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Oban councillor calls for community drug summit

Tackling the drugs supply in Oban is one of the police's top priorities, the area commander has stated.

But former drugs worker and Oban councillor Julie McKenzie thinks more could be done to help those suffering from substance abuse.

Last year, Ms McKenzie called for a drugs mapping exercise to be carried out to best ascertain the issue in the area.

Speaking this week, she said her calls 'disappointingly and unsurprisingly' fell on deaf ears, adding: 'Without such an exercise, how can anyone say our local services are meeting need and are fit for purpose?'

Iain Angus MacDonald, chairman of OASIS – an Oban-based addiction charity, has backed the councillor's calls for a mapping exercise. He said: 'A proper independent needs assessment would go a long way to identify to what the problem is really like.'

Ms McKenzie added: 'It's clear to me that we could be doing things in a much more effective, joined-up and person-centred way.'

'A mapping exercise is just one of the pieces of work required. If we are serious about tackling Oban's drug problem, then it's time for a community drug summit involving all relevant local individuals and agencies.'

Ms McKenzie said she wrote to her fellow councillors, asking for them to acknowledge the problem and to work with her and other like-minded

'A mapping exercise is just one of the pieces of work required.'

individuals to address the situation. However, she said she had not yet received a response.

Policy lead for health and social care Kieron Green said: 'We had a business day yesterday [Monday] of the area committee and it came up at that. Councillor Elaine Robertson, as well as being the chair of the area committee, is also the area committee representative on the local alcohol and drug forum, which includes the

police, the fire service, social work and so on – that seems the environment to raise this and she will do that at the next forum meeting.'

Police Scotland Chief Inspector and area commander Marlene Baillie said: 'Tackling drug supply is one of our top priorities for policing in Argyll and Bute. Officers have been working hard over the past few months to target individuals who are involved in drug dealing in Oban and the surrounding area.'

'In the past week, for example, we have recovered quantities of Diazepam, Valium, Diamorphine and a cannabis cultivation, and four persons have been charged with various drug-related offences, including drug supply.'

A dedicated website has been set up by the Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). For more information on support, advice and services available in Argyll and Bute, visit www.argyllandbuteadp.info – or telephone 01546 604948 or email High-UHB.ArgyllandButeADP@nhs.net

Tiree's Emily named young handler



Despite the weather and ferry cancellations due to Storm Ciara at the weekend, the Highland Cattle Society 129th Spring Show and Sale attracted a large crowd in Oban. One of the people delighted to have made it to the show was Emily Armstrong from Balemartine Fold, Tiree, who was named overall winner of the young handler competition. For the full story, turn to pages 34 and 35. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn



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OT

Oban Mòd registration deadline

This year's Oban Provincial Mòd will take place on Friday June 5 and Saturday June 6.

Organisers have issued a no late entries policy so competitors are urged to get their forms filled in no later than Friday April 24.

Entry forms, entry fees and own choice music must be handed in to Furan Gaelic Centre, Corran Halls, Oban, PA34 5AB, before then.

All cups and shields should be cleaned and returned to Furan Gaelic Centre no later than Friday May 22.

The committee has sent out this year's junior and senior syllabi.

For further information, contact Ann Ferguson on annmacleodf@googlemail.com or Duncan MacNeil on Duncan.Macneil@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Man arrested

At 11pm on Saturday February 8, in Campbell Crescent, Oban, a man, aged 39, was arrested for allegedly behaving in an abusive manner and assaulting a woman.

The man allegedly struggled with police and resisted arrest.

He was charged with the offences, held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Diamond couple celebrate Valentine's Day near miss

Childhood sweethearts Willie and Cathy Campbell will be celebrating 60 years of wedded bliss on Saturday, a day after romance is celebrated around the world on St Valentine's Day, writes Fiona Scott.

Married at St Columba's Cathedral, Oban, on Monday February 15 1960, the Oban couple met during their early years at St Columba's School and both sang in the Cathedral's choir for much of their harmonious relationship.

Willie said: 'Valentine's Day that year was on a Sunday, so we decided to get married on the Monday instead.'



Cathy added: 'It snowed on the day. It was lovely with all our family and friends there.'

The couple will celebrate this weekend with a meal at the Oban Bay Hotel with

Willie and Catherine Campbell decided not to marry on Valentine's Day because it was a Sunday.

close family. They have two daughters, Fiona and Janice, two grand children, Jamie and Becky, and their first great grandchild is due in April.



Man dies after diving incident near Oban

A diver died after getting into difficulties in the Sound of Kerrera during Storm Ciara on Sunday, writes Fiona Scott.

UK Coastguard were alerted first and immediately requested the launch of Oban lifeboat following reports of a group of divers in difficulty to the south of the town.

The volunteer crew of Oban's RNLI Lifeboat Mora Edith MacDonald faced gale force conditions during the

call out at around 10.15am. Despite challenging conditions, the lifeboat reached the scene quickly but found the divers had already been recovered from the water and were being treated by paramedics from the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Helicopter

The coastguard helicopter and Oban Coastguard rescue team were also at the scene.

It was later announced a 50-year-old man had

died during the incident. A Police Scotland spokesperson said: 'Police are investigating the sudden death of a 50-year-old man in south Oban around 10.40am on Sunday February 9.'

'The death is currently being treated as unexplained but there does not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.'

'A report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.'

Shortly afterwards, further reports reached the

coastguard of another diver drifting to the north.

The lifeboat immediately proceeded to the scene and discovered the object was actually the dive gear of one of the divers.

Dinghy

As the crew were drying off in the station after the incident, one of them noticed a dingy drifting across Oban Bay.

Having noticed the oars were in place on the dinghy, there was concern someone

may have fallen from it, so the crew relaunched into the storm to ensure no life was at risk.

Search

Several boats were on moorings in the bay and a systematic search began. Oban Coastguard team, which had also just returned from the previous incident, located the dinghy and identified a name on it.

The owner was located safe and well and unaware his dinghy had gone adrift.



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Move over Ciara, Dennis the Menace is coming

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Storm Ciara and the effects of strong winds have played havoc on the West Coast this week, and it is not over yet, with the arrival of Storm Dennis expected over the weekend.

According to the Met Office, things will quieten down today (Thursday) before Dennis sweeps in on Saturday.

Oban and the surrounding area escaped relatively unscathed after last weekend's battering, with Police Scotland confirming that there had been no major impact inland.

Maritime disruption on the other hand was abundant and with most ferry services cancelled, Oban Bay proved a popular place to be over the weekend and the earlier



part of the week as vessels of all descriptions took shelter from the high winds.

Speaking to The Oban Times on Tuesday, assistant harbour master Richard Dobson said: 'We have been full up since Storm Ciara arrived.

'Things should start getting moving again midweek but we are already booked up for

the weekend as the next wave of bad weather comes in.'

The impact of the next low-pressure system is not expected to be as extreme as Storm Ciara but will bring widespread strong winds and heavy rain to parts of the UK.

The weather warning on Saturday will come into force at midday and run until 23:59

Amateur photographer Sheila McIntyre captured this dramatic scene during the storm this week.

GMT. Wind gusts will widely exceed 50mph but could reach more than 60mph in exposed areas. Heavy rainfall on ground already saturated by Storm Ciara could lead to further flooding.

The Met Office said disruption to transport services and power supplies should be expected and that Storm Dennis could cause large coastal waves.

Steve Ramsdale, chief meteorologist at the Met Office, said: 'Our confidence in the forecast means we have been able to issue severe weather warnings well in advance, giving people time to prepare for potential impacts of the storm.'

POLICE FILES

At 2pm on Thursday February 6, in Queen's Park Place, Oban, a man, aged 43, was searched by police and allegedly found in possession of Valium tablets. Following inquiries, a flat at Shore Street was searched under warrant and a man, aged 42, was allegedly found in possession of Valium tablets and heroin. Both men were charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal when the drugs have been analysed.

At 5pm on Friday February 7, in Soroba Lane, Oban, a man, aged 38, was searched by police and allegedly found in possession of Diazepam. The man was charged and a report submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At 10.20am on Saturday February 8, on the A85 near Tyndrum, a motorist was stopped for allegedly speeding. The driver, a man aged 24, was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At 6.20pm on Saturday February 8, a flat in Miller Road, Oban, was searched

by police. A 22-year-old occupant was allegedly found to be cultivating and in possession of cannabis. He was charged and a report was sent to the procurator fiscal.

At 1.30am on Monday February 10, at the Railway Pier, Oban, a man, aged 34, allegedly breached bail conditions by consuming alcohol. Police arrested and charged the man. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At 5am on Sunday February 9, Birchwood Filling Station, Soroba Road, Oban, was broken into and items including alcohol and cigarettes were stolen. Following police inquiries, on Monday February 10, a house in Oban was searched under warrant, stolen property was recovered and a man, aged 44, and a woman, aged 40, were arrested, charged and a report submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Anyone with information in relation to any incident, should contact police by phoning 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.



Susan Colin and Jayne Donn at Carr Gomm Oban. 17_t07_CarrGomm01

Charity appeals for waterproof jackets

Waterproof jackets are needed by an Oban charity supporting the town's sofa-surfers and homeless, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Housing Support Service manager Susan Colin at Carr Gomm hopes people will donate new, wet weather clothing so they can hand it out to people in need.

The jackets must be new says Susan and donations can be dropped off at Donmor House in Albany Street.

'We are lucky to have

plenty of hats and scarves from kind donations over Christmas, but what we really need are waterproof jackets. We get a lot of people coming here to use our service who walk in drenched through,' she added.

Homeless

Carr Gomm took over a premises from Blue Triangle to support temporary homeless people in the town centre, giving them a roof over their heads.

People struggling with housing issues and anyone

needing support and advice over benefits and other social issues can get help from Carr Gomm.

The organisation, which has been supporting the homeless in Oban for 15 years, runs free weekly drop-ins from 2pm to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with a job club on Tuesday afternoons.

As well as one-to-one support for the homeless, other support on offer includes helping to write CVs and getting access to food parcels.

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OT



Brian MacDonald was present when more than £1,200 was raised for MND research at a bingo night in The View in December. Now the wedding raffle will also boost funds.

Wedding raffle worth £15,000 drawn on Friday

One lucky couple will win a wedding package worth £15,000 on Friday night.

The raffle, in aid of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Scotland, costs £10 to enter and will be drawn at 9pm on Valentine's Day - so there is still time to enter.

Oban businesses contributed to the prize, which includes a venue and catering for 75 guests thanks to the

Argyllshire Gathering Halls, as well as table and chair covers, table centrepieces and a wedding arch should the winners choose to have their ceremony in the venue. The date set aside is February 13 2021.

Other prizes include bridal pampering with make-up, nails and lashes, car hire, a piper, a band and money towards a dress, flowers, cake

and favours. Karen MacInnes organised the raffle after Oban man Brian MacDonald was diagnosed with the disease.

The 42-year-old's shock diagnosis forced him to take early retirement this year after 13 years as a firefighter in Glasgow.

Karen said: 'This is a devastating illness for Brian and his family.

'By donating just £10, people have the chance to win this fantastic wedding prize worth more than £15,000 and help make a difference to people suffering from Motor Neurone Disease.'

To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is donate a minimum of £10 and leave your name on www.justgiving.com/fundraising/karen-macinnis4

Nightclub puts stop to 18th birthday parties

Bosses of an Oban nightclub have stopped taking bookings for 18th birthday parties after being forced to shut down a private function and call for police help.

The View in George Street called for back-up from emergency services at around 9.30pm on Saturday February 1.

An ambulance was also called to the scene after an 18-year-old was taken ill and needed treatment at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban.

The View music venue is a popular nightspot for events in the town from fundraisers, to trad music concerts to ceilidhs and DJ nights.

A statement on The View's social media page announced that 18th birthday parties would no longer be accepted at the venue and an apology was also made to neighbours and anyone else disturbed by the function and party-goers.

'We accepted a booking for a private function till 11pm but unfortunately at 9.30pm, management were forced to call the emergency services

for assistance and shut down the party.

'We'd like to apologise to any of our neighbours or anyone further afield who was impacted by any disturbances linked to this event and its attendees.

'As a result we want to notify all parents that 18th birthday parties will no longer be accepted at our venue,' said the statement.

As reported in last week's Oban Times, a Police Scotland spokesman said: 'We were called to a report of a concern for a person around 9.40pm on Saturday February 1 in the George Street area of Oban. An 18-year-old man was taken to hospital by the Scottish Ambulance Service.'

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Free help to stub out smoking

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is looking to stub out smoking for good and is offering free help and support to do so.

While smoking rates have fallen significantly over the past 20 years, 17 per cent of people in the region continue the habit, also contributing to the 10,000 people who die of smoking related ill-health in Scotland every year.

Quitting can be challenging, but support to help you be smoke-free increases your chances of quitting for good. That's why HSCP has appointed Stop Smoking Specialist services to offer free non-judgemental support in Oban and Lorn, Kintyre, Mid Argyll, Cowal, Bute and Helensburgh and Lomond. Pharmacies also deliver free

stop-smoking support. Laura Stephenson, senior health improvement officer, said: 'There are so many benefits to stopping smoking.

'It increases your chances of living a longer and healthier life and people can feel the benefits from the day they quit. It can also save them an average of £3,000 per year.

'Life expectancy and life quality are likely to improve, for example, noticeable improvements in breathing. Stopping smoking helps people to live life to the full and feel fitter, healthier and more able to take part in physical activities which in turn can benefit your mental health and well-being.'

Smoking is linked to many long-term conditions and diseases like Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary

Disease, heart disease, emphysema, diabetes and cancers. Family members breathing second-hand smoke can be at risk too. Second-hand smoke causes children to get sick more often and smoking when pregnant increases the chance of pregnancy and labour complications.

Every stop smoking journey is different and the specialist services will help smokers to find a plan to become smoke-free for good.

'Our stop smoking services have specially trained staff who can help people find the right medication to get them through withdrawal and cravings,' added Ms Stephenson.

Contact Oban and Lorn smoke-free adviser Louise Devlin on 07795 612590 or email louise.devlin@nhs.net

Rancevs detained without time limit

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



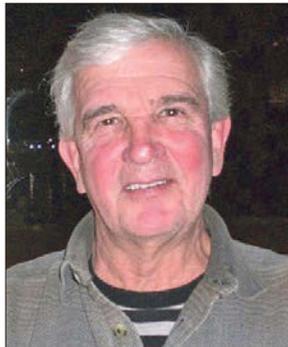
A mentally-ill man acquitted over the deaths of two Oban neighbours has been ordered to be detained indefinitely in the State Hospital, Carstairs.

Last year Oskars Rancevs, 33, was found not guilty of murdering 73-year-old ex-SAS soldier Martyn Smith and killing 75-year-old John Whyte at Columba Court, Castle Road, Oban, because he was 'very seriously' mentally ill at the time.

Last Wednesday at the High Court in Glasgow, Judge Lady Rae said he was a serious risk to the public and imposed a compulsion order with a restriction order meaning Rancevs will be held in the State Hospital without limit of time.

Rancevs, a former reality TV dancer and cruise ship performer, came to the UK with his family from his native Latvia in 2015 and found accommodation at Columba Court.

In the lead up to the killings, a number of people expressed concerns about him behaving erratically in a church, a public house and at a cinema. His step-father, Stephen Paterson,



Martyn Smith died in the attack by Oskars Rancevs.

who was out the country at the time, contacted mental health services and the police with his worries.

The court heard that neighbour Mr Smith had previously complained about Rancevs putting the wrong rubbish in the bin.

At 9.30am on October 1 2018, Rancevs approached Mr Smith as he stood outside the block of flats talking to Mr Whyte.

He began to throw rubbish from a bin bag at Mr Smith, then walked away before turning back and pushing him on the chest three times.

Mr Smith fell to the ground and, as he tried to get back up, Rancevs, who is 6ft 1in and of

muscular build, kicked and jumped on him.

The court heard the violent attack was captured on a mobile phone by another neighbour.

Mr Whyte, who was kicked twice, dialled 999 and went back into his flat. His conversation with the 999 operator carried on briefly until she did not receive any further response. It was not until 8.10pm that police forced entry to his house after not being able to contact him by phone and found him dead. Mr Whyte, who had longstanding heart disease and high blood pressure, died from cardiac arrest caused by stress.

Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs from Police Scotland said following this incident relevant guidance was updated to ensure any immediate concerns in relation to critically injured or gravely ill callers are highlighted to supervisors.

'The Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) has investigated the circumstances leading up to the deaths of Mr Smith and Mr Whyte.

'As the PIRC's report is still under consideration by the

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, we are unable to comment further.'

A decision will be made on holding a fatal accident inquiry on the conclusion of the PIRC investigation.

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership said owing to patient confidentiality it would be inappropriate to comment on the specifics of any case. However, with any significant incident, it would carry out a detailed review of the issues surrounding the event to see if lessons could be learned and whether improvements needed to be made to the systems and processes in place.

Psychiatrists believed Rancevs, who said he was having the best birthday ever and began tap dancing when held at Oban police station, was suffering from bipolar affective disorder with a manic episode.

Work continues on slope above A83

BEAR Scotland has issued an update to the ongoing work on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

The road was closed in both directions from January 30 until February 1 after a landslide.

Forestry and Land Scotland's specialist teams continue to work on the slope above the A83, stabilising boulders and removing trees.

Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland's staff are keeping in close contact with Forestry and Land Scotland. Updates will be provided as work progresses.

What has happened at the Rest and Be Thankful?

More than 86mms of

rainfall fell in the area in the two days before the landslide.

Around 3am on January 30, reports were made of approximately 1,000 tonnes of debris on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful - east of the normal area covered by debris fences and catchpits. The landslide appears to have been triggered by a slip in the forested area high above the road.

The A83 re-opened via the Old Military Road at 11am on January 30 after safety inspections by geotechnical specialists.

A83 main road re-opened at 1pm on Saturday February 1 with traffic lights.



Ayda, Olivia and Perrie Douglas enjoyed the Harry Potter Night.

Oban wizard night pure magic

Oban's witches and wizards had another magical evening last Thursday at Harry Potter Book Night 2020.

Every year, Waterstones in Oban hosts an evening of wizarding wonders, filled with Harry Potter-themed games and activities. Those who attended this year's event wrote to their favourite characters and letters will

be sent in the Owl Mail. Wizards and witches donned their best robes and entered the bookshop via Platform 9 3/4.

Following the event, Waterstones staff said: 'Thanks to everyone who came along to our Harry Potter Night celebrations.

'A magical time was had by everyone who came along.'

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OT

Argyll Animal Aid to move to new home

by David McPhee

dmcphree@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll Animal Aid has announced that it will be moving to a new location.

The charity, which has been based at Lochandubh Kennels at Barcaldine for a 'long time', issued a statement on its website.

The new destination has not been revealed yet and a public event will take place once it is finalised.

The charity said it would not be accepting new animals until the move has taken place.

In the statement, the committee said: 'We have been at Lochandubh for a very long time and it has been invaluable to the charity. It would

be impossible to put into words all the hard work and sacrifices that Fiona and Paul Woodhouse have contributed over the years.

'This decision to part ways has come at a time when the charity is at a critical growth point, and to best serve the needs of the animals of the community.

'The committee felt that a new, expanded location would not only better accommodate these changes, but allow the Woodhouses to focus on their own business at Lochandubh Kennels and Cattery.'

The committee added: 'While the final details of our new location are still being attended to, we are optimistic this move will provide more accessibility

to staff, volunteers, community members and, of course, the animals of greater Argyll.

'However, this does mean that while we are in the process of moving, we will not be taking in any new animals, instead focusing our efforts on helping to re-home animals through fundraising and online support in the interim.

'We anticipate that many of you may have questions about this move, and about the future direction of the charity. To that end, we will be holding an open day in the near future.

'This will be an informal event in which committee members will be present to answer questions, share stories, and get to know one another over coffee and cakes.'



The exterior and main tower of Dunollie Castle will benefit from a £141,000 grant.

Dunollie Castle gets £141,000 windfall for restoration work

Dunollie Castle, Museum and Grounds has received a boost to its restoration work after being awarded £141,605 from Historic Environment Scotland.

HES has announced funding of £842,802 to support conservation repair projects to historic buildings throughout the country.

The money was awarded to the MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust for works to the exterior and main tower of Dunollie Castle in Oban.

This project forms part of a wider regeneration pro-

gramme for the 15th-century castle which includes the museum and grounds.

This funding is part of HES's Historic Environment Repair Grant programme which supports works to buildings or ancient monuments which are of special architectural, historic or archaeological significance to Scotland.

Amy Eastwood, head of grants at HES, said: 'From offering public access to creating co-working spaces, these projects are fantastic examples of how conservation and re-use of historic buildings can make

a positive contribution to the wider community.

'These funds will allow the projects to undertake the necessary high-quality, specialised conservation works required to help ensure a sustainable end use and continue Scotland's story.'

The Historic Environment Repair Grant programme offers grants from £10,000 to £500,000 to support conservation-standard repair projects across Scotland. It supports projects that help restore historic buildings and ancient monuments.

No trees were harmed in the making of this window



Cheered by focus on Highland culture

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk



WHERE IS THIS?



Calls are going out far and wide for everyone interested in entering the Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival to get their applications in.

It's a fantastic opportunity for budding dancers and musicians to test themselves in a friendly and encouraging competition, and I would encourage parents to get their young musicians and dancers to enter.

It's a great way for them to gain confidence and skills which will be useful throughout their lives.

I'm delighted that so many young people are now interested in music and particularly traditional music, which really seems to have taken off over the past wee while. Evidence can be seen in the number of very accomplished bands, musicians and singers we have around the town.

I love that the culture, language and music of this

part of the world are being promoted so widely now.

When I was younger, it was not and I was talked out of learning Gaelic in school and pushed to learn French instead which I really regret now.

I've recently signed up for the Gaelic course with Duolingo, as I know many people have, and it's great fun but there are also lots of opportunities locally to learn with others.

Furan Gaelic Centre in the Corran Halls has lessons available and also advice on groups where you can have

a cuppa and practice face to face.

I've also seen a Gaelic coffee morning at the Gaelic-medium unit in Rockfield advertised which would be great fun, so the opportunities are out there and it's never too late.

My ambition is to be able to understand the words of some of the songs the next time the National Mòd is in Oban ... fingers crossed.

The photo last week was of the door at the side of Fancy That on George Street, which was blocked up years ago, but this week's is easy.

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6-8 High Street, Thurso KW14 8AG Tel: 01847 894956



Meeting hears of harbour progress

by David McPhee
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



The people of Oban were updated on the future of Oban Bay at a public meeting last Tuesday.

The well-attended event was held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls and offered people a chance to find out more about plans to run the bay as a community harbour trust port.

The meeting was organised by Oban Harbour Community Development Association (OCHDA).

The audience heard from the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) about the impact of recent changes to the buoyage and that there appeared to be a significant reduction in the number of incidents.

At the meeting, Tony Bennett, chairman of Oban

Stakeholder Group, updated the room on what progress has been made.

Work undertaken in the past year consisted of preparing the first draft of the harbour revision order, continuing to liaise with stakeholders

'As well as the legal tasks, we urgently need to raise our profile.'

and Oban Bay Management Group (OBMG), identify legal advisers, and engagement with Argyll and Bute Council.

The group is in talks with the council over the transfer of powers and assets within the bay.

However, he highlighted a number of challenges, which

would include time, support from the full council, funding and resources.

The most immediate challenge was time, with the Oban Bay Management Group having set a deadline of March to show progress, otherwise it would review the situation.

A representative from Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) put the group's mind at ease, however, saying: 'I am new to this group, but from our perspective, we are supportive. There was a deadline set, but not just by CMAL, but the whole management group.'

'Certainly, progress is looking promising.'

'We want to ensure this happens in general for the safety of Oban.'

A member of the public responded: 'That is reassuring to hear.'

The next challenge will be finding the funds to pay for a specialist to write a harbour order draft.

OCHDA have announced that they have successfully secured the services of Burness Paull to help them with this work, as well as helping to draft legal agreements with the council and preparing documents for the Scottish Government.

The chairman of OCHDA, John MacAlister, welcomed the partnership. He said: 'This is great news and we can now get on with the next phase of our work. As well as the legal tasks ahead of us, we now urgently need to raise our profile, increase our membership and raise the funds needed to bring the development about.'

Information about OCHDA is available at www.obanharbour.scot under Trust Port.

Public can now have say on proposed health cuts

Proposed cuts to health and social care services in Argyll and Bute have gone out to public consultation – but only after a review of the process took place.

School nurses, maternity and dementia services and social work posts are among the services under scrutiny by the area's health and social care partnership (HSCP) as part of its budget-setting process.

Savings options totalling £1.6 million have been identified by the HSCP's head of transformation and finance, Judy Orr, but the best case estimate for its 2020/21 budget gap is nearly double that figure.

A meeting of the HSCP's integration joint board (IJB) on Wednesday January 29 saw board members agree to carry out a consultation exercise ahead of the budget being set later this year.

However, concerns were raised about the proposed consultation exercise, which in its original form contained seven questions and was due

to go out on Monday February 3. The revised consultation, launched on February 7, features nine questions, and residents can now visit the council's website to air their views.

Launching the amended consultation, Councillor Kieron Green, the IJB's chairman, said: 'This consultation is about high level budget decisions and how we prioritise our investment in local services.'

'When it comes to the impacts on services being delivered, we will carry out further detailed community engagement over the coming year.'

'This will include working with people who will be affected by these changes including patients, carers, our staff and partners to ensure we listen to and take into account their ideas and worries.'

The consultation is available at argyll-bute.gov.uk or by emailing nhs.abhscp@nhs.net and is open until Wednesday March 4.



Hazel Glove Fungus at Dunollie Wood in Oban. Photograph: Stuart Gibson

Fungus found in Oban is UK first

A rare rainforest fungus never before seen in the UK has been discovered at Woodland Trust Scotland sites in Oban.

At Dunollie Wood local naturalists found hazel glove fungus which looks like a monstrous hand clutching tree branches.

The hazel glove fungus was spotted by retired Countryside Ranger Richard Wesley from Cullipool on the Isle of Luing, during a recent visit to Dunollie Wood by Lorn Natural History Group.

'After resting on a log, I looked down and to my surprise spotted a windblown twig with a small sample of

hazel glove, as though it had been placed there for me to find,' said Richard.

The group then set about searching the area for more substantial examples. Cynthia Grindley and Noelle Odling found the fungus on two standing trees. Woodland Trust Scotland staff subsequently identified hazel glove at two other spots.

Hypocreopsis rhododendri, the hazel gloves fungus, is a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Scottish Biodiversity List.

'Hazel glove is an indicator of high quality temperate rainforest, so we are really

pleased it has been identified at Dunollie Wood,' said George Anderson, of Woodland Trust Scotland. 'It might surprise a lot of people to know Oban is a town with a rainforest at its back.'

'It is found along the west coast and on the inner isles and is a unique habitat of ancient native oak, birch, ash, pine and hazel woodlands and includes open glades and river gorges.'

'Our rainforest relies on mild, wet and clean air coming in off the Atlantic, and is garlanded with a spectacular array of lichens, fungi, mosses, liverworts and ferns.'

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This workshop will look at trading on ebay, Amazon and Etsy and which one is right for you and your business, understanding the profit margins and marketplace fees and how to stand out from the competition.

Thu. 20 February 2020, 1330-1630hrs, Oban

To book a place call 01546 604030 or email bg@argyll-bute.gov.uk



OT

Campaign to increase adult social care workforce

Lee Robertson loves his job as a care worker and would recommend it to anyone who might be interested.



A national campaign to increase the adult social care workforce has been launched.

The 'There's More to Care Than Caring' recruitment campaign features stories from adult care workers.

Across Scotland, around 145,000 people currently work in adult social care in a range of roles, including

supporting people with physical disabilities, dementia, autism, older people and those with mental health conditions.

The campaign, which has been developed in collaboration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and key partners in the social care sector, will run across radio,

online, newspapers and social media.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman and Children and Young People Minister Maree Todd attended the campaign launch at community hub Tribe Party in Portobello, Edinburgh.

Ms Freeman said: 'Working in adult social care can be hugely rewarding – for many it's more than job, it's work they give enormous commitment to. As today's report from the Care Inspectorate and SSSC highlights, one of the main difficulties services face when trying to fill vacancies is not having enough applicants or the right applicants. That is exactly what this campaign seeks to address.'

'Brexit presents a clear threat to the future of our health and social care services and the EU workforce makes a valuable contribution to this sector as well as others. As a responsible government, we will continue to do all we can to support our health and social care services.'

Lee Robertson, 43, is a care

worker at Enable Scotland, who moved to the sector after working in retail. He supports Steven Imlah, 25, who features in the campaign and works at Tribe Party.

Lee said: 'I love being a carer and I'm passionate about letting others know why it's such a rewarding and satisfying career choice.'

'In my previous job, I honestly felt like I was working for the sake of it. But now that I'm caring for Steven, I feel like I've found my calling and come away every day knowing that I've made a big difference. It's a good feeling.'

'Day to day, you provide personal and practical support to help people live their lives. Like any job, it's not without its challenges but if you have the right qualities, you will enjoy it.'

'You will also get the chance to build a great career. I'd urge anyone stuck in a bit of a rut or just looking for a change to consider making the move to be a care worker. Like me, you, too, might find your passion.'

Column sponsored by the Scottish Government

Put your qualities to good use with a rewarding career in adult social care.

If you're understanding, practical, responsible, respectful, calm, considerate, empathetic and patient, a career in adult social care could be rewarding and ideal for you.

A new national drive to boost the adult social care workforce is calling on people to consider how their personal qualities are a great fit for a move into the sector.

The Scottish Government's 'There's More to Care Than Caring' campaign highlights the wide range of roles on offer within the sector, from jobs supporting people in their own homes and living in care homes or providing housing support to assist people to live at home, facilitating access to important areas like work and health services.

And the message is clear – it's your qualities and behaviours that will set you apart in adult social care,

supporting older people, people with a physical disability, dementia, autism or mental health conditions. While the role as a care worker can be challenging and requires resilience, it offers the chance to have a hugely positive impact on others' lives, every day. For many it's not just a job, it's a calling.

You don't require qualifications to get started in a career in adult social care. Bring your passion and commitment and you will develop skills and earn qualifications on the job.

If you're looking for a change, starting with a far more varied working day, the opportunity for continued personal growth and the chance to put a smile on people's faces every day, then a role in adult social care could be perfect for you.

To find out more about the career paths available and how to get into a career in adult social care, visit: CareToCare.scot



Katie Tierney previously worked in a factory.

Making a difference to someone's life

Katie Tierney, 34, works in Community Living Services at Capability Scotland and has two roles.

As a support worker, she helps people in homes with all their basic needs. As a moving-in assistant, she helps new recruits come up-to-speed with their training as well as offering refresher training for any other employees.

'I was working in a factory before I got into social care, but it wasn't what I wanted to do. I always wanted to work in social care but at my first interview I didn't get a job and it knocked my confidence a bit. I waited until I was a bit older to re-apply and came across Capability Scotland and applied, I've been here nearly five years now.'

Katie's advice to people looking to apply for an adult social care position: 'You need to have a great personality to work in social care. It's important to be chatty and able to converse with people. Obviously, you need to be caring, good-natured and patient. It's important to be able to empathise and understand.'

'Don't listen to other people's opinions on what they think social care involves. It's not what people imagine it to be. Don't let them put you off, because you get the chance to make a big impact on someone's life. Even if you are only working part-time and juggling school, university, or other commitments – a couple of hours a week is all it takes to make a difference.'

Head chef Mandy is to the Manor born

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



In line with the past week's weather, there is a culinary storm brewing at Manor House Hotel, and it's all down to new head chef Mandy Todd.

With her great gastronomic knowledge and experience, garnered in the main from her travels, Mandy has managed to strike a balance between nouvelle cuisine and hearty platefuls to produce an appetite-slaking fine dining experience.

Mandy told The Oban Times: 'Because I have had lots of different influences, my cooking style is fairly eclectic. I like to use mainly Scottish local ingredients but the flavours come from my travels and things I have picked up along the way.'

'Personally, I like food that is a wee bit more interesting



Manor House head chef Mandy Todd and her assistant Darryl MacIntosh have been getting tastebuds tingling.

and her mum in the kitchen.

Her professional journey began when she was just 18 at the Edinburgh New Town cookery school, but it wasn't until Mandy was 21 and travelled to Australia that she developed a real taste for a career in the kitchen.

'Sadly, my gran died but she left me some money, so I used it to do the cookery course in Edinburgh,' she explained.

'I worked in a lot of places in Australia and when I came back, 10 years later, I worked for a Californian chef, Annette Spragge, back in Edinburgh and I learned a lot from her.'

Before her move to Oban in June last year, when she be-

came assistant chef to Gerard McClusky, Mandy worked as sous-chef at the award-winning Three Chimneys on Skye, where she met up with Darryl MacIntosh, who has now joined her as assistant chef at the Manor House.

'It's great having Darryl here,' she added. 'We know how each other works and have a great working relationship in the kitchen.'

Built in 1780, the Manor House was originally the principal residence of the Duke of Argyll's Oban estate. It was later used as a Dower House for his family.

Of late Georgian architecture, great consideration has been given to preserve the elegance, charm and atmosphere of its past in both its appearance and its cuisine.

Mandy and her ace kitchen team are now keen to maintain the two rosettes the establishment already boasts.

than you can find on an average menu, but I also like to feel I have had something to eat and hopefully that's what I am offering here at the Manor House.

'I like seeing what's out there and then working out

how I can use it in the kitchen. The only way for people to find out the results is to come and try it.'

Originally from Ayr, Mandy first took an interest in cooking from a young age when she helped out her gran

Expert's lecture date set

A leading Dunbeg-based marine science researcher will offer insights into the benefits of algae at a free talk next week.

Professor Michele Stanley will discuss how algae is being used in everything from energy production to waste treatment.

Professor Stanley is the Associate Director of Science, Enterprise and Innovation at the Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS) UHI. She joined the institute in 2006 and has become an international expert in blue biotechnology.

Professor Stanley said: 'Over the past 15 years there has been an increased interest in algae, both microalgae and seaweeds.'

Professor Stanley's lecture, 'A matter of life and algae', will take place at SAMS, from 5.30pm on Thursday February 20.

Attendees can also join by video conference.

To book or find out more, visit www.uhi.ac.uk/events



Memorial night raises £2,500 for charity

A fundraising evening in memory of a well-known Oban man saw the town's Masonic social club jam-packed on Friday night.

The event, dedicated to guest house owner Iain Auld, who died last May as a result of Alzheimer's, raised in the region of £2,500 for the Oban Dementia Resource Centre. Those who attended

had an evening of music, song and dance, and the activities included a raffle, bingo, auction and games. Iain's wife Joan would like to thank all who attended and assisted. Joan, centre, was joined by her daughter Jacqueline, granddaughters Alba and Lucy, and Sue Pagan from Oban Dementia Resource Centre.

Oban Tesco customers choose grant winners

The results are in after Tesco customers in Oban cast their votes to help community projects bag up to £25,000.

Tesco marked its centenary year with two special Bags of Help funding rounds, with a huge £100,000 funding pot

in north-east Scotland. And the winners of the second round have been now revealed. In first place, Alzheimer Scotland has been awarded £25,000, in second place, Keiran's Legacy has been awarded £15,000 and, in

third place, Young Enterprise Scotland has been awarded £10,000.

Bags of Help, run in partnership with greenspace Scotland, sees funding awarded to thousands of local community projects every year.

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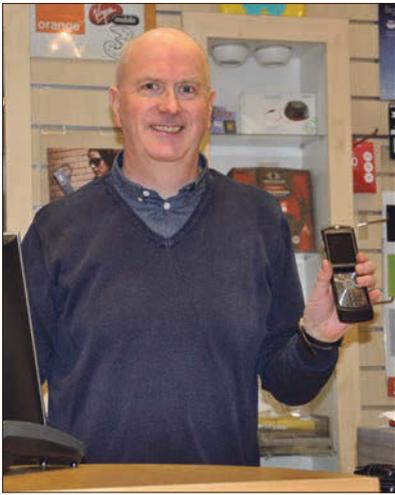
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OT



Brian Smith has sold more than 30,000 phones.



Brian is hanging up on his phone shop

After 15 years and 30,000 phones, Brian Smith is hanging up on his shop in Argyll Square, Oban.

Brian revealed on Facebook earlier this month that he was selling and closing the Fonehouse Oban store, which will officially shut this week.

He wrote: 'We opened in July 2005 and after selling over 30,000 mobile phones as well as countless accessories and top-ups, there can't be many local people who

haven't popped into "the wee Vodafone shop" over that time.

'The first phone I ever sold was a Motorola Razr V3 which was "top of the range" back then, so things have changed a bit over the years.

'I really appreciate your custom and loyalty and I have enjoyed and will especially miss the "craic" with all the regulars who come in for top-ups regularly.'

Speaking to The Oban

Times, Brian said he felt like a change after working in retail for 28 years. Before he opened the Vodafone shop in 2005, he worked at the Hydro shop at the top of George Street.

Speaking about his time selling phones, Brian said: 'It has been good. I have really enjoyed working in the mobile phone business and got to know a lot of the people from Oban and further afield, especially the islands.'

He said in his 15 years at the

shop, he handed over more than 30,000 phones, although admitted: 'I don't sell half as many as I used to.'

'Business is still okay,' he said. 'I just feel like it is time to call it a day. Thanks very much to the people of Oban, Lorn and the Isles. I would like to express my appreciation for their custom.'

Brian will treat himself to a couple of months off before deciding on a new career path.

Slàinte Mhath scheme is now 10 years old

In January 2010, the comhairle took the bold step of more than halving its existing sports facility membership fees to encourage its communities to become more active.

Ten years on and nearly 30 per cent of the population of the Outer Hebrides are members of the scheme.

Slàinte Mhath was designed in order to improve health outcomes and help islanders increase physical activity levels. Over the years, the scheme has been developed further including offering free memberships to 'at risk' children.

In 2018, the comhairle agreed reciprocal arrangements for access to a range of sports facilities across Scotland as part of the LeisureLink Partnership.

This move has meant that families with existing Slàinte Mhath memberships are able to access facilities operated by the comhairle, Highlife Highland, Orkney Islands Council and Moray Council, Argyll and Bute and LiveBorders free of charge. It is anticipated that more local authorities and trusts across the UK will be



Kara Hanlon at the pool.

added to this list over the next year.

Kara Hanlon, a regular user of the scheme, whose most recent swimming successes included four gold medals, one silver and three games records at the 2019 World Island Games in Gibraltar, said: 'The Slàinte Mhath scheme offers great value for money and helps encourage families to enjoy sport.'

'The quality and range of facilities available is amazing and helps promote physical activity of all ages and levels.'

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Mast will aid emergency responding

One of the UK's largest mobile phone companies has been given planning permission to install a communications tower outside Dalavich, on land west of Barnaline Lodge.

EE has been given permission by Argyll and Bute Council to build the 35-metre-high tower outside Dalavich, on land west of Barnaline Lodge.

No objections were received to the proposals for the tower and a council planning officer said the proposals were 'visually acceptable' and would not be seen from the village itself.

Dalavich has an estimated population of about 70 people and is accessed by minor roads off the main A816 at Kilmartin or Kilmelford.

A handling report by the planning officer said: 'This proposal is part of a government-led emergency services

mobile telecommunications programme and is proposed to increase safety and response times in more remote areas.

'An additional function will be to give EE improved mobile phone and data coverage for this area.'

The site is a flat area of ground which is well set within Barnaline Forest West which covers a large area of ground with undulating features and dense forestation.

The report continues: 'The site is remote and is set approximately 16km to the west of Dalavich village...sits in a well set back position to the rear of the designated settlement zone and is not visible from the village or from any approach from any road.'

'The applicant has submitted photo montages in support of the application which show that

the proposed development will fit well within the landscape.'

The officer added: 'The proposals are considered visually acceptable given the considerable distance from the village and the nearest residential properties, the slim and open nature of the proposed 35-metre-high lattice tower and its siting in a rural location which already exhibits broadly similar structures such as the line of electricity poles traversing the landscape.'

'The apparatus proposed is the minimum necessary to ensure coverage requirements are met. In light of the operators' efforts to design the best solution for this particular site, so as to minimise the impact on the environment, it is considered that the installation would not seriously impact on the visual amenity of the area.'

Designer Ellis is now a jewel in New York's crown



Ellis shows off her work to some of the many visitors who showed great interest in her work.

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Designer Ellis Cameron is the jewel in Craft Scotland's crown.

The 27-year-old from Benderloch was chosen out of hundreds of hopefuls to be part of a best of Scotland craft showcase in New York this week.

Ellis, who runs her fine jewellery business from a studio at London's Goldsmith Centre, gets inspiration for her work – which sells for thousands of pounds – from the land and seascapes back home as well as treasure hoards uncovered from Scotland's past.

The former Oban High School pupil, who was last year shortlisted for the UK's young jewellery designer of the year and has worked on projects with Louis Vuitton



Ellis Cameron is showcasing her glittering work in New York.

Photograph: Julia Skupny.

Moët Hennessey (LVMH) and high-end French jewellery design studio Chaumet, is one of five Scottish craftspeople exhibiting their work at the four-day, high-profile trade show called NY NOW-set out over three-storeys and attracting more than

200,000 visitors. Ellis has been working long days at the show but hoped to take in some of the sights while staying just a 20-minute walk away from the show venue in the city's fabric district on 38th Street.

Joining Ellis, who graduated from Glasgow School of Art with a distinction and then completed a Masters in Jewellery Design in London, are Argyll artist and designer Eve Campbell, textile designer Beatrice Larkin, furniture maker Hame, and mixed media jeweller Roslyn Leitch.

'It's a really amazing curation of work,' said Ellis, who hoped to add new Stateside clients from her 'work-cation' in the Big Apple.

Exposing her brand and testing out the US market were also high on her ticklist, while exhibiting mostly her one-of-a-kind alternative

pieces for brides. In 2017, Ellis, whose work has graced the pages of Vogue and Harper's Bazaar, was accepted onto a Setting Out scheme run by training charity The Goldsmith Centre which gives start-up help to just a handful of goldsmiths and creative businesses each year.

Keeping Ellis company in New York this week has been her proud mum Joy Cameron, co-founder of Benderloch's Bookends festival and pop-ups.

Back at home, Ellis's dad, and Oban FM presenter, Campbell Cameron, said: 'Ellis has worked so hard and with a passion for her jewellery. It's lovely to see her getting the success and recognition she deserves.'

'It's also wonderful that Joy and Ellis are getting to spend time together in the Big Apple.'

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



I promised last week that in this offering, I would give a full review of the new Fergie MacDonald album.

However, due to delayed flights from the Canary Islands and immediate following flights across the western ocean to San Francisco, I haven't managed to procure the CD yet. I will get the review done yet, but this week, a tribute to Fergie in lyric form will have to suffice.

I have written of Fergie more often in this column than of any other individual and for that I make no apology. The man has been a hero of mine since I first heard his music at the age of nine.

He is the undisputed king of ceilidh music and, well into his eighties, he approaches life with the optimism, energy and verve of a lively teenager. He is a man worthy of many, many words in this paper.

The song below is about the gift that some people have of defying the conventions of age and there is no better example in western Scotland of that than Fergie.

I would urge you all to go out and buy a copy of Fergie's 50th album and you'll enjoy



Fergie MacDonald.

the review all the more when I get to it.

Still We Run

Time goes by like the winter winds

And the decades fly as the world spins

Where it goes we'll never know and cannot save.

We all must live before we leave

Achieve to give and to believe.

As the years disappear like tears on the ocean wave.

Chorus

Forever Young and still we run

Living dreams that seem to move with the rainbow's gold.

Forever Young and still we

run And we'll run for the sun and the years won't leave us old.

How long our time we'll never know

But up we'll climb and on we'll go.

Keeping pace and grace in the race of the roads we tread.

At age eighteen or eighty-five

Whatever's been you are alive

So drive for the prize, your lifetime lies ahead.

Go by the creed of those we see,

The blessed breed who hold the key,

The rare who dare not care for the age they are.

And meet the day and hit the night

Fight hard and play and chase the light

And dance to a tune by the moon and the morning star.

Fleeting flames in worlds vast

We all too soon become the past.

As glow and shadow guide our way

Pray long the path but live the day.



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Senior sports leaders glammed up for the night, above, while below, members of Oban High School Pipe Band accompanied the young highland dancers for the opening number. Photographs: Kevin McGlynn.



World of glitz and glamour

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



More than 200 pupils and staff took part in the annual Oban High School Dance Show at the Corran Halls last week.

Entitled Shuffle, this year's performance featured a mix of music and dance styles, with Oban High School Pipe Band providing the traditional opening with the help of more than 30 Highland dancers from all the local dancing schools performing a Highland fling.

Now in its 13th year, the show is a highlight on the Oban music and dance calendar, with packed audiences enjoying two evening performances and a matinee.

The community and primary schools supported the show in exceptionally high numbers.

PE teacher Denise Gemmell, who helped organised the event, said: 'The pupils from Oban High School have been fantastic.'

'They practice so hard, they are dedicated and give up so much of their time rehearsing for the show.'

'Even though there are hundreds taking part, they make it very easy with their excellent attitudes and preparation.'

'We are very proud of them all and love to see them grow in confidence and enjoy performing so much on stage.'

'Oban High School would like to thank sincerely parents and the wider community

for their massive support once again.'

Twenty-six senior dance and gymnastics leaders have been working since June, choreographing routines for younger year groups which form the backbone of the whole show.

In the case of Shuffle, senior leaders came up with some great concepts for their dances and a range of styles, including hip hop, Highland, commercial and musical theatre.

For the second year running, S6 pupil Ella MacKechnie taught a P6/7 dance class giving pupils from Dalmally, Taynuilt, Kilninver, Park, St Columba's and Rockfield primaries an opportunity to mix and come into the high school.

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Clockwise from above: senior pupils perform a number from the musical Hairspray; coaches threw themselves into a dance through the decades; pupils performing It's a Hard Knock Life from Annie the Musical; and Highland dancers opened the show accompanied by Oban High School Pipe Band. Photographs: Kevin McGlynn.

Overseen by PE teacher Cara Potts, the OHS gymnastics squad created a high energy routine with precarious balances and numerous backflips that had the audience on the edge of their seats.

Oban High School of Dance, in collaboration with Ballet West teachers Maggie Clunie and Katherine Blythe, also took part in the show.

Ballet West Lower School

also performed on Wednesday night – the school is currently touring Swan Lake all over Scotland.

Helen Sloan worked with three groups this year, performing three very different numbers. There was an Annie-themed piece from a group of S1 pupils, a burlesque number from senior pupils and an exceptional dance duet from senior pupils

Sarah Cameron and Matthew Houston.

Amanda Sloss and the Ballet West outreach group performed three outstanding dances. Their polished pieces had glitz and glamour, adding to the great variety in the show.

The dance show always provides dances with entertainment value and the staff dance and the sports coaches

dance certainly provided that. The staff strutted their stuff to Raining Men and the coaches, who came up with the theme for the show, had their own mix of tunes from various decades.

Sports coach Cameron Brady owned the stage as Rick Astley and Kenni Gray didn't let being on crutches stop him from having his moment on the stage.





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BUSINESS NEWS

Call for delay on air traffic control centralisation plan

Scotland's three islands councils have called for a moratorium on HIAL's plans to centralise air traffic control services pending an Islands Communities Impact Assessment as legislated for under the Islands Act.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has joined Shetland and Orkney Islands Councils to ask for the delay following HIAL's decision to move forward with the centralisation of ATC to Inverness.

The controversial move was debated in the Scottish Parliament last week when it was condemned by many Highland and Island MSPs.

Airports affected by the centralisation proposals include Stornoway and Benbecula.

HIAL is a public company owned by Scottish ministers who have been asked to intervene in the proposals that would see jobs being lost in the islands.

A spokesperson for the islands councils said: 'A full Islands Communities Impact Assessment should be carried out before any more work is carried out on the centralisation of ATC services.'

'Centralisation will lose skilled island jobs, and could also curtail the future development of the island airports.'

Tiree project boost for fishing industry

The island of Tiree has received a long-term boost to its fishing industry from the timely delivery of a project by a community enterprise.

Tiree Community Maritime Assets Ltd has completed the much-needed refurbishment of Milton Harbour and the creation of covered landing and sorting facilities.

The project cost £1,164,955 in total, including just under £350,000 from Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE). It has improved the harbour by raising the height of the quays, extending the pier and providing a new quayside facility.

Tiree's five shellfish boats can now tie up and unload safely, and sort their catch efficiently in the new shed, resulting in increased capacity and improved catch quality.

Fisherman Neil MacPhail said: 'Since we have moved back into Milton, the pier improvements have proved to be everything we had hoped for and more. Loading the catch is taking half the time with so much less manual input and more space. The buyer is extremely happy with packaging and grading under cover in the shed and the resulting catch quality.'

'For the first winter in 25 years, I am looking forward to sleeping peacefully when there are southerly gales and spring tides.'



The new pier extension and under cover facilities, Milton Harbour, Tiree, showing Neil MacPhail's boat Swiftsure tied up alongside. Photograph: Andy Wright/Tiree Community Development Trust.

Morag Goodfellow, HIE's area manager for Argyll and the Islands, added: 'We were keen to support this project as improved pier facilities mean a secure future for the Tiree fleet. This is a huge benefit, allowing safe berthing in all weathers and increased capacity and quality of the catch. In practical terms, this investment

means up to 20 good jobs are secured on the island, with all fishermen and most of their crews local to Tiree. This contributes to the local economy and community resilience, including supporting the schools on Tiree and Islay. We congratulate the Tiree Community Maritime Assets Ltd.'

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Inverlussa launches its newest vessel

by Jacob Rawley
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Inverlussa Marine Services' 12th vessel was launched last Thursday.

The Helen Rice was launched from the Ferguson Marine Shipyard, Port Glasgow, where it was built.

The 21-metre-long vessel has been designed by Macduff Ship Design in collaboration with Inverlussa, Scotland's leading workboat operators.

Its purpose is specifically for aquaculture multirole mooring and grid work, along with general site services. The vessel will be put straight to work as it has been contracted with a leading salmon producer.

The Helen Rice will create more than 70 jobs between the crew and shore-staff.

She was officially named during the launch ceremony by Camilla Wilson, wife of Inverlussa's managing director Ben Wilson.



Mr Wilson said: 'We were delighted to build this vessel in Scotland. I would like to thank Ferguson Marine and their

workforce for delivering such a well-crafted vessel. We are looking forward to the Helen Rice starting work providing im-

portant services to the Scottish fish farm industry. This vessel continues our strategy of investing in the best vessels and crew.'

HIE offers course to help firms begin exporting

This spring, Highlands and Islands Enterprise is sharing exporting knowledge in a series of events, including in the Outer Hebrides.

If your business is thinking about taking its first steps towards international trade and wants to learn more about overseas markets, this is an introduction to exporting you can't afford to miss.

Interested businesses are being asked to sign up now for a session delivering: two-hour Preparing to Export taster session delivered by Giraffe Consulting; an understanding of the benefits of developing trade in international markets; essential practical information needed to start exporting; information on support for businesses; insights from a successful local exporting business; and one-to-one meetings with an export adviser.

Delegates will be given an overview of international trade basics. This will include effective costing and pricing, negotiating agency and distribution agreements.

The Outer Hebrides event is on Friday February 28 from 9.30am to 1pm at Kinloch Historical Society, Balallan, Isle of Lewis.



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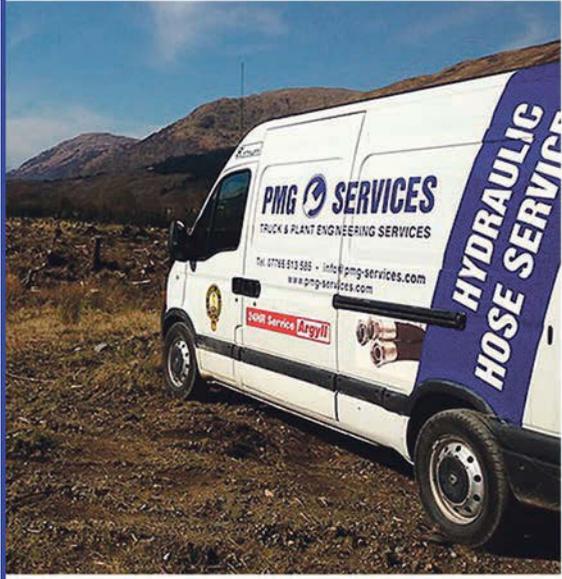
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Charities given £7,000 boost from sale of CD

A fantastic £7,000 has been donated to the RNLI Islay lifeboat station and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) in memory of Donald and Katie MacLeod of Portnahaven, Islay.

The cash was raised through sales of Donald's most recent CD *Gad Chuimh-neachadh* (Remembering You). Readers may recall his previous CD *Ant-eilean Mor* raised monies for the Islay and Jura Sick Children's Fund.

Donald was one of Argyll's most talented singers who remained a modest man despite his success. He attained both junior and senior medals at the Islay Mòd before winning the National Mòd Gold Medal in 1952 in Rothesay. He was inducted into the Traditional Music Hall of Fame in 2011.

The money raised will allow the lifeboat to receive a range of operational and fundraising equipment. The SCAA will put the windfall towards crucial maintenance and running costs.

Katie MacLeod took many Islay patients to the various air ambulances during her 20 years as a night nurse at Islay hospital. Her father, Charles MacArthur, also held his Certificate of Efficiency as a lifeboatman, so the charity choices were especially appropriate.

Islay MacEachern at the RNLI said: 'We are very grateful that the legacy of Donald's wonderful voice will be put to work in saving lives.'

Nick Harvey from SCAA added: 'We are delighted to receive these funds in memory of Donald and Katie.'

The CD sold across Scotland and as far afield as Australia, USA, New Zealand and Canada.

Donald's daughter, Fiona Lock, passed on sincere thanks to the businesses and shops on Islay and the mainland who sold the CD. She said: 'It was a real team effort, what with dad's singing, his grandson Calum assisting in production, businesses selling the CD without taking a commission and so many people buying it. And all of us in Argyll benefit from the services of RNLI and SCAA.'

The CD is available from amazon or from www.birnacdshop.com.

With a gun to the h

Morvern Lines

IAIN THORNER

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Muzzleloaders are firearms, including cannons, into which the projectile and the gunpowder charge is loaded from the muzzle of the gun, as the name implies.

The sequence of loading is to put in first the gunpowder, by pouring in a measured amount of loose powder. Sometimes two types of gunpowder were used consisting of finer priming powder for the flash pan and coarser powder for the main charge behind the ball. This was particularly the case with early muzzleloaders such as matchlocks, but appears to have been less common with flintlocks and was irrelevant with percussion locks since they used percussion caps instead of priming powder. Wadding was made from felt, paper, cloth or card. In shotguns, the wad was used between the powder and the shot charge to prevent pellets from dropping into the powder charge, and on top of the shot charge to hold it in place in the barrel.

The projectiles and wads were then pushed down into the breech with a ramrod until they were firmly seated on the gunpowder charge. Priming powder could be carried in a separate priming flask and poured into the priming pan and the frizzen. The frizzen, historically called the 'hammer' or the steel, is an L-shaped piece of steel hinged at the front used in flintlock firearms and is held in one of two positions, opened or closed, by a leaf spring, pushed down to hold the priming powder in place. Then either a priming charge was placed in the priming pan or a percussion cap was placed on the nipple; the cock or hammer was then pulled back and the weapon was ready to fire.

The bullets in today's rifles are brought up into the chamber from a magazine by a single movement of a bolt. Before, everything had to go down the barrel. There was much that could and often did go wrong, which meant that a lot of extra kit had to be carried by the shooter. This included wadding patches and lubricant, powder and shot flasks, powder measure, bullet starter, worm, jag and ball screws, nipple, nipple prick and nipple wrench.

Powder flasks were made in a variety of materials and shapes, though ferrous metals that were prone to give off sparks when hit were usually avoided. Wood and copper were also popular, as was stag antler formed by the base of an inverted Y-shaped horn. So,



too, were round, flattened pear-shape designs with straight spouts known in French as 'poudre-poudre' (powder pear). Larger flasks, triangular in shape with concave rounded sides which, unlike the smaller flasks, could be stood upright on a surface.

Many designs (such as horn and antler types) have a wide sealed opening for filling, and a thin spout for dispensing. Various devices were used to load a precise amount of powder, as it was important not to load too much or too little powder.

The most impressive Scottish 17th and 18th century powder horns were those made from cow horn softened by heat and flattened to give two broad surfaces as seen in the accompanying photograph. The base of the horn is shut off by a wooden plug held in place by

iron or copper nails. This was a permanent fixture and was not removed for filling the horn. The sharp end was cut away to form a nozzle with a wooden stopper for releasing the powder. Most powder horns had holes or lugs in order that they could be carried round the neck or over the shoulder by a cord or leather thong. Being flat, they lay against the wearer's side more comfortably than the round type.

The fascinating thing about most of these flattened powder horns is their attractive decoration, dates and initials. In the example shown, the date is 1605 along with a ship sailing into the wind, two salmon and a heart with two arrows through it and the initials PML, as well as some intricate Celtic artwork. On the reverse are the words 'John Spence', 'God Blis' [Bless] and an unfinished Celtic cir-

What's your favourite recipe?

Slimming World beef stroganoff?

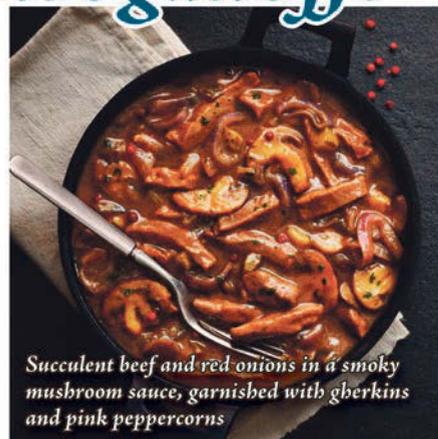
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Method:

1. First, put all the sauce ingredients in a medium-size saucepan. Add 450ml boiling water and bring to the boil over a high heat. Cover, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Remove from the heat and, without draining, whizz until smooth using a stick blender or food processor.
2. Spray a deep, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a high heat. Add the mushrooms and red onion and fry for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the steak and stir-fry for a further 5 minutes, then add the gherkins, peppercorns and sauce. Bring to a simmer and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir through the quark. Season to taste and serve with your favourite Speed vegetables.

Ingredients

- Low-calorie cooking spray
 - 300g mushrooms, sliced
 - 1 red onion, sliced
 - 600g lean sirloin steak, visible fat removed, thinly sliced
 - 60g small gherkins, finely chopped
 - 2 tsp pink peppercorns
 - 100g plain quark
- For the sauce:
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
 - ½ x 400g can cannellini beans, drained
 - 150g cauliflower, cut into small florets
 - ½ tbsp Marmite • 1 beef stock cube
 - 2 large garlic cloves, peeled
 - 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce • ½ tsp paprika



Succulent beef and red onions in a smoky mushroom sauce, garnished with gherkins and pink peppercorns

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ill – part two



Castle Tioram in Moidart where Donald MacDonald sat taking pot-shots at anything that moved and, inset, an ornate powder horn made from a flattened cow horn dated 1605. Photographs: Iain Thornber

As good an example was Donald MacDonald, the 10th chief of Clanranald, who died in 1686 on Canna. Like most of his ancestors, Donald was a keen hunter, and his favourite gun was called 'A chubhag' – the cuckoo.

According to tradition, he was more fond of it than his wife. It was his constant companion during the day and when he retired for the night, it hung by his bed.

When Donald, who lived in Castle Tioram in Moidart, became old, fat and too infirm to hunt in the surrounding woods and hills, he would spend hours sitting on the battlements of Castle Tioram with the 'cuckoo' on his knee.

From this elevated position, he would take pot-shots at everything he saw, including seals, gulls, herons and even humans, whom he thought were stealing from him. Generally, passers-by gave the castle a wide berth knowing what would happen if the 'cuckoo' was pointed in their direction.

On one occasion, however, Donald saw an object which he took to be a sheep-stealer crouching by a rock several hundred yards away and, taking aim, killed a young man who turned out to be one of his best followers.

Another man who loved his gun was Athole Mackeracher, or Farquharson, known as Lonavey, from the Gaelic lonach, greedy, and fiadh, deer, meaning a jealously keen deer-hunter. Lonavey, who was a well known deer poacher around Atholl and Braemar, escaped being caught because he knew of a secret cave on a nearby hill called Carn an Righ, where he could always find sanctuary.

Lovany's luck eventually ran out and, realising he was going to be caught and sent to prison, he filled the barrel of his beloved gun with deer-fat and left it and his dirk on a ledge in the cave so that if he was caught, it would not be taken from him, and would be ready for him when his term of imprisonment was over. Lonavey died in prison.

Years later, quite by chance, the cave was discovered by another poacher whom he met in prison and had told him of its existence. The gun and dirk were still there but disintegrated on being handled. As far as I know its exact location remains a mystery. Do any readers know?

cle. It would be idle to speculate what all this signifies when the provenance is not known, but possibly John Spence was the horner who carved it, and PML the recipient.

The fish-scale motifs, which appear on both sides, the ship and the salmon, suggests he may have been a fisherman and that the love-heart showed it had been given to him by his wife or a female admirer.

Firearms and their accoutrements, such as powder flasks, were handed down in families for generations. They were admired and cherished not only for their decoration but, in the case of guns, their accuracy and killing power. This was especially so among the duanie-uasal (Gaelic – the Highland nobility) who had the where-with-all to buy the finest examples available at the time.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This photograph from 1997 is of the Lochaber Agricultural Show committee. Seen here are secretary Isabel Campbell, seated right, with assistants Nora Gillies, Linda Campbell, Lianne Campbell and Linda MacEwan.



There is precious little information about this sunny photograph other than the wee ones are doing the lucky dip at Appin fete in 1997.

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LETTERS

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Scourge of illegal drugs is a complex problem to tackle

There has been considerable comment in the Oban area in recent days regarding the drugs scene here.

One national newspaper reported the recent death of 'Oban's only drug dealer' as a result of a suspected overdose.

The persistent concern over illegal drugs is an enduring one and it is a problem that is highly complex.

Indeed, there are many different approaches advocated by the many people tasked with tackling this scourge. Some have argued for decriminalising whereas others insist of harsher penalties, including longer prison sentences.

Illegal drugs hurt not only those who are addicted but their families and friends. They are also a major cause of crime as addicts struggle to feed their habits.

There is no easy solution but it is heartening to report this week that for Police Scotland, the issue remains one of its top priorities.

Heroes help to weather these winter storms

Storm Ciara, one of the strongest on record, blasted in over the weekend and caused considerable disruption, particularly to ferries and other forms of transport.

Fortunately, we have had no reports of anyone becoming seriously injured or worse by the storm but there has been damage and inconvenience.

Spare a thought for those who have been affected but also for the emergency services who had to respond to help those in trouble, including Oban lifeboat's crew who put to sea in dreadful conditions to help those in peril.

We owe them all a debt of gratitude.

SNP government blameless

As an objective elector and not a member of any political party, I find J C Hanlon of Taynuilt's letter headlined 'SNP government has its priorities all wrong' odd.

Ascribing the specific litany of issues to 'our SNP controllers', whoever they might be, is inaccurate.

The list starts with the 'two unstable flagship hospitals'. The respective health boards engaged Multiplex as the design and build contractor. As far as I can observe, the cabinet secretary has been taking firm action with each board. Good – she should be commended for this.

Regarding the stability of school buildings, it seems clear those local authorities commissioning the work strayed from the traditional method of having their own inspectors on site through public private partnership design and build schemes that pre-dated the current Scottish Government.

There is certainly a structural issue between the SPA and the Police for the Scottish Government to sort, coupled with the need for some local oversight and an increased capital budget.

The golf course planning application at Coul Links has yet to be reported on. I may be close to J C Hanlon's view here after the Menie decision but opinion on a pattern is premature.

Similarly with the two ferry vessels where a parliamentary inquiry is under way, I observe though this is another design and build contract, this time placed by CMAL.

It has been the fashion in several industries in recent years in the UK and USA to adopt design and build procurement. In theory, this saves design time which many professionals believe would have been sound investment and consequently shifts the risk from client to contractor, increasing costs.

I believe this trend has been a mistake for which we will eventually pay the price. But all of this is some distance from the Scottish Government, which is having to pick up the cost and seems, wrongly, to be getting the blame too.

John C Hutchison, Chartered Engineer.

Adhere to the red line

A red line is only a red line when political parties adhere to it.

In Scotland, 62 per cent voted to remain in the European Union. In any democratic union of equals, Scotland's decision to remain

YOUR PICTURES



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in the European Union would not have been ignored by Unionist MPs and MSPs elected to represent the views of their constituents.

Internationalism sees nations working together. Brexit, on the other hand, has seen the rise of unhealthy British/English nationalism that has not been in existence since

those awful days of Empire expansionism when the British revelled in building their Empire. Thankfully, those days are over. They just haven't realised it. Yes, individuals in Britain benefited greatly, including Scots, but all at the expense of the residents of those countries that Britain invaded.



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Fort William. This week's wintry photograph was taken by Gary Bray, and was taken looking through the old Kinlochleven boathouse to the Beinn na Cailleach.

ing the European Union as an independent nation.

The one thing that SNP MPs and MSPs must do is back up their commitments made to the electorate. That obviously includes the Scottish Government's red line to take Scotland back into the European Union. Anything less would obviously be a betrayal of trust. That will never happen because those elected SNP members have already shown their commitment to Scotland.

Brexit has certainly increased support for a second Scottish independence referendum and Scotland's re-entry into the European Union. The SNP and the Scottish Government have made it clear time and again that Scotland will rejoin the European Union.

Bill Clark, Fort William.

A good, kindly neighbour

It was interesting to read the obituary for Mrs Anne Reynolds MBE in The Oban Times.

She was our neighbour on Lochetiveside for nearly 40 years, since we came to live up here, and was a very dear and kind friend to us for all that time. We miss her greatly and were saddened by her sudden disappearance from our lives.

My husband and I would like to acknowledge her great kindness to us and all the fun and laughter we shared with her and her late husband Mike for so many years.

In your article about her, you said she liked to serve her guests with food she had procured herself.

In her obituary in The Times of January 2, it said whether it was fish or mussels from the loch, mushrooms from the hill or her favourite 'roadkill', at her dinner parties she liked to say the pheasant she served up had often been scraped off the road the night before by the headlights of her car!

We were fortunate to have had our long association with such a good, kindly neighbour who brought such fun and interest to our lives.

Viola Stephenson, Dunfraoch, North Connel, Argyll.

HAVE YOUR SAY
email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk

Like now, Britain didn't play by any moral rules. Broken vows are common place in politics. With more than 80 per cent of the population, England is certainly the dominant partner in this unequal union of nations.

After watching Farage and friends celebrating Brexit, I look forward to Scotland rejooin-

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Chan e dubh a dh'fhuathai-cheas, 's chan e geal a ghràdh-icheas! Bheil an seanfhacal seo freagarrach mar bheachd air mòran de na tha sinn a' faicinn ann an saoghal spòrs an-dràsta?

Gu mì-fhortanach chan e rud ùr sam bith a th' ann an gràin-cinnidh ann an saoghal ball-coise fiù 's an lùib sgiobaidhean aois sgoile, ach nach saoilamaid gun robh sìobhal-tas na dùthcha air tighinn gu ìre 's nach fhaicte leithid seo tuilleadh.

Chan ann mar sin a tha agus 's còir dhuinn a bhith a' faighneachd carson a tha e fairtleachadh air siostam foghlaim agus bunaithean modha cur às dhan chleachdadh mhaslach seo.

Cho fad 's is aithne dhomh chan ann air dath craicinn a tha an seanfhacal a' cuimseachadh idir ach air na dathan dubh is geal mar shamhlaidhean air math is dona, ach carson a bhiodh cluicheadair ball-coise tàlantach dubh a' fulang droch bheul air sgàth a dhath?

Am bheil nàdar gràin-cinnidh annainn gun fhiosta dhuinn mar dhileab bho linn impireachd san robh sluagh geal Bhreatainn a' gabhail làmh-an-uachdar air daoine de

gach dath anns na dùthchannan air an do ghabh Breatann sealbh? Saoilidh mi nach eil sin ceart, ged a tha gun teagamh gràin-cinnidh ri fhaicinn is ri chluinntinn am measg shean is òg, 's gun fhianais sam bith carson a tha sin a' tachairt.

Ann an saoghal ball-coise tha farmad na phàirt den trioblaid is daoine mothachail air na tuarastail a tha cluicheadairean a' cosnadh, agus theagamh gum bheil na bhios anns na meadhanan mun bheartas sin agus mu bheatha chluicheadairean a' cur ri geur-leanmhainn.

Chan eil teagamh nach eil dòigh bruidhne agus cainnt air atharrachadh thar nam bliadhnaichean agus cluinnear is leughte rudan an-diugh nach ceadaicheadh modh àbhaisteach caogad bliadhna air ais.

Ged a tha na meadhanan gu ìre nan sgàthan air a' choimhearsnachd a tha iad a' frithealadh tha buaidh mhòr aca cuideachd air mar a tha daoine gan giùlan fhèin, agus canaidh cuid gum bheil dleastanas orra a bhith nas fhaiceallaiche a thaobh an cuid taghaidh naidheachdan agus an dòigh sam bheil iad sin air a' sgrìobhadh neo aithris.

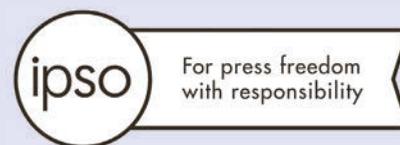
Tha sinn le ceartas a' cur luach air saorsa bheachd agus tuigidh neach sam bith gur e sgainneal an innleachd as fheàrr gus pàipearan-naidheachd a reic, agus chan eil sin dol a dh'atharrachadh. Ach gabhaidh cainnt atharrachadh!

Deagh eisimpleir air an deireadh seachdain seo chaidh is cuid anns na meadhanan ag aithris air toiseach air geama rugbaidh Cuach Chalcutta gun robh gràin aig Alba air Sasainn! Tha e tur ceàrr farpais chruaidh sam bith a dhealbhadh mar 'ghràin' eadar na farpaisich, agus nach uasal a dhearbhadh gach sgioba an càirdeas le crathadh làimhe aig deireadh cùise.

Ach tha còir aig luchd-deasachaidh nam prògraman spòrs air telebhisean agus rèidio ealla agus smachd a ghabhail air cainnt bhuaireasach gun tùr!

Disappointed to watch Scotland lose the Calcutta Cup to England last Saturday. Disappointed also to hear commentators talking of Scotland 'hating' England. Editors should curb idiotic, inflammatory language.

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



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

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OT

DISTRICT NEWS

ISLAY

Three teams from Islay High School have reached the semi-finals of the Student Investor Challenge, outperforming more than 9,000 teams from schools across the UK.

Islay High School shared the news on its social media page, writing: 'Well done to Kinga, Innes, PJ, Ross, Stewart, Sarah and Mirren. The online semi-final runs from February 17 to March 13. Best of luck to them all.'

The competition, run by the London Institute of Banking and Finance, challenges teams of school children to invest virtual money on the London Stock Exchange.

The top three teams from Islay made a combined profit of more than £38,000, trading with a virtual £100,000, between October and January.

TAYNUILT

Ladies in Taynuilt are preparing to mark International Women's Day on Saturday March 7.

There will be a series of events and workshops throughout the day and night.

The event's poster reads: 'When women support each other, incredible things happen. Come and have a cuppa, try something new, join in the fun or just drop in and see what's going on.'

The free events are open to all women aged over 16. The programme will be released soon.

OBAN

A great time was had by everyone at Oban Bowling Club's recent quiz, hosted by Alex Carmichael.

There was an exciting finish with Donna's Boys just pipping the Golden Girls by one point.

The club hopes to have another quiz soon when teams will be out to topple Donna's Boys from the top.

Over the next two weeks there will be Friday night social evenings including chat, dominoes and curling, with the Joker being drawn around

Isle of Eriska Hotel staff game for a laugh



Isle of Eriska Hotel staff took a welcome day off recently to enjoy some of the pursuits often enjoyed by their guests. Around 30 members of the 50-strong workforce took up the challenges of axe throwing, archery and clay pigeon shooting during the annual games day, which continued into the evening when everyone enjoyed food and ceilidh music at Cuan Mor, Oban.



8.30pm. Come along and join in the fun.

MULL

The annual quiz night in Aros Hall, Tobermory, will take place on Saturday February 15.

Tickets for the event, entitled 'Wisdom and Wine', cost £9 and include supper. There is a maximum of six people per team and there will

be a prize for the best teammate. To register your team, email aroscommittee@gmail.com

WESTERN ISLES

Concern over the lack of affordable housing in Harris and Barra has been voiced by Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus B MacNeil.

Mr MacNeil has taken representations from people in Harris and

Barra who are concerned about the lack of house building to the Hebridean Housing Partnership.

Mr MacNeil said: 'Concerns have been expressed in Harris and Barra that the lack of affordable housing is resulting in difficulties for young people and families wishing to remain in these areas.'

'I appreciate Hebridean Housing Partnership may have difficulties in securing land to build houses, but

some means must be found to make land available for housing to ensure there are people to run our tourism, care and the other services needed within the islands.'

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At random

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



Business opportunities

I have been sorry to see a number of businesses in the centre of Oban going to the wall.

In Argyll Street, Abbies Cafe has apparently closed, as did the cafe across the road which was at one time home to Hope Kitchen and most recently the SNP base for the general election.

Then there is the Fonehouse in Argyll Square which is to shut, as is the long-standing David Graham Cycles in Combie Street, where the eponymous owner has said he is retiring after an amazing 50 years.

All these businesses have had varying longevity, but have been welcome additions to the town's retail offering. The winter, though, can be harsh in more ways than just the weather.

To try to stay positive, however, these are centrally located premises that could be ideal for new ventures driven by fresh thinking.

I am sure BID4Oban will be on the case and working to market the premises. I hope new businesses can be found quickly to move in to keep the town's retail sector bustling.

Dark forces at work

You couldn't make it up. I have written twice about the faulty lighting in Lochside Street and Market Street, Oban, where pedestrians have to negotiate uneven pavements in darkness.

I first raised this in November and returned to the subject late last month having reported it to Argyll and Bute Council weeks ago.

Then on Wednesday last week - February 5 2020 - an email dropped in my inbox from the council, saying: "Thank you for contacting the council about lighting fault reference: 191210-000739."

'Our inspector has programmed a repair to be carried out with a target completion date of 25/12/2019.'

By any reading of it, that would have been Christmas Day last year.

But, no, at the time of writing the repairs have still not been carried out.

What do you think?

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

Islay vet nurse ventures into Africa

Iona Scott, a first-year veterinary nursing student, will be travelling to South Africa this summer to work at the Welgevonden Game Reserve.

The reserve is home to more than 50 mammals and 300 different species of birds.

Iona, who attended Islay High School and now studies at the SRUC Barony Campus near Dumfries, said it is 'the opportunity of a lifetime'.

She will travel to the Limpopo Province of South Africa in May where she will spend two weeks at the reserve.

She will be working with the conservation and research team at their premises. These are the people who monitor the ecosystem of the wildlife reserve on a day to day basis.

This allows her an opportunity

to put into practice what she has already learned in her course. Iona said the hands-on experience will benefit her development.

She will also have the chance to work with rare and exotic animals native to that part of the world.

To fund the trip, which will cost more than £2,000, Iona has been saving and selling items at car boot sales and online. She is also looking for donations and sponsors.



Iona Scott is raising money to cover the cost of her visit to Africa.

Islanders pay homage to vegan haggis

Saturday February 1 saw the Puffer Bar and Restaurant host Easdale Island's first vegan Burns Supper. A packed restaurant heard recitations, tunes and details of Rabbie's life. The Address to the Haggis was given, in Russian, by Samantha Payne, right, while Jan Fraser, left, recited Tam O'Shanter from memory. Both were wonders to behold. What will next year's Burns Supper bring?



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OUTDOORS

Show your love for Glencoe this Valentine's Day

The National Trust for Scotland is asking people to show their love for Glencoe this month by giving a Hug of Heather.

This new campaign will help thatch the roof on a reconstruction of a long-lost 17th-century turf cottage.

Six hundred hug-sized bundles of heather are required for the roof of the turf house, which is being carefully crafted to give a glimpse of how Highlanders lived and worked in the 17th century in Scotland's most famous glen.

People can donate to get a 'hug' of heather in their name or a loved one's. Supporters will receive a Hug of Heather card to personalise and their own packet of heather seeds to give to their Valentine or to plant at home, offering a long-lasting reminder of the contribution they've made to Scotland's heritage.

Emily Bryce, operations manager at Glencoe, said: 'Giving a hug of heather is a Valentine's gift with a difference – perfect for those looking for a thoughtful expression of their affection for a loved one who shares their passion for Scotland's mountain heritage. 'We've already had so much support for our campaign to unearth the forgotten history of Glencoe and this project wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of our supporters.'

Donations start at £20 for one hug of heather and you can find out more about the campaign at www.nts.org.uk/campaigns/hugs-of-heather.

Plan a visit to Glencoe at: www.nts.org.uk/glencoe



£2 million for the world's first rewilding centre in Highlands

Trees for Life is to establish the world's first rewilding centre in the Highlands – thanks to more than £2 million of support from the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund led by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other sources.

The groundbreaking centre will be at Dundreggan, the charity's 10,000-acre estate in Glenmoriston. It is expected to welcome more than 50,000 visitors annually – allowing people to explore stunning wild landscapes, discover Gaelic culture, and learn about the region's unique wildlife, including golden eagles, pine martens, red squirrels and wood ants.

The centre will boost the rural economy by providing a new attraction on the journey between Loch Ness and Skye, and benefit the local community through at least 15 new jobs.

'It will celebrate the Highlands' greatest assets – the wild landscapes and unique wildlife.'

'Dundreggan Rewilding Centre will showcase how rewilding and nature can give people amazing experiences, create jobs and really benefit local communities. It will celebrate one of the Highlands' greatest assets – the wild landscapes and unique wildlife being returned through rewilding,' said Steve Micklewright, Trees for Life's chief executive.

'Dundreggan has become a beacon of how to rewild a landscape. With this centre, it will become a beacon for rewilding people too.'

An all-weather visitor centre, cafe and events space will act as the gateway to fully accessible trails, child-friendly forest experiences and more adventurous walks. These will enable families and people with specific needs to get out into wild landscapes and get involved in rewilding.

Announcing the award from the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund, SNH chief executive Francesca Osowska said: 'A key priority for SNH is to help ensure tourism and other



The rewilding centre will be Dundreggan, Glenmoriston. Photograph: Trees for Life.

sectors benefit from, and invest in, Scotland's high-quality environment.

'Nature and culture are closely linked in the Highlands and Islands, and in many places they are central to the local economy, maintaining rural populations, jobs and skills.'

The core of the centre will include displays and interpretation in English and Gaelic, a cafe, classrooms, Gaelic resource centre and events space. Outdoor facilities will include fully accessible trails, children's forest experience area and more challenging trails.

The centre will provide events and experiences for visitors to the area, and groups with specific needs – such as those with physical or learning disabilities, families, schools and other groups.

The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund has granted £714,000, while the National Lottery Heritage Fund has given initial support for a grant of £783,000. And £630,000 of other funding has been secured to enable the core of the centre to be constructed. Trees for Life is now seeking additional funding, including to

power and heat the centre in a sustainable way. The rewilding centre has been developed following extensive consultation with the local community. Ten per cent of residents responded to requests for feedback, and all were overwhelmingly positive.

Planning permission in principle was granted by Highland Council in April 2019, and Trees for Life will apply for full planning permission this year. Construction should begin in early 2021, with the centre opening in 2022.

At Dundreggan, Trees for Life is protecting and expanding globally important fragments of Scotland's ancient Caledonian Forest. The estate is home to more than 4,000 plant and animal species – including several never recorded in the UK before or once feared extinct in Scotland.

Trees for Life is dedicated to rewilding the Highlands. Its volunteers have established nearly two million native trees at dozens of sites, encouraging wildlife to flourish and helping communities to thrive.

See www.treesforlife.org.uk.

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This week's walks



Andrea Hudspeth of Aquila Ecology.

Spring nature watch event is planned for Loch Earn

Places are available at Loch Earn Nature Watch in the private garden of an ancient thatched cottage in Lochearnhead, where nature lovers can enjoy waterside wildlife with the benefit of professional guides.

Loch Earn tourism business owners Kim and Fraser Proven, of Briar Cottages, and Andrea Hudspeth of Aquila Ecology, have collaborated to offer a series of lochside nature viewing events as part of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters.

The first event in the series is on

Sunday May 17 at 10.30am. The two-hour, adult-only session, will take place in Lochearnhead.

Binoculars and telescopes will be supplied by Andrea and ornithologist Terry Williams of Aquila Ecology, who are based in St Fillans. The nature-loving pair will lead the watch, sharing information on Loch Earn's resident wildlife and summer visitors.

Andrea said: 'I love what I do, whether its consultancy, surveys, training or leading local bird-craft walks and nature tours at home or

further afield. We expect to see a variety of garden birds, bees and butterflies, though the icing on the cake will be spotting ospreys and golden eagles.'

Spaces are limited. For full terms, information and to secure a place email: info@aquilaecologyscotland.co.uk. Tickets cost £6 per person. Places are offered on a first to book basis.

Summer and autumn Loch Earn nature watch events have been announced for July 12 and September 13, 2020.

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader should be contacted beforehand for meet-up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk
Saturday February 15, Loch Teacuis, Morvern.

Take the A861 road from Ardgour towards Strontian (approx nine miles), then turn left onto the A884 towards Lochaline.

At NM696494 shortly before Ardtornish, turn right onto the Loch Teacuis road. The walk starts at the end of the public road near Kinlochteacuis NM656541, take track W to loch shore, then NW through forest to Barr River at NM619560. Take path on left before bridge to Barr 300m on.

Return to bridge and cross. Continue NW passing Poll Achad Luachrach on right and on to end of track at Eilean nan Eildean, where there is a viewing platform for views of Loch Sunart and islands. Return by same route.

Grade: L. Distance: 14km. Height to climb: 200m. Maps: LR49 & EX383. Meet at Corran Ferry slip NN021635 for 0915 sailing. Start of walk 1015. Leader: TBC.

Thursday February 20, Stob Ghabhar & Stob a'Choire Odhair.

A fine circuit of Coire Toaig on some of the splendid ridges and summits of the Black Mount.

Start from the CP at NN270418, 300m before Victoria Bridge. Follow a short path NE to rejoin the road, cross Victoria Bridge and turn left at Forest Lodge. Follow the track W by the Abhainn Shira to a small building at NN256425. Turn N on to the path that follows the Allt Toaig. After about 2km, cross the Allt Toaig where convenient to gain access to the spur of Aonach Eagach. A faint path may be found. Head NW up the spur which narrows to a crest and follow it to a summit, 991m. The ridge curves W around the rim of the magnificent Coirein Lochain leading to the summit of Stob Ghabhar, 1090m. Return to the 991m summit then descend N down the ridge which soon curves E to reach a col at 668m. Continue E up to the summit of Stob a'Choire Odhair, 945m.

Descend SW at first on bouldery ground and locate a good stalkers' path which leads S and zig-zags down to the Allt Toaig path at NN253446. Return by the outward route.

Grade: S. Distance: 18km. Height to climb: 1188m. Map(s): LR50, EX374/384. Meet at: Glencoe Car Park 0845. Start of walk: 0930. Leader: Andrew Gilbert 07808 924722.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Full walk details at www.nevis.hillwalking.club. If anyone would like to go on a walk, contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevishillwalking.club

Sunday February 16, Beinn na h-Uamha, Sgurr a' Chaorainn and Sgurr na Laire, Glen Gour.

Although barely a Corbett this hill is the highest point on a remote, steep-sided rocky massif that occupies an area extending over nine square kilometres. The main walk describes a through-route to Ariundle.

Crossing the River Gour may be difficult. Three possible crossing points, E to W, are:-

1. Lub an t-Saoir, NM936644.
2. Opposite the end of the footpath on the N bank, NM933646.
3. At the confluence with the Allt Dubh Bealach nan Aingidh, NM925647.

If it is necessary to go further still upstream, consider tackling these hills via Coire na Laire or *continuing directly to Ariundle.

Start from the bend in the loop road off the A861 at Sallachan, NM978629, where limited roadside parking is available. Head S for about 100m to a gateway then turn W on a track into Glen Gour. After 4.5km, cross the River Gour where convenient. If the crossing is made at or in the vicinity of WPs 1 or 2 above, climb the SE ridge of Beinn na h-Uamha to its summit.

If the river cannot be crossed until WP 3 or nearby, head N and climb the steep ridge just to the W of the Allt Daraich to reach the summit. Descend W around the rim of Coire na Laire, then climb steeply to the summit

of Sgurr a' Chaorainn*. Follow the ridge W down to Bealach Mam a' Bhearna, 493m, then drop steeply into Strontian Glen. A faint path may be found that leads W to the ruin at Ceann a' Chreagain. Follow the track SW to the TIC at Ariundle. Transport required, 16mins from start.

*An alternative route avoids the logistics of the through-route and returns to Sallachan:-

From the summit of Sgurr a' Chaorainn, descend S to a spur, continuing to a col, 577m, then climb E to the summit of Sgurr na Laire. Return to the col and descend E into Coire Laire, curving SE to reach a path on the N side of the River Gour. Rejoin the outward route back to the start.

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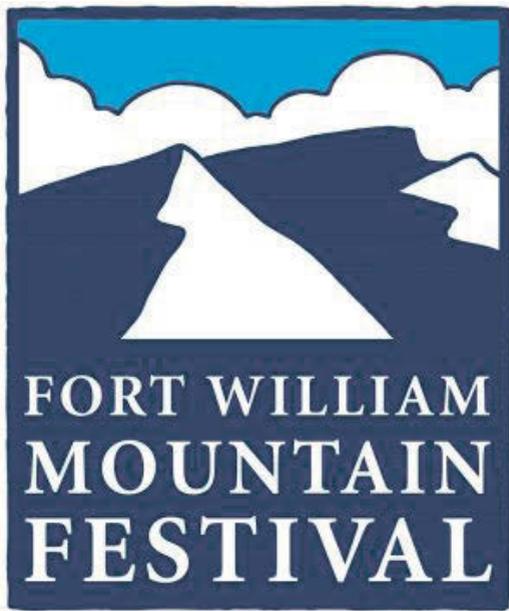
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The 2020 Fort William Mountain Festival is launching on Wednesday. The launch will be held in Fort William High Street in Cameron Square where there will be music, live-streaming of exciting events, and by popular demand the return of FlameOZ with fire and juggling. Things will start to happen around 6.00pm and end around 9.00pm. You don't need a ticket for this just come along and enjoy. Please be aware of road safety rules and come and join us for this event safely!

FESTIVAL

LAUNCH PARTY

Wednesday

19th February 2020

6:00pm

Cameron Square,
High Street Fort William



THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF THINGS TO DO, SEE AND EXPLORE

The International Film Night & the Photographer of the Year Awards Thursday 20 February - Main Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

Hosted by Paul Duffley of Hot Aches Productions. Audiences are invited to relax at a night of award-winning outdoor adventure films. The winners of the 2020 competition categories will be announced: People's Choice, Best Short Film, Best Mountain Sports Film, Best Exploration and Adventure Film and the John Muir Trust Wild Places Film Prize. The new 2019 Young Photographer of the Year Award will be presented.

The Climbers Summit

Thursday 20 February - Studio Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

Hosted by Mike Pescod of Abacus Mountain Guides. This session focuses on nutrition for climbing performance. Presenters include Sarah Kekus a nutritional therapist, Rebecca Dent is a high-performance dietician and Mina Leslie-Wujastyk is a rock climbing and bouldering competitor.

Bike Night

Friday 21 February - Main Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

Sponsored by Nevis Range.

Hosted by Emma Holgate. Speakers include Ben Cathro, who will introduce Cathrovision including outtakes and chat about the Downhill World Cup season 2019 with Q&As with some of the young'uns he is coaching, Katrina Brown, who will introduce her film all about motherhood and biking and Ed and Marion Shoote will chat about their epic Asia expedition on bikes.

Running Night

Friday 21 February - Studio Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

Hosted by Es Tressider who recently set his own Ramsay Round record. Speakers include Paul Tierney who set a new record round the Wainwrights and Anna McNuff who is running all around the UK barefoot!

Mountaineering Night with Nirmal 'Nims' Purja MBE

Saturday 22 February - Main Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

Meet and listen to Nims Purja, former Gurkha and British Special Forces soldier and mountaineer, to hear about his remarkable achievement, climbing all 14 of the Earth's 8000m peaks in a single season, six months and six days to be exact. The previous record was well over seven years.

SARDA: Meet the rescue dogs and puppies and learn about their training and experiences

The recipients of both The Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture and The Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture will receive their awards at a special ceremony. These prestigious awards recognise and celebrate lives spent in the hills, exploring everything the land has to offer whilst inspiring others along the way. The 2020 winners will be announced in early February.

Polar Night

Saturday 22 February - Studio Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

This is our Environment Night with a twist... The focus is on climate change and the effects of global warming in polar regions. Supported by the British Antarctic Survey scientists will share their research from living and working in Antarctica.

Festival Ceilidh

Saturday 22 February - Alexandra Hotel, Fort William - From 22:00 'til late

with Riska Ceilidh band. Everyone's welcome.

Matinee

Sunday 23 February - Main Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William - 16:00 - 18:00

Hosted by Ailsa Johnson-Ferguson. A collection of family friendly films from the International Film Competition to inspire adventurers of all ages. This is a non-ticketed event.

Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour

Sunday 23 February - Main Theatre, Nevis Centre, Fort William

A selection of the finest mountain films to entertain, enthrall and inspire from the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour

NEW FOR 2020

Secret Sessions - Thursday 20, Friday 21 & Saturday 22 February

Three Wise Monkeys Climbing, Fort William - 17:00 to 18:00

Reserve a place to meet an interesting and inspiring person - but you won't know who it is until you meet them. Surprise yourself! Food will be provided. Book your place through the Festival website.

The Exhibition Zone

The Exhibition Zone at the Nevis Centre opens daily before the main programme events and during intervals. There will be the usual mix of mountaineering exhibits, books and trade stands.

The Photographer of the Year Award 2020

The Photographer of the Year competition is open to both adult and youth (anyone aged 17 and under). Applicants have been invited to submit one photograph with the theme Mountain Moments, celebrating and expressing the love for the great outdoors, whether that is showing the achievements of people or taking us on a journey to a place that inspires. The judge is local photography legend and all-round mountain hero Alex Gillespie. The winning photographs will be displayed in the Exhibition Zone.

Workshop Programme

Festival organisers have put together a wide range of workshops with plenty of opportunities for both novices and experts alike to get out and about amidst the beautiful Lochaber winter landscape.

FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT: COME IN FOR OUR Mountain Festival Themed Quiz - 9pm



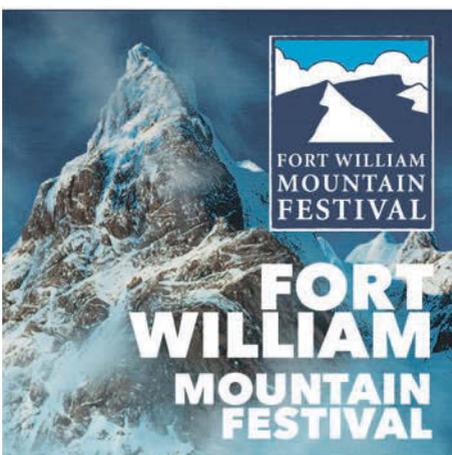

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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Highland tour in fine voice

Opera Highlights is back on the road this month and stopping off in Argyll.

In between Lerwick in Shetland to Castle Douglas in the south, four singers and one pianist will be travelling the highways and byways by land, sea and air on a spring tour taking in towns and villages, including Bowmore on Islay, Arrochar and Bunessan in Mull.

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's Flower Duet, Vaughan Williams's 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 and music director, joined by soprano Zoe



Jade Moffat and Arthur Bruce on stage.

Photograph: Julie Broadfoot.

Drummond; mezzo-soprano Jade Moffat; tenor Andrew Irwin; and baritone Arthur Bruce, who is The Robertson Trust Scottish Opera emerging artist for this season.

Roxana, 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.'

The tour will be at Islay's Bowmore Hall tonight (February 13), The Three Villages Hall in Arrochar on Saturday February 15 and Bunessan Community Hall on Mull on Tuesday February 18. All performances start at 7.30pm.

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.

Go to scottishopera.org.uk

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The programme highlights Boyle's road trip where he visited Cruachan Power Station.

Frankie Boyle put Oban in TV spotlight

Tomorrow (Friday February 14), at 10pm on BBC Two, Frankie Boyle will be on a road trip which culminates in a gig at Oban's Corran Halls.

The ever pessimistic comedian is touring the country for the first time in over a decade, reconnecting with Scotland's history and meeting its colourful characters in-between gigs.

In this episode, he starts in Aberdeenshire, meeting

the hermits of the east coast who he reckons 'may or may not be on the run from the law'.

He then makes his way to Glencoe where he discusses the 1692 massacre, and from there it's off to Inveraray where Boyle learns about Scotland's land ownership.

He meets one of the 'Tunnel Tigers' who helped build the Cruachan Power Station, carving into the mountain to provide hydro

electric energy to the nation. On his way to Oban, Boyle relives his stand-up origins, he used to travel up this way to do his gigs when he was starting out.

He travels to Mull on his favourite ferry ride, where he can take in the sights of the Hebridean Isles.

The gig at the Corran is classic Frankie Boyle, where he – for the most part – has all good things to say about Oban and its folk.

WHAT'S ON

In partnership with Oban Town Diary BID4oban.co.uk

THURSDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am – 12:00pm

Oban Health Walks

Oban Congregational Church

10:00am – 12:00pm

Wacky World UK

Atlantis Leisure

10.15am-10.15pm

Recovery Cafe

New Hope Kitchen

12.30pm

Creative Writing Group

New Hope Kitchen

2.30pm-4pm

Slimming World Fort William

Salvation Army Hall

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

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dances

FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY

FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

Hope Kitchen Music Group

Salvation Army Hall

1pm-4pm

Parsley's Cat Cafe

New Hope Kitchen

2pm

SATURDAY 15TH FEBRUARY

Parkrun

Ganavan Sands

9.30am

The Tainuill Ceilidhs

Tainuill Village Hall

7.30pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dances

Stramash Ceilidh Band

Open till 2:00am

SUNDAY 16TH FEBRUARY

Morning Service - Refreshments follow

Salvation Army Hall

11:00am - 12:00pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dances

QUIZ NIGHT at 9:30pm

£1 per person, max of 6 per team

Win £20 bar voucher

MONDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am – 12:00pm

Slimming World Fort William

Salvation Army Hall

9.30am & 11.30am

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

Fellowship Meeting

New Hope Kitchen

2pm

Slimming World, Lochgilphead

Union Street/Argyll Street

5:30pm & 7:30pm

Tel: Rhona 07880 878906

Martyn's Monday Club

New Hope Kitchen

7pm-9pm

TUESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am – 12:00pm

Carers Coffee Morning

North Argyll Carers Centre

10.30am-12pm

Martyn's Monday Club Ladies

New Hope Kitchen

7pm-9pm

WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

Oban Men's Shed

Salvation Army Hall

9:00am – 12:00pm

Slimming World, Oban

Glencruitten Church Hall

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

Tel: Gillian 07796 040803

Open Day

Greenshoots Garden

10.30am-3.30pm

Hope Kitchen Beach clean

(meet opposite the View)

10.30am

Knitting Group

New Hope Kitchen

2pm

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

New head chef is catch of the day at Port Appin hotel

One of Scotland's top chefs has been added to the menu at The Pierhouse Hotel & Seafood Restaurant at Port Appin in Argyll as part of its mission to become the country's ultimate seafood destination.



Michael Leathley, 37, honed his career over 14 years working in London, Aberdeen and Glasgow, and previously held the position of Sous Chef at A'Challtainn Fish Restaurant in Glasgow.

Originally from North Shields, Michael has lived and worked in Scotland for five years and is renowned for his authentic style of cooking which 'brings the outside in', focusing on dishes inextricably linked with the land and sea, including pepper dulce foraged on the Isle of Lismore, oysters harvested from Loch Creran, and langoustines delivered straight from the fishing boat at Loch Linnhe to The Pierhouse kitchen.

Over the years, Michael has found inspiration in his family's fishing heritage, taking his culinary lead from his grandfather, who was a day boat fisherman on the River Tyne.

Michael is now ready to steer The Pierhouse in an exciting new direction and is looking forward to heading up the kitchen team. He's also making plans to get out and about around Argyll with the restaurant's network of local suppliers

Michael said: 'Cooking

at The Pierhouse is a real celebration of the natural environment we're lucky to have around us. From the lobster creels at the end of our pier, to the finest wild hill venison from Lochaber, our dishes respect the abundance of local produce and the people who dedicate their lives to working on the land and sea to bring us the finest produce.

'I enjoy letting the food speak for itself, using classic, simple techniques. The real luxury in cooking these days is making use of what's here, right now. It's a joy to use produce that's in season, available locally, with known quality and provenance, sourced within 50 miles of the hotel.'

To enjoy a 'Wee Winter Break' at The Pierhouse Hotel, which includes an overnight stay, dinner, full Scottish breakfast and guidance from the team on how to spot local wildlife, in and around Port Appin and on the rugged Isle of Lismore, visit www.pierhousehotel.co.uk.

Prices start from £125 per couple, sharing a double room on a bed and breakfast basis. The 'Wee Winter Break' offer is available until 31 March 2020.

M'ALBA

MY ALBA

DIARDAOIN 13 An Gearran THURSDAY 13 February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Bailtean Fraoich (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 Sar Sgeoil: Macbeth (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Mach a Seo!
22:30 Fo Ghlas/ Worlds Toughest Prisons (rpt)
23:15 Dhan Uisge (Loch Loyne) (rpt)
23:25 Fraochy Bay
23:30 Fonn Fonn Fonn (rpt)

DIHAOINE 14 An Gearran FRIDAY 14th February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
18:35 Machair (rpt)
19:00 An Là – News
19:25 Ceol bho Perthshire Amber (rpt)
19:35 ÙR/NEW: SPFL Challenge Cup-Partick Thistle v Raith Rovers
21:45 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)
22:00 An Klondike (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 15 An Gearran SATURDAY 15 February

16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
17:45 An Là – News

18:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – Ross County v St Johnstone (rpt)
20:00 Machair (rpt)
20:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
20:30 An t-Eilean/From Skye with Love (rpt)
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Seirm – Celtic Connections
22:00 Fo Ghlas/World's Toughest Prisons (rpt)
22:50 Ceol bho Perthshire Amber (rpt)
23:00 Scottish Premiership – Ross County v St Johnstone (rpt)

DIDÒMHNAICH 16 An Gearran SUNDAY 16 February

16:00 ÙR/NEW: SPFL Challenge Cup – Inverness Caledonian Thistle v Rangers Colts
18:10 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
18:15 An Là – News
18:30 Seachd La – News Review
19:30 Alleluia! (rpt)
20:00 Eorpa (rpt)
20:30 Mach a Seo! (rpt)
21:00 Air a Chanal (rpt)
22:00 Seirm Celtic Connections (rpt)
23:00 An Klondike (rpt)
23:50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Loyne) (rpt)

DILUAIN 17 An Gearran MONDAY 17 February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Turas a' Bhradain (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 Air an Smuid (Steaming) (rpt)

21:00 Trusadh – Zinc Houses/ Taighean Sinc (rpt)
22:00 Port – Druthag Eile (rpt)
22:30 Talamh Torrach (rpt)
23:30 Mach a Seo! (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 18 An Gearran TUESDAY 18 February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Bailtean Fraoich (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 Dreach Ur (rpt)
21:00 Air a' Chanal (rpt)
22:00 Trusadh – Zinc Houses/ Taighean Zinc (rpt)
23:00 Oran na Mna (rpt)
23:30 Alleluia (rpt)

DICIADAIN 19 An Gearran WEDNESDAY 19 February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19:00 Turas a' Bhradain (rpt)
19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
20:00 An Là – News
20:30 An t-Eilean/From Skye with Love (rpt)
21:00 Talamh Torrach (Scotland's Food & Drink) (rpt)
22:00 Fonn Fonn Fonn (rpt)
22:30 Port – Druthag Eile (rpt)
23:00 Sar Sgeoil: Macbeth (rpt)



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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Celtic Connections 2020 seems like a distant memory – indeed, for many people it was never anything but a hazy memory! But, as Storm Ciara batters Glasgow, there are plenty of cèilidhs to look forward to that will help us all see out the last of winter.

Choir concert

The Glasgow Islay Choir will perform in the Westerton Hall, Maxwell Avenue, Bearsden, on Friday February 28 at 7.30pm.

The evening will be chaired by Mary Ann Kennedy and the programme will feature last year's Mòd Gold Medallist, Claire Macaulay, as well as Marina MacLeod, Mòd-winning quartet Na h-àilleagain, and many more artists.

Tickets, available at the door, are £8 which includes tea, coffee, and biscuits. Under-16s can get in for free.

Stirling cèilidh

The Stirling branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach will hold their next cèilidh in the Albert Halls on Saturday February 22 at 7.30pm.

Stirling Gaelic Choir will provide the majority of the entertainment, performing solos, duets and choral numbers. The piper for the evening will be Callum Wynd and also performing will be the Cluaran Highland Dancers.

Tickets are £6, which includes the usual tea, coffee and eats.

Tatties and Herring

The Glasgow Skye Association will hold their annual Buntata's Sgadan (Tatties and Herring) night in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street, on Saturday February 29 at 7.30pm.

The association's next event after that will be the Cothrom na h-Òigridh (children's concert) on Friday March 13 in the same venue but at 7pm.

Gathering

The Mull and Iona Association have announced the line-up for their gathering on Saturday February 22. Performers on the evening will be Claire Macaulay, Calum MacColl, Kirsty Netta MacKinnon, Ruairidh MacLean and Camrie MacInnes, Layla and Cara MacFadyen, and the

Mull and Iona Pipers. Doors open at 7pm and, after the concert, Robert Nairn and his Highland Dance band will play from 10.30pm till late. Tickets are available from themullan-diona@gmail.com or in person at the Park Bar.

Glasgow Islay

The Glasgow Islay Association will hold their 158th annual gathering concert and dance on Saturday March 7 in the Glasgow University Union with Iseabail MacTaggart in the chair.

The concert begins at 7.30pm and the dance at 10.30pm. More information on artistes to follow in the coming weeks.

Pub scene

My new year's resolution is to update the Pub Scene more regularly this year. My excuse for not having done so recently is that I haven't been in the pub yet. And if you believe that...

Park Bar: Friday, Scott Harvey; Saturday, Robert Nairn; Sunday, Gunna sound (5pm-8pm). **Islay Inn:** Friday, Taylor Sessions; Saturday, The Raggaeals.

COMPETITION TIME!

Help find a new name for The Perle Hotel's new cocktail bar!

You could be in with a chance of winning an overnight stay with dinner, bed and breakfast at The Perle's sister hotel, 'The Boville' on Skye



The lovely people at Perle Oban are looking for help from The Oban Times to find a fabulous new name for Brew & Co which is undergoing a transformation! Enjoy harbour views with your favourite cocktail, a dish from their refreshed food menu or a glass of something from their new drinks menu.

We think our readers and Facebook followers can come up with a great new name - and there's a lovely hotel break in it for the winner of the best name!

TO ENTER:

Pop on over to The Oban Times' Facebook page and you will see the pinned post at the top of our page. Give us a like and post your best suggestion for a new name and we will enter you into the prize draw! If you don't fancy entering on Facebook, you can post your entry to The Oban Times, Perle Hotel Competition, Lochavullin Road, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

The winning name will be selected from all entries received and the winner will be notified by telephone or via our Facebook page.

Closing date Friday 21st February. Terms and conditions relating to dates that the prize can be taken apply. No cash alternative. Editors decision is final. If entering via post, please include your email address and telephone number. Please note that all entries will be destroyed directly after the competition closing date in line with GDPR rules.



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Oban High School's specialist department of traditional music performed for the first time at the annual Celtic Connections.

Traditional musicians at Oban High wow audience at 2020 Celtic Connections

Oban High School's specialist department of traditional music performed at the annual Celtic Connections festival last weekend for the first time, writes David McPhee.

The musicians were invited by festival director Donald Shaw and received a tremendous response from the sell-out concert audience.

The 15-strong group of S3-S6 pupils performed for the first half of a concert at Glasgow's Royal Concert

Hall on Saturday February 1.

They shared the billing with the TMSA Young Trad Tour, featuring winners and runners-up in the BBC Radio Scotland annual Young Traditional Musician of the Year contest, and performed a 40-minute foot-stomping set of tunes and songs.

The Traditional School of Music is funded by the school and is in its eighth year, with pupils gaining places through audition.

Regular tuition is provided

by tutors Sileas Sinclair, Finlay Wells, Lorne MacDougall and Joanie Garvin, and in addition to instrumental tuition, the group works together to create arrangements of songs and tunes for their performances.

Head of Traditional School of Music Morven Gage said: 'We couldn't be more delighted with the performance on Saturday, and the fabulous reception received on the day was very well deserved.'

'Performing at Celtic

Connections is a great achievement, and the concert was the culmination of many months of hard work and commitment by these young musicians, in addition to their school studies. They're a tremendous credit to their school and to Oban.'

Head teacher Peter Bain said: 'I'm incredibly proud of all our youngsters and extremely grateful to our tutors for their dedication, ensuring we nurture such wonderful talent.'

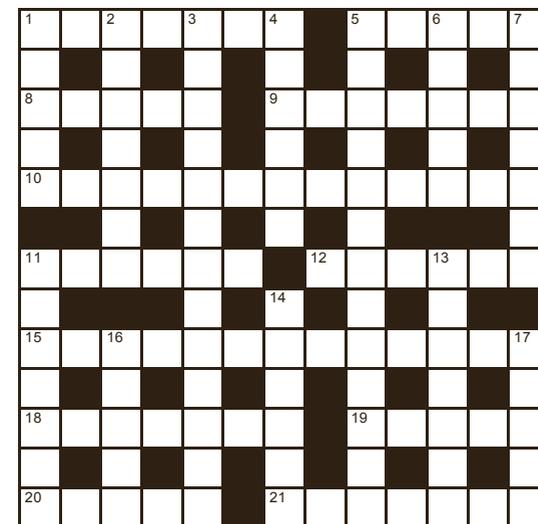
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MONDAY: 8am-12pm: Breakfast with Stephen, 12pm-3pm: Sounds of the '60s with Bob G, 3pm-5pm: Clyde 2, 5pm-7pm: Drive time with Marcus, 7pm-8pm: Rosie's Highland Fling, 8pm-9pm: John McLuckie Show, 9pm-10pm: David Cullen Show, 10pm-12am: Clyde 2
TUESDAY: 8am-10am: Breakfast with Stephen, 10am-1pm: Ken Hunter, 1pm-3pm: Macky on Fm, 3pm-5pm: Mental Health, Musings with Mer, 5pm-7pm: Drive times with Bob G, 7pm-8pm: Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers, 8pm-9pm: Sounds of Scottish with Archie Cameron, 9pm-12am: Clyde 2
WEDNESDAY: 8am-10am: Breakfast with Stephen, 10am-1pm: Comfort Zone with Lesley, 1pm-3pm: Doug Carmichael lunch show, 3pm-5pm: Clyde 2, 5pm-7pm: Drive time with Campbell, 7pm-9pm: Country meets Rock and Roll with Ken or Len, 9pm-11pm: Gordon's Grooves, 11pm-12am: Clyde 2
THURSDAY: 8am-11am: Breakfast with

Andy & Sarah, 11am-3pm: Molly's Mix, 3pm-7pm: Drive time with Stephen, 7pm-9pm: Christine's Collection, 9pm-10pm: Anne's Ceilidh, 10pm-12am: Margo till Midnight
FRIDAY: 8am-10am: Breakfast with Laura, 10am-1pm: Teeny and Tiny, 1pm-5pm: Clyde 2, 5pm-6:45pm: Drive time with Jim Lynch, 6:45pm-7pm: Sports View, 7pm-8pm: Country meets country with Jackie Craig, 8pm-10pm: Peter Rainnie, 10pm-12am: Clyde 2
SATURDAY: 8am-10am: Breakfast with Stephen, 10am-1pm: Saturday morning live with Linda Crosher, 1pm-6pm: Clyde 2, 6pm-7pm: Sports view with the dream team, 7pm-8pm: Sounds Scottish with Archie, 8pm-10pm: Dave Lewis, 10pm-12am: Margo till Midnight
SUNDAY: 9am-11am: Sunday Morning with Allan, 1pm-7pm: Clyde 2, 7pm-9pm: New Country with Dave and Murdo, 9pm-11pm: Drum and Bass with Graham Scott

Crossword



Across

- 1 Standard (7)
- 5 Flaps at (5)
- 8 Comic, which has had over 4000 issues (5)
- 9 Nonanalytic (1,6)
- 10 Gossiped (6-7)
- 11 Decay (6)
- 12 Yellow seasonal drink (6)
- 15 Look into oneself for help (4-9)
- 18 Greek letter (7)
- 19 Flock (5)
- 20 Full Scottish! (3-2)
- 21 Without tears (3-4)

Down

- 1 Solid (5)
- 2 Used for different voltages (7)
- 3 What your bag hangs on (8,5)
- 4 Innocent (6)
- 5 Cunningly (13)
- 6 Reef ring (5)
- 7 Party (7)
- 11 Let go of dry land (4-3)
- 13 Loudly (7)
- 14 Guarded (6)
- 16 Togetherness (5)
- 17 Secured (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Netherlorn Piping Society
is holding a recital by
CAMERON MACDOUGALL
Thursday 20th February 2020
in the
Argyllshire Gathering Halls
at 7.30pm
Entry: Adults £3 and Children Free

**An Comunn Gàidhealach –
Meur Chruachain**
TAYNUILT WINTER CEILIDH
Fear an Taighe – Eric Smith
Piper – Innes Munro
Singers – Rona Morrison
John, Rachael & Emma Deans
Alasdair MacDonald - Accordion
"The Harpies" Clarsach Ensemble
Isla Sinclair Dancers – Katie MacDonald & Rachael Steward
Taynuilt Village Hall
Saturday 15th February 2020. 7.30pm

Screen Machine Scotland's Mobile Cinema

Kinlochleven Fri 14 - Sat 15 Feb
Jojo Rabbit (12A) 108 mins
Satire about a boy in the Hitler Youth who starts to question his extremist beliefs. *"you'll laugh, you'll cry - sometimes at the same time"* Rolling Stone Magazine
14/02 at 5.30pm
1917 (15) 119 mins
Two young British soldiers must traverse hostile territory to stop 1600 of their fellow soldiers from walking into a trap. *"a suspense-filled race through the hell of war"* Vanity Fair
14/02 at 8.30pm
Frozen 2 (U) 103 mins
"bigger, bolder, and more epic" Empire 15/02 at 2pm
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (12A) 142 mins
"a thrilling, fun-filled, light-speed finale" The Guardian
15/02 at 5pm
Little Women (U) 135 mins
Coming-of-age classic about the four March sisters growing up in New England following the American Civil War. *"wonderfully warm, funny and heartfelt"* The Guardian
15/02 at 8.30pm
Book at: www.screenmachine.co.uk. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings. Cash only, no cards. £7.50 Adults. £5.50 concs. Fully accessible to wheelchair users.





WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 7 | SEE IT FIRST FEBRUARY 1 & 2

YOU MUST BE 15 OR OLDER TO SEE A FILM RATED 15 - PLEASE BRING PROOF OF AGE



15

BLAKE LIVELY JUDE LAW
THE RHYTHM SECTION
IN THEATRES JANUARY 31

FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY	
Frozen 2 - Sing - a - long PG	12:30
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	12:45
The Pilgrim's Progress PG	14:15
Dolittle PG	15:00/17:30
Bad Boys For Life 15	16:45
The Rhythm Section 15	19:30
Ghost - 30th Anniversary 12A	20:00
SATURDAY 15TH FEBRUARY	
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	11:30★15:30
Frozen 2 - Sing - a - long PG	12:00
The Pilgrim's Progress PG	13:00
Dolittle PG	14:30/17:00
1917 15	17:00
The Rhythm Section 15	19:30
Bad Boys For Life 15	19:45
SUNDAY 16TH FEBRUARY	
Frozen 2 - Sing - a - long PG	12:00
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	12:45
The Pilgrim's Progress PG	14:15
Dolittle PG	14:30/17:00
1917 15	16:45
Bad Boys For Life 15	19:15
The Rhythm Section 15	19:30

THE RHYTHM SECTION | Rated 15
Starring Blake Lively, Jude Law
Stephanie Patrick veers down a path of self-destruction after a tragic plane crash kills her family. When Stephanie discovers it wasn't an accident, she turns to a former CIA operative who can help her find the culprits. But her quest to uncover the truth soon turns into a full-blown quest for revenge as Patrick decides to punish those responsible.

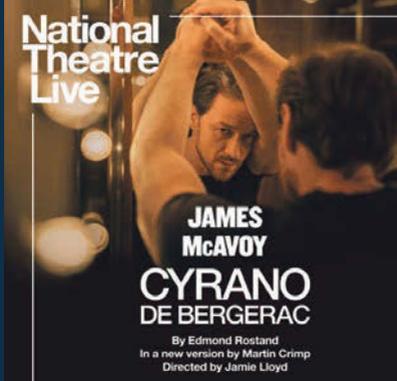
MONDAY 17TH FEBRUARY	
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	16:15
Dolittle PG	16:30/17:45
Bad Boys For Life 15	19:00
The Rhythm Section 15	20:00
TUESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY	
The Rhythm Section 15	12:00★19:00
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	16:15
Dolittle PG	16:30/17:45
Bad Boys For Life 15	20:00
WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY	
Bad Boys For Life 15	12:00★20:00
Paw Patrol: Ready Race Rescue U	16:15
Dolittle PG	16:30/17:45
The Rhythm Section 15	19:00
Bad Boys For Life 15	20:00
THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY	
Little Women U	14:30★
Dolittle PG	16:30/17:15
NT Live: Cyrano De Bergerac 15	19:00
The Rhythm Section 15	19:30



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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 for more information about film certificates.



Deadline for entries to the One-Minute Film Festival is February 28.

Call for entries to One-Minute Film Festival

The call is out to all film-makers to cry 'Action' and create their own film to be screened at An Lanntair cinema in our Fèis nam Film/One-Minute Film Festival, which takes place from March 11 to April 11. Getting involved could not be easier - get your creative thinking-cap on and make a short film of one minute's duration on any subject, although it must be suitable for family viewing. Your film can be animation, motion-graphics, or

live action; and you can shoot it in one shot as a long take or piece, or edit together multiple takes. Any narration or dialogue must be in Gaelic. **Screening** Film-makers can submit up to five separate films. Please ensure that you give your film a title and add credits at the end. And if you shoot with film, please convert it to digital format to ensure we can edit films together for screening purposes. Take some creative risks,

find collaborators, and have fun! For further information or need technical assistance or any other guidance, please get in touch with An Lanntair artist support coordinator Sandra Kennedy: sandra.kennedy@lanntair.com Deadline for entries to the Fèis nam Film/One-Minute Film Festival is Friday February 28. Screening will take place on Wednesday March 14 as part of An Lanntair's Mios na Gàidhlig programme.



WINTER OPENING HOURS 2020

January / February / March

CLOSED - Mon/Tues/Wed
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Please send CV with references to jobs@mkmacleod.co.uk or call 01546602989.

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

REPORTER

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a bright, passionate and self-driven reporter to join The Oban Times' busy team.

The person we are looking for will have an NCTJ or similar qualification, including shorthand, and be multi-media literate.

We are passionate about good local journalism and like our reporters to get out into the local community, meeting people face-to-face, sourcing the best stories.

You should be bursting with ideas and have an eye for a good story, understand the importance of fostering great contacts and knowing your patch, and be capable of working on your own initiative as well as part of a team.

As the position will be based in Oban, knowledge of the area would be an advantage.

You should also hold a full driving licence.

As well as writing for the newspaper of record for Argyll and the West Highlands, you will be expected to take photographs on the job, as well as contribute to our social media channels and podcasts.

In return for all this we offer a competitive salary, great experience and training, as well as an enhanced pension.

Please apply by email, sending your CV, plus a covering letter and some examples of your work to: Alison Arden - ali@obantimes.co.uk

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Key skills include excellent time and territory management, plus the ability to work well under pressure and deliver a consistent sales performance to tight deadlines.

Experience in media sales and/or an understanding of the aquaculture industry would be advantageous as would an equivalent background in B2B sales.

The position is based in our Edinburgh or Oban office.

Please email a copy of your CV, present salary and a covering letter to Brian Cameron at recruitment@fishfarmermagazine.com

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recruitment opportunities

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+ Enhanced Pension

The Campbeltown Courier is looking for an enthusiastic sales executive to join our team. Based in Campbeltown the successful applicant will be working with the business community to enhance their marketing and presence locally. Our titles include award-winning newspapers

and tourism publications. Local knowledge an advantage, applicants must hold a full UK driving licence.

In return we can offer flexible working hours as well as a competitive salary, great experience and training and an enhanced pension.

Please apply by email, sending your CV, plus a covering letter to: Nicky Murphy, Advertising Director nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk

Trainee Reporter

Here at the Campbeltown Courier, we pride ourselves on producing quality grassroots journalism.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a bright, passionate and hard-working trainee to join our small, busy team.

The person we are looking for will ideally have passed their NCTJ prelims, including shorthand, be multi-media literate and

unafraid of hard work. We are passionate about good local journalism and like our reporters to get out into the local community, meeting people face-to-face, sourcing the best stories.

You should be bursting with ideas and have an eye for a good story, understand the importance of fostering great contacts and knowing your patch, and be capable of working on

your own initiative as well as part of a team.

You should also hold a full driving licence.

As well as writing for the newspaper, you will be expected to take photographs on the job, as well as contribute to our social media channels and podcasts.

In return for all this we offer a competitive salary, great experience and training, as well as an enhanced pension.

Please apply by email, sending your CV, plus a covering letter and some examples of your work to: Alison Arden - ali@obantimes.co.uk

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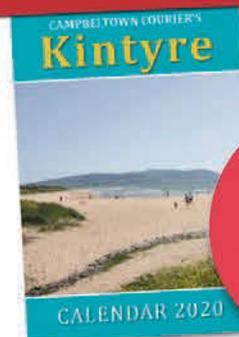
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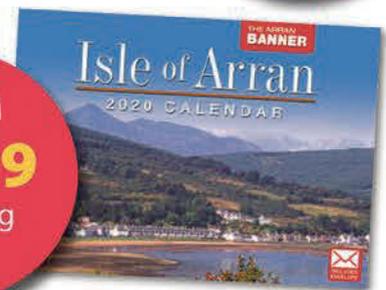
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PUBLIC NOTICES

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD

DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

S C B Gow & K P Gow
Ardcraig Croft, Keills, Jura
102234
0.082 ha
Reason – Existing croft house site & garden ground
Condition – With fencing conditions

AD MacIntosh
6 Stronaba, Kilmonivaig
101841
0.166 ha
Reason – Existing House Site
Condition – With fencing conditions

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

Proposed Assignment of a Croft

Ian Campbell is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to assign the tenancy of the croft at Brolas, Ardchattan & Muckairn to Fiona Campbell of Taigh a Bhalachain.

If you consider you have a relevant interest in this application, you may submit comments in writing to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW or email info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert. Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

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

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
19/05081/FUL	Clan Macduff Hotel 26 Achintore Road, Fort William	Alterations to the hotel and alterations to existing accommodation lodge
20/00437/FUL	Fion Construction 30A Ben Nevis Drive Ben Nevis Industrial Estate	Proposed Alterations and Extension
19/05654/FUL	Tangles 44 High Street, Fort William	Alterations and change of use to create domestic residential flat
20/00303/FUL	Invergarry Hotel, Invergarry	Erection of twelve room hotel annex and erection of staff accommodation house
20/00383/LBC	Canna House, Isle of Canna	Replace roof and other external finishes where in poor condition, redecorate internally electrical installation will be upgraded to provide data cabling and fire detection
20/00337/FUL	Land 70M SW Of Hillside Station Road, Arisaig	Erection of house
20/00370/FUL	Drynachan, Invergarry	Erection of self-contained annexe
20/00211/FUL	Glensanda Quarry Glensanda, Oban	Construction of freshwater lagoon including headwall with abstraction/outfall
20/00311/FUL	Land 450M SW Of Highland Wood Energy Lochaber Rural Complex Aonach Mor Access Road Fort William	Erection of 50 cabins with associated forest retreat, manager's accommodation, cycle store, maintenance area, internal roads, paths, utilities (including renewable heating technologies) and drainage
20/00340/FUL	Moorings Hotel Banavie Fort William	Erection of second floor extension to hotel (17 additional bedrooms) and formation of entrance canopy
20/00435/FUL	Brackletter Lodge, Spean Bridge	Erection of two holiday letting units
20/00469/FUL	Land West of West Lodge Roshven, Glenuig	Erection of house and ancillary building

Time period for comments is 14 days & 21 days for 20/00383/LBC
 ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
 Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Iain Martin has registered their croft Lee, Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon 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 22 Oct 2020

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6659

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Donna MacGillivray has registered their croft 61 Banavie, Kilmallie 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 October 7, 2020.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6607.

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Mary H MacKay has registered their croft Catchean (Share), Catchean, Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon 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 21 Oct 2020

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6656

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Angus Smith has registered their crofts 14 Moss and 29 Blain, Arisaig & Moidart 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 24 Oct 2020

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration numbers are C6412 & C6413

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Mrs June Currie has registered her croft known as Hawthorn, Keil, Benderloch, Ardchattan & Muckairn on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 30th October 2020.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6688.

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Ms Elizabeth (Lizzie) May Keenaghan has registered their croft, Croft 2, Baile lochdrach, Lower Kilchattan, Isle of Colonsay, 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 30th October 2020. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6739.

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

These applications listed below may be inspected between 09:00-12.30 -13.30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, your Local Customer Service Point and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
20/00195/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 17/00802/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land West Of Achadaphail Croft, Ardtun, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA67 6DN
20/00150/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Coille Achachenna (Lot 3), Kilchrenan, Argyll And Bute
19/02594/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 25 metre high lattice tower, associated works and formation of vehicular access	Land West Of Oban Rare Breeds Farm Park, Off Glencruitten Road, Glencruitten, Oban, Argyll And Bute
19/02630/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of treatment plant and formation of access	Land South West Of Mull Slaughterhouse, Glenforsa, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
20/00194/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 17/00801/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land North East Of Achadaphail Croft, Ardtun, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA67 6DN
20/00143/LIB	Erection of extension to form church annex/ toilet facilities and associated works	Church, Kilmelford, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4XA
20/00144/PP	Erection of extension to form church annex/ toilet facilities and associated works	Church, Kilmelford, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4XA
20/00148/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 16/01712/PPP (Site for the erection of 4 dwellinghouses)	Land South Of Woodend, Glencruitten Road, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4PU
19/02543/PP	Alterations, extension and change of use from (Class 10) Public Worship to (Class 9) dwellinghouse and installation of air source heat pump	Coll Free Church, Arinagour, Isle Of Coll, Argyll And Bute, PA78 6SY
19/02580/PP	Alterations and change of use from workshop to form games and laundry room	Kilchoan Barn, Kilmelford, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4XD
20/00131/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 17/01482/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land East Of Traighuaine, Arduaine, Argyll And Bute
19/02663/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and agricultural barn, installation of septic tank and associated works	Land North Of Coultorsay Farm, Bruichladdich, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
20/00020/PP	Use of land for the siting of 1 glamping pod	Garden Ground Of Dunollie, Mansefield Road, Port Ellen, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA42 7BN

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
 Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



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**Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Monday 17 February 2020 - Oban
 13:00 - 17:30 Open Session
 18:30 - 20:00 Presentation and Q&A Session (Refreshments from 18:00)
 Royal Hotel, Argyll Square, Oban PA34 4BE

DRAFT SECTORAL MARINE PLAN FOR OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

Marine Scotland, as planning authority for Scotland's seas, has prepared a draft Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy ("draft Plan"). The draft Plan seeks to identify the most suitable locations for future offshore wind development in Scottish waters. A public event is to be held on the above date to present the draft Plan and supporting Sustainability Appraisal. The event will provide the opportunity for members of the public to discuss the draft Plan with officials from Marine Scotland.

Further information about the draft Plan can be found online here: <https://consult.gov.scot/marine-scotland/draft-sectoral-marine-plan-for-offshore-wind/> Consultation responses can be submitted online until the deadline of 25 March 2020.

Should you have any queries regarding this event or the draft Plan please do not hesitate to contact the Sectoral Marine Planning team, Marine Scotland, Area GB-North, Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ or email: SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot

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Two-year-old champion and overall champion male, K2 of Cladich owned by Queenie and Jon Strickland of the Cladich Fold. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Overall female champion, Diorbhail Dhubh 3rd of Craigowmill, owned by Mr K W W and Mrs E M Brown and brought by Malcolm MacNaughton. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

Highlanders on show at historic Oban cattle sale

by David McPhee
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



Sunday was an historic day for the Dalmally-based Cladich fold, which won the overall male championship at the Highland Cattle Society 129th Spring Show and Sale in Oban.

This was the first time Cladich has won this particular category in its history, dating back to 1882.

A large crowd made its way to the Oban centre, despite Storm Ciara trying to throw a spanner in the works with ferry cancellations.

The show took place on Sunday February 9, with the sale taking place on Monday.

The overall male champion was K2 of Cladich, a two-year-old bull from Cladich. Handler Stuart Campbell, who has worked at the farm for nine years, said it was 'tremendous' to win the overall male champion.

Speaking to The Oban Times, he added: 'This is what you aim for. When you start out in the career, you aim for a champion bull at Oban.'

'It is our first time winning



A large crowd surrounded the pens as the show took place on Sunday. DM_t07_HighlandCattleShow

the overall male – we have been in the breed since 1882.'

Mr Campbell dedicated the win to Cladich's owners, Queenie and Jon Strickland. 'They put so much into Cladich,' he added. 'It is good to give a reward back to them,' he said.

The bull, which was also the two-year-old champion, sold for 6,500gns.

The overall female champion was three-year-old heifer Diorbhail Dhubh 3 of Craigowmill from Ken and Eva Brown's Craigowmill fold at Ledlanet, Kinross.

The heifer was brought out by Malcolm MacNaughton

and sold for 5,000gns on Monday.

The biggest sale of the day went to Mr & Mrs AA MacDonald Ardbhan Kyles, Bayhead, North Uist. Their senior bull sold for 6,800gns.

The overall winner of the young handler competition went to Emily Armstrong from Balemartine Fold, Tiree.

In conjunction with the Royal Highland Society and the Highland Cattle Society, Emily will now front the parade of animals on the first day of the Royal Highland Show, carrying the Highland Cattle Banner.

Emily was encouraged

by her late father Mark Armstrong to keep Highlanders and with his passing Emily, her mum Fiona and her wee sister Eva have kept the Balemartine Fold going, making the long journey from Tiree to Oban to show and sell.

Although Ciara has scuppered the Armstrong's plans of getting home within the next couple of days – it will give the young handler some extra time to celebrate her win.

Visit www.obantimes.co.uk for a full list of results and more photographs.



Despite the weather, Liz Craig kept smiling and proved if you want to get ahead get a warm hat. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



This senior bull fetched the top price, going for 6,800gns. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

Changes unveiled at final Lochaber monitor farm event

Farmers in Lochaber are invited to attend the final monitor farm meeting at Strone Farm on Thursday February 20 to hear first-hand about the changes that have resulted in an increase in profitability and efficiency on the 1,200-hectare live-stock farm.

Run by Chris Cameron in partnership with his father Malcolm, the family have 520 North Country Cheviot ewes and a herd of 50 breeding Limousin cows at their farm near the Great Glen, one of Scotland's highest rainfall areas.

Chris and Malcolm signed up as a monitor farm in 2016 and throughout the three years they have made a range of improvements to their farming business, including changing their grassland management, how they finish their lambs and their approach to reseeding.

Chris said: 'Our main aim at Strone has always been to maximise value of stock leaving the farm, and the best way to do this was to grow more grass.

'During the project we continued to move our ewes and lambs to summer in Inverness and took on a new tenancy locally, which led to more summer grazing.

'This has resulted in year on year improvements, with lamb weaning percentage peaking at over 100 per cent in 2019 for the first time. The extra grass has allowed us to increase the size of our pedigree Limousin herd by 20 per cent.

'The monitor farm project has allowed me to learn new techniques, find new grass seed mixes and discover different technologies to help drive the business forward.'

Niall Campbell, Lochaber monitor farm facilitator from

SAC Consulting, said: 'The monitor farm programme has brought the local farming community together and provided access to experts and knowledge that will prove useful in driving their farming businesses forward.

'I would encourage everyone with an interest in improving their farm business to attend the final meeting which will cover the highlights and lessons learned throughout the three-year project.'

The meeting on Thursday February 20 will be held at Strone Farm near Banavie, Fort William, PH33 7PB, and will begin at noon. Lunch will be provided. The meeting is expected to finish by 4.30pm. All are welcome and the event is free.

For further information and to book your place (and lunch), contact SAC Consulting on 01631 563093 or frbsoban@sac.co.uk



Chris Cameron runs the 1,200-hectare Strone Farm near Fort William with his father, Malcolm. Three years of being in the monitor farm programme have been hugely beneficial, he says.

Around the markets



Nunnerie Xenon fetched a record 25,000gns.

The Luing Cattle Society staged its 55th Annual Premier Sale at Wallets Mart, Castle Douglas on Friday February 7.

At the pre-sale show, judged by Alan Cowens, Philiphaugh, Selkirk, selected the champion pair of in calf heifers from Robert McNee Ltd, Benhar selling to SK and S Brown, Woodmarsh, North Bradley for 2,500gns.

Reserve champion in calf heifers went to S Murray, Rockcliffe. Top price for in calf heifers was 2,600gns from Robert McNee Ltd being purchased by SK and S Brown. Overall average for 31 in calf heifers forward and sold was 1,619gns (£1,700).

The champion pair of bulling heifers was awarded to D and A Barr, Milkieton which went on to sell for 2,400gns to P Simmers, Backmuir. Reserve champion pair of bulling heifers went to Messrs W Graham, Craigdarroch selling to 2,600gns to M Halligan and Burke, Stewartson, Eddleston. Top price for the bulling heifers was 2,600gns (Craigdarroch)

with the overall average for 85 bulling heifers forward and sold being 1,610gns (£1,691).

The breed witnessed a new record of 25,000gns for Nunnerie Xenon from CC MacArthur and Co, Nunnerie, being purchased by Mr T Renwick and Sons, Blackhouse. Of the 33 bulls forward for sale, 31 found new homes giving a clearance rate of just over 94% and three bulls being purchased 10,000gns and over. Other prices 14,000gns was a Benhar Xerox from Robert McNee Ltd, Benhar, purchased by P Simmers, Backmuir. R and H McNee, Finlargo went on to sell Finlargo Xplosion to Kedzie Farms, Galashiels for 10,000gns. Overall average for bulls was 5,865gns (£6,158).

Fort William - Dingwall and Highland Marts on February 6 sold 589 sheep of all classes. Lambs (260) sold to £95 gross for a pen of Blackface from Glendoe Estates, Fort Augustus. Ewes and feeding sheep (179) sold to £90 gross for a Cheviot

ewe from Ben Alder Estate, Dalwhinnie. Rams (150) sold to £79 gross for a Cross from Meall Mo Chridhe, Kilchoan.

Leading prices per head Lambs: BF - Torr-Na-Faire, Lochaline, £87, 9 Clachan, Staffin, £68, 19 Blarmafoldach, Fort William, £64.50; Cross - 6 Stronaba, Spean Bridge, £80, Ardochy, Whitebridge, £67; Chev - South Laggan, Spean Bridge, £75, 6 Stronaba, £70; Mule - Coille Beag, Whitebridge, £73, Glendoe Estates, £70; CharX - Burnbank, Ardgour, £70. Ewes and feeding sheep: Chev ewe - South Laggan, £69; Chev wdr - 6 Stronaba, £66; BF ewe - Insh Farm, Spean Bridge, £64; Mule ewe - Glenmanachrie, Oban, £58.

Rams: Tex - Balmaglaster, Spean Bridge, £78; ZwbX - 4 Glebehill, Kilchoan, £73; Suff - Tigh Seonaid, Nich, £70; BF - Keppoch Farms, Roy Bridge, £68; Chev - Kilmalieu, Ardgour, £68; SuffX - Lagnaha, Torlundy, £60; BFL - Glendoe Estates, £60.

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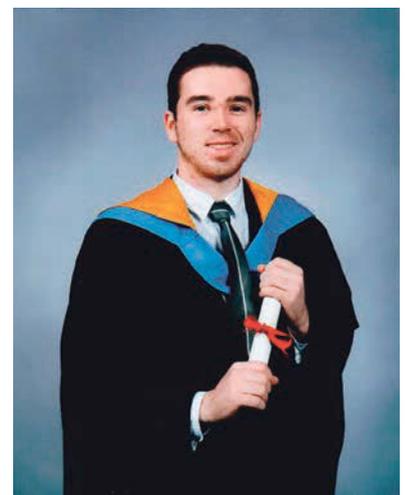
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GRADUATIONS



CATRIONA DOUGLAS

Miss Catriona Douglas BSc (Med Sci), MB ChB, MRCS, MD, gained her Fellowship to the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS), from the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. A former pupil at Upper Achintore Primary School and Lochaber High School before the University of Glasgow. In 2019 she also graduated from a fellowship in Head and Neck Surgical Oncology at the University of Toronto, Canada. She has been appointed a Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow. She is the daughter of James and Christine Douglas, Fort William.



MICHAEL NEIL MACINTOSH

Michael Neil MacIntosh graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Applied Chemistry from Strathclyde University, Glasgow. Michael is the eldest son of Angus and Denise MacIntosh, Houston, Renfrewshire and grandson of Morag and the late Archie MacIntosh, Oban and Penny and the late Norman McPhail, Oban

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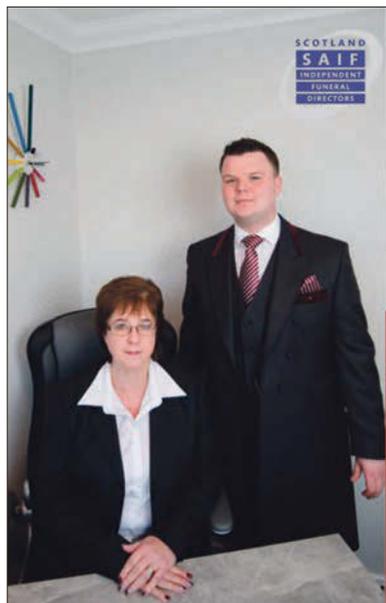
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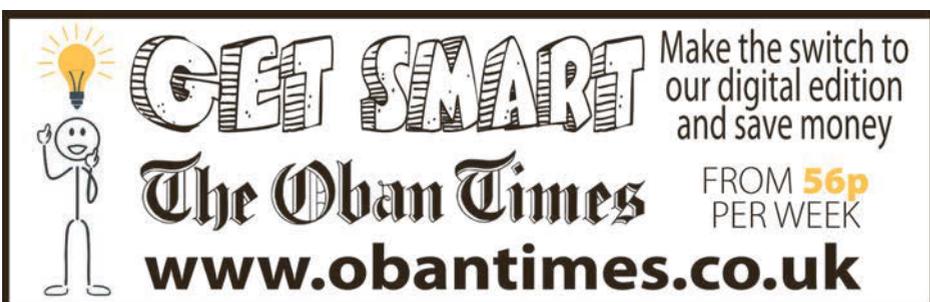
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DEATHS

INCH - Very suddenly, on January 21, 2020, on the Island of Lismore, Robin Grant, beloved husband of Sine (née Millar) and loving father of Ian and Elizabeth, father-in-law of Claire and grandfather of Calum Robin Grant.

MACINTYRE - Donald. Peacefully on January 30, 2020 at Tigh an Rudha, Tiree. Beloved husband of Margaret (Leckie) a dear uncle, cousin and good friend to many.

MACMILLAN - Ruth. Suddenly in Belford Hospital, Fort William, with her family by her side, on January 31, 2020, aged 73 years. Funeral will be held on Friday, February 14 in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church at 12 noon, followed by interment in Blarour Cemetery, Spean Bridge.

McQUADE - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn Care Home, Oban on February 6, 2020, in her 92nd year, Stella (née MacPhee), beloved wife of the late James, mum of Stella, Patricia, Allan, John, Anthony, Anne Marie, Clare and the late Brian, a dear Granny and Great Granny. R.I.P.

PAISLEY - Peacefully at home surrounded by her family on Sunday February 9, 2020, in her 91st year, Marion Paisley. Devoted wife to the late John, one in a million mum of Hazel and Kathryn, gran to Lyana and Kevin, Corale and Raymond, Laura, John and Mark, Super-Gran to Sophie, Erin, Callum and Harris. Special mother-in-law to William and the late Russell. Funeral service will take place 12 noon Saturday, February 15, 2020 from Duncansburgh-MacIntosh Parish Church, Fort William followed by interment at Kilmallie Cemetery. Flowers welcome, donations, if desired for Craig Nevis Surgery.

WOODROW - In loving memory of our mother Mary Woodrow, who passed peacefully at Oban Hospital on February 5, 2020. A wonderful lady, Special, Unique and Fun.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FERGUSON - The family of Mary Ann Ferguson, would like to thank everyone who sent messages of sympathy, flowers, cards and support, after our recent loss. Thanks to the medical profession, carers, Lynn Court Housing and staff at Etive House, for the great care given over many years. Rev Ian Miller led us in a very fitting service at Cardross Crematorium, also

our gratitude to Ian MacInnes of D & A Munn for professional, yet personal guidance. Thank you to all family and dedicated friends who helped us share a celebration of life well lived.

MACKINNON - Stewart, Neil and families would like to thank all relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and phone calls following the sad loss of their mum, Ann. Special thanks to Ian of D & A Munn for his personal and professional service, Donald MacKinnon for his thoughtful and comforting service, Alistair MacDonald for musical accompaniment in church, Iain MacIntyre for piping to the graveside, Justine at The Thistle and the Rose for the beautiful flowers, everyone at Dalmally Community Centre for food and refreshments and North Argyll House staff for their care and attention over the last few years. The retiral collection raised £355 to be split between Alzheimer Scotland and Cancer Research UK.

RUSSELL - Hughie, (late of Ulva and Mull), passed away peacefully at CAU, Belford Hospital on January 18, 2020. The family - Mary, Alistair, James and Amanda would like to say a big thank you to all their family, friends and neighbours for all the lovely cards and flowers and for all the support and help they gave us over the years of Hughie's illness. Thanks to Belford Hospital, Moss Park Care Home, doctors, nurses and staff at Glen Mor Medical Practice, LAD for help with transport, Mr B Skene for the lovely service, Manson and MacBeath for caring and professional services, to all who came to the church and graveside in such atrocious weather and to Railway Club for the lovely spread. The generous donations of over £600 raised at the church will go to Moss Park, Belford Hospital and LAD. Thank you. 83 Kilmallie Road, Caol.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

COOPE - Derek. A Celebration of Derek's Life will be held at the Royal Hotel, Oban at 1pm on Saturday February 15, 2020 followed by light refreshments. A warm welcome is extended to those who knew him. No flowers please. There will be a retiring collection/donation taken which is to be shared between The Dove Centre, Oban and the North Argyll Carers Centre, Oban. Please wear something brightly coloured.

MEMORIALS

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of Ina (née Lawrie), passed away February 14, 2017. A much loved mum and dear partner of Joe. Always in our hearts. - Ewen and Iain.

CURRIE - Cherished memories of Lily, who died February 15, 1989, Archie who died June 1, 1998.

Always in our thoughts.
- Maragret, Donald and family.
Still loved and very dear.
- Mike, London.

MACLEAN - In loving memory of our dear mum, gran and great gran, Annag MacLean, Kinlochleven, passed away February 10, 2011 also remembering our dad and grampa Calum MacLean, who passed away May 19, 1984. Loved and remembered always.

- Ian, Elizabeth and family and Roddy, Fiona and family.

McGHEE - Special memories of my husband Eddie who died February 11, 2019. My heart will always miss you. - Jane

McPHAIL - In loving memory of our dear dad, Charlie, who passed away on February 16, 2017 and our dear mum, Mary, who passed away on April 3, 2004. Sadly missed. Forever in our thoughts.

- John, Sheonaid and Drew, Dalmally.
Love and miss you always
Grandpa and Granny
- Elizabeth and Andrew xxxx

NEILSON - In loving memory of my dearest husband Colin, died February 15, 2018. Dearest Coco, It is not what I write and say
It's what's in my heart everyday.
All my love always and forever.
- Grace x

NEILSON - In loving memory of our dad and papa Colin, died February 15, 2018. Your life was a blessing
Your memory a treasure
You are loved beyond words
And missed beyond measure.
All our love.
- Colin, Shiona, David, Serena and families x

POULTON - Remembering with love, our beautiful baby son and brother, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992, Forever in our hearts.
- Mum and Hannah.

POULTON - In loving memory of my dear grandson and our nephew, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992, aged 3 days.
- Freena and family.

ROBERTSON - In memory of my husband Tom, who passed away February 18, 2011. Always remembered.
- Jean.

Oban Times ANNOUNCEMENTS
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New chief at An Comunn Gaidhealach

An Comunn Gaidhealach has announced that James Graham, originally from Lochinver, will be the organisation's new chief executive officer when John Morrison retires at the end of March following more than 12 years in the post.

James has gained considerable experience in the decade since he was employed as An Comunn's Mòd Manager, tackling the varied management and delivery challenges of staging National Mòds, as well as provincial events, and it will no doubt be of considerable benefit to him in his new post.

James said: 'It is a very great honour to be taking over in this post and I am very much looking forward to maintaining the outstanding work which John Morrison established, but I recognise this will be challenging.

'My ambition will be to develop and strengthen the organisation further in the future. As a participant in Provincial and National Mòds since boyhood and through my management



James Graham is new boss of An Comunn Gaidhealach.

work over the past decade, I have become increasingly aware that the Mòd is a foundation for Gaelic culture and its arts.

'This job will bring challenges, but I look forward to the unqualified support of my colleagues, and our board members, in taking the organisation forward.'

An Comunn president

Allan Campbell added: 'We congratulate James and welcome him to this important job, and we wish him every success in the post.

'At the same time, we extend our warmest good wishes for a long and happy retirement to John Morrison, when he will stand down from the post at the end of March.'

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Lent reminds us of the transience of the world

The period for the Christian churches that we are now embarking on has always been one traditionally used for self-examination.

What do professing Christians think about nowadays when they consider the season of Lent? More importantly, what does the ordinary person in the street think of Lent? Perhaps someone might be heard saying: 'It's a time I should really be in church.'

The oft-quoted Lent custom has been one of giving something up. More often than not, we try to rid ourselves of a bad habit that may be harmful to our health. Nothing wrong with that.

What about fasting? And I don't mean going on a diet. In days gone by, this really meant 'sack cloth and ashes'. 'Remember Man that thou art dust and unto dust thou shall return' (Genesis 3.19).

The Ash Wednesday liturgy used in some churches are a sober reminder. One way or another, we are all confronted with our own frailty and limitations as human beings. Dreadful illnesses, new unknown viruses and the hindrances of sicknesses that dog us as we grow older.

Lent points us in Christian

faith toward the looming cross of which Jesus Christ was so well aware. Lent also reminds us of the transience of the world around us and the nature of our own fleeting lives. To this, no earthly doctor has the cure.

It is important, therefore, that in our own spiritual journey through Lent, we are reminded of the life that is life indeed. The promise of Jesus Christ to all people remains. He is the only saviour standing at the horizon of history.

The Bible promises a new order of the affairs of the world in the sight of God. This promise has already been made for us. If we have faith in God and in his son Jesus Christ, the promise has been made.

Men and women may live together both today and tomorrow in the great joy of the new life that broke through into this world that first Easter morning.

This is the pilgrimage we share each year as we recall the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This we can share by reading the gospels of the New Testament, at times of worship and prayer together as we follow the Church's calendar.

Faith for most is a 'leap

in the dark' and, always demands sacrifice. And, yes, death to ourselves even. One day we are promised, however, it will be given us to understand.

A popular saying of old was 'a God-fearing man'. We know from experience that, like the Scribes and Pharisees, anyone can attend church 'religiously'. What Lent teaches us is that to be religious means a 'turning', a changing in our natures and our behaviour toward others that we might be better people and with divine help, available more worthy followers of Christ.

This really does mean being 'Christ like' and not just Christians in name and profession.

'Go and sin no more' (John 8.11) are the words of Jesus to the woman caught in adultery. More than anything else, this story teaches us how we should treat others. 'Go and sin no more.' What do these words mean for all of us this Lent - in our churches, in our jobs, in our dealings with one another and more specifically in ourselves?

Rev Anthony M Jones,
FRSA

Parish minister: Fort Augustus and Glengarry

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Friendly switch for Ca

There has been a change of venue for Oban Camanachd's pre-season friendly against Newtonmore.

The match was originally scheduled to take place in Oban on Saturday February 22 but will now take place at the Eilan on the same day with a 12.30pm throw-up. It will be Newtonmore's first home match of the season after carrying out maintenance work on their field.

The match between Lochside Rovers and the Newtonmore second team is off, with Lochside looking to find a replacement fixture.

Oban Camanachd and Lochside Rovers host their Glasgow Mid Argyll counterparts this Saturday. The seniors meet at Mossfield, whilst the colts play at Ganavan.

Oban Camanachd assistant manager Kenny Wotherspoon said: 'GMA have strengthened after winning promotion at the end of last season.'

'I believe they've signed Ewan Fraser, who scored a lot of goals for Newtonmore last season, and Ally McKerracher, a player I know well from my time at Oban Celtic.'

'We also meet them on the first day of the new shinty season and they won't be easy games. GMA are new to the league so the pressure will be on us as everyone will expect us to win.'

Oban Camanachd complete their pre-season programme against Ballachulish at the Jubilee Park on Saturday February 29, whilst Lochside play the Fort William second team at Ganavan that day.

cottages.com MacTavish Cup draw

The draw for the first round of the cottages.com MacTavish Cup took place at Hilton Primary School, Inverness, on Monday February 10.

Hilton Primary School is one of many schools in Inverness taking part in regular competition thanks to the efforts of Inverness Shinty Club.

First round

Saturday March 28

Lovat v Kingussie
Lochaber v Caberfeidh
Kilmallie v Kinlochshiel

Newtonmore v Beaulie
Fort William v Skye Camanachd
Byes
Glenurquhart
Inverness
Strathglass

2020 represents the third year of partnership between the Camanachd Association and cottages.com and their regional sales director Mark Whitehouse said: 'We're delighted to be sponsoring the MacTavish Cup for a third year and overseeing the first-round draw. We can't wait for the new season to get under way and the exciting matches ahead. Cottages.com is proud to support shinty, a sport with huge cultural significance that promotes community. We believe in the role the sport plays in Scotland's unique heritage and making it a great destination and wish the best of luck to all the teams in 2020.'

Derek Keir of the Camanachd Association said: 'We are delighted to celebrate the incredible work of clubs and schools to grow and sustain shinty by hosting the cottages.com MacTavish cup draw at Hilton Primary School. This helps raise awareness of the opportunity to participate thanks to volunteers from Inverness Shinty Club as well as give important exposure to our senior game.'

Keith Loades, president of the Camanachd Association added: 'Cottages.com's continued sponsorship of the MacTavish Cup allows us to enhance our position as Scotland's most historic and culturally significant sport. By committing to supporting shinty for another year, cottages.com is showing a desire to augment the quality of life for many rural communities across our country in a way only shinty can. The eagerly anticipated draw will pair together the cream of north shinty clubs eligible to compete in this, the 122nd playing of the MacTavish Cup.'

HIS Sutherland Cup draw

The Highland Industrial Supplies Sutherland Cup draw took place in Inverness on Monday February 3.



Gary Mackintosh of Highland Industrial Supplies with Camanachd Association president Keith Loades at the Sutherland Cup draw. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

Garry Mackintosh from sponsors HIS drew the home teams with Camanachd Association president Keith Loades pulling the away sides.

Holders Lochside Rovers were one of eight teams given a bye into a 16-team second round. Gareth Evans, beginning his second spell in charge at Lochside Rovers, said: 'It's a bonus to get an opening round bye and all you can ask for after that is a home tie and we have that and we'll see who comes through from the tie between Glenurquhart and Lochaber. We are not looking any further forward than that though but it is a plus that Kingussie, Newtonmore and Fort William are in the other half of the draw.'

The tie of the round is the derby meeting between Kingussie and Newtonmore second teams at the Dell.

There is also a west coast derby as the Kinlochshiel colts host the Skye colts whilst Glenorchy were given a trip to play Lewis Camanachd.

The Fort William and Kilmallie seconds both have home advantage against Strathspey Camanachd and the Inveraray seconds respectively.

First round

Saturday April 11

Glenurquhart v Lochaber
Kinlochshiel v Skye Camanachd
Kyles Athletic v Kilmory
Lewis Camanachd v Glenorchy
Kingussie v Newtonmore
Inverness v Caberfeidh
Kilmallie v Inveraray
Fort William v Strathspey
Camanachd

Byes

Boleskine
SCOTS Camanachd
Lochside Rovers
Glasgow Mid Argyll
Strathglass
Lovat

Aberdeen University
Beaulie

Second round

Saturday May 23

Aberdeen University v Kingussie/
Newtonmore
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Beaulie
Lochside Rovers v Glenurquhart/
Lochaber
Strathglass v Lovat
Kyles Athletic/Kilmory v Lewis
Camanachd/Glenorchy
Kilmallie/Inveraray v
Kinlochshiel/Skye Camanachd
Boleskine v Fort William/
Strathspey Camanachd
SCOTS Camanachd v Inverness/
Caberfeidh

Garry Mackintosh from HIS said: 'We are delighted to sign this three-year partnership with the Camanachd Association, with an option to extend for a fourth year. Shinty is vital to so many of the communities that Highland Industrial Supplies operates in and we are looking forward to developing our partnership over the coming years.'

Camanachd Association president Keith Loades added: 'This year's draw has paired together some great teams and there is little doubt that this, the 97th playing of the Highland Industrial Supplies Sutherland Cup, will prove as entertaining and dynamic as it has done in previous years. I wish everyone involved the very best.'

Camanachd Association chief executive officer Derek Keir added: 'We are delighted to continue our partnership with Highland Industrial Supplies. The commitment they have shown to supporting shinty helps the Camanachd Association and our member clubs to reach people in some of the most isolated communities in Scotland. The Camanachd Association en-

deavours to work with businesses who operate and provide jobs for shinty communities and in signing off this partnership we can deliver on this objective. We are all very excited for what is to come and we are eagerly anticipating the start of one of our furthest reaching national competitions - the Highland Industrial Supplies Sutherland Cup.'

The 2020 HIS Sutherland Cup Final is scheduled to take place at Blairbeg on Saturday August 29.

Fixture list

The fixture list for the 2020 shinty season has been released with competitive games beginning on Saturday March 7.

Mowi South Division 1

Lochside Rovers face a tough start to the season. First, they welcome the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team to Oban - a repeat of last season's Bullough Cup Final. On Saturday March 14, the Oban side travels to Ballachulish who finished second behind champions Aberdour in the league last term. A week later, Lochside host Bute who were relegated from the Mowi National Division at the end of last season.

Lochside boss Gareth Evans said: 'It's a tough start but you have to play all the teams sometime. We met GMA in last year's Bullough Final. We also have them this Saturday in a friendly. Ballachulish had a fine season last year, finishing second, and I think they'll be good again this time around, whilst Bute are, in my mind, favourites to win the league. We'll prepare well and hope to catch them cold but it will be difficult.'

Ballachulish had an impressive 2009, finishing second in Mowi



Glenurquhart's John Barr goes for the ball with Lovat's Fraser Heath.

Photograph: Neil Paterson.

manachd

South Division 1. They begin their new campaign against Taynuilt at Taynuilt Sports Field. Ballachulish's first home match comes a week later, against Lochside Rovers, who finished a place behind them last term. On Saturday March 21, Ballachulish host the Kyles Athletic second team.

Taynuilt, with new manager Steven Campbell in charge, open their season with home matches against Ballachulish then the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team, either side of a clash against Bute at the Meadows.

Bute are favourites to make a swift return to national league shinty. The islanders will travel to Col Glen on Saturday March 7 before hosting Taynuilt. They travel to Oban to play Lochside Rovers on Saturday March 21.

Col Glen will be tested at home to Bute before travelling to Tayforth on Saturday March 14. Next is a trip to Taynuilt Sports Field to take on Taynuilt.

Kyles Athletic welcome Tayforth on the opening day of the season and then have successive away matches against the Glasgow Mid Argyll seconds and Ballachulish.

Glasgow Mid Argyll's second team travel to Oban to play Lochside Rovers and to Tayforth either side of their home meeting with their Kyles counterparts.

Tayforth open at Kyles before hosting Col Glen and Glasgow Mid Argyll's second team.

Mowi North Division 1

Champions Newtonmore seconds start with a clash against their Kinlochshiel counterparts at the Eilan. There is a trip to newly promoted Lochcarron before the Inverness first team visit the Eilan.

Glengarry, who finished second in the title race last season running Newtonmore reserves all the way to the final day of the season, have a free week on the opening day of the season in this 11-team league. Glengarry play the Skye colts at Craighard on Saturday March 14 and travel to Caberfeidh a week later.

The Fort William reserves are away to Skye on the first Saturday of the season. The Glenurquhart reserves come to An Aird a week later, whilst Fort William head for Lochcarron on Saturday March 21.

Newly-promoted Lochcarron face the Lovat second team at Balgate on Saturday March 7. They host the Newtonmore and Fort William second teams on the next two Saturdays.

The Kingussie seconds follow their game at Caberfeidh with Lovat's visit to the Dell and a journey to Skye.

The Inverness senior side's run of games are away to Glenurquhart and Newtonmore, either side of a free Saturday.

The Skye second team's first three matches are Fort William, home; Glengarry, away, and Kingussie, home.

The Kinlochshiel reserves visit

their Newtonmore counterparts before hosting Caberfeidh and travelling to Glenurquhart.

The Lovat second string welcome Lochcarron and then travel to Kingussie before having a free Saturday.

The Caberfeidh second team have Kingussie, home; Kinlochshiel, away; and Glengarry, home, whilst the Glenurquhart colts take on Inverness, home; Fort William, away; and Kinlochshiel, home.

Pre-season friendly results

The pre-season friendlies gathered pace with a number of games beating the elements on Saturday February 8.

Oban Camanachd 7 Inveraray 3

Oban Camanachd beat Inveraray 7-3 in their 1pm throw-up. The match was originally scheduled for Ganavan but the 4G pitch at Oban High School was booked as back-up and it came into play when Ganavan was ruled unplayable.

Garry Lord bagged a brace for Oban Camanachd whilst Chrissie MacMillan, Connor Howe, Daniel MacCuish, Daniel MacVicar and Lewis Buchanan were also on target. Allan MacDonald, Lewis MacNicol and Hamish MacLellan found the net for Inveraray.

Oban Camanachd boss Stephen Sloss said: 'We played three, 30 minute matches which we won 2-1, 2-1 and 3-1 so it was a good work out. We used 17 players who all got 70 minutes and a chance to get their touch in.'

Oban Celtic 2 Inveraray 2

Oban Celtic's second team and the Inveraray second team drew 2-2 in their noon throw-up at Mossfield.

It was a cold, windy day for this closely-fought clash with both teams fielding several youth players.

There was also a sprinkling of experience in both sides with first team boss Ruairaidh Graham, Allan MacDonald and Hamish MacLellan featuring for the visitors, whilst Ross MacMillan and Lennon Campbell got 90 minutes for Celtic with Andy MacDonald, Neil Carmichael and Dylan Cooke also taking the field with some unable to make all the remaining February friendlies.

Inveraray took the lead with a shot from Kane Kirkhope. Celtic keeper Rebecca Macphee got a touch to the ball and was unlucky not to keep it out.

Celtic levelled through Charlie Campbell Roberts but a goal from Inveraray veteran Ruairaidh Graham gave the visitors a 2-1 advantage at half-time.

A few of the Inveraray first team players had to leave for their first team friendly against Oban

Continued on page 44.

new SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

Win!
THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £2350

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph below. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 2pm Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into any of our offices - The Oban Times, Lochavullin, Oban; The Lochaber Times, High Street, Fort William; The Campbelltown Courier, Main Street, Campbelltown; The Argyllshire Advertiser, Argyll Street, Lochgilphead or the Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

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In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Winners agree to have their photograph taken for publicity purposes. Winners' names and home towns will appear in the newspaper. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/destroyed within 30 days of the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.



Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB or hand in to any of our offices as detailed above.

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- S Campbell Sept '18 £2550
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- D MacLellan Jan '20 £2000

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



The two entries who got nearest the ball and each receive £25 are:

- M Shaw Barbreck
- D Mitchell Tarbert



The teams who part in the 'Garry Girls' Tournament. Photographs: iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Skye 'A' win Invergarry tournament

The last Saturday in January is always the date of the annual tournament organised by 'The Garry Girls' of Invergarry Shinty Club.

Now in its 23rd year, the tournament, sponsored by Ailsa Johnstone, formerly of D A Johnstone and Son, Contractors, is so popular it now has an upper limit of 12 teams to fit the tournament into a five-hour slot in Fort William's Nevis Centre.

Teams were split into two leagues, picked by random number selection,

with League A consisting of Glengarry 'A', Strathglass, Inverness, Skye 'B', Oban Lorn and Ardnamurchan 'B'.

League B comprised Badenoch, Glengarry 'B', Skye 'A', Ardnamurchan 'A', Aberdour and Lochaber

Winners of League 'A' were Inverness, with Glengarry 'A' runners-up. Badenoch won League 'B' with Skye 'A' runners-up.

In the semi-finals, Skye 'A' beat Inverness 9-1 with Badenoch overcoming Glengarry 'A' 7-1, resulting in a Badenoch and Skye 'A' final. After a thrilling match

WOMEN'S SHINTY

which ended in a 4-4 draw, another close-run four minutes of extra time brought another goal from Skye 'A' to take the much sought after trophy.

Darcie Williamson presents the trophy to Caitlin MacLean, captain of the winning Skye 'A' team as sponsor Ailsa Johnstone was unable to attend.



Glenurquhart's Michael Fraser gets his block in on Lovat's Greg Matheson. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

Continued from page 43

Camanachd whilst Oban Celtic made changes of their own throughout the second half. Just minutes before referee Alex MacVicar's final whistle, Celtic grabbed an equaliser through Ross MacMillan and it finished 2-2. There were stand-out performances from Inveraray keeper Gregor Mather, who had a great game, and Chris Campbell who worked hard throughout the 90 minutes.

Kinlochshiel P Fort William P

Kinlochshiel and Fort William brought their throw-up at Kirkton forward

to 11am in an attempt to get the match played ahead of the arrival of Storm Ciara.

However, overnight rain left water on the pitch and the match was called off on Saturday morning.

Lochaber 2 Newtonmore 5

The Newtonmore second team beat their Lochaber counterparts 5-2 in their 1pm throw-up at Spean Bridge.

Bruno Berardelli and Robbie Rydings were on target for Lochaber but Craig Macleod's double and goals from Arron MacBean, Somhairle Thomson and Duncan Gorman gave Newtonmore victory.

Ballachulish P Kilmallie P

The 1pm throw-up between

Ballachulish and the Kilmallie second team at Jubilee Park was postponed because of pitch and weather conditions.

Lovat 0 Glenurquhart 0

Lovat and Glenurquhart drew 0-0 on a particularly cold day at Balgate.

Lovat were without Marc MacLachlan, whilst Neale Reid and Connor Golabek won't feature for the Glenurquhart this season.

Glenurquhart had wind advantage in the first half and created more chances without really troubling Stuart MacDonald in the home goal.

However, at the other end, Fraser Heath's shot hit the crossbar with Glenurquhart keeper Stuart MacKintosh helpless.

Lovat introduced Scott MacKenzie when Fraser Heath was forced off for treatment after he was caught on the nose by John Barr's swing.

Referee Andy MacLean awarded Lovat a penalty just before the hour after the goal judge flagged when John Barr felled Fraser Heath, now back on the field, inside the 'D'.

Greg Matheson took the spot-hit but Stuart MacKintosh saved with his caman, above his head.

Lovat had the better chances in the second half and the excellent Stuart MacKintosh threw himself to again deny Greg Matheson, this time from close range, but the hosts couldn't break the deadlock.

James MacPherson, now at full forward, had a couple of efforts for Glenurquhart but the match finished goal-less.

Newtonmore 4 Beauly 0

Newtonmore ran out 4-0 winners against Beauly in their 1pm throw-up at Kincaig.

Iain Robinson, Drew MacDonald, David MacLean - against his former club - and Jamie Robinson got the goals.

Aberdour 4 Strathglass 3

Aberdour edged out Strathglass 4-3 at Silversands.

The sides had been due to play first and second team matches but the conditions meant only one mixed match went ahead.

The elements meant this was a game of two halves and although a double from Penri Jones and a Sam Cooper goal counted for Strathglass, Lewis Nicol, Roddy MacColl, Ruairidh Reid and Alec Mitchell sealed an Aberdour win.

Inverness 0 Boleskine 1

Neil Hope scored the only goal of the game as Boleskine beat the Inverness seconds 1-0 on the Bught Park outside pitch.

MacKinnon Shinty Sixes

Skye Camanachd held the MacKinnon Sixes at the

Portree High School astro pitch.

Five teams took part and, after the round-robin matches, Witness the Fitness and Crossal Inc. won their semi-finals to meet in the final. Goals from Jenna Beaton and Jordan Murchison gave Witness the Fitness a 2-1 win in the final.

Player of the tournament accolades went to: Overall - Jordan Murchison; Ladies - Ilana Paterson; U17 - Ross MacKinnon and Over 40s - Robbie Gordon.

Liz Young Sixes

Kingussie hosted the sixth Liz Young Sixes at Dalfaber Sports Hall, Aviemore.

Eight teams and more than 50 players took part, with Ruthven the eventual winners.

The winning squad was Rona Stewart, captain; James Hutchison; Roddy Young; Eoin Baikie; Dylan Borthwick and Callan Stewart.

Oban Lorn Ladies P Bute Ladies P

Oban Lorn Ladies were to return to action with a pre-season friendly against Bute Ladies at Ganavan on Sunday February 9.

But the match was called off 24 hours earlier because of an unplayable pitch.

The sides will renew rivalries on Sunday March 1 when they meet on Bute in a Mowi South Division 2 clash on the first day of the new season.

This weekend's pre-season fixtures

There are only three more Saturdays until the 2020 shinty season starts and clubs will ramp up their preparations on Saturday February 15.

Oban Camanachd and Lochside Rovers have a double-header against the Glasgow Mid Argyll first and second teams. Oban Camanachd play at Mossfield, whilst Lochside are at Ganavan. Both matches start at 1pm.

The Oban Celtic squad head for Dunoon to play Kyles Athletic, whilst Glengarry start their pre-season against Beauly.

There is an all-Mowi Premiership match between Caberfeidh and Newtonmore at Castle Leod, whilst the Kingussie first and second teams host their Skye Camanachd counterparts at Dunbarry.

Strathglass and Lovat hope to play first and second team matches, with venues to be confirmed.

The seniors will contest the Murdo MacKenzie Memorial Trophy.

Inverness play Glenurquhart, Newtonmore's second team face Tayforth whilst Boleskine challenge the Caberfeidh seconds.

Kinlochshiel will host a pitch naming ceremony at their new home, Reraig Park.

Oban jiu jitsu club punches above its weight

By Jacob Rawley

Oban Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is tucked away in the back of town, but it is a trek worth taking if you want to learn the world's most practical martial art in a fun and friendly environment.

The gym is run by Coogie Potter, a student of Marcos Nardini, Scotland's only Brazilian born black belt, a European jiu jitsu champion and a former professional mixed martial artist.

Coogie has created a fantastic atmosphere at his Lochavullin base. His students all help each other in their pursuit of a common goal.

There is no ego, no bravado, simply a passion for the martial arts.

It's a small gym, but often those are the best in the world of combat sports. They are real. Bigger gyms sometimes lose their way, becoming money driven businesses which push a fast-food version of whatever art they may have once taught.

Oban BJJ isn't like that.



Coogie Potter, back row, left, with his Oban BJJ team that competed at Ravenscraig in 2018.

It's more than big enough to have a solid community built around it. However it has stuck to its roots with the community remaining tight-knit and humble.

This is apparent in the training sessions, where people aren't just trying to improve on their own abilities. They all help each other. If someone catches their training partner with something they

will explain how they were able to do so. This means knowledge is passed through all levels.

The team also test themselves and some of the gym's walls are covered in competition medals. And there's plenty of gold ones there.

Coogie's coach Marcos Nardini has great things to say about the gym: 'What Coogie has been able to do for

BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

the sport in a small town like Oban is great,' he said. 'Oban BJJ is a credit to the town.'

He also complemented Coogie as a coach saying 'Coogie thinks outside the box'. The team's standard impresses Marcos, especially considering how isolated Oban BJJ is compared to other Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and mixed martial arts gyms in Scotland.

That is because Coogie goes the extra mile, travelling with his team to places like Kilmarnock and Alloa, giving his students the opportunity to train with different people and learn from different coaches.

If you are looking to get fit, practice a martial art with like-minded people or compete in jiu jitsu or mixed martial arts, Oban BJJ is an outstanding option.

Classes run from Monday to Friday. Tuesday is a mixed martial arts class and Friday is an advanced class.

Martial arts

IAIN RODGER
editor@obantimes.co.uk



Left to right: Caio Terra, Coogie Potter and Mikey Musumici.

BJJ/MMA

Some members of Oban BJJ travelled to Glasgow to attend a seminar with ten-time world champion and Jiu Jitsu royalty Caio Terra and four-time champion and phenomenon Mikey Musumici. Both men are known for entering absolute division - any weight - at their diminutive weight of 56kgs then beating others at more than 120kgs on their way to winning championships.

This three-hour event was a great learning experience with technique and philosophical issues of BJJ passed onto eager minds.

Classes in Oban continue, with Mondays and Thursdays focusing on fundamentals in no-gi and gi. As a result of the popularity of the MMA classes, the academy is changing the length of classes to 90 minutes on Thursdays.

If you would like to try BJJ or MMA, Oban BJJ can be found on Facebook or email coogiepots@gmail.com

Shukokai Karate

Classes continue as normal the clubs in Oban, Dalmally and Inveraray.

Anyone looking for more information on these clubs can get details from Kenny Gray on 07884 183905 or kenni.gray@btinternet.com

Kickboxing

Cody McCulloch and Lewis May were presented with their personalised embroidered black belts this week.

Sessions are on Sundays from 11am to 1pm for juniors, five to 15 years, and Wednesdays from 4.30pm to 6pm for juniors, five to 15 years, and 6pm to 7.30pm for seniors, 16 years and over. Find us on Facebook Senshi Do Kickboxing or email shihanwill@gmail.com

Kyokushinkai Karate

Oban fighters are training for the Scottish Open in the Arc Fitness Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University, on Saturday February 29. The club has three fighters entered and this week sees the last of the hard sparring in preparation for the event. Darryl McLaughlin senior is making his debut in the over 40's division and son Charlie McLaughlin is in the cadet section. We also have Sebastien Jubeau making his debut in the novice heavyweight section.

The Oban club has worldwide recognition and has access to national and international training and tournaments. It is taking on beginners until the end of March so get in contact if this is something you would like to be part of.

For details about Kyokushinkai Karate classes, contact Iain on 07584 166542 or email iain@ikku.co.uk

The club can also be found and messaged on Facebook under Caledonia Kyokushin.



Charlie McLaughlin kicks pads held by Darryl senior.

Oban players make the grade at Edinburgh Open

Two Oban Tennis and Squash Club (OTSC) players served up capital performances at the recent Edinburgh Open and Graded events.

Playing at Edinburgh Sports Club, the OTSC members smashed their respective events at what was the strongest squash competition to be held in Scotland in the last 20 years.

Several members of the club took part in the graded events, while the open featured world class players in the ladies and gents competitions, offering up a fantastic weekend of amazing squash for players and spectators.

Oban TSC member Grant Addison won the Grade E event while clubmate Mark Lockart won Grade F.

Speaking on behalf of the Oban club, secretary Jackie Kersley said: 'Huge congratulations to Grant and Mark. They did Oban Tennis and Squash Club proud.'



Mark Lockart, back row fourth right, and Grant Addison, third right.

Photograph: Steve Cubbins.

'Thanks to Edinburgh Sports Club for putting on such a fantastic weekend, OTSC will definitely be back next year. Thanks also to Steve Cubbins, tournament photographer, for allowing

us to use his photograph. A proud moment for our Oban boys.'

The winner of the Open event was Karim Abdel Gawad, world number four, who beat Scotland's Greg

SQUASH

Lobban, world number 29, 3-0. The ladies open saw Donna Lobban, seeded five for the tournament, beat Julianne Courtice, 2, 3-2.

OT

POOL



Pool potters primed for European championships

Two local pool champions head off to Malta next week to play in the 2020 European Eightball Pool championships.

Current Oban champion Brandon Ferris and five times winner Geo Adam jet off on Saturday to represent Scotland in their separate categories. Brandon, who plays out of the Lochavullin Bar, will be playing for the men's B team and Geo (Wide Mouthed Frog) will be captain of the senior B team.

Anyone wishing to sponsor the pair can contact them at geo11adam@yahoo.co.uk

CURLING

Success for Oban curlers

Oban Curling Club have become Argyll curling champions for the second time in three years but only the third time in over 55 years.

The club's team consisting of Jack Tollan, Graham Innes and David Howie with Fraser Inglis as skip competed in the championship at Greenacres ice rink in Renfrewshire over two recent weekends, playing two qualifying games on January 5, winning both against Upper Cowal and Glenorchy/Tighnabruich.

The top four teams after these two rounds – Millport, Glenorchy/Tighnabruich, Dunoon Argyll and Oban – qualified for the third qualifying round which was played on Sunday February 2 with Oban beating Millport (the holders) 7-2 and Dunoon Argyll beating Glenorchy/Tighnabruich 6-3.

As the only two unbeaten teams after three rounds, Oban and Dunoon Argyll qualified for the high road final with the game being closely contested over the first couple of ends before Oban managed a huge score of six shots in the third end followed by four shots in the fourth, eventually winning 12-5 after eight ends.

In the low road final, Glenorchy/Tighnabruich defeated Millport 9-5.

ADULT FOOTBALL

Results and fixtures

Last Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup sixth round replay – Oban Saints v Wishaw HSFP, postponed; Greater Glasgow Division Three – Oban Saints GG 4, Colquhoun United 1; SAFL Premier Division One – Busby 2, Lochgilphead Red Star 1; Dunoon 0, Parkhall 2; Neilston 0, Campbeltown Pupils 1; Premier Division Two – Glenburn Athletic 4, Tarbert 2.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup, sixth round replay – Oban Saints v Wishaw HSFP, Oban High School 3G, kick-off 1pm; Greater Glasgow AFL – Division Three – Oban Saints GG v Westerlands; SAFL Premier Division One – Campbeltown Pupils v Dunoon; Lochgilphead Red Star v Carlton YM; Premier Division Two – Tarbert v FC Argyll.

OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

Results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Under 13s v Victoria Park, postponed; St Patrick's SA 5, Under 14s 0; Under 15s v Rossvale Thistle, postponed; Under 17s v BSC Glasgow, postponed.

This Sunday's fixtures: Under 13s, no game; Glasgow Boys v Under 14s; OLM FC v Under 15s; Rutherglen Glencairn v Under 17s.

Saints GG return

Oban Saints GG	4
Colquhoun Utd	1
GGPL – Division 3	

A goal and three assists from Oban Saints youth product Gavin Forgiveie helped Oban Saints GG arrest their recent form slump and return to winning ways against Colquhoun United at Oban High School last Saturday afternoon.



Saints youngster Gavin Forgiveie was in top form against Colquhoun United.

In horrendous weather conditions, braved by a hardy band of supporters Forgiveie's opening goal was cancelled out by a sweetly struck free-kick on the stroke of half-time from Zak Murray before a dominant second-half Saints performance produced further goals for Alex Craik, Fraser MacFarlane and Keir MacLean.

With a waterlogged Glencruitten forcing the cancella-

tion of the first team's game, the Saints second string management team were able to call on the services of Martin Bonar, Gavin Forgiveie and Aaron McKay, who were due to be part of the squad to face Wishaw HSFP in the Scottish Amateur Cup sixth round replay.

In just their first season in the Greater Glasgow Premier Amateur Football League, the youthful Saints second string are more than holding their own against considerably more experienced opposition and are one of, perhaps, six clubs harbouring ambitions of lifting the Division Three league title.

Those ambitions have taken a bit of a knock in recent weeks with three defeats in succession. However, the youngsters, with seven under 19s in a squad where 11 of the 16 were under 23, bounced back in convincing style to notch their seventh league win of the season.

After a cagey start, the match burst into life in the 12th minute when Dean Smith held the ball up well on the edge of the Colquhoun United box and swivelled away from his marker to arrow a shot towards the postage



Dean Smith pokes the ball home but Dowd.

stamp corner where United keeper Mark Dyet flung himself acrobatically to fingertip Smith's effort over his crossbar. Dyet's excellent work was almost undone from Gavin Forgiveie's corner kick when he lost the aerial battle to Rory Dowd and Dean Smith poked home the loose ball from close range. However, referee Frank MacLachlan, who handled proceedings well, disallowed the goal for what he considered an unfair challenge by Dowd.

The deadlock was broken in the 25th minute with Dean Smith again involved. Smith held up a Daniel Croarkin pass on the edge of the United box and laid the ball off to Robert Johnstone on the right

Scottish Cup last eight place up for grabs

Heavy overnight rain on the eve of the match put the final nail in the coffin of the slender hopes of Glencruitten surviving the recent dismal weather forcing the postponement of last Saturday's scheduled Scottish Amateur Cup sixth round replay between Oban Saints and Wishaw HSFP.

The eagerly anticipated re-match has therefore been re-arranged for this coming Saturday with a 1pm kick-off either at Glencruitten or the all-weather surface at Oban High School.

The incentive, if any was needed, for the two combatants is a home quarter-final tie against last season's runners-up, and many tipsters competition favourites, Eastfield, of the Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division.

Wishaw HSFP, winners of the most prestigious trophy in Scottish amateur football, kicked off this season's campaign with a comfortable 3-0 away win at Windlaw of the Strathclyde Saturday Morning Amateur Football League.

Wishaw were on the road

again for their second round tie which took them to Falkirk to face Lothian and Edinburgh Amateur Football Association Lothian West Division strugglers Mill where an emphatic 6-0 win eased them through to the third round.

A third consecutive away draw gave Wishaw a shorter journey to Glasgow Green and a third round tie against Hampden of the Glasgow Colleges Football Association Premier Division. Despite succeeding where all others in the competition have failed in breaching the miserly Wishaw defence, the Saturday morning team were no match for their afternoon opponents and were easily brushed aside by six goals to one.

The fourth round draw set up an all Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division tie between Wishaw and three times cup winners St Patrick's FP. Having already inflicted a heavy away league defeat on their opponents, the much fancied Dumbarton men went into the tie as favourites though Wishaw had other

ideas and produced their best performance of the season to progress by two goals to nil.

After competing well for the first 45 minutes of their fifth round tie, Singer were stunned by two Wishaw goals in five minutes at the start of the second half. There was to be no way back for the home side and Wishaw added a third goal to put the tie beyond any doubt and set up a sixth round clash with Saints.

Scottish Amateur Football Association Select manager Colin MacLeod was among the large crowd at Wishaw Sports Centre when Wishaw HSFP hosted Saints in round six.

The national gaffer would have been impressed with a number of players on both sides and quietly satisfied that two of his players, Oban Saints Scott Maitland and Wishaw's Lee Hadden, provided the goals in a 1-1 draw. Saints progressed to this stage of the competition with a bye in the first round.

Round two saw the Oban side paired with Perthshire outfit Vale of Earn and it took two games and penalty

FOOTBALL

kicks for Saints to march into round three. The first game in Oban finished 4-4 with the replay in Crieff ending in a 3-3 draw, with Saints winning the penalty shoot-out 4-3.

There was no such drama in the third round tie at a damp Garscube Sports Complex where Saints recorded a comfortable 4-1 win over Westerlands.

Saints made the gruelling 410-mile round trip to the chilly north-east for round four and a re-match with last season's conquerors Rothie Rovers. The Oban side progressed to the fifth round with a hard-fought 3-0 win.

In the fifth round, Saints were paired with Glasgow Saturday morning side Renfrew Town with Saints running out 5-1 winners.

Saturday's tie must be decided on the day with a penalty shoot-out coming into play if the two sides cannot be separated after 90 minutes. Once again taking charge of proceedings is Mr Donald McCallum of the Scottish Amateur Football League.

to winning ways



the goal is disallowed for a foul on the goalkeeper by Rory

Match report and photographs: Derek Black

wing. Johnstone strode forward and cut into the box to send a cut-back tantalisingly out of reach of the advancing keeper into the path of Gavin Forgive who stroked the ball into the unguarded net from 10 yards.

An injured right foot cut short Nathan Allan's afternoon after just 35 minutes when the young central defender, one of 11 players on show who came through the club's youth ranks, was replaced by experienced utility man David Smith.

On the stroke of half-time Smith was harshly penalised for a challenge on United striker Robin Wyatt 25 yards from goal and right of centre.

Defender Zak Murray

took responsibility for the set-piece and arrowed a low left-foot strike across Murdo MacKenzie and into the bottom corner to level things up.



Oban Saints No 1 fan Iain Neilson braves the horrendous weather conditions.

With the wind and driving rain at their backs, Saints produced a dominant second-half display and deservedly regained the lead in the 53rd minute.

Veteran central defender Alex Craik demonstrated that his worth to the team extends beyond that of nurturing the young talent alongside him when he stretched his neck muscles to head a Gavin Forgive left-wing corner kick past Mark Dyet.

Sixty seconds later, the woodwork denied Daniel Croarkin a spectacular goal when his fierce dipping 30-yard effort landed on top of the United crossbar with the keeper well beaten.

Saints made their second change on the hour mark when Aaron McKay came on to replace Rory Dowd.

Saints made a double substitution in the 67th minute, replacing Dean Smith and Robert Johnstone with Keir MacLean and Fraser MacFarlane.

After coming close on a couple of occasions, MacFarlane got his name on the score sheet in the 76th minute from a move started by Alex Craik. The big centre-half strode out from the back and sprayed the ball out wide to Fraser MacFarlane. The winger's direct running had the United defence backpedalling and his well weighted pass sent the overlapping Gavin Forgive

FOOTBALL

in behind. Forgive hit the bye-line and picked out MacFarlane with his cut-back which MacFarlane lifted over the goalkeeper from eight yards.

A cheeky back heel flick inside the six-yard box from Daniel Croarkin was stopped by the legs of Colquhoun keeper Mark Dyet before the midfielder made way for Lewis Buchanan in Saints final change in the 81st minute.

Saints rounded off the scoring in the 89th minute from another good move up the right wing. Right back Craig Livingstone sent Fraser MacFarlane scurrying forward where he was once again supported by Gavin Forgive. Forgive rounded off an impressive all-round display with another assist, teeing up Keir MacLean for an emphatic right-foot finish past the keeper.

The Saints second string are at home again this coming Saturday when they welcome Westerlands with three more vital league points up for grabs.

Cyclists sizzle in Lanzarote 4-stage race

North Argyll Cycle Club got the season off to an early start by sending a team of five to the Club La Santa 4 Stage Mountain Bike Race on Lanzarote.

The UCI-sanctioned event takes place over four days where amateur and elite riders challenge themselves on varied terrain of tarmac roads, sand, lava fields and dirt track routes in the north of the island. Ninety per cent of the course is off-road.

Three days are straight races increasing in length from 40km to 60km and on the final day 80km.

By way of a rest the third day is a hill climb time trial climbing 500m over 20km.

Conditions were the same every day – bright and sunny with a stiff breeze – and the Argyll riders, used to stripping off layers on the start line, adapted quickly to T-shirts, shades and sun-cream and set off with the 700-strong field.

It was strong, too, with amateur riders in the age categories pushing well into the elite rankings.

NACC member Nick

Charlton told us: 'Each day the race presented challenges of steep climbs, long drags into the wind and bone shattering descents.

'Loose sand, marble-like lava to football-like lava, winding paths through terraces, low tunnels and endless washboard tracks tested bike and rider.

'The race strategy was to eat well, go out fast and keep

pushing through the stages, there was more pushing involved than expected; the last day had long sections climbing on deep loose sand.'

A daily dip in the sea kept the legs fresh and the NACC tourists all acquitted themselves well without injury or mechanical failure. Special credit to Judith Braun, who had never entered a MTB race before. The NACC riders

CYCLING

ranked as follow below.

NACC results by category:
Masters 30F: Judith Braun, 11th place, 13:25:56. Masters 30M: Graeme Neagle, 15th place, 9:14:21; Michael Bossard, 24th place, 9:37:56. Masters 40M: Gavin Blainey, 55th place, 10:21:13. Masters 50M: Nick Charlton, 22nd place, 10:26:36.



North Argyll cyclists at the finish line, from left: Gavin Blainey, Graeme Neagle, Michael Bossard, Judith Braun, Nick Charlton.



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Web: www.northwestmarine.co.uk

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WEATHER

Thursday

Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 5°C.

Friday

Heavy rain and a fresh breeze
Temperatures
6°C to 8°C.

Weekend

Outlook

Saturday
Gusty winds and light rain showers
Sunday
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze
Temperatures
5°C to 7°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday February 13, 2020 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Thur	02.24	0.3	08.22	4.0
	15.01	0.8	20.45	3.6
Fri	03.11	0.5	09.05	3.7
	15.48	1.0	21.30	3.4
Sat	04.01	0.8	09.52	3.4
	16.40	1.3	22.22	3.1
Sun	04.57	1.1	10.50	3.1
	17.43	1.5	23.37	2.9
Mon	06.03	1.4	12.26	2.9
	18.58	1.7	***	**
Tues	01.24	2.9	07.20	1.6
	14.40	2.8	20.30	1.7
Wed	02.56	3.0	08.53	1.6
	16.18	3.0	21.44	1.5

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

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

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

Saints GG
return to
winning ways

Cyclists sizzle
in Lanzarote
4-stage race

Oh! Calcutta! Doddie Gump gets bums on seats

Such was the combined pedal power of Oban Lorne RFC ladies and gents last weekend that, not only did they complete the Wounded Lions 500 on their Wattbike, they clocked up an incredible 1,000 miles by the end of Saturday's Calcutta Cup match.

Devised by head coach Andrew Johnston, the Doddie Gump static cycle, run in tandem with Rob Wainwright's official Wounded Lions 500 challenge to make it from Twickenham to Murrayfield in 48 hours, began on Thursday evening with 10 of the men's team looking to relay the miles on the static machine at the Glencruitten clubrooms.

The idea grew arms and legs, however, with ladies and junior team members joining in as well.

Working in relays, the boys had completed the 500 miles by around 8pm on Friday night and decide to attempt to make the 500 miles back.

Epic

Thirty-four riders ended up taking part in the epic cycle which took 53 hours in total at an average speed of 18.9 miles per hour.

At the time of writing, the effort had well exceeded its £1,200 target, sitting at £1,561 and rising.

Coach Johnston commented: 'This was an amazing effort from everyone who

RUGBY

gave their time on the bike and all those who donated.

'It was a tough couple of days with a number of boys suffering from broken bum syndrome but everyone is so happy to have completed this challenge.'

The last few hours of the challenge was run out in front of a large gathering of supporters who had arrived at the club to cheer on the cyclists and to watch the Calcutta Cup match on the big screen.

Doddie Gump is a platform for mass participation events supporting Scottish rugby legend Doddie Weir and his quest to fund research into more effective MND treatments.

Donations can still be made at the Oban Rugby Wounded Lions 500 page on Just Giving.

This weekend it's back to action for both Oban gents' and ladies' teams, with the Green Machine playing a rescheduled fixture against Wigtownshire at Glencruitten on Saturday.

'Hopefully, the weather will play ball and actually allow us to have a game,' said coach Johnston.

'We should have a relatively settled squad, as throughout January, and are looking forward to turning around one of the defeats on the road from earlier in the season.'

On Sunday the Green Army play host to Kelso for the second of four pool games in the National Plate competition.



Caitlin Fowler takes her turn.



Pedal power: Oban Lorne and Bulgarian international Vasil Borisov gets on the bike.



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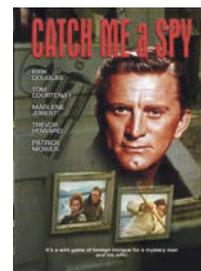
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When Hollywood star Kirk Douglas caught the Ballachulish ferry



Climbers wearing trainers 'total idiots' say rescuers
Full story on page three

Delight as £1.48M Corpach marina contract awarded

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Caol Regeneration Company (CRC) this week confirmed it has awarded a construction contract worth £1.48M for phase one of the new 40-berth Thomas Telford Corpach Marina.

The announcement follows years of planning, consultation, detailed design work and lease negotiations.

This initial phase comprises construction of the public slipway and car park with Barrhead-based George Leslie Limited starting work on site next month.

Leases were signed on Christmas Eve with the three landowners involved - Lochiel Estates, Scottish Canals and Crown Estates Scotland - which means CRC can begin to spend the £1,465,000 Regeneration Capital Grant awarded from the Scottish Government in March 2018 and £171,000 from the EU LEADER fund.

Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will be wholly-owned by CRC and will provide a marina, a long-awaited public

slipway and a community coffee shop which is expected to become a popular attraction.

Situated at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal, marina users will enjoy outstanding views of Ben Nevis and Loch Linnhe.

Despite being the largest town in the Highlands and the

This project fills a 100-mile gap between Inverness and Oban.

Outdoor Capital of the UK, Fort William lacks a serviced year-round marina. This project fully meets that need and fills a crucial 100-mile gap between Inverness and Oban.

The marina project was instigated by the late Dr Su Sen, who procured funding from EU LEADER, HIE and Scottish Government on behalf of CRC.

When completed, Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will be Scotland's latest marina development in line with Scottish Marine Tourism Strategy.

CRC chairman Donnie Corbett said it had been ex-

tremely challenging to get to the point where construction of the marina can begin.

'With sustained commitment over the years by the directors of CRC and the hard work of the marina project committee and project managers, I am certain Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will provide major social and economic benefits to Caol, Corpach and Fort William,' he said this week.

'We are indebted to Highland Council for financial support and for the enthusiasm of our councillors and of council staff here and in Inverness.

'Significant financial support has been provided over the years by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, without which we could not have achieved this milestone.

'The SSE Sustainable Development Fund, too, has been an invaluable source of funding during the long and costly preparatory phase.

'Other welcome contributions, in cash and kind, have

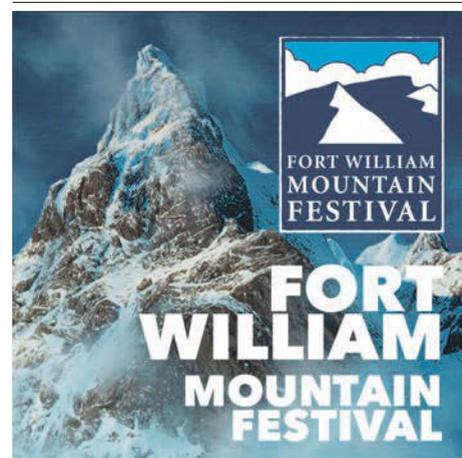
Continued on page three

Baptist church inducts new minister



Fort William Baptist Church inducted its new pastor, Reverend Jonathan Tink, above right, at a well-attended special event on Saturday. Originally from Cornwall, Reverend Tink and his family have spent the last seven years at Uig on Skye. Reverend Tink's wife, Elizabeth, is originally from Fort William and the couple have four children. Reverend Tink was inducted by Reverend Ian McFarlane from Oban.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



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LT

New Lochaber radio station to boost arts

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

A new internet radio station for south Lochaber is aiming to promote the arts in all their forms.

Set up by long-time creative arts practitioners Ilona Munro Lawson and David Ogg, the primary function of Radicoe is to combat isolation and promote well-being through creativity.

They want to help community groups set up podcasts, scripted shows and other audio content with their portable studio.

Mrs Lawson said: 'The main way to look at it is like a scatty and daft version of Radio 4. We want to make it an accessible platform for the arts, so not snobby and allowing everyone the opportunity to get involved.'

'We have interest from some retired people, the local men's shed and a group of high school pupils who want to do a non-scripted discussion show about popular movies and maybe other current event topics.'

'There will also be the opportunity for people to learn how to do the production side of things and we want to have more courses for people



Ilona Munro Lawson and David Ogg are setting up an internet radio station to promote the arts in South Lochaber.

to learn new skills such as presenting and writing for radio. The focus will be on including and promoting the community.'

David Ogg has a background in radio, using technical equipment and hosting outdoor events.

He said: 'South Lochaber spans a large area and at the moment we want to keep

the radio station portable, so people - especially young people - don't have to go out of their way.

'We have all the equipment to make a radio show, but are making funding applications to make things bigger and add a studio with more microphones.'

As well as working on the radio station, Ilona and David

provide drama services. Under the banner of Bright Productions, Ilona and David run free drama groups for primary and high school children every Thursday evening.

Mrs Lawson is also working on creating a dedicated theatre space in Lochaber.

The space will also promote all forms of creative arts as she feels there needs to be more

done since the Eden Court Theatre pulled its funding for its outreach drama post.

She said: 'It is a slow process, but we are getting somewhere with the theatre space. We are looking for volunteers with creative ideas to set up dedicated arts hubs in Lochaber.'

You can follow the progress of Radicoe on its Facebook page where the station is running a Guess the Local Voice contest and accepting early entries for a Christmas Ghost Story competition.

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WHAT'S ON

■ **Today (Thursday February 13):** The annual service and march to commemorate the anniversary of the Massacre of Glencoe.

■ **Sunday February 16:** Anyone who has ever wondered what birds live in Glen Nevis will be able to find out and see them up close at the bird ringing event at the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre from 9am to 3pm.

■ **Tuesday February 18:** Fort William, Inverlochly and Torlundy Community Council meeting, 7pm, An Drochaid, Claggan.

■ **Wednesday February 19:** Lochaber Area Committee (Highland Council) meeting, 3pm.

■ **Friday February 21:** A family Beetle Drive will be held in Nether Lochaber Village Hall at 6.30pm for a 7pm start. Entry is £4 per person, £2 per child, which includes refreshments. There will also be a raffle. Funds raised will be donated to Nether Lochaber Senior Citizens Association.

Community call

Environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful is calling on community groups from the Highlands to register and take part in its 2020 Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood projects in recognition of their efforts to deliver environmental improvements and enhance their areas. Visit www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org



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Climbers wearing trainers 'total idiots' say rescuers

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) leader John Stevenson has described four people who had to be rescued from near the summit of Ben Nevis in blizzard conditions this week as 'total idiots' after they were found without the right winter kit and with three of them wearing trainers.

There was also a barrage of online anger directed at the quartet with politicians and even a television presenter labelling the four as 'selfish and stupid' and 'clowns of the century'.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team said the four, who were trapped near the summit of Ben Nevis in blizzard conditions on Monday afternoon, were lucky to be alive as they had no winter kit, such as ice axes and crampons. Three



The Coastguard helicopter crew's flying skills were put to the test in the blizzard conditions near the summit.

Photograph: LMRT.

of them were only wearing trainers. Twenty two team members were deployed in the search for the four young men, who were reported to be stuck on steep ground.

Describing the weather as 'horrendous', the team said its members had to battle a

wind chill factor in the region of minus 20 degrees.

All four were eventually found by rescuers and airlifted off the mountain and taken to the Belford Hospital, Fort William.

LMRT said the four were extremely lucky. 'They were

about 150 metres down into Coire Eoghainn on steep ice and if they had slipped or gone down, any further consequences could have been far more serious.'

The revelations of how poorly equipped the quartet were for an assault on the summit of the UK's highest mountain in freezing winter conditions made worse by a severe storm, sparked widespread criticism.

Highlands and Islands Conservative MSP Donald Cameron tweeted: 'Glad this had a good ending but trainers! Come on, folks.'

And television presenter and journalist Lee McKenzie posted a tweet that described the four as 'selfish and stupid'.

But while LMRT acknowledged the rescue had created a useful amount of national and international publicity about mountain safety, they also asked for people to 'back off' a bit in their criticism.

LMRT commented: 'The casualties admit they made a significant error of judgement and are extremely sorry for the results of their actions. The guys were just members of the public who, perhaps, were unaware of what they were getting into.'

'Not being from the UK and with limited English, a lot of the information available to mountaineers and hill walkers would not have been accessible to them, so perhaps there is an element of mitigation in respect of their actions, clothing and lack of equipment. At present, money from the Scottish Government is channeled, via SportsScotland, quite rightly so, into the Avalanche Information Service and for training and education through centres like Glenmore Lodge and agencies such as Mountaineering Scotland. Most of this will

be targeted at people who are either engaged in the sport or have an interest in taking it up. Perhaps more thought needs to be given into how to inform the general public/casual tourist about how dangerous our small mountains are and how severe our weather can get and how it will catch-out the unwary and uninformed at any time of the year. Unfortunately it takes incidents like this to raise the profile in the media and the message has definitely got out. So there is a positive from the incident. Therefore, let us just cut the guys a little bit of slack.'

Mr Stevenson added: 'They were left in no doubt as to how foolish they had been. But they know that now and have had a lot of criticism and that's why we posted the request for people to perhaps tone down the amount of slugging they're giving them.'

Delight as £1.48M Corpach marina contract awarded

From page one

come from donors including Ferguson Transport and MOWI, as well as several regional landfill funds.

'I want to thank them all, as well as members of the wider community who have given us their encouragement and support over the years.'

Andy McKenna, chairman of the marina project committee, added: 'The marina car park, slipway and marina building are fully funded, allowing us to make today's announcement and crack on with the biggest chunk of the project.'

'We are now working to secure the balance of the money needed to complete the marina. We need just over £1million to pay for the floating marina which will be manufactured and installed by Gael Force Marine in Corpach, creating immediate local economic benefit.'

'Highland Council has been allocated £1.2m from the 2018/19 surplus arising from Crown Estates Scotland trading receipts.'

'After meeting with Highland Council leader Councillor Margaret Davidson and chief executive officer Donna

Manson on December 4, we are confident this project is an excellent fit for this funding, focused as it is on delivering community and economic benefits to Highland coastal communities.'

'We will therefore be formally submitting a request for a substantial contribution towards our floating infrastructure.'

'In addition, we presented our case to the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise during their visit to Caol Community Centre in November. This was well received and we have been assured of their financial support in closing the final funding gap.'

'Our aim remains for the marina to open later this year, perfect timing to celebrate the 2020 Scottish Year of Coasts and Waters.'

Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Kate Forbes, the Scottish Government's Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, said: 'I am delighted to see how far the marina project has come, thanks to the grit and determination of a handful of people.'

'The marina will transform the marine economy of Fort William. At a time when tour-

ism is booming and Scotland is celebrating the Year of Coasts and Waters, it's brilliant to see the contract finally awarded and the Corpach Marina coming one step closer.'

Councillor Denis Rixson, Caol and Mallaig, said: 'We all hope this exciting new marina project will transform Corpach from Loch Linnhe, through the Canal and up the Great Glen.'

'That would be a fitting reward for everyone who has poured in countless hours of hard work.'

Councillor Alan Henderson added: 'I am delighted that after all the false starts, this project has finally reached, not the conclusion, but the start of the contract. Over the years, I have been energised by the enthusiasm and drive and commitment of the volunteer steering group.'

'This development has the potential to develop Corpach Sea Port base from not just an industrial operation, but also a leisure and tourism one.'

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When Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas caught the Ballachulish ferry

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The tan-coloured van came to a halt on board the Ballachulish ferry, the door opened and out stepped the most famous chin in Hollywood history.

Ferryman Peter MacKenzie stretched out his hand in welcome: 'Pleased to meet you Mr Douglas' he said, to be met with the reply: 'Peter, please call me Kirk?'

And from that day on, whenever big screen legend Kirk Douglas appeared in

a film or on television, Mr MacKenzie would always remark: 'That's my mate Kirk from the ferry'.

Kate Ward, daughter of the late Mr MacKenzie, was relating this story to the Lochaber Times last week following the death of Mr Douglas, aged 103, at his home in Beverly Hills, California, a few days previously.

The meeting between her father and Mr Douglas came during a break in the filming of the 1971 movie *To Catch a Spy*. Mr



Peter MacKenzie, centre in black waterproofs, was skipper of the Ballachulish ferry for 40 years. Photograph: Kate Ward.

MacKenzie piloted the ferry Glen Duror up and down Loch Leven for film producers.

Directed by Dick Clement, the British, American and French co-production, which was also released as *Catch Me a Spy*, co-starred Marlene Jobert, Trevor Howard, Richard Pearson, Garfield Morgan, Angharad Rees and Robert Raglan.

It was written by Clement and Ian La Frenais and was filmed partly on Loch Leven, as well as in the Romanian capital Bucharest.

The scenes shot on the famous loch involved three gunboats and the nearby countryside was also used for footage of Mr Douglas running through a herd of Highland cattle.

Mr Douglas is also seen fishing on Loch Awe and waiting at the railway station. Mr Douglas' character Andrej and his companion, Fabienne (Marlene Jobert) take the ferry to escape from their pursuers.

This scene is followed by others filmed on the ferry as it travels eastwards along Loch Leven towards Glencoe

rather than the normal ferry route northwards across the loch to North Ballachulish.

The mountains seen behind Mr Douglas are the Pap of Glencoe (Sgorr na Ciche) and Sgorr nam Fiannaich.

Mrs Ward explained her father had been the ferryman at Ballachulish for 40 years following the Second World War.

'I remember the filming taking place, but I didn't meet Kirk Douglas or any of the other cast members,' Mrs Ward said.

'But my father did. He met a lot of famous people over the years who came aboard the ferry. My dad really liked Kirk Douglas. He thought he was great. That was my dad's era - the one that saw huge film stars like Kirk Douglas. 'So obviously, he knew who he was.'

'He told us he was very nice, charming and he was really nice to my dad.'

'I was living in Fort William at the time as my late husband was still in the RAF at that point,' said Mrs Ward, who now lives in North Ballachulish.

'My dad met any number

of famous people during his time on the ferry. Apart from Kirk Douglas, his favourites included Queen Salote of Tonga who was over the for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

'She was a real character, according to my dad. She was a very large lady who took up the entire rear seat of the limousine she travelled in.'

A clip from the Ballachulish ferry scenes featuring Kirk Douglas in *To Catch a Spy* appears in the new documentary film *The Last Ferries of Ballachulish*, made by Edinburgh film-maker Graham Kitchener.

The documentary took Mr Kitchener three years to make and details his investigations to uncover the history and fate of the Glen Duror and its sister vessels the Glenachulish and Glen Loy.

Mr Kitchener is hoping his 37-minute film will get an official premiere at a documentary festival in the near future and it is entered in several international film competitions.

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Are you up for the Cow Hill pathways challenge?

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

Upper Achintore Regeneration Group (UARG) wants to connect the area to the Cow Hill circular path.

The path is a popular walking and running route and an enjoyable way to get into town, but there is no real way for those living in the upper Fort William area to access the path.

There is a path that goes some way to connecting it, but it is overgrown and many more in the area need extensive maintenance.

Mark Linfield is the chairman of the regeneration group working to provide Upper Achintore residents with more access.

He said: 'Our group wishes to see new paths in our area and of those we already have



Ken Johnston, left, and Mark Linfield explore the 1980s path which they hope to extend. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

we hope to encourage the council to carry out repairs and maintenance.

'Having a network of paths

helps to connect the community and paths promote better physical and mental health for residents. Hopefully better

paths for walking and cycling will lessen our reliance on cars.

'The group's proposed route from Ross Place to the Cow Hill Circular starts with an existing but overgrown and neglected path built in the early 1980s. Our proposal has been supported in principle by Highland Council's access officer who has agreed to restore this existing section with his budget in the coming months.'

Paths were built across Upper Achintore in the early 1980s when the closure of the pulp and paper mill led to 1,400 redundancies.

The government sought to address this by setting up the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) to re-employ some of the workforce on civic and public projects, the most prolific

of which was path building. Initially well used, over the next 40 years the network of footpaths, steps and bridges have fallen into disrepair and disuse through a lack of maintenance.

The UARG's proposal is to restore many of these paths and join them to create a link to the Cow Hill Circular Path.

Tenders are currently going out to contractors for the first part of the path restoration.

Mr Linfield continued: 'We feel it is best to start at the bottom and restore/build up the hill.

'This will tie-in with the proposed Link housing development and they will hopefully help complete the path to the Cow Hill Circular.'

The group is encouraging as many residents as possible to support regeneration efforts by joining its Facebook group

and coming along to the next meeting in Lundavra Primary School on Monday March 9 at 6.30pm.

Mr Linfield added: 'We believe the larger the number of residents supporting the group the easier it will be to have Highland Council and other public agencies notice and work with us to improve our community.'

The group also has other plans in the pipeline, including an upgraded play pitch at Ross Place because of the one at the former Upper Achintore Primary School being removed to make way for 39 new homes.

It is also in the early stages of applying for money for a community hub. They hope residents will engage with the group and Highland Council on the specifics of this development at the next meeting.



After periods of heavy rain, the water can't be drained because of the broken drains. This will be rectified once all the improvement work has been completed. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Caol improvements ready to break ground

Caol Regeneration Company (CRC) can move on with essential renovations to the Kilmallie Road shopping area and other improvements, writes Richard Mason.

As reported last week, Ladbrokes were the last landowner to confirm its agreement to the work. All the other businesses that own a stake in the car park land have agreed to make a contribution to the renovations.

The renovation work is focused on the drains around the perimeter that are almost all completely

collapsed and causing flooding.

CRC was the only Lochaber group to win funding from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund, administered by the Highland Council.

It is hoped a new pedestrian crossing, upgraded benches, new bins for the square and the renovated car park drains will improve the experience of those who use the square.

CRC secretary Linda Campbell said: 'In the brief for the fund, we need contributions from landowners when renovating land not

owned by the council. This is why it took so long to move ahead with the renovations as we needed to have a dialogue with the landowners. When we spoke with representatives from Ladbrokes and the Co-Op, they were apologetic for their lack of action. We are over the hurdle now and the team can't wait to get the diggers in.'

The team has tenders out to three contractors but still need to finalise quotes before work begins. It hopes to do this soon and get the work completed as quickly as it can.

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Ardno House supports charities

Inspired by the Year of Coasts and Waters, Ardno House will be supporting two rescue charities for this year's National B&B Week.

The week runs from March 16 to 22 and raises awareness of the hard work of more than 20,000 UK B&Bs.

For each guest booking directly through Ardno House's website to stay during the week, the owners will share 15 per cent of the booking value equally between the RNLI and Glencoe Mountain Rescue. Robert and Morag Whiteley, owners and operators at Ardno House, said: 'We are happy to highlight National B&B Week. The more B&Bs who get involved the better.'

'It's a great opportunity for us to show our appreciation and support for these wonderful charities. Their search and rescue operations in Scottish seas and lochs are invaluable to help keep our visitors safe while they get out and about to enjoy the grandeur of the Highlands.'

Heritage to be brought to life in £500,000 project

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

West Highland College UHI's Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research (CRTR), based in Fort William, can now bring heritage stories to life in greater detail with match funding.

Original funding of £350,000 came from Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund, and match funding has been committed by the college and CalMac to bring the figure to more than £500,000.

The Coast that Shaped the World project will gather maritime stories from 20 destinations across the West

Coast – stories that shaped our coastal communities into what they are today and which convey how our maritime cultural and natural heritage helped to shape the world.

It is part of a £5million Scottish programme of projects to invest in the Highlands and Islands to provide more high-quality opportunities for visitors to enjoy natural and cultural heritage assets.

This community-led project gathers stories from local people and hopes to attract more people to the less-visited areas of the West Coast.

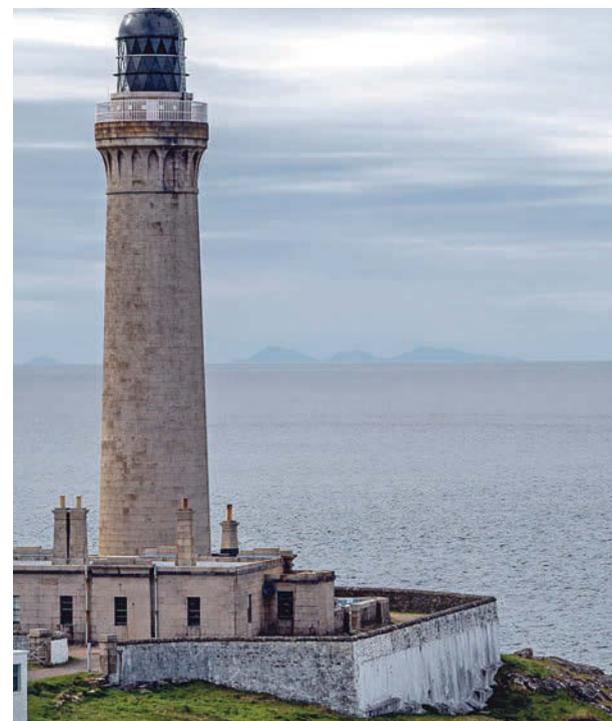
Senior innovation manager at the CRTR Sara Bellshaw is managing this project. She said: 'There is a plethora of sto-

ries to be told and interpreted linked to the cultural heritage and spread of communities across the West Coast, directly related to the maritime environment.

'The project will create a repository of important and influential narratives, helping to both keep these important oral, written and visual artefacts alive and to unearth hidden gems that risk being lost. 'Many of the areas share story themes, from Gaelic language and culture, to Viking trading posts, world famous inventors and departure points for mass emigration.

'Materials will be collected that help tell each story, including music, film, imagery, artwork, augmented reality and prose. Sharing these stories will help visitors understand the culture and traditions of local life and what has made the place and community they are visiting what it is today.

'Combining these stories with practical visitor information aims to enhance the visitor experience along the West Coast.'



The heritage stories to be told will be found by local partners in areas like Ardnamurchan. The lighthouse is placed at the most westerly point of mainland Britain.

Photograph: West Coast Waters

The project will develop a website, app and programme of immersive and innovative digital exhibitions along the west coast of Scotland.

Using augmented and virtual reality, for example, the maritime heritage stories will be brought to life, in many cases where the events unfolded through GPS triggers.

This will be complemented by a series of physical, inspirational and interactive installations in museums, galleries and heritage centres in west coast communities.

Collaboration is integral to the project and the college hopes to involve students where it can.

Led by the CRTR, the Coast that Shaped the World is a large-scale collaboration between the college and the West Coast Waters (WCW) tourism initiative.

WCW is a collaboration of 20 west coast destinations and tourism organisations collectively representing over 2,500 tourism interests across the west coast of Scotland.

Carron Tobin, coordinator of West Coast Waters, commented: 'This project has so much potential. Just over a year ago when we scoped out the possibilities around the West Coast Waters collaboration The Coast that Shaped the World was everyone's favourite.'

No trees were harmed in the making of this window



VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

The word is most definitely out about how Lochaber Chamber of Commerce can help local businesses to connect with each other and the wider Scottish business community!

Over the last two weeks we've been delighted to welcome record numbers of members old and new, and other local business owners along to our friendly and informal business events.

Our last monthly Networking Lunch saw a record 50+ local business folk come along to mingle, enjoy a light lunch and hear an interesting overview of their work from local business, Northern Light Consulting Ltd.

All members have the opportunity to give a short talk promoting their work and we've already got a busy schedule of businesses lined up to introduce themselves during the first part of the year.

As well as a record at-



tendance at our most recent networking lunch, we were delighted with the turn-out from local tourism businesses at last week's Tourism Roadshow.

The roadshow brought experts from the tourism industry out to venues in Ballachulish, Arisaig, Strontian and Fort William. These informal drop-in events gave everyone in the tourism industry locally a fantastic opportunity to ask their questions face-to-face and get valuable insights from the likes of Expedia, Freetobook, Highland Council, VisitScotland and more. We've had great feedback!

We've got another exciting event for tourism businesses coming up next month at our 'Activities & Attractions

Expo' at the Nevis Centre of March 23rd. This expo will bring together activities and attraction providers from across Lochaber in one venue.

The event is designed to give accommodation providers an opportunity to find out more about the huge range of options that their guests can enjoy as part of their stay in Lochaber.

We're always open to suggestions for events, so if there's something you'd like the Chamber to help with, please just get in touch on 01397 705765 to have a chat.

Let's see if we can top the record for our next networking lunch!

Book online at www.lochaberchamber.co.uk and come along to find out about all the great business assistance you can tap into as part of our strong Scottish Chambers of Commerce business network.

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Developer's assurances over Fort flooding fears

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

A developer has responded to concerns over its plans for a housing development of 325 homes.

Link Housing said it wants to assure residents it is doing everything necessary to prevent flooding and manage the peatland to avoid unnecessary disruption.

Flooding concerns were raised by residents living below a nearby recent housing development, who were complaining of gardens being 'spongy'.

It is thought this is due to poor peat management.

A Link Housing spokesperson said: 'Link and the developer have been working with the council's Flood Risk Officer and the Scottish Environmental Protection

Agency (SEPA) to agree an acceptable drainage strategy.

'There has been extensive dialogue with SEPA and the council as part of the planning process to understand and agree the principles around the peat management, and as part of the planning approval and conditions (planning conditions 20 and 22) Link is required to produce a Peat Management Strategy which will be approved by SEPA.

'The strategy is as far as possible to avoid areas of deep peat and put in place mitigation measures.

'There is already a contractor in place for the development and we will be in a position to confirm a site start following confirmation of funding which has currently been applied for from

the Scottish Government.' Peatland is an important factor in retaining water, especially in an area like Fort William which is one of the wettest places in the UK.

The sections of peatland in Upper Achintore can be as much as 14-feet deep and removal of this to be replaced by a hard and slick surface could cause water to flow underground and saturate the grounds of lower homes.

Peat is also an important store of carbon and – due to its abundance in the region – Highland Council and the Scottish Government have committed to peatland restoration.

A Lochaber Environmental Group spokesperson said: 'The Highland Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency so any activity that further

increases our carbon emissions is completely contradictory to this declaration.

'Because healthy peat plays a vital role in carbon storage, maintaining water quality, reducing flood risk and supporting biodiversity, it is essential we preserve and maintain our healthy peatland, not destroy it.

'It is much easier and cheaper to maintain healthy peatland than to restore damaged peatland. Once damaged, carbon emissions from one hectare – about the size of a football field – of peat range from five to 15 tonnes of CO2 per year, similar to the carbon emissions from two to seven cars per year.'



The proposed development of Upper Achintore.



Moggie Sim, centre, and Neil Cameron, both wearing jackets, with Duror Primary staff and pupils holding their interpretations of their favourite books. Photograph: Lauren Stewart.

Duror youngsters put Ballachulish Co-op in the picture as thank you for donation

Duror Primary School staff and pupils were delighted to receive a £645 cheque from staff at the Ballachulish Co-op.

The shop raised the money through its annual sale of books and raffle tickets.

Every year, the shop chooses a different school to donate the money to. In return, the 10 Duror pupils talked about their favourite book

and drew the front cover, which will be displayed in the shop.

Duror class teacher Lauren Stewart said: 'Being a small school, this sum of money is challenging to raise on our own, so we very much appreciate the excellent things the Co-op do for the community.

'Neil Cameron, the previous manager of the

Co-op who has just moved to the Co-op in Alness, and Moggie Sim, another member of staff from the Co-op, presented the cheque to us. We spoke about our book covers and gave them [the drawings] in return for the donation.

'These pictures are now available to see and the children are very proud of them.'

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LT

Campaign to increase adult social care workforce

Lee Robertson loves his job as a care worker and would recommend it to anyone who might be interested.



A national campaign to increase the adult social care workforce has been launched.

The 'There's More to Care Than Caring' recruitment campaign features stories from adult care workers.

Across Scotland, around 145,000 people currently work in adult social care in a range of roles, including sup-

porting people with physical disabilities, dementia, autism, older people and those with mental health conditions.

The campaign, which has been developed in collaboration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and key partners in the social care sector, will run across radio, online, newspapers and social

media.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman and Children and Young People Minister Maree Todd attended the campaign launch at community hub Tribe Party in Portobello, Edinburgh.

Ms Freeman said: 'Working in adult social care can be hugely rewarding – for many it's more than job, it's work they give enormous commitment to. As today's report from the Care Inspectorate and SSSC highlights, one of the main difficulties services face when trying to fill vacancies is not having enough applicants or the right applicants.'

'That is exactly what this campaign seeks to address.'

'Brexit presents a clear threat to the future of our health and social care services and the EU workforce makes a valuable contribution to this sector as well as others. As a responsible government, we will continue to do all we can to support our health and social care services.'

Lee Robertson, 43, is a care

worker at Enable Scotland, who moved to the sector after working in retail. He supports Steven Imlah, 25, who features in the campaign and works at Tribe Party.

Lee said: 'I love being a carer and I'm passionate about letting others know why it's such a rewarding and satisfying career choice.'

'In my previous job, I honestly felt like I was working for the sake of it. But now that I'm caring for Steven, I feel like I've found my calling and come away every day knowing that I've made a big difference. It's a good feeling.'

'Day to day, you provide personal and practical support to help people live their lives. Like any job, it's not without its challenges but if you have the right qualities, you will enjoy it.'

'You will also get the chance to build a great career. I'd urge anyone stuck in a bit of a rut or just looking for a change to consider making the move to be a care worker. Like me, you, too, might find your passion.'

Column sponsored by the Scottish Government

Put your qualities to good use with a rewarding career in adult social care.

If you're understanding, practical, responsible, respectful, calm, considerate, empathetic and patient, a career in adult social care could be rewarding and ideal for you.

A new national drive to boost the adult social care workforce is calling on people to consider how their personal qualities are a great fit for a move into the sector.

The Scottish Government's 'There's More to Care Than Caring' campaign highlights the wide range of roles on offer within the sector, from jobs supporting people in their own homes and living in care homes or providing housing support to assist people to live at home, facilitating access to important areas like work and health services.

And the message is clear – it's your qualities and behaviours that will set you apart in adult social care,

supporting older people, people with a physical disability, dementia, autism or mental health conditions. While the role as a care worker can be challenging and requires resilience, it offers the chance to have a hugely positive impact on others' lives, every day. For many it's not just a job, it's a calling.

You don't require qualifications to get started in a career in adult social care. Bring your passion and commitment and you will develop skills and earn qualifications on the job.

If you're looking for a change, starting with a far more varied working day, the opportunity for continued personal growth and the chance to put a smile on people's faces every day, then a role in adult social care could be perfect for you.

To find out more about the career paths available and how to get into a career in adult social care, visit: CareToCare.scot



Katie Tierney previously worked in a factory.

Making a difference to someone's life

Katie Tierney, 34, works in Community Living Services at Capability Scotland and has two roles.

As a support worker, she helps people in homes with all their basic needs. As a moving-in assistant, she helps new recruits come up-to-speed with their training as well as offering refresher training for any other employees.

'I was working in a factory before I got into social care, but it wasn't what I wanted to do. I always wanted to work in social care but at my first interview I didn't get a job and it knocked my confidence a bit. I waited until I was a bit older to re-apply and came across Capability Scotland and applied, I've been here nearly five years now.'

Katie's advice to people looking to apply for an adult social care position: 'You need to have a great personality to work in social care. It's important to be chatty and able to converse with people. Obviously, you need to be caring, good-natured and patient. It's important to be able to empathise and understand.'

'Don't listen to other people's opinions on what they think social care involves. It's not what people imagine it to be. Don't let them put you off, because you get the chance to make a big impact on someone's life. Even if you are only working part-time and juggling school, university or other commitments – a couple of hours a week is all it takes to make a difference.'

Atmosphere is everything when capturing the Spirit of Hebrides

by Kirsteen Bell
fort@obantimes.co.uk

The weekend's wild weather was the perfect setting for a special collaborative event between the Highland Book Prize and the Highland Bookshop last Saturday February 8, writes Kirsteen Bell.

Skye-born photographer Alastair Jackson presented a selection of his atmospheric images of Skye and Raasay, as he introduced his and Kenneth Steven's book *The Spirit of the Hebrides* – one of the 11 titles long-listed for the Highland Book Prize this year.

The list was curated from 88 nominated titles by a selection of volunteer readers from across the Highlands with *The Spirit of the Hebrides* described as a 'beautiful and evocative book that explores the land and seascapes of these islands, their vast skies and their resilient, shifting beauty in all seasons and weathers'.

Mr Jackson's photographs are accompanied by a selection of poems by Kenneth Steven, with images and text inspired by the works of the influential Gaelic poet Sorley Maclean.

When Mr Jackson was clearing out his granny's house, he discovered a 1973 LP of Sorley Maclean's voice, the first audio recording of his work, in which Mr Maclean talks about places in Skye and Raasay that Mr Jackson recognised from his own childhood.

So he began going out into the nooks and inlets so well-known to him and his family to take images inspired by Sorley's poems.

He told the bookshop audience: 'There are so many of these places in Skye, lots of wee places you wouldn't know about unless you know the area really well'.

At the same time, Mr Jackson said the project had taken him to parts of the islands he had never visited before: 'Elgol is a popular spot for photographers, but I'd never been there until four years ago. When you grow up somewhere you can be guilty of not visiting places.'

As he shared the images, Mr Jackson gave the audience an insight into the ideas of history and family that he had wanted to impart into his photographs, as well as sharing the challenges of capturing such distinctive landscapes.

'I always look for atmosphere over technical perfection.'

He said: 'I don't take images between May and September, it's too nice, too bright. I always look for atmosphere over technical perfection.'

Stormy dark

Mr Jackson's images capture the Highland light as well as the stormy dark and he talked about his perfect day for photography on Skye as being 'wet, with hail-



Alastair Jackson took his audience on a journey to all the nooks and inlets that inspired his photographs for the book, including this one taken which he took at Elgol, Isle of Skye.

stones, wind and cloud, to capture the real storminess of Skye – then 20 minutes later the skies can be clear!'

The event was introduced by Ian Peter MacDonald, representing the Highland Society of London which supports the Highland Book Prize.

Talent

The prize was established in 2017 to celebrate published work that recognises the rich talent, landscape and cultural diversity of the Highlands and Mr MacDonald said the society has long been a great supporter of Highland culture.

Another of the long-listed titles, *Landscapes in Stone*, by geologist Alan McKirdy, will be introduced at the Highland Bookshop on Saturday March 6.

Lochaber Probus Club welcomes new members

At its meeting on Thursday February 6, Lochaber Probus Club had 11 people in attendance, almost double the six who attended the inaugural meeting.

They were treated to a brief 'Who am I?' talk by Terry Lee and a report on his research into the workings of other probus clubs across the UK.

The club agreed to change the timing and structure of future meetings to meet

at 11.30am for coffee and fellowship, speaker at noon, followed by lunch.

The next meeting is on Thursday February 20 when Gordon Barclay, a member of Glasgow Kelvin Probus Club, will share his experiences in probus.

At the meeting on March 5, Isabel Campbell will be taking the 'Who am I?' slot and on March 19 Lorna Steele of Lochaber Archive Centre will talk about

the centre's work. Probus clubs are associations of retired and semi-retired professional and business people which exist to provide opportunities for members to meet others with similar interests, make new friends and maintain and expand their interests.

It is not a fundraising organisation.

More information on Lochaber Probus Club can be found on its Facebook page.

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LT

Gnats a first! Rare insect discovered at Loch Arkaig

Two tiny fly species never before seen in the UK and a rare rainforest fungus have been discovered at Woodland Trust Scotland sites on the West Coast, writes Mark Entwistle.

An insect survey at Loch Arkaig Pine Forest near Spean Bridge has recorded two species of fungus gnat previously unseen in Britain. While at Dunollie Wood in Oban, local naturalists found hazel glove fungus which looks like a monstrous hand clutching tree branches.

Fungus gnats are a large group of tiny flies whose larvae feed on mushrooms and fungi.

Boletina gusakovae is more usually found in Finland and Russia, and *Mycetophila idonea* in Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, Georgia and Luxembourg.

'My guess is that these two



One of the species of fungus gnats, *Boletina gusakovae*, found in the UK for the first time at Loch Arkaig.

Photograph: Woodland Trust Scotland.

have always been here, or at least for a long time, but just not found before,' said local surveyor Ian Strachan.

The insects were captured in 2018 using Malaise traps – which look a little like a backpacker's tent and funnel

flying insects into a collection jar. Two traps were in place over four months.

It is a massive task to separate all the individual insects caught. Mr Strachan is still painstakingly separating out the samples and

taking advice from a dozen different experts to help with identifications.

The new-to-Britain flies were represented by just one male of each species, out of more than 1,500 fungus gnats Mr Strachan had in turn separated out from tens of thousands of other insects in the sample.

'This was a very exciting find. It makes all the hours of sorting worthwhile,' he said.

Mr Strachan, who lives near Roy Bridge, has sorted through some 20,000 specimens from the Loch Arkaig traps so far using a binocular microscope, as most are less than 1mm in size. A considerable number of specimens remain to be sorted and/or identified.

'It is a very laborious process. It could be several years before all the species are identified – but I am determined

to get as many as possible done,' he added.

The hazel glove fungus was spotted by retired Countryside Ranger Richard Wesley from Cullipool on the Isle of Luing, during a recent visit to Dunollie Wood by Lorn Natural History Group.

Woodland Trust Scotland staff subsequently identified hazel glove at two further spots.

Hypocreopsis rhododendri, the hazel glove fungus, is a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Scottish Biodiversity List.

'Hazel glove is an indicator of high quality temperate rainforest, so we are really pleased it has been identified at Dunollie Wood,' said George Anderson of Woodland Trust Scotland. 'It might surprise a lot of people to know that Oban is a town with a rainforest at its back.

'Last year we formed the Atlantic Woodland Alliance, a partnership with other landowners, community and conservation groups which aims to secure a better future for this dwindling habitat.

'Scotland's rainforest is just as lush and just as important as tropical rainforest, but is even rarer.

'It is found along the West Coast and on the inner isles, and is a unique habitat of ancient native oak, birch, ash, pine and hazel woodlands and includes open glades and river gorges.

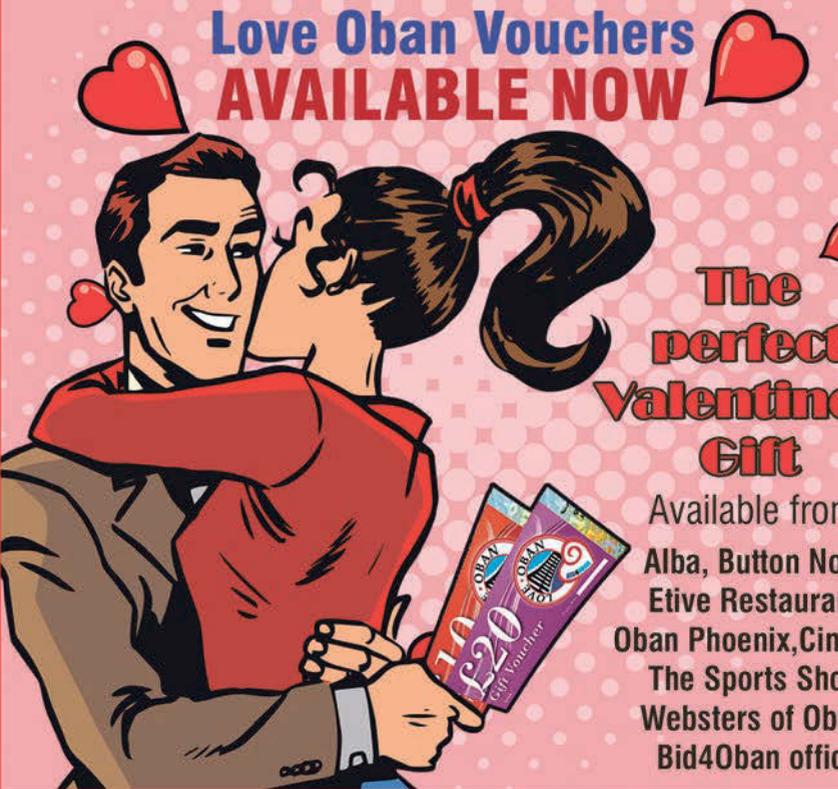
'Our rainforest relies on mild, wet and clean air coming in off the Atlantic, and is garlanded with a spectacular array of lichens, fungi, mosses, liverworts and ferns.

'Many are nationally and globally rare and some are found nowhere else in the world.'

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MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

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I promised last week that in this offering, I would give a full review of the new Fergie MacDonald album.

However, due to delayed flights from the Canary Islands and immediate following flights across the western ocean to San Francisco, I haven't managed to procure the CD yet. I will get the review done yet, but this week, a tribute to Fergie in lyric form will have to suffice.

I have written of Fergie more often in this column than of any other individual and for that I make no apology. The man has been a hero of mine since I first heard his music at the age of nine.

He is the undisputed king of ceildh music and, well into his eighties, he approaches life with the optimism, energy and verve of a lively teenager. He is a man worthy of many, many words in this paper.

The song below is about the gift that some people have of defying the conventions of age and there is no better example in western Scotland of that than Fergie.

I would urge you all to go out and buy a copy of Fergie's 50th album and you'll enjoy



Fergie MacDonald.

the review all the more when I get to it.

Still We Run

Time goes by like the winter winds
And the decades fly as the world spins
Where it goes we'll never know and cannot save.
We all must live before we leave
Achieve to give and to believe.
As the years disappear like tears on the ocean wave.

Chorus

Forever Young and still we run
Living dreams that seem to move with the rainbow's gold.

Forever Young and still we run
And we'll run for the sun and the years won't leave us old.

How long our time we'll never know
But up we'll climb and on we'll go.
Keeping pace and grace in the race of the roads we tread.

At age eighteen or eighty-five
Whatever's been you are alive
So drive for the prize, your lifetime lies ahead.

Go by the creed of those we see,
The blessed breed who hold the key,
The rare who dare not care for the age they are.
And meet the day and hit the night
Fight hard and play and chase the light
And dance to a tune by the moon and the morning star.

Fleeting flames in worlds vast
We all too soon become the past.
As glow and shadow guide our way
Pray long the path but live the day.

A Cry For The Wild

HOLLY GILLIBRAND

fort@obantimes.co.uk



In my English class, we were recently asked to write a discursive essay about a controversial topic we feel interested in. I chose the UK voting age, specifically the reduction of it, and I have decided to publish it as a special edition of my Cry for the Wild column.

I hope my essay sparks your thoughts and adds to the growing conversation around giving 16-year-olds the vote.

The government is supposed to represent the people, but when one and a half million citizens who should be eligible to vote are denied this basic human right, is that really true? As a teenager soon to reach the age of 16 and be given most rights afforded to adults bar one, I believe that 16-year-olds should be given the vote in the UK.

Sixteen-year-olds are granted many of the freedoms given to adults, so why not this one? Sixteen is the age in which



young people are judged to become responsible for their own lives. They can, among other things, leave school, get married, work full-time, pay taxes, join the army and save a life via the donation of blood. They are, effectively, adults. But one thing 16-year-olds can't do is decide who they think should lead their country,

when this must be the most important civil liberty of them all.

Evidence from Austria (one of the few EU countries in which 16-year-olds can vote) suggests that with enfranchisement comes increased political awareness. After Austria reduced the voting age to 16 in 2007, the government launched

the 'DemokratieInitiative' campaign, in an effort to boost registration and increase awareness about elections. Dr Eva Zeglovits, a political scientist and statistician from the University of Vienna, showed that the number of 16- and 17-year-olds who thought of themselves as 'very interested' in politics went up by 100 per cent thereafter. If the UK began a similar venture, we could dramatically increase the number of young people voting and reduce the sense of political alienation among this demographic.

People of my age group will be left to deal with the issues of the world, long after our current leaders are pushing up the proverbial daisies. Cities and coastal communities will be at risk of being washed off the map due to the

expected sea level rise of one to two metres by 2100.

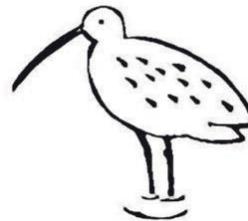
Finite planetary resources are dwindling, as people in financially fortunate parts of the world extract resources faster than nature can replenish them. And according to the UN Food and Agriculture organisation, the world on average has just three score years of harvests left. All in all, the future looks very bleak and it is my generation that will be living through it, dealing with it and attempting to survive in it.

There is lots of opposition against a reduction of the voting age: a 2018 study conducted by YouGov found that only 24 per cent of the public supports

it. Young people being less politically engaged than their elders is one argument commonly used by those

who oppose it. I disagree with this opinion, on the grounds that, yes, some young people don't vote, but that is the case for every age group. An apathetic one third of the UK electorate chose not to use this great power bestowed upon them in the 2019 general election. According to iNews, the number of people who turned out to vote was actually down by 1.5 per cent from the previous election, two years beforehand. It seems that our seniors can be just as idle as teenagers, yet this wouldn't justify stripping them of their rights. Why does it with us?

The reasons for the voting age to be reduced far outweigh the reasons for opposing it. A report released on the Social Progress Index three years ago, named the UK a country of 'very high social progress'. Let's live up to this title, and give 1.5 million citizens a voice in a world of political turmoil.



Greenpeace gain support to protect oceans in Fort William

The local Greenpeace branch has been busy gathering support for a strong Global Ocean Treaty at the United Nations.

Last week, campaigners were gathering support at West Highland College UHI on Monday and Wednesday, then met Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Ian Blackford.

Mr Blackford signed a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson asking him to support the treaty, and later tweeted: 'It is my pleasure in supporting this campaign.'

Greenpeace are petitioning Boris Johnson to send a high-ranking minister to the discussion for a Global Ocean Treaty at the United Nations, in March.

They want the treaty to include protections for at least 30 per cent of the world's oceans by 2030.

A statement from the group said: 'The oceans are the biggest carbon sink on earth and therefore they are our best ally in the fight against climate change, but currently less than five per cent of the world's oceans are protected. 'Ocean sanctuaries would prevent deep sea mining,



Some of the attendees at the exhibition with volunteers Kevin and Janet Hickman. Photograph: Fort William Greenpeace

oil exploration and fishing and would allow the marine ecosystem to recover and stabilise.'

In addition, the group hosted a photographic exhibition at the Wildcat Cafe in the High Street, Fort William on Saturday evening.

Despite the stormy weather, there was a good turnout to see photos of iconic wildlife such as walrus, whales, salp (something that looks like a jellyfish but is in fact a vertebrate), penguins and the Tristan lobster.

The photos were taken aboard the Greenpeace ship Esperanza, which is

travelling from pole to pole gathering information about wildlife and the effects of climate change.

Greenpeace volunteer Rhona Grant said: 'As Fort William is a coastal town, we know how important our oceans are for wildlife, food, tourism and to protect us from climate chaos. So we are really pleased that Ian Blackford MP saw the beautiful photos and signed the letter to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.'

If you want to add your name to the petition for a strong Global Oceans Treaty go to act.gp/protectourocean



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LT

Ceilidh spotlight on heritage plan

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

A number of consultation 'ceilidhs' took place a fortnight ago to allow people to contribute to the development of Pròiseact an Fhior Àite (the Great Place Project).

Despite disruption caused by Storm Brendan, the ceilidhs in Harris, North Uist and Barra were well-attended.

The purpose of the Great Place Project is to develop a place-based heritage strategy for the Outer Hebrides with a 10-year vision and action plan.

Central to the work is identifying strategic approaches to support and deliver appropriate heritage-led economic development, infrastructure requirements and priorities.

The ceilidhs saw members of the community contribute



Community members discuss the importance of heritage at one of the ceilidhs. Photograph: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

ideas and opinions to the project's strategy and action plan, while enjoying the talents of local musicians and singers.

Kenny MacLeod, chairman of Harris Development, attended and introduced the ceilidh at the Hotel Hebrides, Tarbert, Harris.

He said: 'What a fantastic

idea - a consultation that is also a ceilidh. It is so good to have such a wide representation and to hear all the talking at the various stations.

'Actually asking people for their views and getting them to shape the discussion is such a refreshing approach. And beautiful singing and box playing as well. An enjoyable

evening with a productive outcome.'

Catherine Maclean, Great Place project manager at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'Heritage is inherent in all we do as islanders.'

'On every island and in each community, there is a wealth of knowledge, talent and cultural richness. Each area and community has its own distinct story to tell. This came through loud and clear in our consultations.

'What is truly impressive is the amount of passion and commitment of individuals in the communities towards the work of preserving and sharing our cultural heritage.'

'Travelling through the islands - even in January - has been really important to do as it meant we experienced and learned more about what is happening in each area.'

Success of scheme to help islanders get fit

In January 2010, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) took the bold step of more than halving its sports centre membership fees to encourage communities to become more active.

Ten years on and nearly 30 per cent of the population of the Outer Hebrides are members of the scheme.

Slàinte Mhath was designed to improve health outcomes and help islanders get more active. Over the years, the scheme has been developed further to include free memberships for 'at risk' children.

In 2018, the comhairle agreed reciprocal arrangements for access to a range of sports facilities across Scotland as part of the LeisureLink Partnership.

This move means families with existing Slàinte Mhath memberships can access facilities operated by the comhairle, Highlife Highland, Orkney Islands Council and Moray Council, Argyll and Bute and LiveBorders free of charge. It is anticipated more



Kara Hanlon has benefited from the Slàinte Mhath scheme.

local authorities and trusts across the UK will be added to this list over the next year.

Kara Hanlon, a regular user of the scheme, whose most recent swimming successes included four gold medals, one silver and three games records at the 2019 World Island Games in Gibraltar, said: 'The Slàinte Mhath scheme offers great value for money and helps encourage families to enjoy sport.'

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Maritime history the focus of themed year

Concern over lack of housing

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Museum nan Eilean and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have received funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Museums Galleries Scotland to employ a maritime heritage project officer as part of this year's Coasts and Waters 2020 initiative.

Shona Maclellan has been employed as 'Dualchas na Mara' project officer and her remit will be creating a programme of activities connected to the coasts and waters.

The year-long project will focus on the maritime heritage of the islands and how important it was in history and still is for communities today.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig gave £25,000 to the project and another £4,082 came from



Shona Maclellan, who has been employed as the 'Dualchas na Mara' project officer.

Museums Galleries Scotland. A programme of activities with the Gaelic language at its heart will be developed and

will showcase the culture, language and heritage connected to the sea.

Shona is from South Uist,

with strong family connections to boat builders and fishermen, as well as being brought up by the sea on the island.

As part of her degree with the University of the Highlands and Islands, she has been researching the history of pirates and Vikings in the Outer Hebrides.

'There are so many Gaelic stories and songs about boats, seals and mermaids in Gaelic culture, much of it forgotten or locked away somewhere,' explained Shona.

'This project is a great opportunity to unlock those stories but to also explore other maritime heritage such as lighthouses, ship wrecks, ferries and fishing.

'Through the activities programme, we will get to hear those stories again, re-learn old methods such as rope knots and record the place-

names around our coastlines. 'Although the post is based in Stornoway, many of the activities will happen throughout the islands.'

From the herring trade to the kelp industry, islanders have always made a living from the sea and although times have changed, many still rely on the sea for their livelihoods today.

Caitriona MacCuish, Museum nan Eilean development officer, said: 'This is an interesting and important project for Museum nan Eilean.

'We are grateful to the funders because it allows us to create a programme of activities about the heritage of the sea for this national Year of Coasts and Waters.

'The activities will not only be within our museum walls but outdoors and throughout the Outer Hebrides.'

Concern over the lack of affordable housing in Harris and Barra has been voiced by Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus B MacNeil.

Mr MacNeil has taken representations from people in Harris and Barra who are concerned about the lack of house building to the Hebridean Housing Partnership.

Difficulties

Mr MacNeil said: 'Concerns have been expressed in Harris and Barra that the lack of affordable housing is resulting in difficulties for young people and families wishing to remain in these areas.

'I appreciate Hebridean Housing Partnership may have difficulties in securing land to build houses, but some means must be found to make land available for housing to ensure there are people to run our tourism, care and the other services needed within the islands.'

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LT

LETTERS

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

Anger over need to rescue climbers is understandable

The lure of the mountains can be a very strong one and, for some climbers, especially in winter.

However, caution is the watchword for any experienced mountaineer, particularly in winter when conditions can be extreme and the weather can deteriorate very suddenly.

So it is understandable that there is widespread anger at the behaviour of four people who attempted to reach the summit of Ben Nevis during a blizzard on Monday without the proper equipment and who subsequently had to be airlifted off the mountain.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team said the four, who were found near the summit of Ben Nevis, were lucky to be alive as they had no winter kit such as ice axes and crampons and that three of them were only wearing trainers.

As expected, the LMRT and emergency services responded brilliantly but these foolish climbers put many lives at risk with their attempt on Monday. They should be made to pay for their own

A touch of Hollywood to brighten our winter

The headline of the week must be: 'When Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas caught the Ballachulish ferry'.

We report this week the story behind one of the movie world's greats and his visit to the area while filming *To Catch a Spy* back in 1971.

Douglas, as many will know, died earlier this month at the great age of 103, yet there are residents here who still remember the glamour which surrounded the visit by the film crew. It brings fond memories for many.

SNP government blameless

As an objective elector and not a member of any political party, I find J C Hanlon of Taynuilt's letter headlined 'SNP government has its priorities all wrong' odd.

Ascribing the specific litany of issues to 'our SNP controllers', whoever they might be, is inaccurate.

The list starts with the 'two unstable flagship hospitals'. The respective health boards engaged Multiplex as the design and build contractor. As far as I can observe, the cabinet secretary has been taking firm action with each board. Good – she should be commended for this.

Regarding the stability of school buildings, it seems clear those local authorities commissioning the work strayed from the traditional method of having their own inspectors on site through public private partnership design and build schemes that pre-dated the current Scottish Government.

There is certainly a structural issue between the SPA and the Police for the Scottish Government to sort, coupled with the need for some local oversight and an increased capital budget.

The golf course planning application at Coul Links has yet to be reported on. I may be close to J C Hanlon's view here after the Menie decision but opinion on a pattern is premature.

Similarly with the two ferry vessels where a parliamentary inquiry is under way, I observe though this is another design and build contract, this time placed by CMAL.

It has been the fashion in several industries in recent years in the UK and USA to adopt design and build procurement. In theory, this saves design time which many professionals believe would have been sound investment and consequently shifts the risk from client to contractor, increasing costs.

I believe this trend has been a mistake for which we will eventually pay the price. But all of this is some distance from the Scottish Government, which is having to pick up the cost and seems, wrongly, to be getting the blame too.

John C Hutchison, Chartered Engineer.

Adhere to the red line

A red line is only a red line when political parties adhere to it.

In Scotland, 62 per cent voted to remain in the European Union. In any democratic union of equals, Scotland's decision to remain

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@](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)

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

in the European Union would not have been ignored by Unionist MPs and MSPs elected to represent the views of their constituents.

Internationalism sees nations working together. Brexit, on the other hand, has seen the rise of unhealthy British/English nationalism that has not been in existence since

those awful days of Empire expansionism when the British revelled in building their Empire. Thankfully, those days are over. They just haven't realised it. Yes, individuals in Britain benefited greatly, including Scots, but all at the expense of the residents of those countries that Britain invaded.



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DISTRICT NEWS

LOCHABER

Highland Council is inviting people to serve on community councils that remained unformed after elections in December 2019.

The Lochaber areas seeking nominations in are: Caol, Mallaig, Glenfinnan and Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry. Portree and Braes on Skye is also currently unformed.

Community councils are voluntary organisations that act as a voice for their area.

They express views and concerns of people within their area across a wide range of issues including new buildings, roads and services.

They also have legal duties: by law, the Highland Council must consult with community councils on planning and licensing applications in their area.

In some areas, community councils receive community benefit money from windfarm projects which they can reinvest in the community.

Others are involved in setting up community development companies which can lead to larger projects to improve the area.

Some community councils have helped improve patient transport, dental services and care services as well as looking at ways to improve the environment.

The maximum membership of each community council is determined by the population it serves and varies from seven to 13 members.

When the number of nominations exceeds the maximum number of members, a ballot will be held to decide the successful candidates.

Those wishing to stand as a candidate must reside within the community council boundary and be a registered voter.

The deadline for receiving nominations is noon on Wednesday February 26.

For more information and to download nomination forms, visit the community councils section at www.highland.gov.uk/elections.



Ramsay MacMahon on his visit to Glenfinnan Viaduct.

Gaelic train of thought

This week's BBC Alba edition of Gaelic travel show Mach A Seo! Let's Go! visits Glenfinnan.

Broadcast tonight (Thursday February 13) at 10pm, the show sees presenter Ramsay MacMahon travel to Glenfinnan and Ardnamurchan.

He is one of hundreds of onlookers as the steam train crosses the famous viaduct and finds out more about the railway and its importance long before it became associated with a certain boy wizard.

He takes a cruise up Loch Shiel and hears about the Jacobite rising. In Acharacle, Ramsay tries to learn a tune on the accordion.

His weekend ends in spectacular fashion, on a deserted beach, looking out west to the sea and the Small Isles.

Coastguard launches new search and rescue aircraft

Two new state-of-the-art aircraft have taken to the skies, boosting the lifesaving search and rescue missions carried out by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

Equipped with the latest sensors, the Beechcraft King Air B200 planes can spot a person in the water up to 40 miles away and can drop emergency locator beacons, communications and first aid equipment to those in danger.

Specially-trained pilots and their crew will be on stand-by to respond to emergencies around the clock, conducting wide area searches around the UK coastline.

Operating out of Doncaster-Sheffield Airport, the new aircraft



A Beechcraft King Air B200.

will also support HM Coastguard's counter pollution activities by monitoring pollution in UK waters.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani

said: 'The ground-breaking new technology aboard these aircraft will be an invaluable asset in time critical rescue situations, ensuring our rescue teams are better equipped than ever to save lives.'

On average, the current fleet of search and rescue helicopters respond to seven taskings a day, with more than 1,600 people rescued around the UK last year.

Commercial and programmes director at the MCA Damien Oliver added: 'The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's new aircraft will enhance HM Coastguard's existing and future search and rescue capabilities.'

'These Beechcraft King Air B200

aircraft are a welcome addition to the MCA's fleet of helicopters and planes and boast state-of-the-art cameras and sensors that can detect people in the water at considerable distance. The aircraft will also provide assistance to other public bodies.'

The Beechcraft King Air B200 aircraft are equipped with electro-optical infrared search cameras and the latest multi-spectral reconnaissance sensors, which are co-ordinated through an integrated mission control system.

Small stores, such as emergency beacons and flares, can also be distributed by the aircraft to survivors of a sinking vessel at sea.

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Around Lochaber

ANGUS MACDONALD

fort@obantimes.co.uk



Introducing Lochaber businessman Angus MacDonald, who will be providing occasional columns to the Lochaber Times' over the next few weeks...

Where have the seabirds gone?

Twelve years ago when we bought our house by the sea in Moidart, it seemed the beach was teeming in activity, but now its barren.

I read the seabird population is declining by three per cent a year, so if that is reverse compounded, the number of birds has fallen by 30 per cent since we moved in.

I daily scan the shore for the kittiwake, the eider duck and dunlins that used to be seen even five years ago. Frequently, I see nothing, then an oyster catcher or gull makes an appearance. Last week there were two black-throated divers offshore. Lovely.

I read in one of Gavin Maxwell's wonderful books, written in 1953, of a cloud of gannets rising from the sea ahead of his boat, so dense that it blocked out the sun. Today you are lucky to see even one of these magnificent large yellow-throated birds soaring on the thermals before diving like an arrow into the waves.

Occasionally, a story hits the press of the decline of puffins in the outer isles or penguins in the Arctic, but the decline of seabird numbers on our own shores doesn't seem to be noticed.

The seabird is the equivalent of the canaries that miners took down coal mines as an early warning of dangerous gases. What is this precipitous decline warning us of and if the three per cent annual decline continues, will we really

have lost virtually all our seabirds in my lifetime?

What is the cause of this dramatic drop? It can be summed up as a lack of food and predators, with global warming and plastic in the sea also contributing.

We can spot the disappearance of the seabirds but we cannot see the disappearance of the fish they survive on. It's difficult to imagine 100 years ago there were so many herring boats in Mallaig you could walk across the harbour, and fishing was the main source of employment in many communities.

Over the past 30 years, the oceans have been stripped bare, vast factory ships with seine nets 10 miles long catching and killing everything they can scoop up as their sonar fish finders lead them from shoal to shoal.

The Sunday Times recently ran a piece about Danish trawlers catching sand eels in British waters which are then used to fuel their power stations. Sand eels, about the size of sardines, are the core food for most seabirds. And scallop dredgers pulling rakes along the sand and using vast vacuum pumps to suck up our next meal are destroying our west coast seabed.

One of my sons was off for a run last spring and returned reporting he had seen a pine marten carrying a little duckling. My heart sank. The pair of eider duck that I had been watching rearing their hatch of six duckling was now down to two. Within a week, there was none.

The protected pine marten numbers are flourishing and so,

too, are the vermin mink which escaped from fur farms 50 years ago and are now prevalent across the UK. These two species scour the shores for nesting birds and, once a hatch has been discovered, it is curtains for that family. Foxes and rats, too, play a part in ensuring few young survive.

What can we do to reverse this decline? The first thing we can do is to complain to our politicians and ask what they are doing to protect our inshore waters. How can it be legal to fish the way these vast industrial ships do? We should eat only line-caught or sustainably-caught fish and eat more farmed fish. Despite the well publicised issues of fish farming, it is the only chance of our wild fish stocks recovering.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Scottish Natural Heritage need to extend the excellent work they have done destroying vermin on remote islands even further. They seem to direct their focus and considerable funds too much on growing the red kite and sea eagle population and not enough on saving less high profile birds.

If I was an RSPB board member would I like to have my epitaph read: 'During his directorship of the RSPB, he oversaw the disappearance of 80 per cent of the seabird population?'

Quite a likely scenario, I would have thought.

We have a crisis in our seas unfolding in front of our eyes, but few are looking or caring.



Holly Gillibrand is one of six award nominees.

Holly shortlisted for top national award

Climate striker, environmental campaigner and Lochaber Times columnist Holly Gillibrand has been shortlisted for the Glasgow Times' Young Scotswoman of the Year Award 2019.

The winner of the competition will be decided by public vote and Lochaber Times readers can vote for Holly at www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/young-swoty-2019/. Voting closes on Monday Feb-

ruary 24 at 5pm. The category was open again in 2019 to girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 21. Holly faces competition from five other nominees and the winner will be announced at a gala final in the Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow, on Thursday March 26.

There are also six nominees for the Glasgow Times Scotswoman of the Year title.

GLEN NEVIS

The Nevis Partnership has received £50,000 from Paths for All to trial a bus service into Glen Nevis between May and October.

In partnership with Lochaber Environmental Group and Shiel Buses, the service will run hourly

from 7.30am until 6.30pm to the Lower Falls.

It is hoped the service – if fully implemented – will reduce traffic congestion in the area.

Fort William, Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council agreed it was an 'excellent project' at its most recent meeting.

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LT

CLIMBING



Members of 3 Wise Monkeys climbing team that took part in Saturday's event in Inverness.

Scottish youth climbing

Climbers from the Fort William-based 3 Wise Monkeys team competed for the second time in the Scottish Youth Climbing Series 2020 on Saturday, when the second round qualifier for the North of Scotland was staged at the climbing wall at Inverness Aquadome.

Local results were as follows: Group A Male: Craig Allott 4th/Hamish MacKay 8th/Owen Pescod 10th (Owen had to pull out of his last route due to injury). Group A Female: Tilly Knight 5th.

Group B Male: Archie MacIntyre 2nd. Group C Female: Shona Knight 9th. Group E Male: Aaron Tresidder 2nd.

After competing in two rounds of the Youth Climbing Series the youths who qualified for the Scottish final and are now part of the top climbers in the North of Scotland in their age group.

North of Scotland Youth squad members: Craig Allott 4th. Tilly Knight 3rd. Archie MacIntyre 2nd. Aaron Tresidder 2nd.

The Scottish final is on March 21 and 22 in Glasgow TCA The Prop Store for boulders and Glasgow Climbing Centre for routes.

10-PIN BOWLING

Little change at the top

After week 11 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, there is little change at the top of the scratch division where all the leading teams won out 5-0.

Alleycats still remain at the top with 53 points followed by Team With A Bowling Problem in second place with 41 points with British Legion Fort William in third place with 37 points.

The handicap division is still very close with positions changing every week as the top group of teams sometimes play one another.

Team With A Bowling Problem and Alleycats head the table with 34 points followed by Peaky Bowlers on 33 points with fourth place British Legion Fort William in close attendance on 30 points.

There was a spate of high individual scratch games this week led by Steve Day (Team With A Bowling Problem) with 198.

Other good games this week came Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 195, Ben Weller (Team With A Bowling Problem) with 190, Kevin Fraser (Council) with 177, Gus Fraser (Council) and Gary Cowan (Peaky Bowlers) both with 175 and Nick Richardson (Alleycats) with 170. Steve Day had the top two-game scratch series of 365 and the top two-game handicap series of 453 whilst Ben Weller had and the top handicap game of 245.

The best team scores this week all came from Team With A Bowling Problem with the top scratch game of 639, the season high top two-game scratch series of 1238, the top handicap game of 877 and the top two-game handicap series of 1714.

The top scratch averages over the season so far are currently held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 157 followed by Tony Whitelocke and Steve Day both with 148.

Roy Bridge trials star joins his hero

Rising Roy Bridge trials star Ben Dignan has a new team for a new decade, joining his hero, Dougie Lampkin, as a member of the Vertigo family.

Dignan, just 16, is the latest emerging talent to join Vertigo UK, with the Lochaber youngster, who has already won national titles both at youth and 125cc adult level, having recently agreed terms for the 2020 season.

This comes with some additional support from the Vertigo factory to assist Dignan with the overseas exploits he has planned for the coming months.

Having caught the eyes of Vertigo ambassador Lampkin over the past couple of years, the ex-multi world champion was keen to get the teenager in Vertigo colours for what will be both a busy and important season for the teenager, as the latter looks to build on the excellent third place he achieved in the 2019 European Trial Championship.

The past two seasons have seen Dignan ride a limited number of Trial GP events, as he prepared for a full assault this year.

Heading for Japan in early June, Dignan will contest all five events of the 2020 Trial 125 series as he looks to make his presence felt among the front-runners following the consistency he showed during last year's Euro campaign.

Closer to home, the ex-national youth champion will compete in the eight round 2020 British Trial Championship that gets under way in March.

Dignan will switch up to a larger capacity bike for the domestic series, swapping his



Ben Dignan, right, and Dougie Lampkin are both now riding for the same team in 2020.

normal Vertigo Vertical 125 for its bigger brother – the Vertical 250 – as he goes in search of another national title to add to the 125 crown, which he secured last year.

Schedule allowing, Dignan will also look to take in other selected events both at European and national level, but will unfortunately not make his Scottish Six Days Trial (SSDT) debut until 2021 having only turned 17 a few

weeks earlier during what will be a heavy exam period.

Dignan said: 'Moving teams was not an easy decision as both John Shirt and Gas Gas have been good to me, so I would like to say a big thanks to them.'

'On the other hand, having the opportunity to ride for Dougie [Lampkin] and the Vertigo team is really exciting and is something I am really looking forward to.'

'Right now, my priority is to get practising as much as possible so I can be ready for

TRIALS RIDING

the first round of the British.'

Lampkin, who has known Dignan and his family for a number of years, said he had noted Dignan's development from a young boy to a rider with real potential.

'Over the past couple of years, he has certainly started to make his mark and hopefully with the support he will receive both from Vertigo UK and the Vertigo factory he can step up another level this season,' added Lampkin.



Ben Dignan in action.

LOTTERY NUMBERS

Lochaber club lotteries

Ballachulish Shinty lottery: This week's (9/2) shinty lottery numbers were 1, 8 and 11. No winner's this week, so it's a £400 draw next time.

Caol Regeneration Lotto: Numbers for draw on 6/2 were 2, 12 and 17. No winners so £400 jackpot for draw on 13/2.

Fort William Golf Club Lotto: Numbers for draw on 6/2 were 12, 14 and 20. No winner so £800 available for draw on 13/2.

Caol Community Centre Bingo Club Lotto: Numbers for draw on 2/2 were 3, 8 and 16. No winners so £800 next time.

Fort's Falcons flying high after hosting their first netballathon

Fort William Falcons Netball Club hosted its first ever netballathon at the weekend, playing four gruelling hour-long matches against teams from the Highland region.

Visiting teams at the event, staged at Lochaber High School, included two talented Highland District U17s teams – the netball stars of the future.

Each game was highly competitive but full of fun. Eighteen Fort William and Oban-based players turned up to the event helping the Falcons win three of the four matches they played.

Match scores were as follows: Fort William Falcons 64-29 Lochaber High School Students; Fort William Falcons 54-36 Highland District U17s Squad (A); Fort William Falcons 39-43 Highland District U17s

Squad (B); Fort William Falcons 30-20 Lochaber High School Staff.

The Falcons' Christina Wood played the equivalent of three whole matches, racking up nearly 18,000 steps and burning almost 3,000 calories.

It just goes to show that netball is a highly physical sport and a great way to stay in shape.

With the organisational help of Bridget Thomas (Active Schools co-ordinator), teachers and parents, four Lochaber primary school teams also attended the event to participate in a mini-tournament in the middle of the day.

Two teams from Caol Primary School and two from Spean Bridge Primary came along and enjoyed every minute they spent on and off



Fort William Falcons' Christina Wood, left, with the ball, shadowed by Klaudia Solinska.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

the court. Caol P7s were impressive, winning all of their matches.

Many members from the Falcons put their baking skills to good use and brought along a variety of homemade goodies. The bake sale was a huge success, and thanks to the generosity of Lidl, Fort William, they were also able to offer free healthy snacks to participants.

With help from Highlife Highland for venue hire, along with proceeds from the bake sale and sponsorship, the Falcons raised £650 which will be used to help with future venue hire

NETBALL

costs, coaching course fees and the purchase of kit and equipment.

Falcons' captain Rebecca Christopher, who organised the tournament, told the Lochaber Times: 'To see so many girls and women of all ages enjoying netball together at the same event was inspiring. The Falcons' future looks bright.'

If you want to get involved with netball in Lochaber, email fortwilliamnetball@outlook.com for more information, or follow the Falcons on Facebook.



The Falcons' Sharyn Morgan, left, facing a challenge

The world's best trail runners will descend on Kinlochleven for Skyrunning weekend

The full schedule of trail running for the two-day Salomon Skyline Scotland event in Kinlochleven has been released with a UK final included.

Attracting some of the best trail runners with world-class events on September 19 and 20, the weekend also has 5k, 10k and 18k for amateur runners.

Now in its fourth year, the gruelling Ring of Steall Skyrace will be the first event on Saturday and the final event in the Golden Trail National Series (GTNS) in the UK.

The route, which has already established itself as a classic skyrunning event, has 29km and 2,500m of ascent and incorporates two lofty



A skyrunner in action during the Ben Nevis Ultra.

ridges within the Mamores. The GTNS aims to bring the strongest and most ambitious off-road runners into a 'super circuit' with a Grand Finale in the Azores and a chance to compete in the Golden Trail World Series.

Also on Saturday will be the Mamores Vertical Kilometre race in which participants gain 1,000m of ascent in less than 5k.

Sunday September 20 will have two races for highly experienced competitors.

Starting at 7.30am, the Glen Coe Skyline race is a pure test of speed, endurance and skill across a 52k route with a staggering 4,750m of ascent.

The second 52k race on Sunday will be the Ben Nevis Ultra with almost 4,000m of climbing and great variability in the terrain, the race includes a traverse of one of Scotland's most famous ridges, the Càrn Mòr Dearg Arête, leading to the summit of Ben Nevis.

Billed as Britain's toughest

TRAIL RUNNING

5k, the Grey Mare's Trail Race follows the popular walking route in Kinlochleven.

Held on much of the same terrain, the Loch Eilde Mòr Trail 10k, and Three Mealls Trail Race 18k take runners into remote terrain near the River Leven.

The 5k and 10k will be available at half price entry for participants under 18, and youngsters aged six-12 will be able to tackle a 'fun trail' run.

In addition, the Event Village will be open throughout the festival with speakers, Q&A sessions, live music and advice from some of the leading outdoor brands.

For more information visit www.skylinescotland.com.



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WEATHER

Thursday
Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 5°C.

Friday
Heavy rain and a fresh breeze
Temperatures
6°C to 8°C.

Weekend Outlook
Saturday
Gusty winds and light rain showers
Sunday
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze
Temperatures
5°C to 7°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 13, 2020** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	02.24	0.3	08.22	4.0
Thur	15.01	0.8	20.45	3.6
Fri	03.11	0.5	09.05	3.7
	15.48	1.0	21.30	3.4
Sat	04.01	0.8	09.52	3.4
	16.40	1.3	22.22	3.1
Sun	04.57	1.1	10.50	3.1
	17.43	1.5	23.37	2.9
Mon	06.03	1.4	12.26	2.9
	18.58	1.7	***	**
Tues	01.24	2.9	07.20	1.6
	14.40	2.8	20.30	1.7
Wed	02.56	3.0	08.53	1.6
	16.18	3.0	21.44	1.5

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

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

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

Roy Bridge trials star joins his hero

World's best trail runners descend on Kinlochleven

Goal from Hyde secures hard-fought win for Fort

Turriff United	1
Fort William	2
Highland League	

A penalty in the 35th minute and a last-gasp goal after four minutes of extra time away to Turriff United on Saturday saw the Claggan Park side claw themselves off the bottom of the Highland League table.

This hard-earned win against a stuffy Turriff side came off the back of the draw against Deveronvale the previous weekend and the away win to Clachnacuddin. Fort manager Calum MacLean, while not getting carried away, is hoping it is the first sign of a winning habit beginning to take root.

'Losing can become a habit, but so can winning and the latter is a much more preferable habit to get into,' he said.

Fort dominated the first half against Turriff, but the home side were very strong at the back and made it anything but easy for the Fort players.

Fort started getting in behind them and had several good opportunities, most notably Aidan Taylor's 35-yard strik in the 11th minute that flew over the bar along with Ross Gunn's chance in the 27th minute.

However, a penalty in the 35th minute saw Donald Morrison grab his second goal in a Fort shirt and put the visitors 0-1 up and that's how the sides went into the

Fort Falcons soaring after their first netballathon success



Teams in Saturday's netball tournament held at Lochaber High School. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

There was plenty of netball action at Lochaber High School at the weekend, when Fort William Falcons

Netball Club hosted its first ever netballathon. Players took part in four hour-

long matches against teams from the Highland region, including the netball stars of the future from two

talented Highland District U17s teams. See page 47 for a full report and photographs.

interval. The second half was a different story with the first 25 minutes seeing Fort unable to get out of their own half.

It was in the 92nd minute that Fort hearts were broken when the referee's decision to award a goal kick was overturned by a linesman, with the resulting corner ending up in the Fort net for the equaliser.

'I thought that was it and we'd have to settle for the draw,' admitted MacLean. 'But then we went back to the centre, ended up the park



Connor Moore, 16, made his first start for the team on Saturday.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

and Lewis [Hyde] scored a brilliant goal.'

The goal from Hyde in 94th minute came on the player's debut and he might well never score a more important one as far as the Claggan Park faithful are concerned.

The win means Fort are now off the bottom of the table and still have eight games in hand. Saturday's game was also notable for former Oban Saints youngster Connor Moore, who made his first start for the club at the age of 16. Moore had come on

as a substitute during the Deveronvale game.

'Connor did very well and is a very promising player,' added MacLean.

Looking ahead to this Saturday's home league game against Forres Mechanics, MacLean repeated the mantra he has every week since taking the reins once again at Claggan Park.

'There are no easy games in the Highland League and this will be just as tough as all the rest, as they are a big, strong side. But we're coming off the

FOOTBALL

back of some good results and will look towards Saturday with confidence in our own abilities.'

Fort William FC v Forres Mechanics, Claggan Park, Saturday, kick off 3pm.



ONE CALL COVERS IT ALL!

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