, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland fling with Rosie MacColl, 20.00 John McLuckie's show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Through the night with Clyde 2

**TUESDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 Breakfast show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday morning, 13.00 Macky on Fm, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest praise with Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.

**WEDNESDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 09.00 Sounds Scottish repeat, 10.00 The Comfort Zone with Lesley Blair Simmonds, 13.00 Doug Carmichael in the afternoon. 17.00

Drivetime with Campbell Cameron, 19.00 Country meets Rock & Roll with Len Ford & Kenny MacLachlan alternating.

21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre, 12.00 Midnight through the night with Clyde 2.

**THURSDAY:** 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christine's collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo till midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2.

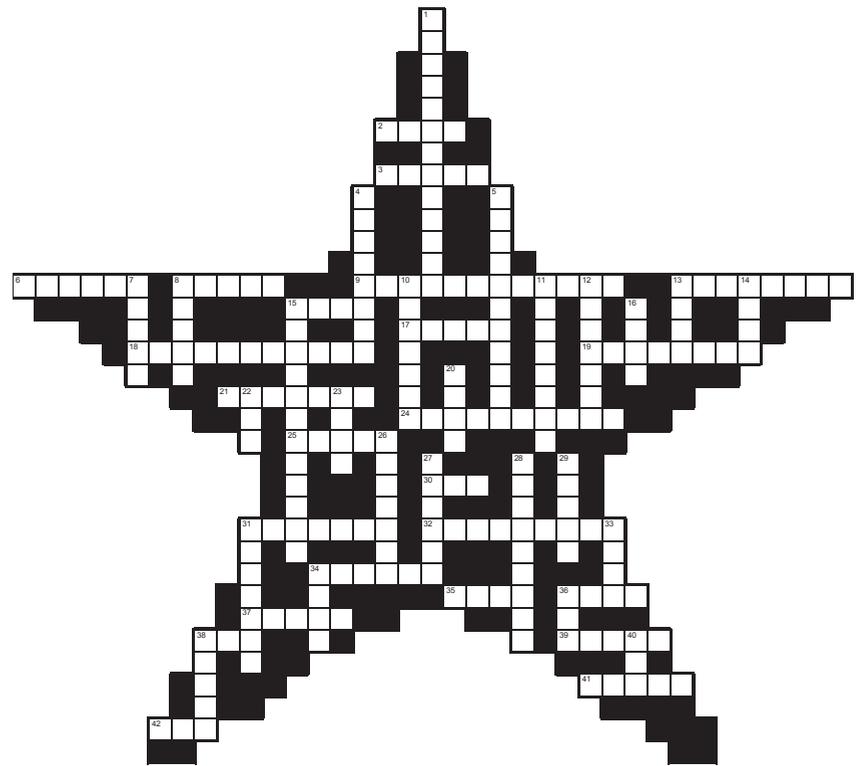
**FRIDAY:** 08.00 breakfast show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny aka Harry, Janet, and Anna, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country meets Country with Jackie Craig, 21.00 Peter Rainnie 12.00 Midnight

through the night with Clyde 2.

**SATURDAY:** 08.00 The Breakfast show with Stephen MacPhee. 10.00 Saturday Morning live with Linda Crosher, 13.00 Clyde2 Sports and the Greatest hits, 18.00 Sports view - Oban Fm Dream team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo till Midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2 and the Greatest Hits.

**SUNDAY:** 09.00 Sunday Morning with Breege, 11.00 Sunday brunch with Allan MacKechnie, 13.00 Clyde 2 on a lazy Sunday afternoon with the Greatest Hits, 19.00 New Country show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.

## Festive Crossword



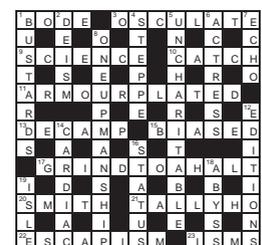
### Across

- 2 Santa's sackful (4)
- 3 Christmas sauce (5)
- 6 He was with Mary (6)
- 8 In good spirits (5)
- 9 Incense (12)
- 13 Where to go to buy presents (8)
- 15 Wise men (4)
- 17 Tree colour (5)
- 18 Where to find an old 6d (4,7)
- 19 Unknown happening (8)
- 21 News (7)
- 24 Parades (10)
- 25 Prickly decoration... (5)
- 30 ....goes with the last answer in a carol (3)
- 31 Toast (7)
- 32 Always done (9)
- 34 Stable place (6)
- 35 Winter toy (4)
- 36 Sacred (4)
- 37 Topsy (5)
- 38 Mince one (3)
- 39 Perfume ingredient (5)
- 41 Christmas tree type (5)
- 42 Pleasure (3)

### Down

- 1 Get-together (6,7)
- 4 Wrapped in the fowl (8)
- 5 German Christmas song (1,10)
- 7 Cheerful (5)
- 8 One in a manger (5)
- 10 Really good (7)
- 11 Twelfth day (8)
- 12 Link (7)
- 13 Wish receiver (4)
- 14 Yearn (4)
- 15 Service at Christmas (8,4)
- 16 Received in the post (4)
- 20 Religious leader (4)

### LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

### SCOTTISH FIELD

January issue



OUT NOW

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

### An Comunn Gàidhealach - Meur Chruachain TAYNUILT CHRISTMAS CEILIDH

Audrey Paterson  
Children from the Mod Academy Plus Full Supporting Programme  
Taynuilt Village Hall  
Saturday 21st December  
\*7pm  
\*(Please note change of time)  
Supper and Hamper Raffle  
Adults - £4 - Children £2

"See local press for details"

★★★★ "Your local paper - a must-see"  
Regional Press  
closer to home

# Opera Highlights tour will include Argyll and the Isles

Opera Highlights is back on the road on February 4, with four singers and a pianist journeying to 17 venues the length and breadth of Scotland, from Lerwick in the north to Castle Douglas in the south – and including Argyll and the Isles.

Following 17 performances in the autumn, the same Opera Highlights but with a new cast is travelling the highways and byways by land, sea and air. The spring tour begins in Bathgate, then visits Birnam, Markinch, Campbeltown, Bowmore, Arrochar, Bunessan, Arisaig, Beaul, Cumnock, Castle Douglas, Callander, Lerwick, Peebles, Fochabers, Alford and Rutherglen.

Set in a beautiful garden, director Roxana Haines's production features a playlist of operatic classics and must-hear rarities, curated by Scottish Opera's head of music Derek Clark. Highlights



include Delibes' Flower Duet, Vaughan Williams' Blue larkspur in a garden and many more from the likes of Mozart, Lehár and Scottish Opera composer in residence Samuel Bordoli.

Scottish Opera 2019/20 emerging artist repetiteur Michael Papadopoulos is

the pianist/music director, and is joined by soprano Zoe Drummond, mezzo-soprano Jade Moffat, tenor Andrew Irwin and baritone Arthur Bruce, The Robertson Trust Scottish Opera emerging artist this season.

Roxana Haines, who directed Scottish Opera's hit

Edinburgh Festival Fringe show Fox-tot! this summer, said: 'After a successful autumn tour, I am pleased to revive this Opera Highlights show, where the cast cordially invite you to a party on your doorstep.'

'This spring we have a brand new cast to guide you through

our story, which takes place in luscious gardens and magical flora and fauna of opera.

'The stage has been set, decorations unpacked and the guests have all arrived but, the problem is we're still not sure whose party this is...

'As the evening progresses, the connections between our characters unravel through music from the likes of Handel, Donizetti and Mozart, and lighter pieces from Gilbert and Sullivan and Vaughan Williams as well as a new work by Samuel Bordoli.

'Prepare for an evening of charm, magic and love in all its operatic forms in a show that highlights the joy and absurdity of opera.'

This Opera Highlights tour is supported by The Friends of Scottish Opera, JTH Charitable Trust and The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust. Tickets are on sale now.

## Key dates ...

- Regal Theatre, Bathgate, Tue 4 Feb, 7.30pm
- Birnam Institute, Thu 6 Feb, 7.30pm
- Markinch Town Hall, Sat 8 Feb, 7.30pm
- Victoria Hall, Campbeltown, Tue 11 Feb, 7.30pm
- Bowmore Hall, Islay, Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm
- The Three Villages Hall, Arrochar, Sat 15 Feb, 7.30pm
- Bunessan Community Hall, Mull, Tues 18 Feb, 7.30pm
- Astley Hall, Arisaig, Thu 20 Feb, 7.30pm
- Phipps Institute, Beaul, Sat 22 Feb, 7.30pm
- McLaren High School, Callander, Saturday 29 Feb, 7.30pm

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CHRISTMAS  
TO ALL



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## Remember the reason for the season!

Amid all the parties, presents and feasting of the festive season, do yourself a favour and take the time to remind yourself – and your family – of the real reason to celebrate.

**Bishop Brian McGee, Catholic Diocese of Argyll and the Isles:** ‘They will call him Emmanuel, a name which means God-is-with-us’ (Matthew 1:). At Christmas we celebrate that we are loved and never alone. When Jesus was born he took on our human nature to draw us into God’s love. This Christmas, may you rejoice in how precious you are!

**Bishop Kevin Pearson, Episcopalian Diocese of Argyll and The Isles:** The love Jesus was born to show in His story is my story in the love we share we know God for God’s love, whether we are always able to recognise that fact, that light or not.

**Douglas Allan, Moderator Argyll Presbytery:** The Peanuts cartoon strip created by Charles Schultz has a wonderful and simple philosophy about Christmas. It says, ‘Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.’ Jesus did this kind of thing all his life. So, here’s the challenge, what little something are you going to do for someone this Christmas?

*A full guide to your local church services this festive season.*

### St. Columba's Cathedral Oban

Monsignor James L MacNeil  
Wishes you all a peaceful, holy and Happy Christmas Season

**Vigil Mass & Blessing of Crib:  
5.00pm (Tuesday)  
Carol Service followed  
by Midnight Mass:  
11.30pm  
Christmas Day Mass:  
10.30am**

All Welcome

### St Mary's RC Church

#### Christmas Eve

Our Lady of the Angels, Mingarry - Mass 4pm  
St John's Caol - Carols 11.30pm  
followed by Midnight mass

#### Christmas Day

St Mary's Fort William - Christmas Mass 10.15am  
St Mary's Glenfinnan - Christmas Mass 12noon

**ST ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
High Street, Fort William

Christmas Eve - Tuesday 24th December  
11.45pm Midnight Mass  
And Blessing Of Crib

Christmas Day - Wednesday 25th December  
10.45am Family Eucharist

All Are Welcome

**VISITATION AT TAYNUILT**  
Canon Fraser wishes you all a peaceful and Happy Christmas & New Year

24th December  
Carols at 11.30pm  
followed by midnight mass

25th December  
10.30 a.m. Christmas Mass

ALL WELCOME

**OBAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
- TWEEDALE STREET -

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER  
11AM - Family service of carols & readings

TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER (Christmas Eve)  
7PM - Candlelight Carol Service

WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER (Christmas Day)  
11AM - Family short service

ALL WELCOME -  
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

St John's Episcopal Cathedral,  
George Street, Oban.

Thursday Dec 19th at 7.30pm  
Candlelight Carol Service  
mince pies & mulled wine/non-alcoholic punch

Christmas Eve  
3pm Crib Service  
Come dressed as one of the Nativity figures & join in the Christmas Story

11.15pm Candlelit Midnight Eucharist  
A joyful service to start the celebrations

Christmas Day  
10.15am Christmas Celebration Eucharist  
Eucharist & Carols for all the family

*We wish you the blessings of joy and peace,  
love and wonder at Christ's Birth*

**KILMORE & OBAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**Christmas Services**

Tuesday 24 December  
Christmas Eve  
7.00pm for all the family  
9.00pm Kilmore Kirk  
Watchnight 11.30pm

Wednesday 25 December  
Christmas Day 10.30am

For more information please contact the Church Office, Mon-Fri 9am-1pm  
Tel: 01631 562405  
E Mail: obancofs@btinternet.com  
Website: www.obanchurch.com

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Oban PA34 5NA

Tel: 01631 563652  
or 07501 655 954

We would like to thank all our supporters for their continuing generosity and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

- 11am Sunday 22nd Dec Worship
- 11am Wednesday 25th Dec Christmas Service
- 11am Sunday 29th Dec Worship

N.B. Group Christmas Party  
Friday 20th Dec  
10.30am - 12.30pm

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# Union starts 2020 on sound financial basis

NFU Scotland is entering 2020 on a healthy financial footing with membership growing again for a third year in a row.

Publication of its annual accounts for 2019 shows income is up by £61,000 last year with subscriptions accounting for nearly all the increase. Affinity income generated from the range of exclusive member services and discounts remains strong at £145,000 (2018 – £146,000).

Expenditure at NFUS in 2019 was up £176,000 at £3.2 million, a reflection of the additional activity undertaken in 2019 (2018 – £3.0 million) leaving an operating deficit this year of £109,200. Investment income and unrealised gains means NFUS ended with a net surplus before tax of £110,500 compared to £42,600 in 2018. As a result, the balance sheet remains strong with net assets increasing by £91,000 to £3.06 million.

Farming, crofting and



Scott Walker.

professional membership at financial year end was 8,366, up from 8,315 at the same time last year, an increase of 51.

Last year, the union launched its family membership. As part of an existing membership, at no cost, it gives any family member who is actively involved in the farm business the opportunity to be recognised as a member of NFUS. The union

now has 368 family members, 60 percent of which are women. That takes NFUS total membership to 8734.

This year, recognising the way that many people now access information and the demand to be kept informed on key issues, it has launched an NFU Scotland phone app – available to download to iPhone through the Apple App Store. The new app will give everyone all the latest news from NFU Scotland, special offers from its affinities team and an ability to read the views and opinions of the experts through its blogs and award-winning Farming Leader magazine.

NFUS chief executive Scott Walker said: 'NFU Scotland exists to lobby. We are here to bring pressure to bear on policy makers and commercial organisations to gain favourable outcomes for Scotland's farmers and crofters to achieve a sustainable and profitable future for Scottish agriculture.'

## Around the markets

Islay – United Auctions on Tuesday December 10 sold 2097 sheep of all classes. 1953 lambs averaged £61.07 (+£2.44) per head and 169p/kg (nc). A good following of buyers were in attendance and all classes of lambs and sheep were easily cleared at highly satisfactory rates.

Leading Prices per Head  
LAMBS – Suffix - £100, Bayview; £90.00, Coull Farm; £90.00, Uiskentuie; £87.00, Lossit Farm; £83.50, Sunderland Farm; £83.00, Coull Farm; £81.00, Coull (D and P Jones); £80.50, Uiskentuie; £80.50, Coille Farm; £80.00, Ballimartin; £76.50, Kilchiaran; £76.50, Coull Farm; £76.00, Coull (D and P Jones); £76.00, Lossit Farm.  
Beltx - £63.80, White Room.  
TexX - £87.00, £86.50, £85.00, £82.00, Bayview; £81.00, Keills Farm; £80.00, Daill (Jordie Rountree).  
CHEVx - £85.50, Bayview; £84.00, Ballychatrigan; £79.00, Coillabus; £63.00, Ballychatrigan. Cross - £88.00, £85.00, Bayview; £83.50, Coull (A Jones); £80.00, £78.00, Bayview; £75.00, Kilchiaran; £70.00, Bayview. Mule - £73.50, Coull(D and P Jones); £70.00, Rockside Farm. Chev Mule - £87.00, £70.00, Coull (D and P Jones). BF - £75.00, Kilchiaran Farm; £70.00, Lossit Farm; £67.00, Coille Farm; £67.00, Keills Farm; £66.00, Kilchiaran; £66.00, Uiskentuie.  
EWES – Suffix - £85.00, Bayview. TexX - £69.00, Blackrock. Cross - £69.00, Lossit Farm, £66.00, Duich Farm. Mule - £66.00, Coull Farm. BF - £55.00, Lossit Farm.  
Leading Prices per Kilo  
LAMBS – Suffix – 200p, Coull (D and P Jones); 199p, Coull Farm; 190p, Ballimartin; 190p, Coull Farm; 189p, Ballimartin; 188p, Duich Farm; 187p, Kilchiaran; 186p, Uiskentuie; 185p, Kilchiaran; 184p, Ballachlaven. Beltx – 165p, Daill Cottage. TexX – 200p, 194p, 193p, 192p, Bayview. Chev – 183p, Daill Cottage. Cross – 199p, Coull (A Jones); 184p, 180p, Bayview; 180p, Kilchiaran; 180p, Islay Estates. Mule – 191p, Coull (D and P Jones); 181p, Rockside Farm; 180p,

Ballachlaven. Chev Mule – 193p, 187p, Coull (D and P Jones). BF – 181p, Kilchiaran; 179p, Lossit Farm; 177p, Kilchiaran; 170p, Rockside Farm.

Stirling – Caledonian Marts Ltd on Thursday December 12 sold 222 Cattle comprising of 93 Prime Bulls, Heifers and Young Bulls as well as 107 OTM Cattle and 22 Young Calves and Stirks.

With a great ringside of buyers, having over 41 active accounts throughout, many more could have been sold to sellers advantage and all types are required on a weekly basis. Prime Heifers sold to 248ppkg for a Limousin from A Pettigrew, Faskine, Airdrie purchased by G Kirk and Son, Butcher, Denny and to £1512 for a Limousin from D Dickinson, Brockwoodlees, Canonbie purchased by H A Black and Son, Butcher, Stirling. Prime Bulls sold to 240ppkg for a Limousin from D Dickinson, Brockwoodlees, Canonbie purchased by T Johnston, Butcher, Falkirk and to £1462 for a Limousin from W Dandie and Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn again purchased by T Johnston, Butcher, Falkirk.

Bulls sold to 215ppkg for an outstanding Charolais from D S and R C Taylor, Easter Ochtermuthill, Muthill and to £1464 from B McIntosh, Drumflower, Stranraer. Other Leading Prices; Heifers per kg 240p Easter Ochtermuthill, Learielaw and Balquharrage 238p Learielaw 235p Faskine and Easter Ochtermuthill 230p Whitehouse (Henderson) and Learielaw 228p Learielaw Bulls per kg 235p Balquharrage 232p Brockwoodlees 230p Learielaw 228p Faskine 225p Balquharrage 222p Spittal (Gardner) 220p Knockhouse Heifers per Head £1500 Brockwoodlees £1418 Learielaw £1412 Knockhouse £1398 and £1389 Learielaw £1382 Easter Ochtermuthill Bulls per Head £1458 Learielaw £1424 Brockwoodlees

£1400 Durieshill £1373 Pirnhall £1363 Brockwoodlees  
Bulls per kg  
205p Drumflower 200p Drumflower (Twice)  
Bulls per Head  
£1436 Easter Ochtermuthill £1376 and £1279 Drumflower  
Also forward were 107 OTM Cattle. Beef OTMs averaged 125ppkg selling to 154ppkg for a Limousin from W Dandie and Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn and to £1180 for a British Blue Bull from D and I Mackintosh, Kirkton of Kingoldrum, Kirriemuir. Cast Males sold to 165ppkg for a Limousin Bullock from R Clarkson, Whiteside, Slamannan. Dairy Cows averaged 94ppkg selling to 108p from W and M Wylie, Broompark, West Lothian and to £730 from J Brown and Son, East Gartmillan, Airdrie.  
Other Leading Prices  
Beef OTMs per Head  
£1150 Broombrae £1140 Learielaw and Kirkton of Kingoldrum £1130 and £1120 Learielaw £1100 Drumflower  
Beef OTMs per kg  
153p Learielaw (Twice) 149p Dollarbank 148p and 147p Balliemartin (Isle of Islay) 147p and 146p Learielaw 145p Lenaig Dairy cows per head  
£710 Carneil and East Gartmillan £690 and £680 Broompark  
Also forward were 22 Young Calves and Stirks at our fortnightly sale. The sale topped at £180 for a British Blue Bull Calf from J Brisbane and Son, Gartclush, Bannockburn.  
Other Leading Prices  
Beef Heifer Calves British Blue £150 Gartclush; £130 Carneil Simmental £150 Gartclush Shorthorn £100 Tarbert (Isle of Gigha)  
Beef Bullock Calves  
Hereford £100 (x2) Tarbert  
The next sale of Young Calves and Stirks will be held on Thursday 9th January 2020.  
All Classes of Stock required on a weekly basis. Please contact; Alastair Logan – 07713 342514.

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from all of us at Agrimony

# There is no chance of climate change success without farming input

NFUS climate change policy manager Ruth Taylor writes after returning from COP25 conference in Madrid and ahead of Glasgow being host city next year

To give it its full title, the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations climate change convention (COP25) took place in Madrid and NFU Scotland, for the first time, was there.

The parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change meet every year to assess progress in tackling climate change – and we are acutely aware that next year it is the turn of Glasgow to host.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions while providing food for an ever-growing world population, set to reach 10 billion by 2050, poses an enormous global challenge. However, after listening to discussions, expert panels, and to the negotiations on agricultural emissions at UN level, it is apparent that farmers from across the globe, and not just Scotland, are committed to finding a solution.

At COP25, there was much discussion around future policy direction for agriculture and its role in tackling climate change.



Ruth Taylor.

**'We are clear about what we need: innovation, investment and financing.'**

Agriculture as a global industry is hugely diverse, and there will clearly be no silver bullet to solve this challenge. There is a recognition that this diversity must be factored into the delivery of future policy, and successful mitiga-

tion and adaptation policies will have to be provided as a package of measures.

We need to make sure targets set at both national and international level are translated into policies which reflect local priorities and needs, as well as providing incentives and support for innovation.

The farmers' constituency was clear in its submission to the agriculture negotiations on this point. The constituency highlighted: 'To be successful, farmers have to lead. We have to be at the centre of discussions and action. We are clear about what we need: innovation; investment in science and extension; and an ambitious financing framework to transform farm productivity and resilience across the world so that no farmer is left behind.'

NFU Scotland has always been clear that measures introduced to mitigate climate change are supported by robust scientific evidence. It was encouraging to see that message emphasised by

members of the international farming community, with the president of the World Farmers' Organisation emphasising: 'If the process is not science-led, then it is not sustainable.'

With next year's conference taking place in Glasgow, climate change will undoubtedly remain at the forefront of the public and political agenda.

By then, decisions on carbon markets will have to be made and all countries will be expected to have made new climate change commitments.

Climate change will continue to be a critically important issue for Scottish farming, and COP26 will be a key opportunity for Scottish farming to showcase all the vital work farmers across the country are doing to reduce their emissions and sequester carbon.

It is clear that there will be no successful climate change process without the involvement and contribution of the agriculture sector.

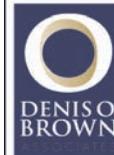
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# THE ALL-NEW SUBARU FORESTER E-BOXER AWARDED MAXIMUM FIVE STAR RATING IN 2019 EURO NCAP SAFETY TEST

- Subaru awarded top rating for the 8th consecutive time
- The all-new Forester e-BOXER achieved the highest score ever in its class\*2 in the Child Occupant Protection test
- The all-new Forester e-BOXER performed the best score ever for Subaru in the Adult and Child Occupant Protection

4th December 2019 – Subaru UK, announced today that the all-new Subaru Forester e-BOXER (European spec) has achieved the maximum five star overall rating in the 2019 European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) safety performance test. In addition, the Subaru XV has been reconfirmed with the maximum five star rating with the e-BOXER version in 2019, following its 2017 Euro NCAP safety test.

The all-new Subaru Forester e-BOXER has registered outstanding scores in all four assessment areas (Adult Occupant, Child Occupant, Vulnerable Road Users, Safety Assist), well above the minimum threshold required and with a noticeable high

overall average.

The all-new Forester achieved the highest score ever in its class in the Child Occupant Protection test. Euro NCAP commented in the official crash test report: "In both the frontal and side barrier tests, protection of all critical body areas was good for both dummies and the Forester scored maximum points in this part of the assessment. The front passenger airbag is automatically disabled when a rearward-facing child restraint is put in that seating position. Tests showed that the system worked robustly and the system was rewarded. All of the restraint types for which the Forester is designed could be properly installed and accommodated in the car." In

addition to Child Occupant Protection, the Forester also performed the best score ever for Subaru in the Adult Occupant Protection.

These superior crash safety performance have been achieved thanks to the Subaru Global Platform (SGP). The SGP brings significant enhancement to the body and chassis rigidity (front lateral flexural rigidity +90%, torsional rigidity +70%, front suspension rigidity +70%, rear sub frame rigidity +100%) and impact energy absorption is improved by 40% over outgoing models. Together with this solid body structure, safety features such as 7 airbags, including one SRS knee airbag installed for the driver's seat ensure collision safety performance of the Forester.

To make the all-new Forester safer than ever, new advanced safety technologies have also been employed. It is available as standard with EyeSight Driver Assist Technology

(providing Autonomous Emergency Braking, lateral support functions and other functions) and adds to its increased safety package: Subaru Rear Vehicle Detection (SRVD), Reverse Automatic Braking, Side View Monitor and Driver Monitoring System, a new facial recognition technology that alerts the driver when detecting signs of fatigue or distraction while on the road.

Globally, this fifth generation Forester had been praised with important awards: in Japan it won the Grand Prix Award for earning the highest score ever of 96.5 points (out of 100 points under new scoring method from the 2018-2019 assessment), in the 2018-2019 Japan New Car Assessment Program (JNCAP) collision safety performance assessment conducted by the Ministry

of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and the National Agency for Automotive Safety and Victim's Aid (NASVA). The 2018-2019 Grand Prix Award in JNCAP collision safety performance assessment marks the second winning of the award for Subaru following the Grand Prix Award for Impreza and SUBARU XV in the 2016-2017 assessment.



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**Closing Date for Applications: 31st December 2019**

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Email [info@northargyllhouse.org](mailto:info@northargyllhouse.org)

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# PUBLIC NOTICES

[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

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

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>; electronically at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, CHARLES KENNEDY BUILDING, ACHINTORE ROAD, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6RQ; or electronically at your nearest Council Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a\\_to\\_z](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z)

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
19/05292/PIP	Plot 2, Former Caravan Site Faichem, Invergarry	Erection of house (renewal of 16/05144/PIP)
19/05322/FUL	Achaderry Steading Roy Bridge	Change of use from agricultural land to clay pigeon shooting range (revised application)
19/05267/FUL	4 Glenloy Street, Caol	Proposed garage with family use area above
19/04573/FUL	Narrach Bridge, Kinlochleven	Erection of house
19/05266/FUL	Land 45M South Of 4 School Road, Strontian	Erection of 3no flats

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

**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**

Mr Donald James MacDougall has registered his croft known as Oban Seil, Oban Seil, Kilbrandon & Kilchattan 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 10th September 2020. Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C6526.

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATION**

IM Larg  
1 Caoles, Tìree  
0.104 ha – Site for a dwelling house  
100852

Written comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 17/01/20. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW – [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot)

Our privacy notice is available at [www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/privacy-policy) or on request.

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

**(LAUREL ROAD AND DUNCRAGGAN ROAD, OBAN) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) (NO.2) ORDER 2019**

On Monday 16th December 2019, Argyll and Bute Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by section 62 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, made the above named Order which will make it unlawful for any person to drive or cause or permit to be driven any motor vehicle on the entire length of Duncraggan Road, and the section of Laurel Road between its junction with Ardconnel Road and Duncraggan Road, Oban.

The restrictions imposed by this Order, which are desirable because of considerations of public safety and convenience during the Hogmanay Fireworks Display, will be in operation when indicated by signs between 2200 hours on 31st December 2019 and 0030 hours on 1st January 2020.

Contravention of the Order, which may be inspected at the Argyll & Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, could result in a penalty of up to £500.

Roads & Infrastructure Services, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



**Proposed Division of a Croft by Owner-occupier Crofter**

Iain Henderson and Mrs Sandra Mary Henderson are applying to divide the owner-occupied croft at Knochan, Bunessan, Isle of Mull, in the Parish of Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon into 2 new crofts.

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

**Proposed Division of a Croft by Owner-occupier Crofter**

Iain Henderson and Mrs Sandra Mary Henderson are applying to divide the owner-occupied croft at 1B Achadafail Bunessan, Isle of Mull, in the Parish of Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon into 2 new crofts.

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

Forestry and Land Scotland | Coilltearachd agus Fearann Alba

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION DROP-IN EVENT**

**3.30 – 7 PM,  
FRIDAY 10TH JANUARY 2020  
AT APPIN VILLAGE HALL**

A Public Consultation is currently underway on the Briefs for the following Plans:

North Argyll Forests Strategic Plan (Brecklet, Glenachulish, Duror, Bealach, Appin and Creran)

Glen Creran Land Management Plan

Appin Land Management Plan

The Brief is an early stage in the planning process that describes the plan area and summarises the main economic, environmental and social issues to be considered. We welcome your comments and queries, which will help to inform the draft Land Management Plans.

The Brief documents are available for download on the Forestry and Land Scotland website ([www.forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/consultations](http://www.forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/consultations))

Or, come along to our **drop – in Consultation Event:**

**3.30 pm – 7 pm on Friday 10th January 2020, at Appin Village Hall**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

**Oban and Lorn**

Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be carried out as follows:

- Collections due on 25th, 26th and 27th December will be collected a day later than normal i.e. due on 25th will be collected on 26th, due on 26th will be collected on 27th, due on 27th will be collected on 28th December.
- Collections due on 1st, 2nd and 3rd January will be collected a day later than normal i.e. due on 1st will be collected on 2nd, due on 2nd will be collected on 3rd, due on 3rd will be collected on 4th January.

All other days will be collected as normal.

Moleigh recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

**Mull and Iona**

Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be carried out as follows:

- Collections due on Wednesday 25th December will be collected on Friday 27th December.
- Collections due on Wednesday 1st January will be collected on Friday 3rd January.

All other days will be collected as normal.

Glengorm recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

**Tìree**

Recycling collections due on Wednesday 25th December will be collected on Tuesday 24th December.

Recycling collections due on Thursday 26th December will be collected on Friday 27th December.

All other days will be collected as normal.

Gott Bay recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

Information is also available on the Council website and from your local office.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
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**Argyll and Bute Council**

**PLANNING**

These applications listed below may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 - 13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, your Local Customer Service Point and by logging on to the Council's website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk).

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
19/02504/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and outbuilding and installation of septic tank	Lot 2 Kilchrenan Woodlands, Land North East Of Lower Achachenna, Kilchrenan, Argyll And Bute
19/02145/PP	Formation of access and engineering operations to re-contour the adjacent landscape (retrospective)	A819 Land Opposite Kilchurn Castle View Joint, Dalmally, Argyll And Bute
19/02503/PP	Erection of replacement 2 storey side extension	Duncraig, Isle Of Iona, Argyll And Bute, PA76 6SP
19/02498/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and installation of sewage treatment plant	Lag An Fhiodhain, North Connel, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA37 1RF
19/02387/PP	Erection of research and development lab building (Class 4), construction of access road and car park and associated works	The European Marine Science Park Dunstaffnage, Dunbeg, Argyll And Bute
19/02521/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of access	Plot 2, Scallastle, Craignure, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
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## BIRTHS

**FERGUSON** - David and Kate are delighted to announce the birth of Rose Ann on September 4, 2019 in Inverness. Granddaughter for John and the late Judy O'Rourke, Acharacle and for Ann and the late Donnie, Kilmore.

## GRAHAM



Chris & Rachel (Paterson) are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their third son Billy Ross Graham, born 2nd December, 2019 at the R.A.H. A little brother for Josh & Ronnie. Tenth grandchild for Dougie & Allison Graham, Oban & the third for James & Catherine MacMillan, Taynuilt.

## DEATHS

**BLACK** - Sheena (née Kerr). Peacefully at home on Isle of Mull on December 12, 2019, formerly of Edentaggart, Luss, beloved wife of the late Thomas Black, much loved mother of Carol and the late Joan, loving grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral service at Luss Parish Church on Friday, December 20 at 1.00pm followed by interment in Churchyard. Family flowers only please.

**MACDONALD** - Suddenly, but peacefully, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, Lochgilphead, after a short illness, on December 16, 2019, Geordie MacDonald (Duncan), in his 83rd year, of 45 Glenfyne Park, Ardrishaig, formerly of Ashfield, and Ellary Estate, beloved husband of the late Jean MacVean and much loved father of Malcolm. Dear brother of Jean, Mary, Lilly, Ena and Minnie, much respected brother-in-law, uncle and cousin to all the family, and a good neighbour, dear friend and work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held in Lochgilphead Parish Church, on Monday, December 23, 2019, thereafter to Achnabreac Cemetery. Donations to British Heart Foundation and Mid Argyll Hospital.

**MACFADYEN** - Isabel. At Islay hospital on December 5, 2019, after a time of illness, aged 84 years. Much loved sister of Mary and beloved mother of Duncan, Janice, Donald and late Neil, grandmother and great-grandmother. Interred in Kilchoman. Greatly missed by all the family.

**MACGILLIVRAY** - Peacefully at Dal Mhor Care Home on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, Margaret (Maggie Moss), beloved wife of the late John, much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Sadly missed.

**O'CONNOR** - Suddenly at home on December 10, 2019, Billy O'Connor, aged 69 years, Beechwood Road, Inverness (formerly of Glenkingie Street, Caol). Sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral Service on Monday, December 23, at 2pm in Inverness Crematorium. All welcome to attend. No flowers please. Donations, if desired, to charities of his choice may be given at the door. Arrangements by D. Chisholm & Sons.

**SCOTT** - Peacefully, on December 12, 2019, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, William, beloved husband of Grace, loving father of Caroline, Kenny and Tracey, adored papa to all his grandchildren and

great-grandchildren. Funeral service will take place at Oban Parish Church, Glencruitten Road, Oban, on Tuesday, December 24, 2019 at 12 noon. Family flowers only, retiral collection for Erskine Hospital Residents' Fund.

**SHIELS** - Robert. Peacefully on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban after a short illness, Robert (Bob) Shiels, aged 67 years of Port Appin. Funeral Service at Holytown Crematorium, Memorial Way, Holytown, ML1 5RU on Thursday, December 19 at 12.30pm. To which all friends are invited.

**STEELE** - (William) Gordon, aged 82, of 7 Lodge Avenue, Inverness, passed away peacefully at home on December 15 after a long illness, bravely borne. A much-loved husband, father and grandfather. He is survived by wife Nan (née MacPhail), two children and three grandchildren. Funeral arrangements, by D. Chisholm & Sons, to be confirmed. Family flowers only, please.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**CLINCH** - Albert, Elaine and Anita would like this opportunity to acknowledge and thank their extended family, friends, neighbours and all well-wishers for their loving, caring gestures and support on the unexpected, sudden loss of their beloved mum, Hilda. Special thanks to Alyson Stewart for conducting the wonderful heartfelt ceremony to celebrate our mother's life and to Linnie and John from MacLellan's Funeral Directors for their caring support and guidance with all the arrangements. Particular thanks to all who contributed their special memories for Alyson to relay at the ceremony, and through our laughter and tears, remind us of mum's fulfilled life. Additional thanks to Shona for the lovely flowers and to the team at The Railway Club for the buffet. All monies donated have been passed to the local Macmillan nurses.

**GALBRAITH** - The family of the late Archie (Baldy) Galbraith would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in so many ways during their recent sad loss. Grateful thanks to staff at Mid Argyll Community Hospital. To the Rev Hilda Smith for her very comforting service. To Donald MacDonald, funeral directors for their caring and professional service. Many thanks to the Stag Hotel for their excellent purvey. Finally sincere thanks to all who paid their last respects and who donated generously to the retiral collection which raised £710.00 for British Heart Foundation.

**LEE** - Carole, Graeme, Gareth and Gina would like to express their thanks to everyone who attended the service for Jim Lee who sadly passed away on November 23. The donations gathered amounted to £606 which will be split evenly between the family's chosen charities, Lochaber MS Society and the local Macmillan cancer support nurses. They would also like to extend their thanks to the Glen Mor Medical Practice and the Macmillan nurses for all their support and care in the past few months. The family are also extremely grateful to Alyson Stewart who performed a beautiful service and the caring professional service provided by John McLellan & Co.

**MACINTOSH** - Sheila and family would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind wishes, cards and phone calls received following the sad loss of Ronnie. Special thanks to Fr MacKinnon and also to Fr Danny and Bishop Toal for the beautiful service, Mr Rose and choir for the lovely singing. Special thanks to Dr Munro, Dr Campbell and all the team at Tweeddale Medical Practice, the Lochaber Macmillan Nurses who were outstanding in their care for Ronnie, Dr Mmeka and his team at Raigmore Hospital, Mr Scott and his team at Belford Hospital, Stoma Nurse Mrs Cathy King, Andrew Orr for his piping which was excellent despite the extreme weather conditions. Grateful thanks to John McLellan, Funeral Directors for their most professional and caring help with all the arrangements and the Stronlossit Hotel for first class level of service, McDonald Bros for the lovely flowers. Finally thank you all who donated so generously to the retiring collection in aid of

Lochaber Macmillan Nurses, raising the sum of £627.10. Ronnie was dearly loved and will be sorely missed.

**MACINTYRE** - The family of the late Hughie would like to thank everyone for their kind expressions of sympathy and support shown to them on his death. For all the flowers, cards and phone calls. Thanks to Fr James MacNeil, Dr Emma Boyle, Roseann, Carers Direct and latterly over the last few weeks staff at ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital. To Catriona at Hamish Hoey and Son for the care and compassionate funeral arrangements, Petals of Oban and the Royal Hotel for Catering and thanks to all who came to pay their last respects and who donated to the collection for ABCD which raised £565.26.

**McEWAN** - The family of the late Helen McEwan would sincerely like to thank all friends and family for their calls, cards, flowers and messages of sympathy and support shown to them on our recent sad loss. Thank you to all who paid their respects at the funeral services in St. John's Cathedral, Oban and at Perth Crematorium. We wish to extend our grateful thanks to the Very Rev'd Canon Margi Campbell for her support to us and for the comforting and uplifting services and to Catriona and all at Hamish Hoey for their professional and sensitive care. A life well lived, now at peace.

**McPHAIL** - Dougie, Wilma, Cameron and Morvern would like to thank everyone for their sympathy and support at Catriona's passing. Thanks to staff at Cradlehall Nursing Home, Inverness for all their love and attention during her 20 years in their care. Also to Rev Dugald Cameron for the comforting service, to Ian at D&A Munn who took Catriona back to Oban for a sincere and dignified funeral service, also the Royal Hotel for refreshments. A collection of £133 went to Cradlehall Nursing Home Resident's Fund.

**McRAE** - The family of the late Nancy McRae would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy following their recent sad loss. Special thanks to all at Culloden Medical Practice for their dedicated care over many years, to the carers in Cawder Unit, Cradlehall Care Home. To D&A Munn for professional funeral arrangements, Rev. Jenny Earl for a sincere and comforting service, The Thistle and The Rose for beautiful floral

arrangements and Argyll Arms Hotel for catering. Finally thanks to all who paid their respects at the Church and graveside, and generously donated £276.55 to Oban Dementia Resource Centre.

## MEMORIALS

**BEATON** - Fond memories of my mother, Bella, who passed away on December 19, 2016. Also remembered my father, Veek, who passed away on March 6, 1999 much loved Granny and Granpa.

- Hugh, Mary, Lorna and David.

**CARMICHAEL** - Very special memories of Kate (Kilchoan), who died December 20, 2013. Always in our thoughts. Forever in our hearts.

- All the family x  
**GIBSON** - Loving memories of a dear mother, granny and great-granny, Jenny, who died December 12, 2003. Also remembering loved ones gone before and since then.

Always remembered.  
- Tommy, Nellie and family.

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

Today, tomorrow our whole life through  
We will always love and remember you,  
- Elizabeth, Julie and Steven.

**HADDOW** - Paul. 18/12/16. Loved and missed so much. It wasn't his fault that he had to go

Tell him don't worry and please let him know  
That I had a man who was one of a kind  
And he'll always be in my heart and my mind  
Forever unbreakable.  
- Jacqueline xxx

**HADDOW** - Remembering our pal Paul, who died December 18, 2016.

Never forget the laughs.  
- Mary and Duncan.

**HOUGHTON** - In loving memory of my dear parents Muriel and Davie and brother Michael. Loved and missed every day.

- Linda and family.  
**HOWE** - In memory of Betty, who died December 18, 2014. Gone but never forgotten.  
- Willie and family.

**MACCOLL** - In loving memory of my husband Charles MacColl (Charlie), who died December 16, 2015.

Sadly missed  
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- Mairi, Fiona and Calum.

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**MACKINNON** - Treasured memories of a dear Mum, Granny and great Granny Flora, who passed away on December 21, 2015. To those who have a mum love her while you may, Because we wish with all our hearts our mum was here today.  
- Angus, Lachie, Margaret, Christine, Fiona, Linda, Alastair and all their families.

**MAITLAND** - James, beloved husband, dad and seanair, died December 23, 2012. In our thoughts every day and our hearts forever.  
- Teeny, Marie, Ross and families.

**NICOLSON** - In loving memory of our dear mum and grandmother Christina Stewart, who died December 19, 1985, also Mima McAulay who died December 30, 1989 and Mary McTaggart, who died August 23, 2011, our dear sisters and aunts. Too dearly loved

To ever be forgotten  
Sadly missed by all the family.

**THORNE** - Mary. 27/12/2017. In loving memory. Because you're missed so very much  
Far more than words can say  
And sadly mum no presents, cards or hugs or Christmas day  
Just silent tears and a special kiss  
Blown to Heaven above  
To thank you for a lifetime of devoted selfless love.  
- Wendy and Marie, Rebecca and Rachael.xxx

# Season's greetings

Your personal Christmas messages to friends and family, near and far

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

To all our relatives, friends and neighbours  
From Allan & Margaret Black, Salen.

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

To all our relatives, friends and neighbours  
Love Margaret Pearson & Gordon.



**Ian & Sheila Campbell**  
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**MRS JOAN REFFIN,**  
ETIVE HOUSE

Would like to wish all her relatives, friends & neighbours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

To all my family and friends from Ann MacLean, Dunmar Court.

**Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year**

to all our relatives, friends and neighbours  
Ian & Jean Ross, Oban.

**TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS, FRIENDS & FAMILY**

We wish you a merry Christmas & a happy New Year from John and Lorna MacLennan.

Wishing everybody a merry Christmas & a happy New Year  
**from Donnie & Peggy McVicar, Oban**

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

To all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Michael Kelly, Oban

**ARCHIE LAMONT OF ACHLONAN, TAYNUILT**

would like to offer all his friends and family the warmest of Christmas wishes and thanks all for their assistance and support in the year past.

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

to all our relatives, friends & neighbours from Alastair, Morag & Angus Cameron, Callander

*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

to relatives & friends in Lismore, Appin, Benderloch, Connel, Taynuilt, Lochawe, Dalmally & Oban. All the best for 2020.

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# Oban to reap rewards from School of Shinty

Oban High's School of Shinty was launched in September this year.

It follows the model of existing 'Schools of' rugby and dance that Oban High School already has in its junior years.

'Through the hard work of several volunteers, we have finally been able to launch the School of Shinty at Oban High School,' said Murray Hamilton, Principal Teacher of PE and Head of the School of Shinty programme.

'With the backing and support of the Camanachd Association and the Macaulay Association, along with several clubs - Oban Camanachd, Oban Celtic, Taynuilt, Glenorchy and Oban Lorn Ladies - we have been able to offer this fantastic opportunity to our students.

'It has been great to have the support of so many clubs, companies and organisations, from Oban Common Good Fund and the Camanachd Association to MacKenzie Welders, helping us get shinty goals for the class. This will be a great opportunity for our students, not only to get time to develop their shinty skills and understanding but also to embed the vision and value of Oban High School.'

Murray Hamilton continued: 'This has been something we have been working towards for some time and it is great to finally roll out this initiative. We are fortunate that we have Colin Carswell on our staff who is able to lead the weekly coaching sessions and of course we are spoilt

for expertise locally with so many successful teams on our doorstep.'

Colin Carswell has played senior seasons with Lochside Rovers and Taynuilt shinty clubs so he is well placed to deliver the weekly coaching sessions.

Colin is ably assisted by staff member and former shinty player David Ferguson in taking the players through a fitness programme that includes strength and conditioning alongside the playing aspect of the sport.

The project has been supported by Euan McMurdo, regional development officer for the Camanachd Association.

The players sign up to the School of Shinty at the start of the year. This is a commitment to participate in the weekly coaching during school time and the weekly after-school training which is run by local club coaches Les Kinvig, Stephen Campbell and Shelley McCuish.

The School of Shinty is open to boys and girls in S1 or S2 at Oban High School.

There are two Shinty Ambassadors this year - Jamie MacGillivray and Mairi Inglis - who have been a great help. They have helped to promote the sport and are a visible presence within the school.

'We are hoping that after this pilot year, we will be able to grow the number of participants and the classes. This helps make the sessions more specific and we can focus on different aspects of the game or

areas such as fitness or nutrition,' explained Murray Hamilton.

Lead coach Colin Carswell said: 'I am delighted to be involved with the delivery and planning of the School of Shinty. It is great to get out of the classroom once a week to work with the students. This is something I would have relished the opportunity to be a part of when I was in school.

'The introduction of the Bulls v Sharks format is great and will help provide more competitive matches for the students,' added Colin. 'It follows the model rugby used and we had a really successful first match last week.

'It was a competitive 4-4 draw and there was some great shinty on show.'

The players are split into two teams who compete for a cup over five or seven matches.

Murray Hamilton explained the idea behind the competition: 'The Bulls v Sharks idea started when we first launched the School of Rugby. We needed a way to give all the players more game time and we found students bought into the idea of having their own teams within the school. So we make two team selections and will play five or seven matches throughout the year. We also have transfer windows if we need to even up the teams or move numbers around. The pupils really buy into that.'

Murray Hamilton added: 'We have used the same idea for shinty this year, and football, so we now have a games week where all three sports compete for the respective trophies. This has been successful so far, but we hope to make it grow as the year goes on.

'We still want to get more matches for our School of Shinty players and other school teams. It is a big challenge across all school sports. Given our geographical location and transport logistics, it can be difficult but working together with various associations and club coaches, we aim to provide more competitive matches across all ages.

'We really hope this initiative will help the students on the shinty park and in the classroom. It is about taking the values of discipline, respect, resilience and that hard work ethic and applying that across the board. Hopefully this will help students to achieve their full potential on and off the field.'

A Macaulay Association spokesman confirmed its support saying: 'The Macaulay Association is delighted to support Oban High's School of Shinty as it creates another playing platform at a vital age in the development of youth players within the sport.'

The early signs are positive for the Oban High School of Shinty as they

recently travelled to a youth festival with 21 players, whilst also hosting a festival with the same number of players taking part.

## What next for Oban Celtic?

After securing a fifth place finish in the 2019 Mowi National Division, Oban Celtic assistant manager Les Kinvig gave an insight into what his side needs to do to break into the top four in 2020.

'There are a number of areas we'd need to work on to do that,' said Les Kinvig. 'First of all, Dougie and I are still relatively new to the National Division but we gained a lot of knowledge over last season, understanding the opposition and where certain opposition players may be deployed.

'You can have a player who usually features in attack but suddenly he switches to buckshee back either before or during a game and we'll be wiser to things like that next year.

'Improved player fitness is going to be very important.

'We'll get back to training two nights each week from the turn of the year, leading into the pre-season friendly matches.

'We then want to step up our pre-season programme on last year, fitting in more friendlies, so that we are ready to hit the ground running when the season starts at the beginning of March.'

Les also highlighted the need for consistency saying: 'We also need to put together a performance for the full 90 minutes. There were times last season, particularly the draws with Beaulieu, Glasgow Mid Argyll and Glenurquhart, where late goals cost us points. We have played really well for parts of matches but need to maintain that level of performance throughout the whole match.'

Youth shinty is an area Les knows well. 'Oban Celtic are still a young team but these youngsters will be better for last year's experience. William MacEwan, John Douglas, Jigme Jones and Innes MacDonald all came in last term and will no doubt feature next year. They are all a year older, albeit they will still only be 15 years next season. We'll look to them to continue their development, but at the right pace.

'A more settled side would also be a huge benefit and there are three main areas where we can achieve that: discipline, players making themselves available each week and injuries. Firstly, discipline was better last year and we have to keep that going and continue the improvement.

'Secondly, player availability can make such a difference.

'The boys themselves would admit



Oban High School has launched a School of Shinty and the players have signed up.

that there were times last season where a bit more commitment would have seen us field a stronger team which would in turn have given us a better chance of winning. Thirdly, injuries are another factor. We lost Neil Carmichael, Michael MacKinnon, Peter Currie and Lewis McPhee for periods with injury last season and they are all big players for us.

'We know how we want to play shinty but getting our first choice team out on the pitch as often as we possibly can is key as it gives us the best chance of succeeding.'

Making best use of their squad is also something Oban Celtic are keen to develop. 'We need to get to a stage where we prepare our players to play in different positions should the need arise,' said Les Kinvig. 'We'll work on that with the players to ensure we have cover should injuries or suspensions arise.

'We've had a year with the boys now so we have a better idea of what works and what doesn't. Injuries and suspensions will happen over the course of the season so we want to have identified replacements for all positions in advance so that if anything unexpected arises, we are ready for it.'

One issue which needs to be solved sooner rather than later is the goal-keeping position. Iain MacFarlane is expected to be out for the season through injury. 'Unfortunately Iain will be missing,' sighed Les Kinvig. He has a problem with both knees and we'd like to identify a replacement and get to work with that person before the pre-season starts.

'Iain does a great job behind the scenes within the club, especially with the second team, and he'll continue to be a good influence and not disappear completely but he'll be a big loss on the field.'

There may be six weeks to go until pre-season fixtures get under way but Oban Celtic are already plotting how to continue their improvement next season.

## PJ signs off

Paul John MacKintosh has brought the curtain down on his seven-year reign as Newtonmore manager.

Newtonmore's final match of the season was to have been against Kyles Athletic at Tighnabruaich but the teams agreed to share the points. That meant Newtonmore's defeat to Oban Camanachd marked PJ's final game in charge.

Paul John MacKintosh took over as Newtonmore first team manager in 2013 from Norman MacArthur who had five years at the helm. It was, of course, MacKintosh's second stint at the helm as he previously led the side before MacArthur.

Paul John MacKintosh's recent tenure has yielded five Camanachd Cups, five league titles, two Macaulay Cups and four MacTavish Cups. His replacement is likely to be confirmed at this week's annual general meeting.

Whilst PJ is looking forward to watching games from the touchline without added respon-



PJ MacKintosh.

sibility of first team management, he was very much 'hands on' for Newtonmore U17s Mowi London Shield defeat to Skye Camanachd U17s at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree, when he was Newtonmore bus driver and goal judge during the final.

# om new



of Shinty. Our photograph shows the coaches and some of the pupils who

## Oban Celtic's Boxing Day double treat

There's a Boxing Day double treat for the Oban Celtic support on Thursday December 26.

First up is the annual shinty match between the Oban Celtic Old Crocs and the Youngsters at Mossfield. Throw-up is at 1pm.

The veterans were penalty shoot-out winners in 2017 but the young boys came out on top last year with Ross MacMillan, Daniel MacMillan, Andy MacDonald and Dylan Cooke getting the goals in a 4-3 victory. The match was keenly contested as ever. Kenny Wotherspoon scored twice for the seniors but he also saw a penalty saved by young boys' keeper Iain MacFarlane. Scott Burnett got the other veterans' goal. Later in the afternoon, Oban Celtic's annual prizegiving takes place at Oban Masonic Hall. There will be refreshments, food and entertainment from 5.30pm.

## Clubs launch recruitment drives

Oban Celtic are amongst a number of clubs who have launched recruitment drives ahead of the 2020 shinty season.

Les Kinvig said: 'We are looking to add players to our first team and second team to help out the current squads and we have a lot to offer. We are especially keen to get a first team keeper with Iain MacFarlane injured. We'd also like more cover in the defensive areas but feel we are well placed middle to front. We'd be happy to hear from any interested players in all positions though.'

Premiership sides Kyles Athletic and Glasgow Mid Argyll as well as Aberdour, newly-promoted to the National Division, are also on the lookout for new players.

Lochaber are also spreading their net as they look to restore their second team next season.

## Skye Camanachd AGM

Skye Camanachd held its annual general meeting at its clubhouse at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree, on Thursday December 5.

Fiona Cruickshank stays on as chairwoman, as does Thomas Wilson as vice chairman whilst Marion Gillies remains club secretary.

Alasdair Bruce steps down after 35 years as treasurer, whilst club stalwart Donnie Martin also leaves the board as do former chairman Douglas MacDougall and new ladies first team manager John Angus MacInnes.

The club will confirm the addition of several new trustees at its next board meeting.

Ross Cowie, manager of the club's 1990 Camanachd Cup winning side, was made an Honorary Vice President.

Skye Camanachd runs nine teams from its Portree base and is in a healthy financial position having benefited from a Co-op Community Fund payment which allowed them to buy its own mini-bus.

## Inverness awards

Inverness Shinty Club announced its player of the year awards at a recent event.

First team player of the year award went to Daniel Palombo.

Stevie Campbell was the recipient of the second team prize whilst Jack Craig was U21 player of the year.

It was a good season for Inverness Ladies, winning the Donella Crawford Sixes through Culloeden Academy, the Alister Gow Sixes and the Three Sisters Sixes competition in Edinburgh.

The Inverness Ladies senior player of the year was Amber MacKay; Chloe Mutch took the U16 honour with Laura Brandie named Ladies development player winner.

Continued on page 52.

# new SPOT THE SHINTY BALL



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If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

This game has a jackpot of £4150. If no one wins the jackpot outright then £2000 will be awarded to the person closest to the exact centre of the ball. The £2000 nearest prize will be taken from the jackpot fund. The competition will continue as normal from the issue dated 16th January 2020 with a jackpot fund of £2150. No other near miss prizes will be awarded for this game. In the event of a tie the prize money will be split evenly between all winning entries. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

TO ALLOW FOR DISRUPTION TO THE POSTAL SERVICE / HOLIDAYS THIS GAME WILL RUN OVER 4 WEEKS - CLOSING DATE 2PM MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2020

### Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 2pm Monday 13th January 2020. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline. You may hand it into any of our offices - The Oban Times, Lochavullin, Oban; The Lochaber Times, High Street, Fort William; The Campbeltown Courier, Main Street, Campbeltown or The Argyllshire Advertiser, Argyll Street, Lochgilphead by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted. Competition rules No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Winners agree to have their photograph taken for publicity purposes. Winners' names and home towns will appear in the newspaper. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/destroyed within 30 days of the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.



Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB or hand in to any of our offices as detailed above.

Name.....

Address.....

Tel No.....

Please tape your £1 coin here (only if posting)

## LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

The two entries who got nearest the ball and each receive £25 are:

J Cullen, Oban

T Campbell, Oban



OT

# Oban Otters sparkle in silverware department



Oban Otters with their recent gala trophy haul.

Oban Otters Amateur Swimming Club held its annual gala at Atlantis Leisure recently with some superb results across the board.

The event was sponsored by MacQueen Bros Charitable Trust with contributions also coming from Puffin Dive and Oban Joinery Services.

A report and photograph spread was included in The Oban Times' sports pages earlier in the month

but full results were not available then.

But here they are now: Hutchison Cup Boys 9/10 years – Alfie MacIntyre; Spence Shield Girls 9/10 years – Rose MacInnes; Larchfield Shield Boys 11 and over – Malcolm MacIntyre; McCracken Cup Boys 10 years – Finn MacKechnie and Ben Docherty; Columba Hotel Trophy Girls 10 years – Lily Robinson \* 25m Fly record broken,

Fiona MacAlpine held since 1983 (19.10 – Lily swam 18.15);

Tyndrum cup Girls 11 years – Molly Gilchrist \*; Molly and Abby both broke record for 25m fly held by Ruth Preston since 2005 (18.72 – Abby swam 18.45, Molly swam 18.39); Bank of Scotland Cup Boys 11 years – Hugh Glen; Intermediate shield Girls 12 years – Alex Elliott; Iona Shop Cup boys 12 years – Kai MacKechnie \* Kai broke 25m fly

record held by Calum MacFarlane since 2005 (16.84 – Kai swam 15.82) \* Kai broke 50m Backstroke record held by Calum MacFarlane since 2005 (40.60 – Kai swam 35.19 \* Kai broke 50m Free record held by Calum MacFarlane since 2005 (34.37 – Kai swam 31.72); Gateway Cup – Tayler Robinson; Hannahs Shield – Ewan Dowd; Hunter Cup – Callum MacInnes; Forteith Cup – Edie Elliott

Coates Senior Cup – Sam Coates; MacKechnie Senior Cup – Ella MacKechnie Beaver Timber Shields – Sam and Ella.

The Otters thank the 30 volunteers who helped out on the day along with Atlantis Community Leisure for hosting the event and being so supportive and helpful throughout the year.

Training re-starts for the Otters on Thursday January 9.

## Continued from page 51

Rory MacLennan was the Inverness U17s top performer and Iain Hunter was given the U14 award.

## Lovat Cup

Arrangements for the 2020 Lovat Cup clash between Lovat and Beaulieu have been confirmed.

Lovat will have home advantage as the annual clash takes place at Balgate on Thursday January 2, throw-up 1pm.

Lovat are holders having beaten their rivals 3-1 at Braeview Park in early January.

## Kingussie set for busy 2020

It was quite a season for Kingussie as first team manager John Gibson led the side to a Mowi Premiership and Artemis Macaulay Cup double.

The signs are 2020 could be just as eventful and there was a boost for the club on the pitch following the club's annual general meeting with



George Fraser, chief executive of Tulloch Homes, with Camanachd Association president Keith Loades. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

John Gibson confirmed as manager for next term, whilst off the park, the Camanachd Association has confirmed that next season's Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final will take place at the Dell, Kingussie, on Saturday

September 19. This will be the first time the Dell has hosted the final since 1999 when Kingussie defeated Oban Camanachd 3-0.

Camanachd Association chief executive officer Derek Keir said: 'The two games

that took place in September this year highlighted just how important the host club is in delivering a successful Camanachd Cup final.

'Fort William did an incredible job hosting the final and from our initial discussions

with Kingussie Camanachd Club, I am excited for what is in store in 2020.

'Our sponsors, Tulloch Homes, were incredibly supportive in this year's rescheduled final and are equally as excited at the prospect of 2020 in Kingussie.

'The host club plays a key role in the delivery of the Camanachd Cup and we are delighted the 2020 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup will take place on one of the finest playing surfaces in shinty.'

### Proud

Russell Jones, president of Kingussie Camanachd Club, said: 'Kingussie has a long and proud association with shinty and our town hosted the first meeting of club representatives from all over Scotland in 1893, a meeting from which the Camanachd Association was born.

'The sport is as strong and as important to the people of Kingussie and surrounding area now as it was then and we are all delighted that on Saturday September 19 2020, we can once again welcome the shinty community to our town for the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final.'

Tickets for the 2020 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final are now on sale.

This year there are exclusive offers available providing more of a reason than ever to witness what promises to be an epic encounter.

The 2020 final is set to be one of the biggest and best yet in the event's 124-year history with live traditional music, entertainment and a dedicated Kids Zone adding to the festival feel.

Gates will open at 10am on the day with shinty's rising stars contesting the U14 MacMaster Cup Final before the main event in the afternoon.

The Camanachd Cup Final attracts thousands of spectators on the day and is broadcast live by BBC Scotland across television, radio and online platforms.

Tickets can be bought online at [www.shinty.com](http://www.shinty.com) and via your local club. Early-bird prices are £10 for adults, £8 for concessions and under 12s go free.

Additionally, when you buy a ticket through your local shinty club, they will receive 25 per cent of the fee.

## Martial arts

IAIN RODGER

editor@obantimes.co.uk

Oban BJJ travelled to Scotstoun stadium with a small team of mostly first time competitors to the last Brazilian jiu-jitsu competition of 2019. The Scottish open had more than 350 competitors, all hoping to represent their clubs with honour and bring home hard-fought medals.

Young Andrew Ritchie was first up and after a tenacious performance was beaten by a more accomplished opponent. This was a brave showing after only re-joining the club 10 days before the fight.

Drew MacCallum showed big improvements in his fitness and Brazilian jiu-jitsu

and had the honour of being beaten by the eventual winner in his weight category and the absolute division.

Enjoying his competition debut, Colin Maxwell fought in one of the biggest divisions of the tournament. Fighting an incredible six times, he won four matches and finished one of his wins with a highly technical arm bar. In a field of more than 20, Colin finished a highly respectable fourth.

Fellow rookie James Wigley from Mull also enjoyed a great first competition. Having trained only for a few months, he fought back from behind to get a much deserved win, showing composure and heart against opponents with much more competitive experience.

Despite badly bruised ribs, Niall Robertson still managed to finish two opponents with choke holds to claim a hard-fought fourth place. Callum Galbraith won silver. A fantastic performance by someone who lost 9kgs to get into the heavyweight division. A fantastic testament to Callum's willpower and commitment to the sport.

Paul 'lobster hands' McGhee, after having to wait

# Brazilian Jiu Jitsu



Oban JJ members who took part in the Scottish Open at Scotstoun stadium.



Paul McGhee, left, and Calum Galbraith with coach 'Coogie' Potter.

all day for his fight, shocked everyone - including himself - when he won gold with one of the best finishes of the competition.

With a dramatic sweep, he sent his opponent flying over his head and finished him with a picture perfect cross

choke. The match was over in under 30 seconds.

Another fantastic tournament for one of the smallest clubs in the event. Oban can be proud of finishing 14th in a field of 45 teams.

Coach Coogie Potter said: 'Come and join our beginners

### BRAZILLIAN JIU JITSU

introduction to BJJ. We are a very friendly bunch and new members are welcome.'

For more information contact Coogie Potter on coogiepots@gmail.com

# Muddy good festive fun at Glencruitten

Saturday's much anticipated league match against Helensburgh may have been cancelled - Helensburgh couldn't raise a team - but it didn't take away from the festive feel good factor at Glencruitten.

Instead, Oban Lorne RFC

arranged a Bulls v Sharks challenge match, replicating the series currently played by pupils at Oban High School, captained by brothers Lorne and Calum MacLachlan.

The Sharks took the honours in the inter-club match with a last gasp try from Ferg

### RUGBY

McCoss sealing a 36-29 victory after being 29-10 down.

Oban Lorne's next league match takes place on Saturday January 11 when they travel to Ayrshire to face Cumnock RFC.



The Bulls and Sharks before Saturday's game. Photographs: Stephen Lawson.



Conditions weren't ideal.



A combination of Ewan Shearer and David Cameron try to stop this Calum MacLachlan charge.

OT

## SQUASH



The Oban Ladies squash team that travelled to Dunblane.

## Ladies lose out, but only just

Oban Ladies squash team travelled to Dunblane recently for their final competition of 2019.

The Oban team consisted of a mix of experienced and relatively new players to the game while Dunblane, who compete in the Central Scotland League, had some talented juniors as well as some experienced players in their line-up.

The competition was closely fought with Dunblane winning by a single game.

There was some great squash on show with notable performances from Claire MacQueen and Nicola Morgan and the team wish to thank coach Colin MacNiven for his continued support.

It has been a successful year for the team which was only formed in January. The ladies will be back in action early in the new year for the Scotstoun Open.

## FOOTBALL

## McMorran set to resign as Fort William FC manager

The Claggan Park faithful were rocked this week with news that Fort William FC manager Russell McMorran intends resigning from the role.

McMorran's last game in charge will be the away game to Wick Academy on January 4, after which he will concentrate on his recovery from his well-documented battle with PTSD.

In a statement issued yesterday (Wednesday), club chairman Peter Murphy said McMorran has had a massive impact on the team during his year in charge.

'Russell's impact on the club cannot be overstated. He joined the club just over a year ago as secretary and stepped up to take on the manager's role at the start of this year,' said Murphy.

'Russell has contributed hugely to putting a competitive Fort William team on the park. McMorran told the Oban Times this week it had been a great honour and pleasure to have taken control of the team, firstly at the end of last season on an interim basis and then to have been



Russell McMorran.

appointed manager for this season.

'My struggle with PTSD is well-documented and something that I am open about, which hopefully raises the awareness of the illness for people who are suffering like myself and hopefully to give others an understanding of the effects it has on people.

'I find my self in a position now where my health is in a better place and as such I have taken the decision to resign from my position in order that I can now concentrate my recovery around my family, especially at this time of the year.

'This decision has not been taken lightly, but it is something that I felt was the right time and thing to do.'

# Saints half-term r

With Oban Saints currently enjoying a four-week festive break, Derek Black takes a look back at the season so far beginning with the first six league fixtures.

## Saturday August 10 Craigneuk 0, Oban Saints 1

After a disastrous pre-season where every friendly match had to be cancelled due to their scheduled opponents having to withdraw, Oban Saints made their eagerly awaited Central Scottish Amateur Football League debut on August 10.

Craig MacEwan bagged the honour of scoring Saints first goal in their new league set-up while Paul Carmichael has the slightly less prestigious distinction of picking up the first red card in a tight Division 1B encounter with Craigneuk.

Saints got their noses in front five minutes before the interval from a free-kick on the edge of the Craigneuk box after a promising Matthew Kelly run had been brought to a premature end by Greig Williams. The home defence couldn't deal with Lewis Cameron's delivery and Craig MacEwan pounced on the loose ball to open Saints Central Scottish Amateur Football League account.

A straight ball over the top saw Taylor Lawrence winning the foot race with Carmichael and, with Graham Douglas well off his line, the big centre half elected to tug back the Craigneuk striker giving Mr Murdoch an easy decision to make.

The Saints defence, well marshalled throughout by skipper Dene Cassells, survived what remained of the Craigneuk onslaught to get their Central Scottish Amateur Football League Division 1B campaign off to a hard-fought winning start.

## Saturday 17 August Oban Saints 2, Lesmahagow 1

Goals early in each half gave Oban Saints the edge over visitors Lesmahagow when the D&K Lafferty Contractors sponsored side made their first competitive home appearance of the season.

In an evenly contested encounter, strikes from David Beaton and Lewis Cameron had Saints two goals to the good before a 59th minute reply from James McGill set up a nervy closing third of the match for the Glencruitten faithful who were relieved to see their favourites cling on to claim the points. Getting

the first glimpse of their favourites in Central Scottish Amateur Football League action the Glencruitten faithful didn't have too long to wait to savour the first home goal of the season when David Beaton's second-minute diagonal run from the left was expertly picked out by Craig MacEwan. Beaton held off the attentions of Dean McLean and, with the outside of his right boot, lifted the ball over the advancing keeper Christopher Shaw and into the net to give Saints an early lead.

Lesmahagow hit the woodwork just before the half-time whistle when the unmarked James McCrorie headed a James McGill cross onto the inside of Graham Douglas's left hand post and back into the arms of the grateful keeper.

Saints started the second half in the same fashion as the first with a goal after two minutes. Lewis Cameron's free-kick rolled up to the edge of the box was taken towards the byeline by Craig MacEwan. There was no way through for MacEwan but his lay-off to David Beaton was cut back to Lewis Cameron on the edge of the box whose low shot through a sea of legs deceived Christopher Shaw and nestled in the bottom corner.

## Saints started off their new campaign in the Central Scottish AFL with a narrow win at Craigneuk

Referee John Quinn allowed a suspiciously offside James McGinn to continue his 59th minute run on the right with Dene Cassells eventually getting back to concede a corner kick. From Johnny Logan's delivery the Saints defence left McGinn and Robbie Kilpatrick completely unmarked at the back post where McGinn poked the ball home from five yards out.

The visitors stepped up their aerial bombardment for the closing stages but the Saints rearguard stood firm under pressure protecting keeper Graham Douglas well.

## Saturday 24 August Oban Saints 9 Clydebank 0

After labouring somewhat in their first two Central Scottish Amateur Football League Division 1B fixtures,



Oban Saints have got off to a good start in the Central Scottish AFL with 11 wins from 11 games and have a home fixture against Renfrew Town on Saturday January 11 for a place in the last 16 of the Scottish Amateur Cup.

Saints finally clicked into gear against Clydebank AFC at Glencruitten.

Keeping up a high tempo from the first whistle, Saints gave their goal difference a substantial boost rattling in nine goals without reply in a polished all round performance which kept the Glencruitten faithful richly entertained throughout the ninety minutes.

The early Saints pressure paid off when Lewis Cameron slipped Cammy Hill through on goal with the big striker side footing a low finish into the net past the advancing Andrew Cameron.

After hooking a 20-yard effort over the crossbar, David Beaton doubled Saints advantage in the 14th minute reacting quickly to tuck away the loose ball after a Craig MacEwan shot had been blocked by Darren Murray.

Cammy Hill outpaced the Bankies defence to reach a twenty second minute Kerr Newbigging flick-on and take Saints goal tally to three. Hill kept his composure to round the exposed Andrew Cameron before tapping home a composed left foot finish from close range.

A mistimed Ian Huggan sliding challenge on Cammy Hill inside the Bankies box gave referee Tom Cavanagh an easy decision to make in awarding Saints a 38th minute penalty kick. Andrew Cameron got down well to his left to push away Lewis Cameron's spot kick and was quickly up on his feet to save Cameron's second effort on the rebound and complete an excellent double save.

A 42nd minute driving run through the inside left channel from Craig MacEwan had the Bankies defence on

the back foot. MacEwan's pass inside found Cammy Hill who in turn picked out Lewis Cameron for a shot on goal. Cameron's effort was blocked and sent wide of target however Matty Kelly kept the move alive and cut the ball back from the left for Craig MacEwan to lift over Andrew Cameron for Saints fourth goal.

A Ruaridh Horne run had the Bankie's defence backpedalling and his cross to the back post picked out Craig MacEwan. MacEwan's Bergkampesque exquisite first touch to control Horne's cross took him away from the advancing Andrew Cameron and opened up the space for him to roll the ball into the empty net for a wonderful goal that will linger long in the memories of the Glencruitten faithful.

Last season's top scorer Lewis Cameron made up for his earlier penalty miss notching Saints sixth goal on the half hour mark.

Making a return after a long absence was co-manager Donald Campbell who has been out of action since being stretchered off during last season's West of Scotland Cup semi-final. Campbell took Cammy Hill's place up front for the final 25 minutes.

James Ford curled a left foot effort wide of Andrew Cameron's right hand post before Donald Campbell added a seventh goal in the eightieth minute.

Ross Maitland then latched onto an 82nd minute Donald Campbell through ball to slam home goal number eight. Maitland then thumped home another excellent strike taking Saints goal tally to nine in the 87th minute.

# Report – part one



## Saturday 31 August Stedfast K 1 Oban Saints 4

Saints continued their winning start to the Central Scottish Amateur Football League campaign with a 4-1 away victory against Stedfast K at Scotstoun Sports Campus.

A first minute own goal from Stedfast full back Robert McIntyre gave Saints an advantage which they never looked back from before further strikes from Matty Kelly, Craig MacEwan and James Ford consolidated Saints position at the top of the fledgling Division 1B table.

The match got off to the best possible start for Saints when Stedfast fullback Robert McIntyre headed past his own keeper inside the first minute.

Saints doubled their advantage after 20 minutes from a patient build-up involving Craig MacEwan, Ross Maitland and Matt Rippon. Getting forward to support the attack, Matty Kelly picked up Rippon's lay off and took full advantage of the space created to clip the ball from the edge of the Stedfast box away from the despairing right hand of George Riddick and into the bottom corner of the net.

Matty Kelly was upended by William Plommer wide on the Saints left in the 29th minute giving Ross Maitland a chance to show his prowess with the dead ball. Maitland didn't disappoint and sent an excellent ball to the near post which was met perfectly on the run by Craig MacEwan who bulleted a header into the roof of the net to further stretch Saints advantage.

Stedfast Skipper James Harvey blazed a 32 yard free-kick high over the crossbar before top scorer Grant Cathro pulled one back for the home side.



From the restart Saints worked the ball up the left wing where a sensational jinking run into the box by James Ford was rewarded when his dinked finish evaded a last gasp attempted goal-line clearance to nestle in the back of the net and restore Saints three goal cushion.

## Saturday 7 September Bridgewater 0, Oban Saints 3

Saints made it five wins out of five to extend their lead at the top of the league table to five points but it was far from a five star performance at the Palace of Art as the D&K Lafferty sponsored side struggled to overcome determined hosts Bridgewater.

After surviving a couple of early scares a successfully converted Matt Rippon penalty kick gave Saints a first half lead with second half

## The Oban side sit proudly at the top of the league with a 100 per cent record with 11 wins from 11 games

strikes from Craig MacEwan and David Beaton securing the points with a slightly flattering scoreline.

The deadlock was broken in the 29th minute when Saints profited from a mix-up in the home defence. David Beaton pounced on a stray back pass and was sent sprawling in the box by Bridgewater keeper Graeme Macrae. Matt Rippon

### Central Scottish AFL - Division 1B

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Oban Saints	11	11	0	0	39	5	33
2 Blantyre RGM	9	5	2	2	20	15	17
3 Stedfast K	11	5	1	5	18	22	16
4 Lesmahagow	8	4	1	3	24	10	13
5 Cambusnethan Talbot	10	3	4	3	15	17	13
6 Bridgewater	7	4	0	3	14	10	12
7 Garrowhill Thistle	9	3	2	4	16	21	11
8 Clydebank	11	2	2	7	14	30	8
9 Craigneurk	10	0	0	10	3	33	0

assumed responsibility for the spot kick and sent Macrae in the wrong direction to give Saints the lead.

Attacking the pavilion end Saints made a better start to the second half with Matty Kelly hooking a right wing James Ford cross over the crossbar.

Saints Management duo Donald Campbell and Willie Gemmell made an early change replacing goalscorer Matt Rippon with Lewis Cameron in the 52nd minute.

Cameron's introduction paid instant dividends when he retrieved a David Beaton left wing cross which central defender Ross Gemmell had helped on it's way. Cameron picked out Craig MacEwan in the middle with a low cross which the Saints leading scorer gleefully tucked away from close range.

Saints made the points secure with 20 minutes remaining when Matty Kelly's driving run and cut back from just short of the bye-line was met by David Beaton sliding in at the near post to divert the ball past Graeme Macrae and into the far corner of the net to make the final score 3-0.

## Saturday 14 September Oban Saints 4, Cambusnethan Talbot 0

A hat-trick from Lewis Cameron and a further strike from leading goal scorer Craig MacEwan helped maintain Oban Saints 100% record at the top of the Central Scottish Amateur Football League Division 1B at a rain soaked Glencruitten.

Resplendent in their new grey and black strips, kindly supplied by principal sponsors D&K Lafferty Contractors, Saints were made to work hard for the points against a battling Cambusnethan Talbot side still in search of their first league victory of the season.

Prior to kick-off Referee Kevin O'Neill led both sets of players and officials in a silence of remembrance for former Saints player and manager Henrik Madej who sadly passed away during

### FOOTBALL

the week. The deadlock was broken in the 20th minute when Lewis Cameron regained the scoring touch from the penalty spot which had recently deserted him. Cammy Hill's galloping run up the right touchline found David Beaton inside the box where the diminutive wide man had the legs whipped away from him giving Referee Kevin O'Neil an easy decision to make.

A 67th minute substitution paid instant dividends for the home side. David Beaton was withdrawn in favour of Donald Campbell who linked up with Lewis Cameron to feed Craig MacEwan on the left. MacEwan's cross evaded keeper David Thomson who would have been impressed with the agility shown by Paul Costello to fingertip Cammy Hill's net bound cushioned volley over the crossbar.

Less impressed with Costello's innovative intervention was Referee O'Neil who sent the big defender packing.

Lewis Cameron made no mistake with his second penalty kick of the afternoon to double Saints lead.

More inventive work from Donald Campbell and Lewis Cameron saw Cameron unselfishly pick out the supporting run of Craig MacEwan who calmly slotted the ball past the hopelessly exposed Cambusnethan keeper to put the game well beyond the reach of the ten men.

Lewis Cameron missed the chance to seal his hat-trick in the seventy fifth minute heading a cross from Central Scottish Amateur Football League Select colleague Matty Kelly wide of target however the Saints talisman did eventually complete his hat-trick and rounding off the scoring in the 84th minute slotting home from the corner of the six yard box after being sent through by young Gavin Forgiveve.

Next week Derek Black will take a look at Saints cup exploits.



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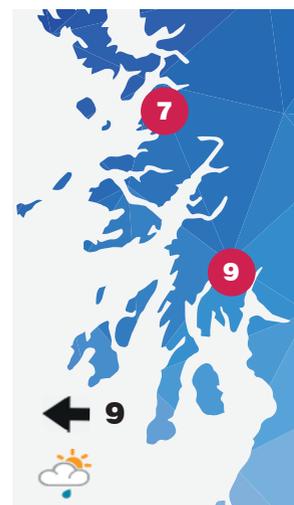


### WEATHER

**Thursday**  
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze  
Temperatures  
7°C to 9°C.

**Friday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
6°C to 9°C.

**Weekend Outlook**  
**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze  
**Sunday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
5°C to 8°C.



### TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 12, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	04.49	1.3	10.53	3.4
<b>Thur</b>	17.58	1.6	23.53	3.0
<b>Fri</b>	05.58	1.4	12.27	3.4
	19.15	1.6	**.**	**
<b>Sat</b>	01.34	3.1	07.10	1.4
	13.55	3.4	20.24	1.5
<b>Sun</b>	02.40	3.3	08.19	1.3
	14.56	3.6	21.22	1.4
<b>Mon</b>	03.30	3.5	09.22	1.2
	15.46	3.7	22.10	1.2
<b>Tues</b>	04.12	3.7	10.17	1.1
	16.28	3.8	22.53	1.1
<b>Wed</b>	04.51	3.9	11.07	1.0
	17.07	3.9	23.33	1.1

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

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

### Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

**Chain, shackles and buoys all available to purchase.**

Saints half-term report – part one

McMorran set to resign as Fort William FC manager

# Oban Lorne enter entente cordiale with USC Terrasson

A duo of delegates from Oban Lorne RFC crossed the Channel recently in the interest of building club relations overseas.

Club secretary Murray Hamilton and Allan Wright, Active School's development officer, travelled to the

**The clubs hope the partnership will be a long-term one and that the relationship between the two will grow and grow for years to come**

Dordogne region of France to hook up with players and officials from USC Terrasson and to toast (literally) a twinning arrangement between the two outfits.

The initiative came about

when Terrason vice-president Benoit Pensivey visited Oban as part of a pre-World Cup documentary series, which featured clubs from Oban, Ivory Coast, Fiji and France and realised there were many similarities between the two clubs.

Now the clubs are looking to strengthen the partnership with regular tours for both high school and senior teams.

Speaking about the recent visit, Hamilton said: 'We were a bit apprehensive at first as we didn't know what to expect when we went over there but as it turned out they were just trying to do what we have already been doing at Oban Lorne with an emphasis on rejuvenating rugby in their town.'

'When they came here they really liked our rugby culture and the connection we have between the high school and the club. They want to use that as a model as good practice and replicate it across there.'



The Oban Lorne RFC delegates join their hosts on the stage at USC Terrasson.

Wright added: 'We are really excited to see where we can take this.'

'We have had close relationships with clubs in the past but this has kind of died away in the past 10 years. There is a new generation of players coming through now who have never experienced touring and it would be great to get something going again.'

'The weekend we were across they held a reunion dinner at which there were many former club players, including ex-internationals and

the emphasis was not only on how good it was but how good it could become, a sentiment we share at Oban Lorne.'

The clubs are hoping the partnership will be a long-term one and that the relationship between the two will grow and grow for years to come.

Joining the conversation from France, Pensivey added: 'Part of our ongoing development project is to send young players overseas to play rugby so this partnership is very important to us.'

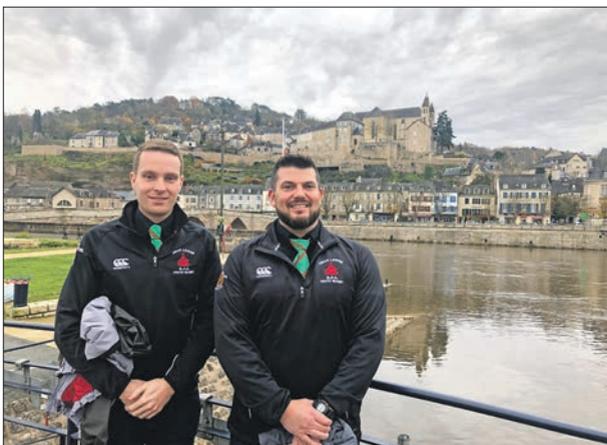
'When we were over there making the documentary we loved the people in Oban and were made so welcome. I knew that there were good people there and that the link between the school and the club was something we should be looking at.'

'It wasn't just about going there, watching some rugby and leaving.'

'It was about the bonds we created, and hopefully those bonds will remain and help both clubs in their future development.'

## RUGBY

'We also knew that however much money we invested in this partnership would be returned when they visit as they would drink twice that amount and we would have a return on our investment!' he joked.



Oban Lorne RFC's Allan Wright and Murray Hamilton in Terrasson.



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## & OBAN TIMES

No 8490

Thursday 19 December, 2019

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# Smelter estate report will answer land questions

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A report being drawn up by Lochaber smelter owner GFG Alliance will answer many of the outstanding questions and concerns surrounding plans for the 114,000 acres of estate lands the company acquired when it bought the Fort William aluminium plant.

With last week's shock news that the proposed alloy wheels plant earmarked for a site at the smelter in Fort William could be in doubt, calls are growing for the issue of community land transfer to be back on the table.

GFG Alliance said last week an automotive wheels plant was an option under consideration but, in view of a downturn in UK car production, alternative uses for the smelter's liquid aluminium – such as industrial extrusions or water bottles – were also being considered.

At the time of the 2016 sale of the smelter and its associated estate lands by Rio Tinto Aluminium, there was a bid for the land on the table from

the East Lochaber and Laggan Community Trust.

Although that ultimately proved unsuccessful, the trust welcomed the sale to GFG Alliance because of the prospect of around 400 new jobs being created, existing smelter jobs being safeguarded and future expansion.

But John Hutchison, chair-

**'A community-owned estate remains the only way of securing the land for the community, long term.'**

man of the trust, says given Liberty has expressed doubts about the alloy wheels plant, there are bound to be wider concerns about the viability of the estate lands operations.

'A community-owned estate remains an option and, because of the uncertainty, is the only way of securing the land for the community, long term,' he told us.

'Are people losing confidence in the project locally? If they are, then this is the time to

bring the issue of community land transfer back to the fore.

'The aspiration of the East Lochaber and Laggan Community Trust never threatened power generation, nor the viability of the smelter. The purchase of the two major power stations came with the water rights which would be unaffected by any transfer of land to community groups.

'In return for its financial support, GFG Alliance was required to give a formal undertaking to the Scottish Government to do certain things, one of which was a community land transaction, which is clearly outstanding.'

Asked to respond, GFG Alliance told the Lochaber Times this week: 'We are in the process of drawing together a very wide-ranging report on the estate and associated activities, which should be published by the end of January, and certainly before the end of the first quarter. The subject of land transfers will be in that report and hopefully all the questions about the estate lands will be answered then.'

## Triumphant Blackford



Triumphant Ian Blackford, re-elected as MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber at last week's election, is pictured welcoming the SNP's other 47 MPs to Westminster this week, where he is his party's group leader. Mr Blackford hailed the SNP's landslide result and said 'we will have our referendum' on independence. Full story, page five.



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The young entrepreneurs from Mallaig High School with their stall at the Inverness fair.

## Young Mallaig entrepreneurs set out stall for Christmas

Enterprising pupils from Mallaig High School set out their Christmas stall in Inverness at the weekend.

The Las-e team were taking part in the annual Young Enterprise Christmas trade fair, selling their own luxury handmade scented candles.

The Young Enterprise Scotland Company Programme for Highland and Moray runs in partnership with local schools to encourage young people to experience the challenges of running a business.

Over the course of a year, teams from individual schools learn how to run a successful business by designing and making products, marketing them and managing the financial side of the business.

The scheme is aimed at 15- to 19-year-olds and teams

are supported by teachers, a volunteer business adviser from the local community and an area team.

Linda Thomas, chairwoman of YES Highland and Moray, said: 'Once again our judges were blown away by the creativity and professionalism demonstrated by this year's teams.'

'It is fantastic to have so many teams taking part this year and despite the cold they all kept their smiles and sales pitches going all day.'

'The trade fair is a great way for young people to learn about marketing and try out their selling skills.'

'The quality of the products on sale was outstanding and we're delighted with how far the teams have already come since they started the programme earlier this year.'

# 2050 predictions show Caol at high risk of flood

by Richard Mason  
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

New projections show that all of Caol, Lochyside and parts of Fort William are at high risk of severe flooding by 2050 due to sea levels rising.

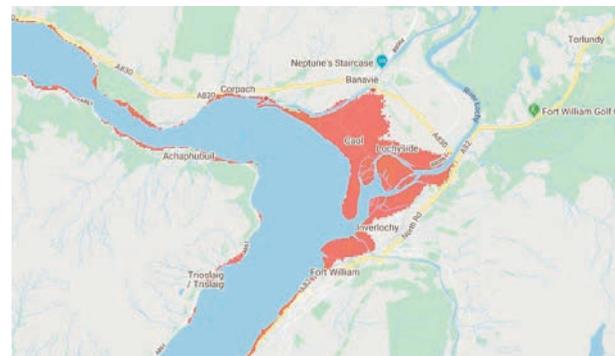
The map produced by Climate Central also shows parts of coastal villages such as Ballachulish, Arisaig and Kinlochleven could be susceptible to increased flooding.

Climate Central is a non-profit news organisation, comprising scientists and science journalists, who analyse and report on climate science.

Where previous predictions showed only the closest streets to the coast in Caol at risk, the new data shows the entire community could be flooded, along with Lochyside and An Aird.

A flood protection scheme from the Highland Council is already scheduled to begin construction in 2020 and will stretch along the coastline of Loch Linnhe and the River Lochy, stopping where the trainline crosses the river.

A council spokesman said: 'The one in 200-year standard of protection is a robust defence and includes an enhanced protection with regard to tidal surge and wave



The parts in red show areas that will be under the high tide line by 2050, but flood defences should prevent complete flooding of the area from happening.

Photograph: Climate Central

into this predicted perilous situation.'

While the council is doing what it can to reach its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2025, this is a global issue.

Kate Willis is a marine biologist and development officer for Lochaber Environmental Group. She said: 'When assessing planning applications in the low lying areas of Fort William, the Highland Council needs to plan for the future and consider the growing impacts that the climate crisis and sea level rises will have on coastal communities.'

Research by Extinction Rebellion activist and former LEG board member Andrew Squire also showed that reducing warming does more than just stop melting, saying: 'As the ocean heats, it expands, taking up more space, and the sea level rises accordingly. Estimates suggest that 50 per cent of current sea level rise is due to this - and, as the heating up continues, so will the expansion.'

'Through our schools we will continue the education of our inhabitants who simply will have to change their habits, if we are not to plunge the world

action from Loch Linnhe as well as a joint probability for combining tidal flood events with flooding from the River Lochy.

'There is also a 300mm freeboard allowance.'

Designers of the protection are prepared for unforeseen circumstances and say the scheme is robust enough.

'The scheme has been designed to be adaptable, in the future,' the spokesman continued, 'to account for sea level rise. The rock armour and embankment have been designed to accommodate space for a future sea wall within the width of the scheme.'

Climate Central told the Lochaber Times that defences are likely to be an effective preventative measure. A spokesman said: 'In fact, our

study found that, worldwide, land now home to more than 100 million is already lower than the high tide line, suggesting that coastal defences are protecting those places and the people living there.'

Councillor Allan Henderson said: 'Some of this will come at a cost and other things will simply be behaviour change. There will be a range of measures at our disposal.'

'The sea defence is one of these and reports such as this are one reason why the Scottish Government has backed Highland Council's proposal to begin to protect Caol, Lochyside and the Blar area.'

'Through our schools we will continue the education of our inhabitants who simply will have to change their habits, if we are not to plunge the world

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# Kilmonivaig fire collapses roof of derelict church

In the early hours of last Wednesday morning (December 11), fire crews were called to a derelict church just outside Spean Bridge.

Firefighters tackled the well-developed blaze for more than six hours at the Kilmonivaig Free Church building, which has been lying empty for almost 17 years.

Constructed in 1860, the congregation dwindled to the point of the building being put up for sale in 2003. There has been interest to use the land for other purposes, but it has never been bought.

John Fotheringham is treasurer of the nearby Kilmonivaig Parish Church, one of the three remaining churches in the area. He said: 'The church fell into disrepair a number of years ago and when I have passed it before nothing has been done to improve the quality of the building.'

'Recently I saw that someone had horses grazing around the land, but there is generally very little activity.



The church has been abandoned for 17 years.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

There have been plans previously to construct homes on the site, but nothing has come to fruition.'

A spokesman for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service said: 'We were alerted at 6.07am on Wednesday December 11 to reports of a fire within a derelict church building in Kilmonivaig.'

'Operations control mobilised three appliances to the scene and firefighters extinguished the fire. Crews

left after ensuring the area was made safe.'

Police were also called to the scene and a cordon was placed around the area as the fire crews worked to control the fire.

A spokesperson for the police said: 'Police were called around 6am on to a report of a fire at a derelict church outside Spean Bridge. Officers attended and are assisting SFRS as required.'

The cause is not yet known.

# BEAR says it will probe road blockage

Trunk roads operator BEAR Scotland says it will carry out further investigations into a blocked culvert alongside the A830 in Corpach, after it overflowed during recent rain storms sending water into people's gardens.

At Kilmallie Community Council on Monday night, resident and businessman Norman Clark described how he and other residents tackled the overflowing drain on the roadside near the Treasures of the Earth visitor attraction by themselves.

'We checked where the culvert comes out on the other side of the road and there was not a drop of water coming through, so we have no idea where any of the water that was managing to go down

it was going,' said Mr Clark. 'But there was a lot just bubbling up and flowing down the road into gardens,' he told the meeting.

'I would think the culvert is blocked somewhere between Treasures of the Earth and on the other side near the railway line. It was a huge amount of water.'

Mr Clark described how he and others had plunged their arms down into the culvert almost to shoulder depth in an effort to scrape out whatever was clogging it.

'There was a lot of bark chippings that must've been washed down it.'

And he described how a van with workmen had pulled up to the culvert the residents had already been clearing, took a

quick look and drove off. 'They were totally ineffective,' he added.

Asked to comment, a spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'Our teams responded to a blocked culvert on the A830 last week to help alleviate flooding on the route during a period of severe rainfall. Teams removed debris from the grill to help water drain away from the road.'

'We've arranged for further investigations to take place at the culvert to identify if there are any additional blockages in this section of the drainage system and will carry out further work if required.'

'In the meantime, our teams will continue to monitor the culvert and address any flooding issues.'



## St Bride's youngsters stage annual Christmas concert and Nativity

For the 14th consecutive year, St Bride's Primary School held its Christmas concert and Nativity play with two outstanding performances in Nether Lochaber Parish Church, Onich, last week.

After a bible reading and Sir John Betjeman's poem Christmas, music teacher Sandra Hollingdale led a 'strings' musical group of nine children playing the carol Little Donkey.

This was followed by a duet by 11-year-old Ramsay Stubbs and teacher Ms Hollingdale playing Prelude and Gavotte by Shostakovich. This complex



piece of music was played to a professional standard and acknowledged with much applause.

This year's Nativity play

was called Stargazer, the narrative being interspersed with nine lively songs which the children sang with great verve and enthusiasm.

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## WHAT'S ON

Nevis Hillwalking Club's final hikes of 2019 will be Fraochaidh and two Graham tops – Duror on Sunday December 22 and Glas-charn, Glenfinnan, on Saturday December 28. The first of the new year will be Beinn Mheadhoin – Kingairloch on Sunday January 5. More information can be found on the club's Facebook page, through [www.nevishillwalking.club](http://www.nevishillwalking.club) or by calling 01397 701975.

The service of distribution of the Bethlehem Peace Light will take place on Saturday December 21, starting at 12.30pm. The Reverend Richard Baxter will conduct the service with the dress code being uniform and decoration. RSVP to Malcolm Dear by email to [KilmallieGSL@gmail.com](mailto:KilmallieGSL@gmail.com). Candles can be pre-ordered by email.

Kilmallie Singers' Christmas Concert will be in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Parish Church on Saturday December 21 from 7.30pm. Tickets can be bought on the day.

# Bid to stem tourism tide

Glencoe and Glen Etive residents often breathe a sigh of relief in November at the end of the tourist season, but the community council wants that to change through managing the effects visitor numbers cause, writes Richard Mason.

An excessive volume of cars cause congestion in the single track road leading to Glen Etive and the busy A82 in Glen Coe. Chairwoman of Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council Victoria Sutherland wants to work with the National Trust for Scotland, a large landowner in the area, to apply for infrastructure funding.

She said: 'There is a plot of land at the junction that joins the road to Kinlochleven and the A82 that we think would be perfect for a car park. Ever increasing numbers of tourists are coming to the area

and a lot cannot find space to stop in the village.

'This is a proposition at the moment and nothing is set in stone, but it would take pressure off the car parks in the glen.'

Mrs Sutherland suggested people could hire bikes and cycle to Glen Coe, allowing them to enjoy what the village has to offer – from local lunch spots to the Folk Museum – and not have to worry about getting out of the car parks on the A82.

Another suggestion is to put up passing place signs on the road to Glen Etive that also say 'no parking'.

It wants to apply to the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund but would first have to apply to Highland Council.

A council spokesman said: 'For the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, either

local authorities or National Park authorities act as the applicant to the fund but decisions on which projects are successful are taken by an assessment panel set up by the Scottish Government.

'The level of grant available varies from £70,000 to £375,000 depending on the detail and scale of the project, and the amount of match funding being provided by the applicant. As Glencoe is undoubtedly one of the best known destinations in Highland and could benefit from further investment in tourism infrastructure, the council would be happy to work with the community council or other local partners on making an application to the fund.'

The group has until January 22 to apply and is working to get views from everyone who might be affected.



Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP and SNP Leader at Westminster, Ian B 47 MPs in London on Monday.

## Shop pilots e-bike project

January 2020 will not only bring a new decade but a HITRANS pilot for e-bikes in and around Fort William.

The pilot scheme is being run in conjunction Inverlochy-based Nevis Cycles to offer residents the chance to hire e-bikes to improve fitness, mobility and ability to get around.

There will be six bikes available at the Nevis Cycles shop. The e-bikes take some of the strain off cycling.

Highland councillor Allan Henderson, chairman of HITRANS, said: 'It's so great to see HITRANS partnering with businesses to deliver these pilot projects that will hopefully encourage more people to try out an e-bike and potentially opt for a more sustainable way to move around in future.'

'I'm excited to take an e-bike out for a try. Cycling is one of our most effective, healthy and environmentally friendly forms of transport and we work closely with many partners to encourage active travel in our area and hopefully these e-bikes can.'

Emma Holgate, director of Nevis Cycles, said: 'We have been happy to volunteer to get involved in this research project which seeks to in-



The bikes are available at Nevis Cycles in Inverlochy. Left to right: Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS; Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, HITRANS; and Andy Slater, Nevis Cycles store manager. Photograph: JP Peebles, Abrightside Photography

crease local access to e-bikes. We are keen to get this project started and start collecting people's views on e-bikes after they have had a chance to hire them as part of this project.'

HITRANS has also produced an active travel map for Fort William and Lochaber. It highlights recommended on and off-road routes, transport hubs, bike shop/hire locations and cycle parking.

HITRANS Partnership Manager Frank Roach said: 'Transport accounts for 27 per cent of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions,

so choosing to walk or cycle instead of taking the car for journeys under five miles has a positive impact on carbon emissions, air quality and traffic movements, making our streets more liveable. The Active Travel Map makes it easier for people to make different choices about how they get around and offers ideas for where to take an e-bike for a trial.'

The map is available from Off Beat Bikes, Nevis Cycles, the Lochaber Times, other locations and through the HITRANS website.

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# Victorious Blackford: 'We will have our referendum'



Blackford, greets the party's other

Newly-returned MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber Ian Blackford has warned Prime Minister Boris Johnson Scotland will have a referendum after the SNP won 48 of the country's 59 Westminster seats at last week's General Election, writes Mark Entwistle.

Speaking on Friday morning, after being declared constituency winner at the count in Inverness, Mr Blackford addressed cheering SNP supporters.

'We will be demanding democracy takes place. We are not prepared to sit back and see Scotland taken out of the EU against its will,' he said from the podium after thanking everyone who voted for him. We're not prepared to see the devastation to our communities and the loss of jobs or the loss of rights we have as EU citizens. We will have our referendum and I ask all people throughout

Scotland to engage with us in a debate about the vision and values we have. This election has been about saving Scotland – and we will save Scotland. We will have that referendum. Scotland will become an independent member of the EU.'

Nearly 40,000 people, approximately three-quarters of those eligible to vote, went to polling stations across the constituency. Mr Blackford was returned with 19,263 votes out of a total ballot cast of 39,949 votes – an increased majority of 23.7 per cent. The SNP got 48.3 per cent of the vote share.

The full results, declared by Donna Manson, Returning Officer, were:

Gavin BERKENHEGER – Scottish Conservative and Unionist – 6,900 votes; an BLACKFORD – Scottish National Party (SNP) – 19,263 votes; Donald MacLeod BOYD – Scottish

Christian Party 'Proclaiming Christ's Lordship' – 460 votes; Kate BROWNLIE – Brexit Party – 710 votes; John Robert ERSKINE – Scottish Labour Party – 2,448 votes; Craig Thomas Alexander HARROW – Scottish Liberal Democrats – 9,820 votes; Richard Crewe LUCAS – Scottish Family Party: Putting Families First – 268 votes.

A total of 80 ballot papers were rejected.

## Deposits

Three of the seven candidates, Katie Brownlie (Brexit Party), Donald Boyd (Christian Party) and Richard Lucas (Scottish Family Party), lost their £500 deposits after failing to win five per cent of the vote.

Gathering with the SNP's 47 other newly-elected Westminster MPs outside the House of Commons on Monday, Mr Blackford, SNP Leader at Westminster, said

Scotland's right to choose its own future must be respected.

'We stood on a clear and unequivocal platform of rejecting Brexit and giving the people of Scotland a choice over their future – ensuring Scotland's future is in Scotland's hands.

'Having won 80 per cent of the seats in Scotland, that mandate to hold a referendum on Scotland's future is indisputable and must be respected by all democrats.

'I am hugely grateful to the people of Scotland who have put their trust in the SNP. We will work every day to repay that trust and stand up for the whole of Scotland.

'The Tories can rage against democracy but, have no doubt, Scotland will have the choice to become an independent country and protect our place at the heart of Europe so we can get on with building a better future

as a fairer, greener, prosperous and equal country.' In the Western Isles, the SNP's Angus Brendan MacNeil was returned to serve as the MP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar for an historic fifth term.

The SNP took more than 45 per cent of the vote with Labour and the Conservatives left to battle it out for second place finish with 28 per cent and 22 per cent of the vote share respectively.

The Liberal Democrat candidate Neil Mitchison received only four per cent.

A total of 21,106 people were eligible to vote with total votes cast numbering 14,542 on a 68.90 per cent turn out.

After being declared the winner, Mr MacNeill tweeted: 'England and Scotland have spoken and we are clearly two different countries. Pressure next on Scot Lab and Scot Lib – do they support five years of Boris or Scottish independence?'



Cheeky wee elves like this one are hiding all over the place.

## Santa's plea for youngsters to find mischievous elves

In recent years, Santa Claus has taken to sending elves into some houses to help him prepare for Christmas Day, writes Kirsteen Bell.

The elves tend to be mischievous, making snow angels in flour, sledging down stairs on candy canes and drawing silly faces on oranges.

This year, however, elves in the Lochaber area have been coming out of their houses to spread the Christmas mischief.

Some elves have been hiding clues around shops and buildings in Caol and Corpach for a Christmas scavenger hunt to help planet Earth.

Lochaber Countryside

Rangers spotted what the elves were up to and have created a special answer sheet for children to find all the clues.

Once children have found all the clues and discovered fun facts about looking after the Earth – because of course Santa and the Elves have a lot of ground to cover – they can hand them in to Caol library for a chance to win a prize.

Answer forms are available from the Bake'n'Roll café in Caol, Caol Library and Corpach Co-op.

The elves have not stopped there though. West Highland Museum has also heard the elves will be targeting them next.

The museum elves have escaped and are hiding all over the museum.

Staff are having trouble finding them so are asking children to come in and help between Monday December 23 and Tuesday December 31. Once all the elves have been found, each child will receive a prize.

Santa Claus told the Lochaber Times: 'The elves are a great help to me at this busy time of year, but they can be quite silly at times in their quest for Christmas fun.

'I would be very grateful to the children of Lochaber if they were to keep an eye out for my elves.'

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LT

# Ex-broadcaster Simon leads adventurous life in Lochaber

by Nic Goddard  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

Our special correspondent on the peninsula, Nic Goddard, catches up with former BBC presenter, Simon Willis, and finds out about his continuing quest for new adventures.

The first time I met Simon Willis was on the Corran ferry when I was heading over in my wetsuit to complete the swim back across in October.

As part of the Highland Open Water Swim team running the event, Simon spent the ferry crossing telling those of us looking nervous at the prospect of the swim ahead about how the swim had been precision-timed to make best use of tides and weather conditions.

More recently, I have attended an event where Simon spoke about tides in far more depth. Using props of different sized balls to represent



the moon and the earth to demonstrate what causes high and low, spring and neap tides along with a couple of his own beautifully put together films, he captivated a room full of people – of mixed ages and differing previous levels of understanding of the subject.

I interviewed Simon in his home in Strontian to find out more about this one-time

BBC TV presenter who has travelled the world pursuing extreme sports and adventures but is now settled here on the peninsula with his wife and dog, and continues to find adventures right here.

With a career which began back in the 1980s in front of the camera with his first big story as a TV reporter covering the miners' strikes at Cortonwood Colliery and

**Simon is a passionate open water swimmer.**

presenting on Newsnight Scotland, it is clear that bringing stories to people is Simon's greatest skill.

An epic walk crossing the whole of America in 2002 on the Pacific Crest Trail which spans from Mexico to Canada, resulted in his travel journal becoming a published book. A second book resulted from a sea kayak expedition in 2008.

However, Simon is quick to tell me he doesn't always feel he has much to say. 'The scariest thing I've ever been asked to do is an after dinner speech,' he admits.

'I simply didn't know what to talk about! But if there is something I know about and think others should also

know then I enjoy figuring out the best way to tell them. I've always had an urge to tell stories. It's deeply satisfying when people want to listen.'

And it seems that finding the most interesting stories to tell drives Simon to seek out interesting experiences to have.

A keen cyclist, swimmer, kayaker and hill walker, Simon has previously competed in triathlons and iron man contests although regretfully tells me his knees now prevent him from the running aspect of these extreme sports.

He explained: 'There is always an intrinsic reward to doing extreme things but there is an added motivation to write, take pictures, make films, or tell stories about these adventures.'

Retiring from the BBC and moving up to the Highlands means those stories now

have a more local flavour. Moving into new technology, Simon combines freelance film-making with blogging, podcasting and YouTubeing.

He shares these closer to home adventures on with a wide audience online and on social media. Simon also writes for magazines and has won awards for his travel writing.

Simon has called this part of the country home even while working down in Glasgow for the BBC, though commuting back and forth to find peace here.

He told me simply: 'I live here because it feels like home. I am at peace between mountains and water. I love the fact that there are no Munros here because it means we are not swamped with visitors.'

'It's a stunning but relatively quiet corner of the Highlands.'

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to help them make the most of the space they have,' said Mark, who has 19 years experience in the business.

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Mòd Gold Medal winner and Oban primary school teacher Ciaran MacAonghais, left, wrote the course curriculum.

# 85,000 users in one week for Duolingo Gaelic app

by Kirsteen Bell  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

A free online service has more users learning Scottish Gaelic than the number of people who speak the language in its first week, according to the app's developers.

This will come as no surprise to parents and teachers from Lochaber's Gaelic-medium primary school.

The majority of parents at the school have little or no Gaelic and the app has been welcomed as a huge step forward in their own ability to learn the language along with their children.

Leanne Stoddart is a Gaelic learner whose children attend Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Lochabaer and who now works at the school's playgroup, Croileagan.

## Super basic

She told the Lochaber Times: 'I think it's great. You can select how much time you can dedicate to learning, which for me is the hard part, so you can do as much or as little as you like, just five or 10 minutes a day. It is super basic and has voice clips too, which means anyone can do it.'

The Scottish Gaelic course was launched in the run-up to St Andrew's Day, with nearly 20,000 people signed up ahead of its release. It then accrued more than 65,000 learners in the first five days, developers said.

Colin Watkins, Duolingo's country manager in the UK, told the Lochaber Times that number has now increased to 85,000.

He said: 'To have more people learning on Duolingo in under a week than can speak



the language or are currently learning elsewhere is amazing.'

According to the last census in 2011, 57,375 people could speak Scottish Gaelic and the University of Edinburgh has suggested 5,460 are currently studying on other platforms – 62,835 in total.

The app was developed by community volunteers, including Joanne McLennan, a student from Benbecula, and Iagan MacAonghais, a secondary school teacher from Eriskay, who provided many of the voice recordings. Oban primary school teacher Ciaran MacAonghais wrote the course curriculum.

Users learn the language by playing various games including typing words or phrases, matching grammar and also speaking or listening to sentences to earn 'crowns' and progress their knowledge through a number of levels.

Words and phrases in early rounds of learning Scottish Gaelic include boy and girl, various animals, and discussing chicken and Irn-Bru.

Ahead of the course's launch, Deputy First Minister John Swinney said: 'The Gaelic language is a vital part of Scotland's cultural identity and we want to ensure those who wish to learn and use the language are given every opportunity to do so.'

## VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

For many of us a festive tippie plays a big part in our seasonal celebrations.

Drinking is part of our culture, we use it to celebrate, socialise, relax and also when we face difficult times.

In 2017, one in four adults in Scotland reported drinking at levels that exceeded the recommended low-risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week.

Do you know how many units



of alcohol are in your glass of fizz during the festive season?

One pint of beer – 2.2 units; one bottle 330ml of beer – 1.5 units; 125ml glass of prosecco – 1.5 units; 1 75ml glass of wine – 2.2 units; 250 ml glass of wine – 3.1 units

Our member businesses requested some assistance with how to deal with issues around alcohol and drugs and impacts on employees and we've run a series of awareness-raising events over the year.

Earlier in December, an expert trainer from Healthy Working Lives Scotland led a half-day course for managers that increased awareness and gave practical tools for how to

approach the subject of alcohol issues with staff.

I think I can speak for all of us who attended that it's been a real eye-opener and very useful.

If you are an employer in Scotland looking for workplace health, safety and wellbeing information, visit [www.healthy-workinglives.scot](http://www.healthy-workinglives.scot) for resources and free e-learning courses.

Stay safe and enjoy the festive season!

Column sponsored by the Scottish Government

## Become a Healthcare Professional and Get Ready for a Life-Changing Career.

A new campaign is shining a spotlight on a career in healthcare – highlighting the range of opportunities available and encouraging young people to consider it as a suitable profession.

A huge variety of careers (within nursing, midwifery, the allied health professions and healthcare science) are accessible and there are plenty of jobs available. What's more, you can work in a wide range of settings from hospitals, GP practices, care homes, community clinics, people's homes, or schools.

As well as an undergraduate bursary of £10,000 for those choosing to study nursing or midwifery from 2020, a healthcare degree is highly valued, both here in Scotland and all over the world.

It's a stable and valued career for life – more people studying nursing related degrees go on to find a job after their course than any other degree.

The new 'What did you do today?' campaign shows the significant variety of opportunities within all healthcare professions including nursing, midwifery, healthcare science and the allied health professions such as radiographers, dietitians and paramedics, featuring real people sharing their real stories.

If you're a young person or know one who's still trying to figure out their career path, then working in healthcare could be a great route. No two days are the same, it's rewarding, and you get to make a real difference to people's lives.

To find out more about the career paths available and where to study visit [CareersInHealthcare.scot](http://CareersInHealthcare.scot)



LT

# Leading wildlife artist gives Resipole demonstration



Wildlife artist Colin Woolf, above, gave a demonstration of his pin feather artistic technique.

by Nic Goddard  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

Artist Colin Woolf's incredible 'pin feather art' took centre stage at a weekend demonstration at Resipole Studios, Acharacle.

Working in oils and watercolours to create his amazingly detailed art, his fascinating technique of painting with feathers has helped Lochgilphead-based Colin gain widespread recognition as one of the UK's leading wildlife and landscape artists.

Using tiny pin feathers from woodcocks, mounted in a specially-designed holder to create a tiny brush, he completes the entire painting using the feather before mounting it onto the painting

itself to complete the work. The technique of painting with tiny feathers was one used by Victorian miniaturists who used to paint miniature portraits.

Colin learned of this style in the 1990s and has been working on perfecting this skill since.

Gallery manager Kerrie Robinson said: 'Resipole Studios was delighted to welcome renowned landscape and wildlife artist Colin Woolf to the gallery to give a live painting demonstration.

'Many visitors have been struck by the fine detail in Colin's work, so it was wonderful they were able to witness his skill and technique as an artist first hand.

'The artist's visit brought to



One of Colin's works depicting a woodcock in flight.

a close the largest exhibition of his work to date.'

Colin told the Lochaber Times: 'Resipole Studios is the perfect place for an exhibition of landscape and wildlife art. I was thrilled to be invited to put on the exhibition. The whole experience has been amazing. There's a lovely relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in the gallery and Andrew has created the perfect space for showcasing original artwork.

'I've enjoyed putting my work here and I've enjoyed the 'demo days' that I've spent painting at the easel, meeting customers and chatting about my work.

'The gallery is so perfectly placed. The whole of Ardnamurchan contains the

most magnificent scenery and some of Scotland's most beautiful wildlife. I never fail to be inspired whenever I come up here, in all seasons.'

Mulled wine and mince pies were served adding to the festive feeling at the event with visitors enjoying Colin's demonstration along with the other exhibitions of work on display, including work by local artists Rob Fairley and Stephen French.

The exhibition runs at Resipole Gallery through the winter until March.

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# New ranger qualification developed by partnership

West Highland College UHI is joining with Fort William-based Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) to offer a new qualification in the great outdoors, writes Mark Entwistle.

The course should prove attractive to students of all ages and backgrounds who have an interest in the countryside and a desire to contribute to conservation and provision for visitors.

The partnership welcomed the Countryside Skills with Ranger Training saying: 'We

are excited to embark on this new structure for our Trainee Volunteer Ranger Scheme, working in partnership with West Highland College UHI.

'Building on the positive legacy of our previous ranger training programme, working with our partners the John Muir Trust, the Woodland Trust and Jahama Estates, we are now adding valuable work experience.'

Underpinning the programme will be regular input from an experienced college lecturer and, on successful

completion, in addition to practical and theoretical knowledge, students will gain recognised industry awards plus a National Qualification.

The course includes practical skills training, conservation and visitor management tasks led by the NLP volunteer co-ordinator and landowning partners, giving opportunity to contribute to positive action in the area, and through engaging with potential employers, enhance their prospects.

Theoretical work covers

habitat studies, an understanding of visitor provision, recreation and access issues and consideration of land use, management objectives and possible conflicts of interest.

Industry awards offer certification in specialist skills such as dry-stone walling, chainsaw operation, quad bike use, navigation, outdoor first aid and tree surveying.

Course leader Heather McNeill said: 'Following on from the success of our Skye-based rural skills course, this course has been developed in response to feedback from organisations and employers in Scotland's rural sector.

'Employers are looking for staff with an understanding of countryside issues, a wide range of practical skills and the knowledge and confidence to work safely and effectively,' the partnership added. 'This fast-paced and



Trainee volunteer rangers at work on Ben Nevis.

exciting course aims to deliver that.'

The course is based in Fort William, four days per week for 18 weeks, from February.

Interviews will take place in

January and applications are open online now at <https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/courses/nq-countryside-skills-with-ranger-training/> or telephone admissions on 01397 874000.



## Frame of The Highland Soap factory takes shape

The frame for The Highland Soap Company's new factory and visitor centre in Fort William is in place. The factory will manufacture Highland Soap products before they are sent out to customers and shops across Scotland. Scheduled to open in 2020, it will also have a visitor centre, cafe and shop. The new factory will pay homage to the British Alcan social club that inhabited the site previously, building to the same dimensions and style.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

## Swim or row the length of Loch Ness for Nevis Radio

Nevis Radio is running another 'Loch Ness Challenge' to help raise funds for the station.

The event, which starts on January 4, 2020, involves swimming or rowing the length of Scotland's most famous loch, a distance of 22 and a half miles, in 12 weeks.

This will not involve taking an extended leave of absence from your job, camping out on the frosty shores and bumping into a mythical creature, as the challenge can be completed at a pool or fitness centre when time permits.

It is a great way to get fit, says Pam Weller, organiser

of the event, also known as Mrs W when co-hosting with husband John on the station.

She said: 'We did the same event in 2018 and it went very well. It is an opportunity for people to make a start on those January fitness goals that can fall by the wayside after a few weeks and raise money for their local radio station.'

'You can do it on your own, in a team or donate to some of the presenters or teams who are already taking part. We have a team from the British Legion, the Fort William Town Team and some B&Bs already signed up. It's a great way to support your commu-

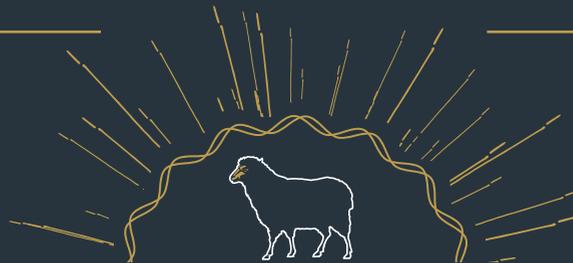
nity. Presenters will be taking part as well and updating everyone on how well we are doing.'

'So join in the fun and get fit as well.'

Money raised will help the station run its accredited DJ course, standard grade qualification and expanding the MOWI Live Lounge that spotlights local musicians.

As part of the last challenge, a disabled man completed the 22 and a half miles on a hand bike at a gym.

For more information and to request a sponsorship pack, email [admin@nevisradio.co.uk](mailto:admin@nevisradio.co.uk) or call Pam on 07764 986855.



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Jamie MacDonald (Burke), right, and Annie MacNeill (Hare), left, with Faye MacKinnon (Helen McDougall) and Marsaili MacNeill (Margaret Hare), and the rest of the cast of the Lochaber High School show. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

# High school production of Burke and Hare entrancing

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

*Up the close and doon the stairs,*

*But and Ben wi' Burke and Hare*

*Burke's the butcher, Hare's the thief,*

*Knox the boy who buys the beef!*

For generations the macabre story of Edinburgh bodysnatchers William Burke and William Hare has lingered in the Scottish consciousness and been the stuff of nightmares.

But it also proves rich pickings for amateur drama productions and last week a young cast from Lochaber High School demonstrated what a wealth of talent exists in this part of the Highlands.

Burke and Hare: A Musical Play was written by George Young and, interlaced with various musical numbers, it tells the story of how Burke and Hare ended up facing the gallows after being arrested for murdering vagrants and selling their dead bodies for medical dissection at Edinburgh Medical School.

The plot explores various universal themes such as hypocrisy and temptation, unconditional love and loyalty.

Starring as Burke and Hare were Jamie MacDonald and Annie MacNeill with their respective other halves, Helen McDougall and Margaret Hare, as played by Faye

MacKinnon and Marsaili McNeill.

This was the quartet which did the heavy lifting with the main dramatic roles and, while all four were excellent, special mention must be made of Jamie's accomplished turn as Burke, while Faye was not only highly convincing as Burke's unsuspecting partner, but had a wonderful singing voice also.

## An enjoyable show that made the hairs on your neck stand up

Giorgio Berardelli must be mentioned for his role of Daft Jamie, the matchseller who ends up on the medical school slab thanks to Burke and Hare's murderous attentions.

Giorgio was also resurrected later on after his death scene to double up his roles with a nice little turn as the clerk of the court.

Lily Bloom was excellent as the 'woman of the night' Mary Paterson, while Michael White as Procurator Fiscal William Rae showed some spot-on comic timing that had the audience laughing.

Other members of the small cast were Jake Sessions, Fraser Vardy, Ben Davies, Fraser Anderson, Lucy Stephen, Lucy Bloom, Chantelle Entwistle, Craig Kennedy, Riley Forsyth, Blair Rigg, Josie Ball,

Emma Chisholm and Mary Anderson.

The orchestra also comes in for special mention for its top drawer handling of the score, with the young musicians demonstrating skill that made you forget how young they actually were.

The orchestra comprised: violins (Mya Clark, Rebecca Lawrie, Megan Pescod, Sandra Hollingdale), cello (Josie Bloom, Josef Kocjan-Briggs), flutes (Libby Kerr, Stephanie Hume), tenor saxophone (Polina Iljina), alto saxophone (Rhuairidh Poll), percussion (Mhairi MacColl, Archie Campbell), bass guitar (Anna MacDonald) and piano (Finn Young).

At the end of the final night performance last Thursday, head teacher Scott Steele apologised for singling out one person for special praise from the orchestra, but said Finn's piano accompaniment had provided the 'musical thread' which wound its way throughout the score.

Both drummers, Mhairi and Archie, also need to be mentioned for their tight, driving atmospheric rhythms.

The production was produced and directed by Jacqui Hume and George Young. The show also boasted a highly competent stage, sound and lighting crew that created the perfect conditions for a most enjoyable show, with a dark underside that also made the hairs on your neck stand up.

# HOGMANAY FIREWORKS!

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Fin Young, aged just 10, from Banavie Primary School was the superb pianist who joined the high school orchestra in providing music for the Burke and Hare performance.



Medical students examine one of the bodies provided by Burke and Hare.



Moving the body...



Close scrutiny for one of the bodies provided by Burke and Hare.



Marsaili MacNeill gave an excellent performance, dancing and singing across the stage as Margaret Hare.

## MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



I am writing this from a very Christmassy Potsdam, a small town 20 miles to the south-west of Berlin. We are not long back from visiting a German Christmas market and a small advent-calendar-themed gathering where very potent gluhwein was served to accompany a local choir singing songs of the season. This German version of mulled wine, coupled with the mid-winter music and the festive fare has ensured the magic of Christmas is well and truly upon me!

Our journey began with very atmospheric seasonal weather, as we left a snow-covered landscape for Edinburgh Airport in the cold dawn of Monday morning. In the early hours, after packing, when the snow began to fall in huge soft flakes, childish excitement getting the better of me, I scampered out the house to build my first snowman of this winter! Sincere apologies to any neighbours who may have looked out their bedroom windows at 3am to see a large lunatic in blue dressing gown and yel-

low wellies rolling snowballs in the garden and singing 'The Boys from the SY Village Byre were singing Eilean Fraoch, and the bells were ringing out for Christmas Day!'

Gigs at this time of year have a very special feel to them, and the two we had just done had left me on the usual slightly-dazed high I feel following the effect of audiences dancing, singing and generally going a bit wild to our racket. The Barrowland on Friday was like no other gig we've done before - the audience was so good that we could probably have left them to do the gig by themselves! What a sound and atmosphere they were making! I had expected Perth Concert Hall on the Saturday to be a much more sedate affair, but they were just as wild and responsive as the Barras crowd.

When I got home in the early hours of Sunday morning, I turned on the Christmas tree lights and sat on my own having a good big Talisker in a wonder of Christmas feelings and blurred amazement at the gigs we had just done and

filled with excitement for the four festive gigs still to come in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Inverness and Dunoon.

There could not have been a better time to come across the new Peat And Diesel Christmas single - A Fairy Tale of Stornoway, a new version of the classic original as only Peat and Diesel could create. It is absolute brilliance and I sat and watched it on repeat for about an hour.

As with so much of their output, they have struck a unique sweet spot of island humour, gentle self-mocking, clever lyricism, total authenticity, uncontrived identity, unashamed confidence, effortless power of delivery and the extra indefinable ingredient that combines and enhances it all and will continue to grow their already immense popularity.

So to set your Christmas Spirit on course, build a snowman, have a mulled wine and a good dram, book a festive gig and download A Fairy Tale in Stornoway.

Merry Christmas to you all and well done Peat and Diesel!

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# Lucky2Behere wins top prize at YPI awards

The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway held its sixth annual Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) final earlier this month.

There were more than 30 teams to begin with, but they were narrowed down to six, with each finalist representing a different charity.

The charities represented were Skye's Lucky2Behere which was the overall winner; Lewis and Harris Women's Cancer Support; Alzheimer's Scotland; The Salvation Army; Autism Eileanan Siar and Befriending Lewis.

Judging this year's competition was Andrew MacNair, head of marketing at CalMac; Christine MacLeod, head teacher at Stornoway Primary School; Charlie Macmillan from Skills Development Scotland and John MacRae, a former winner and school



student. The winners of the 2019 YPI Final were Holly Martin, Kate Macsween, Catherine Thomson and Emily Maciver who were competing for Lucky2Behere.

Angus Morrison, who accepted the cheque on behalf of the charity, said:

'I am absolutely delighted the S5 YPI group chose to represent Lucky2bhere. It would be fair to say that the standard of all presentations was high and I commend the exceptionally high standard of the winners' presentation. This win has come at a time

Holly Martin, Kate Macsween, Catherine Thomson and Emily Maciver with Angus Morrison.

where the Western Isles Council has agreed to introduce Emergency Life Support Training within the school curriculum targeting all primary five and secondary three pupils.

'I have agreed with the winners that the prize money should be spent on a defibrillator to be situated at a location of their choice and that the remaining money be used to buy training equipment for school use. I am encouraged that the winning team has indicated its desire to be involved with the work of Lucky2bhere and look forward to engaging with them.'

## Allan hails 'emphatic' MacNeil victory

Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan has hailed the re-election of Angus Brendan MacNeil to serve as the MP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar for an historic fifth term.

The SNP surged to victory with more than 45 per cent of the vote while Labour and the Tories battled it out for a distant second place finish with 28 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. The Liberal Democrat candidate received four per cent and failed to retain his deposit.

Alasdair Allan MSP said: 'Angus Brendan is a first-rate constituency MP and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with him on the issues that affect the lives of islanders.'

'This is an emphatic victory for the SNP locally in what looks to be shaping up as a very positive night for the SNP. Angus Brendan has more than doubled his majority, while Labour have registered its worst performance in the islands at a UK General Election since 1974,

leaving them scrapping with the Tories for second place.

'I know from speaking to voters on the doors that the prospect of a Boris Johnson majority Tory Government fills them with dread. While it is still early in the night and results are still coming in, it is clear Scotland is now on a very different political journey to that of the rest of the United Kingdom. SNP MPs will work hard to stand up for the people of Scotland and make sure Scotland's future is in Scotland's hands.'

Following his re-election at 4.40am on Friday December 13, Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MP Angus Brendan MacNeill said: 'England and Scotland have spoken and we are clearly two different countries. Pressure next on Scot Lab and Scot Lib - do they support five years of Boris or Scottish independence?'

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
email us at [fort@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:fort@obantimes.co.uk)

## Travel cost bid for Hebrides athletes

For a third year, eight elite athletes from the Outer Hebrides will be able to apply for £1,500 to help with travel costs to the mainland.

The Island Athletes Travel Award Scheme is open now for individual athletes to apply for the money to be used from 2020 to 2021 for improved training.

Athletes will need to show how the grant would improve their performance, provide them access to quality training opportunities and

improve their sports or club environment.

Sportscotland allocated £10k to the Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney with local authorities paying the rest of the costs.

Stewart Harris, chief executive of sportscotland, said: 'We recognise the specific challenges faced by island athletes. That's why we are delighted to continue support for the Island Athlete Travel Scheme, in partnership with island councils.'

'By working together we can deliver services locally through the sportscotland institute of sport in the Outer Hebrides while providing additional support to allow talented athletes to travel to competitions and progress in their chosen sport.'

Application forms are available on the comhairle website and the deadline is Friday February 14 at 5pm.

For more information, contact the Community Sports Hub officer for your area.

## Gaelic project to grow in South Uist

A pilot project to increase the uptake of Gaelic in South Uist will begin in February next year.

'Càirdeas Coimhearsnachd' aims to pair fluent speakers with different age groups in social contexts to reinforce vocabulary, use and relationships through the language.

The project is based on similar language programmes run by the Office of Gaelic Affairs in Nova Scotia, Canada, such as 'Bun is Bàrr' and 'Na Gaisgich Òga'.

Ceòlas Uibhist and Comunn na Gàidhlig will lead the project with support from Cothrom Limited, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and funding

from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Running between February and June, they are looking for three different groups: children under the age of P4, teenagers in S1-S3 and fluent speakers over the age of 18.

Fluent participants will receive an honorarium for their time.

Regular sessions will seek to build on participants' language skills.

Parents will receive practical support towards raising their children with the Gaelic language.

Màiri Ann Chaimbeul, from Comunn na Gàidhlig, said: 'We're looking forward to working with other com-

munity organisations in Uist on this project. Partnership work is a very important part of operating in small communities.'

Shona MacLennan of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, said: 'This is an exciting project which will support the National Gaelic Language Plan's aim of more people speaking Gaelic more often in more situations.'

'It's a great opportunity for young people to benefit from older people's knowledge and ensure the richness of the language is passed on through the different generations.'

For more information, visit the Ceòlas website or phone 01878 700154.

# Stoddarts

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## LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)  
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## Volunteers deserve our gratitude at a special time of year

Most of us will celebrate over the next two weeks in familiar fashion the festive season.

For many, that will involve a degree of over-indulgence as we mark Christmas and New Year with parties and large amounts of food and drink.

However, for some people in our communities, it can be a difficult time of year for a variety of reasons.

In addition, there are many among us for whom Christmas and New Year are working days, rather obviously the emergency services, NHS staff and others.

Spare a thought this festive season for all those who will go to work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public.

Spare a thought, too, for the volunteers who will be out and about sharing Christmas joy with those in our communities for whom this time of year can be that bit harder.

## Don't miss next week's festive Lochaber Times

The festive holiday is almost upon us with the vast majority of us looking forward to putting our feet up and celebrating Christmas and the new year.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our readers and advertisers for your continued support and want to reassure you that we at the Lochaber Times will continue to publish the newspaper throughout the festive season.

However, because of the holidays, your Lochaber Times will be published on Tuesday next week (December 24) and the following week (December 31) instead of on the usual Thursdays.

Make sure your pick up you copy of the Lochaber Times to keep up to date with what is happening across the region.

## Approval of zipwire application beggars belief

On May 9 this year Highland Council declared a climate emergency. On December 4, the same council granted permission for a multiple zipwire attraction at Kinlochleven.

I am dismayed that no consideration was given at the council meeting to the wider issue of the implications of allowing a proposal in this location to go ahead.

Local and national opinion, including the Woodland Trust, Mountaineering Scotland and the Ramblers' Association all expressed reservations.

More than 1,600 people agreed: 'Kinlochleven is not an amusement park but is part of Scotland's wild land heritage. Time spent in nature is free for all to enjoy and should not be ruined by a permanent, ugly, expensive structure that will only benefit a small minority.'

Veteran outdoor pursuits authority Cameron McNeish stated via his Twitter account that he is 'saddened to hear of plans for a zipwire in Kinlochleven ... Kinlochleven's potential is better than cheap thrills like that'.

Highland councillors granted permission for this development while repeatedly asserting it is 'difficult to say' what the impact will be, as it is an 'unknown quantity'.

Councillor Andrew Baxter referenced his own recent enjoyable family holiday experience on a zipwire and Councillor Carolyn Caddick based her judgement on her own experience of her children's zipwire in her back garden.

I am flabbergasted our councillors imagine these subjective inanities are relevant to informing the decision-making process.

I am further disappointed that Councillor Baxter, who 'understands the area particularly well' and who was at pains to show his awareness of the controversy surrounding this proposal, saw fit to recommend the constraints on operating hours – proposed by Environmental Health to protect the local community – were lifted, thereby giving residents little respite from the noise and disturbance.

Only one councillor raised the issue of the carbon footprint of the development. There was no debate on the carbon emissions which will arise as a result of the 200-plus visitors per day that the developers claim will come to the village and the huge 35-seater all-terrain SUVs that will be carrying them backwards and forwards through the village at 15-minute intervals.

## YOUR PICTURES



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

[editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk), post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Alternatively, hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or to our office in High

No questions were raised as to how the wires are to be put in place, given that many structures like this drag their cables along the ground before lifting them and attaching them to the towers.

This would have a significant impact on the ancient woodland which the structure will span.

Presumably, this is part of the 'unknown

quantity' which the council is happy not to explore.

Kinlochleven Community Council, the elected body for the village, has remained neutral on the proposal in recognition of the divided opinion surrounding it. However, opponents have been derided, mocked and, in some cases, threatened on social media, with one supporter of the development who holds



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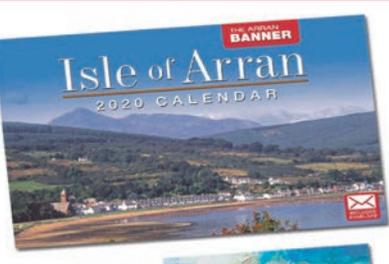
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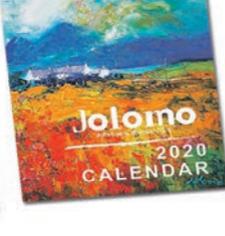





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# DISTRICT NEWS

## PLOCKTON

■ A coffee morning in Plockton Hotel on November 9 raised £310 which was shared between the children's Christmas party and the play park fund.

■ A soup and sandwich event in Plockton Hall on November 23 raised £200 for the play park fund.

■ A coffee morning in Plockton Hotel on November 23 raised £470 for Plockton Drama Club funds.

■ The collection for Poppy Scotland in Plockton and district raised £1,110.83.

■ The annual senior citizens dinner was held in Plockton Hall on December 6. Sixty two senior citizens attended and enjoyed an excellent meal. Andy Will said grace and Charlie Macrae proposed the vote of thanks. Santa presented gifts and a ceilidh followed.

■ The National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music held its annual Christmas concert at Plockton High School on December 7 at which it launched a new CD, The Final Trawl.

■ An election was held for the seven seats on Plockton and District Community Council after nine candidates put their names forward on the ballot.

The result was as follows: Ewen Cameron, 178 votes; Fiona Mackenzie, 172; David Mcghe, 164; Ian Hay, 158; James Krisp, 135; Peter Mackenzie, 127, and Catherine Camp, 113.

The two unsuccessful candidates were Duncan Gass and Suzanne Hazeldine with 71 and 72 votes respectively.

■ Malcolm Mackenzie hired Plockton Hall for two weeks to host a community fortnight. He organised various events including a knit and chat afternoon, a ceilidh, helped by the historical society, a family movie, a pot luck supper and a table tennis tournament.

■ The Lochalsh branch of Royal British Legion Scotland received a £6,276.65 cheque from the Kyle Co-op community fund.

Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band also received a cheque.



Andrew Maclean with Olivia and Emma enjoyed meeting Santa.

## Families get into Christmas spirit as Santa visits RNLI

Kyle of Lochalsh RNLI hosted its annual Santa's Grotto recently, raising just over £1,000.

Despite atrocious weather, lots of families got into the Christmas spirit, many donning Christmas jumpers, to visit Santa at Kyle lifeboat Station.

Throughout the day there was a steady queue of children waiting to visit Santa and get their picture taken with him, while the tea, coffee and home baking was in high demand as people tried to dry off from the rain.

There was also an opportunity for people to do some Christmas shopping as there were gifts and cards available from the table sale, while the children had the chance to get their faces painted and post their Christmas letters to Santa at the North Pole.

A Kyle RNLI spokesperson said: 'We would like to thank everyone who helped make it such a success. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us throughout the year and we hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.'

## KILMALLIE

The Kilmallie Singers' annual carol concert, which for many families heralds the start of Christmas, will be held on Saturday December 21 at 7.30pm.

This popular event will again be held in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church on the Parade, Fort William.

The choir's performance of Christmas carols and songs, some well-known and others that are less familiar, will offer something for every taste.

The audience will be invited to join in and there will be the usual highlight when boys and girls are invited to accompany the choir and audience as they sing a well-known carol by playing percussion instruments.

This year, the choir will also

perform choruses from Handel's 'Messiah' - a preview of their forthcoming 50th birthday celebration concert in April 2020, when the complete piece will be performed with the Dalriada Singers - previously Corran Singers with whom they have a longstanding association - soloists and orchestra.

Their conductor will be Catherine Cameron, accompanist Jennifer Skene and they will be joined by guest organist Kerr Jamieson. Heather Hook, French horn, and Fiona MacCormick, voice, are this year's special guests.

Tickets, priced £5 for adults, £4 for concessions and £1 for children, will be available at the door, which opens at 7pm.

There will be retiring collections on behalf of the choir's chosen charity, Clic Sargent (Childhood Cancer and Leukaemia in Children) Scotland. Over the years

the Kilmallie Singers' concerts have raised more than £8,000 for this worthy cause. There will also be a collection for Lochaber Sensory Care, a charity which helps more than 1,500 people each year who are hard of hearing or visually impaired.

## FORT WILLIAM

Staff and volunteers from Fort William PDSA shop are urging people to clear out their wardrobes and donate any unwanted clothes to help sick and injured pets.

Ladies, men's and children's clothes are all needed, including jeans, coats, jackets and jumpers, as well as shoes, hats and belts. Donations can be taken to the store from Monday to Saturday, between 9am and 5pm.

PDSA shop manager Carol said:

'Perhaps your wardrobe is bulging with unworn clothes, or your chest-of-drawers is full to the brim with items that no longer fit? Why not have a sort-out and donate your unwanted items to PDSA?

'As well as decluttering your home, and making more room for new purchases, you will be helping a very worthy cause.

'All the money raised in the shop helps PDSA treat the sick and injured pets of people in need.'

Located in High Street, Fort William PDSA shop raises funds to provide PDSA-funded veterinary treatment in the area.

PDSA encourages all supporters to sign up for Gift Aid to help their donations go even further.

Gift Aid allows PDSA to claim an additional 25 per cent of the value of each item sold, which helps raise more than £1m a year for the charity.

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## Lochaber Women's Aid workers take part in '16 Days of Action' event

Lochaber Women's Aid workers joined members of the Highlands Violence Against Women Partnership, staff from the Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland and workers from a variety of frontline services last week to mark the end of 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence 2019.

The event took place at Dingwall City Chambers, where attendees discussed how to empower survivors of gender-based violence to take part in action to end violence against women and girls.

The event was aimed at highlighting recently published research by Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland looking at the difficulties of tackling violence against women in rural areas. The report, Participating in Equally Safe in the Highlands and Islands, outlines the concerns and recommendations of 188 survivors of violence against women who spoke about isolation,

lack of access to services and the difficulties of negative local attitudes.

The report makes 13 recommendations to the Scottish Government and Equally Safe Partners about how to improve women's access to participating in work to end gender-based violence and attendees at the event support those recommendations.

Lorraine Revitt, Services Manager at Lochaber Women's Aid, commented: 'We really welcome the findings of this work to find out how we can assist women and girls affected by abuse and violence to have a voice in shaping service delivery.'

'It is only by listening to and acting on their input that we can ensure we are delivering services that are appropriate for our rural communities.'

'At Lochaber Women's Aid, we are also particularly keen to expand our work to support early intervention by working more with those in education.'



## Sensory Care Christmas lunch and theatre trip

Members of Lochaber Sensory Care's social group met up for Christmas lunch in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, last week. A few days later, the group enjoyed their annual festive outing to Pitlochry Theatre. Anyone using the services of Lochaber Sensory Care can join the social group and enjoy the benefits of fortnightly get-togethers and trips. For details contact the office in Caol on 01397 704889.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



There was an excellent turnout for the anniversary event. Back row, from left: President-elect Richard Baxter and his wife Sheryl; Peter Hamling and his wife Kathryn and Past President Paul Brian and his wife Helen. Front: Oban President Douglas Small and his wife Judith and Lochaber Club President Clive Talbot and his wife Celia. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Lochaber Rotary celebrates 70 years

Lochaber Rotarians and their families and friends met in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, earlier this month to celebrate and reflect on 70 years of fellowship, friendship and support for a range of community projects and international causes.

Club president Clive Talbot, in a well-researched talk, reminded everyone of the club's 70 years of activity following its inaugural meeting at the Grand Hotel on December 9 1949, before proposing a toast to the club.

President-elect Richard Baxter thanked him for his absorbing talk and invited members and their partners and friends to drink a toast to the good work of Rotary International and its founding aim of 'Rotary and Peace the World Over'. Guests



The inaugural meeting of Lochaber Rotary Club in December 1949. Club president James MacBean is on the right in a kilt.

of the club for the evening were Douglas Small, President of the Rotary Club of Oban, and his wife Judith. Mr Small said: 'We thoroughly enjoyed the evening and were made most welcome.'

'The meal, music by Paula

MacAskill and the accommodation at the Alexandra Hotel were superb. President Clive gave a most interesting and informative speech about the history of the Lochaber Rotary Club - a very successful and enjoyable evening.'

# HIGHLAND FASTENERS

A very Merry Christmas!!

FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

Saturday 21st December	08:00 - 12:00	Friday 27th December	07:30 - 17:00
Sunday 22nd December	CLOSED	Saturday 28th December	08:00 - 12:00
Monday 23rd December	07:30 - 17:00	Sunday 29th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 24th December	07:30 - 13:00	Monday 30th December	07:30 - 17:00
Christmas Day	CLOSED	Back to our normal hours of business	
Boxing Day	CLOSED		

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## BOXING

## Lochaber boxers looking forward to further success

Business is booming at Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club, so much so that the small gym used for training is struggling to cope with the upsurge in the numbers wanting to train.

The club says there should be some exciting news shortly on that front, with another other boost being the return to training after a two-year break of former multiple national and international champion, Cameron Whyte.

For more on this story see the facing page.



Cameron Whyte.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson,  
The Write Image

## 10-PIN BOWLING

## Alleycats remain top dogs in 10-pin bowling league

After week six of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats still remain at the top of the scratch division as the only team with the maximum 30 points after defeating previous second placed British Legion Fort William 5-0.

Peaky Bowlers are the new second placed team with 22 points and British Legion Fort William slip back to third place on 21 points.

The handicap division is very close at the top where Peaky Bowlers remain in first place on 22 points followed by Alleycats on 21 points and Team With A Bowling Problem on 19 points.

Individually this week, the best scratch game came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with a 208. Also this week Nick Richardson (Alleycats) had a 185, Gary Cowan (Peaky Bowlers) a 180 and Vincent McLay (Team With A Bowling Problem) with 172.

Pam Weller also had the top two-game scratch series of 350 whilst Nick Richardson had the top handicap game of 237 and Vincent McLay had the top two-game handicap series of 444.

The best team scores this week came from Alleycats with the top scratch game of 591 and the top two-game scratch series of 1166 whilst Peaky Bowlers had the top handicap game of 801 and the top two-game handicap series of 1584.

The top scratch averages are currently held by Pam Weller with 167 followed by Steve Day (Team With A Bowling Problem) on 147 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 145.

## LOTTERY NUMBERS

## Lochaber club lotteries

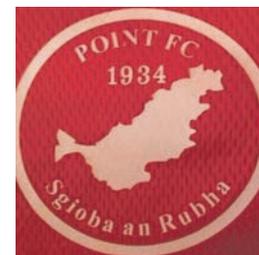
**Ballachulish Shinty Lottery:** This week's ( 15/12 ) shinty lottery numbers were 3, 8 and 19. No winners again this week, so it's an £800 draw next week.

**Caol Regeneration Lotto:** Draw Date - This week's (12/12) winning numbers were 3, 10 and 16. No winners so £200 jackpot for next draw on 19/12.

**Fort William Golf Club Lotto:** Numbers for this week's draw (12/12) were 7, 11 and 15. No winner so £200 available for draw on 19/12. This will be the last draw of the year as there will not be a draw on Thursday, December 26 or January 2. The draw will recommence on January 9. Every lotto ticket purchased for the draw on December 19 will be entered into a raffle for a hamper.

**Caol Community Centre Bingo club lotto:** The numbers for the draw on 8/12 were 1, 9 and 17. No winners so £200 next week.

## Point FC to get new stand



Sport and recreation on Lewis have received a boost with the news that Point Football Club have raised the money for a new stand at their Garrabost ground, in time for the coming season.

Point FC, who won the league last year and came second this year after losing to Westside in the play-off, are about to order a new 100-seater stand from a company in Sussex after receiving a £20,000 donation for the capital project from community wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust (PST) and another £20,000 from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund.

The stand costs £37,000 and the project will cost more than £40,000 once groundworks have been included. The club will also be putting money towards it and are

looking forward to having it in place for the 2020 football season, following building regulations approval, as a replacement for their current stand which is rusting badly and becoming a 'health and safety issue'.

Iain MacSween is secretary of Point FC and Point Sport and Recreation Association, the charity formed 25 years ago to improve the old pitch and adjacent building.

He said the new stand would make a big difference to the Point FC experience – for players as well as supporters – and would complement the Ionad Stoodie community centre, next to the pitch.

'After about 10 years of struggle we managed to get all the money together for what is Ionad Stoodie now. That was in 2007, as part of the improvements to the whole area.



The £20,000 cheque is handed over to Point FC. From left are, Roddy Munro, vice-chair of Point Sport and Recreation Association, Point manager Angus 'Stoodie' Mackay receiving the cheque from Point and Sandwick Trust board member Donald 'Buck' Macdonald, PST board members Catherine Anne Smith and Jane Watson, and former Point player Kenny Nicholson.

As an afterthought, there was some money left over and we bought a 50-seater stand,' he explained.

'It was just a standard stand. It wasn't galvanised which became a major problem over the years with the Lewis weather and lately we had to remove the sides from it and it was becoming a health and safety issue. It was rusting from inside. We knew it had to be replaced and we decided to go a bit bigger, take a step up, and first of all make sure the replacement would be galvanised.

'We'll obviously have to put some of our own money in and we've got funding which will make the whole thing fea-

## FOOTBALL

sible. We've been in contact with the stand company for the last eight or nine months. Once we put in the firm order, we hope they'll be ready to swing into action and we hope the stand will be in place for the start of the season in April 2020.'

And Mr MacSween added: 'All we need is to win the league now and that will be a perfect year for us in 2020. We're hoping that the stand will attract more supporters. It will give a better atmosphere and it's part of a long-term programme that we have to improve the whole facility.'



An example of what the new stand will look like.

## Runners gain experience from district championships

Lochaber sent a strong team of runners with supporters to the North District cross country running championships at Dores on the Saturday before last.

The long wet grass proved a challenging course against the elite cross country runners in the north of Scotland.

After a very fast opening 1,000 metres, the under-13 boys had to work hard, and the team finished with Sorley Swabey in sixth position, just short by four seconds from fourth, and backed by Duncan MacDonald and Euan Servant to complete the scoring for the three-person teams.

Fraser Anderson had a strong run in the under-15 age category with a ninth placing. Jamie McConnell and Finlay Fraser also ran

well in the under-17 race. To round off the day, John Yells came in seventh in the senior race. The speed work involved in these fast races will be of great experience for all the Lochaber runners.

On December 8, LAC held its Cour Loop (Nevis Range) long event which saw John Yells first male home in a time of 01:13:41, nearly a full five minutes ahead of second-placed Ed Tresidder

## CROSS COUNTRY

01:18:22 First female runner home was Lisette Walter in a time of 01:30:37, with Ailsa Lopez second female athlete to finish in 01:31:22.



A good field braved wind and rain for the recent LAC Cour Loop race at Nevis Range.

Photograph:  
Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

# Lochaber lose but bag a bonus point

Hyndland	14
Lochaber	12
Tennent's West Division 3	

Lochaber travelled to Hyndland on Saturday for their last game of 2019, with a much changed team from the previous week.

Eight players who had helped the Banavie club win the regional bowl final the weekend previously were unable to travel to Scotstoun.

The 17 players who did travel almost never made it through Glencoe with considerable snow on the road.

Once the match kicked off, Hyndland started well with the strong wind at their backs and were able to pin Lochaber deep in their own half for long spells in the first half.

Hyndland had the first opportunity to score but dragged a penalty just wide. Lochaber also had a penalty that went wide.

It was Hyndland who got the first try of the game after a Lochaber mistake. Lochaber gave away a penalty just outside their 5m line for an offside and Hyndland took a quick tap and their player managed to force his way over the line to score.

In the second half the visitors didn't waste any time tying things up at 7-7 when Edward Murray John ripped the ball in the tackle and made the pass to Christopher Simpson who crashed his



Lochaber were in action against Hyndland in wet and windy conditions at Scotstoun.

way over the line to score with Jonathan McCook converting.

Lochaber were able to use the wind to their advantage in the second half and gain good territory. Edward Murray John was having a great game breaking the gain line on several occasions and putting in some big hits on defence.

His performance was rewarded with a try when he ran clear to score in the left corner to make it 7-12.

However, Lochaber's grasp on the lead did not last long as Hyndland hit back almost straight away again from a Lochaber mistake after they failed to secure the high ball.

Hyndland were able to recover the ball and work it to the right to score by the posts to make it 14-12 with the successful conversion attempt.

Lochaber came closest to scoring again but weren't able to breach Hyndland's defence.

The game finished 14-12, but the losing bonus point keeps Lochaber in second position as they head into the winter break.

Lochaber head coach Gary Hendrie was reasonably pleased with the result, given the large number of players unavailable.

'We didn't do too badly, given the team situation,'

## RUGBY

Hendrie told the Lochaber Times.

'The conditions were pretty similar to the previous weekend, being wet and windy. The boys played well so overall I'm quite happy.'

Lochaber are back in league action on Saturday January 11 when they host Cowal at Banavie, kick off 2pm.

Before that, however, Lochaber would like to invite players old, new and everyone else, along to their annual Boxing Day game at Banavie. Kick-off could be 'some time around two-ish' we have been told!

## As year draws to close boxing club sees surge in numbers

As the year draws to a close, it looks like 2020 is going to see an upsurge in activity for Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club, as the boxing season enters its 'business' months.

Current Scottish champion, 13-year-old Josh Dieguno, enters the Scottish Intermediate Championships at the end of January with the Scottish Open Championships, where he will defend his title, coming hot on the heels of that competition in March.

After the very successful home show in November, there has been an upsurge in attendance at training sessions for the club which has meant the club's small gym is struggling to contain the numbers in attendance.

To this end the club hope to announce some exciting news regarding premises before the turn of the year which will be hugely beneficial in letting the coaches create many more boxers from the club members.

Other exciting news is the fact that after not competing for almost two years, former multiple national and international champion Cameron Whyte is back in the gym training hard towards a comeback.

He has also been attending Boxing Scotland's Performance Pathway Programme at regional level which is the first steps in trying to return to international duty for Scotland.

After the club coaches have transported Whyte across Scotland for regular training sessions over the past two months, he will now take part in a district assessment within the next eight weeks which, if successful, will see him link up with the Scottish Development Squad and give him an avenue to join Scotland's elite boxing group and hopefully resume his international career.

Club spokesman Stephen McManus was enthusiastic about Whyte's re-emergence on the boxing scene. 'It's been great to see Cameron back in the gym and watch his fitness improving.'

'Hopefully, over time he can represent his country again

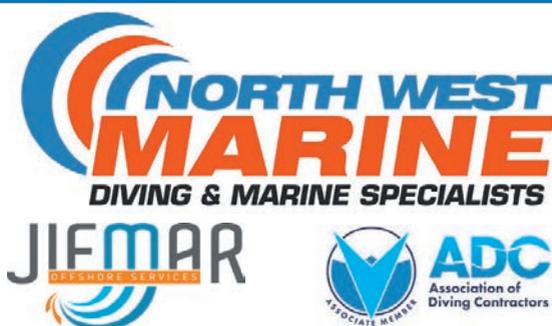
## BOXING

and fairly soon we'll have him back boxing for Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club.'



Dieguno is eyeing up Scottish championship bouts starting next month.

Photograph: A Brightside Photography



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## WEATHER

**Thursday**  
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze  
Temperatures  
7°C to 9°C.

**Friday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
6°C to 9°C.

**Weekend Outlook**  
**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze  
**Sunday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
5°C to 8°C.



FRIDAY

## TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday December 12, 2019 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	04.49	1.3	10.53	3.4
<b>Thur</b>	17.58	1.6	23.53	3.0
<b>Fri</b>	05.58	1.4	12.27	3.4
	19.15	1.6	** ** *	** *
<b>Sat</b>	01.34	3.1	07.10	1.4
	13.55	3.4	20.24	1.5
<b>Sun</b>	02.40	3.3	08.19	1.3
	14.56	3.6	21.22	1.4
<b>Mon</b>	03.30	3.5	09.22	1.2
	15.46	3.7	22.10	1.2
<b>Tues</b>	04.12	3.7	10.17	1.1
	16.28	3.8	22.53	1.1
<b>Wed</b>	04.51	3.9	11.07	1.0
	17.07	3.9	23.33	1.1

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

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

## Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Chain, shackles and buoys all available to purchase.

Lochaber lose  
but bag a  
bonus point

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looking forward to  
further success

# McMorran set to resign as Fort William FC manager

The Claggan Park faithful were rocked this week with news that Fort William FC manager Russell McMorran intends resigning from the role.

McMorran's last game in charge will be the away game to Wick Academy on January 4, after which he will concentrate on his recovery from his well-documented battle with PTSD.

In a statement issued yesterday (Wednesday), club chairman Peter Murphy said McMorran has had a massive impact on the team during his year in charge.

**'This decision has not been taken lightly, but it is something that I felt was the right time and thing to do.'**

'Russell's impact on the club cannot be overstated. He joined the club just over a year ago as secretary and stepped up to take the manager's role at the start of this year,' said Murphy.

Along with Jamie McGregor and then Mark Rydings, they were able to stabilise the first team and get us through the season.

Russell has contributed hugely to putting a competitive Fort William team on the park.

'So far this season we have

reached the second round of the Scottish Cup, holding Albion Rovers to a draw away from home and reaching the semi-final of the North of Scotland Cup.

Murphy said the club will begin the hunt for McMorran's successor in the coming weeks.

McMorran told the Lochaber Times this week it had been a great honour and pleasure to have taken control of the team, firstly at the end of last season on an interim basis and then to have been appointed manager for this season.

'Having seen where the club and players were at the end of last season and to see where they are now is extremely positive and confirms that the club is moving in the right direction,' he said.

'I have been fortunate to have been in control of the team this season when we have got rid of the title of "Britain's worst team" having picked up wins in both league and cup completions.

'It was a humbling experience to take the team to the semi-final of the North of Scotland Cup, only to be beaten by the overall winners, and to take the lads to Coatbridge to play second division side Albion Rovers in the second round of the Scottish Cup, where we earned ourselves a replay at Claggan Park ... memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

'My struggle with PTSD is well-documented and something that I am open about, which hopefully raises the



Fort Manager Russell McMorran intends stepping down as manager at Claggan Park.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

awareness of the illness for people who are suffering like myself and hopefully to give others an understanding of the effects it has on people.

'I am grateful for the support that the club and the players have given me throughout my time here, and without them

my recovery may have been scripted along another path.

'I find my self in a position now where my health is in a better place and as such I have taken the decision to resign from my position in order that I can now concentrate my recovery around my

family, especially at this time of the year.

'This decision has not been taken lightly, but it is something that I felt was the right time and thing to do.'

McMorran said the team have the ability to finish clear of the bottom of the Highland

## FOOTBALL

League this season. We currently sit at the bottom of the Highland League, still with seven games in hand.

'This means that most teams at this time are half way through the season.

'Looking at the progress we have made, we are sitting in a better position points wise, with more goals scored and fewer goals conceded than last season.

'I have no doubt that whoever my replacement is will have a great squad of local and loan lads to work with and they will finish off the bottom of the league this season.'

And looking ahead to this Saturday's game away to Keith, he added: 'If it beats the weather, we have a full squad to choose from with the exception of Gabriel Hastings who is out with an ankle injury and John Treasurer who is out until the end of the season.

'It was a close game last time we met at the start of the season with the injury to John Treasurer proving to be the pivotal moment in that game.

'The lads have their Christmas party on Saturday and, all being well, it will start at 4.45pm on Saturday with three points in the bag.'



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