

New classmates wanted at Luing Primary School

by Kathie Griffiths
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Luing residents are hoping to entice young families to move to the island and boost numbers at its tiny school.

Unless more children are registered for the start of the August term, there will be just one pupil left.

Keen to find classmates for the youngster, islanders are rallying round to attract other families to join its lively little community on the edge of the Atlantic.

Argyll and Bute Council says that regardless of numbers it has no plans to shut the school, but the drastic drop in the number of pupils was worrying enough for Luing Community Council to put it on its agenda.

At the last census count, there were seven pupils.

Community council chairman Mike Barlow, whose own children went to the school, said: 'It's part of the community to have a school here and it would be a real shame if it had to be mothballed until

numbers picked up again. We want to see it stay open. All it will take is a couple of families to come and live here and it would be all change.'

Argyll and Bute councillor Elaine Robertson added: 'Luing is a wonderful island. It's a superb place to bring up children. I would love to see more young families come and live here.'

'The success of Argyll and Bute is built on a growing population.'

'A few years ago the school was thriving, so I was horrified to hear there might be just one pupil left when the others move up to Oban High School.'

Rent

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson told The Oban Times: 'We have no plans to close any of our schools, including Luing primary.'

'The future success of Argyll and Bute is built on a growing population and this

is something the council and its partners are focused on.' At the start of this year, the island's Facebook page posted two family-sized houses up for rent, inviting people to start a 2020 adventure by joining the Luing community, home to the bustling Atlantic Islands Centre, a bakers' co-operative, an award-winning bakery and a post office/general store.

The appealing post attracted 'quite a bit of interest' as a result, The Oban Times was told, and the owner of both properties is looking to progress it.

On the island of Lismore, the search continues for a new head teacher to replace Catherine Davies when she retires in April.

The school has 12 primary-age youngsters and three under-fives in the nursery.

Kilchattan Primary School on Colonsay is also on the hunt for a new head teacher and is running a social media campaign to find the right person for the job, offering a salary of £51,249.

Pancake Day is 'flipping' fantastic



Young cooks at Oban's Park Primary School had all the right ingredients for a fabulous Pancake Day. Pupils at the school in Dunollie took it in turns to stir the batter and flip pancakes during class time on Tuesday before enjoying the Shrove Tuesday snack. On average, people in the UK eat two pancakes each on Pancake Day, meaning more than 100 million pancakes are eaten on the day.

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Clarification

In an article in last week's Oban Times with regard to Comar, the Mull-based arts organisation, and its problems in trying to engage a new chief executive officer (CEO), the article mentioned the company's former CEO and head of theatre Alasdair McCrone.

The article stated Mr McCrone was on a salary of £38,000. Mr McCrone would like us to point out this was not the case and the actual figure was considerably less.

Mr McCrone said: 'In 1995, I was appointed artistic director of Mull Little Theatre at a time when the company had no funding and very few assets. At that time and for many years afterwards, while I was helping build up the company, I was paid a very small fee and only for part of the year. Later, when Mull Theatre was one of the busiest and most successful full time producing and touring theatre companies in Scotland and I was artistic director and CEO, my annual salary was still substantially less than other theatre pro-

ducers. In 2016 I was asked to be CEO of Comar as well as head of theatre. Subsequently, under my leadership, Comar applied for and received substantial regular funding from Creative Scotland. As well as having CEO planning, budgeting and management responsibilities, I continued to be active as theatre producer, director and actor, regularly touring the country with the company.'

In its statement on Mr McCrone's resignation in 2019, the board of Comar said: 'After 24 years of balancing acting and directing with a desk job Alasdair McCrone will be leaving Comar this spring to focus full time on his creative work. His career with Mull Theatre, and subsequently with Comar, the Mull arts organisation, has been memorable.'

'Alasdair was instrumental in growing Mull Theatre from its foundation as a tiny and unfunded theatre to one of Scotland's foremost professional touring theatre companies and has latterly been Comar's CEO.'

Inactive burial sites in Argyll and Bute listed

Last week, we revealed a family were left devastated after finding out there are no more burial plots on Lismore, writes David McPhee.

Within the article, Argyll and Bute Council said there are 66 cemeteries closed to the sale of spaces throughout the constituency.

The Oban Times has obtained a list of the inactive cemeteries.

The inventory was compiled in August last year, however, it has since been revealed Lismore is at capacity.

Argyll and Bute Council now says it will be asking residents across the constituency about their personal choices and views this year, so 'a new set of cemetery policies can be proposed'.

Local authorities are only required to provide one

Bute and Cowal

Saint Blanes (Private) - Bute
Hamilton Street - Dunoon
Inverchaolin - Cowal
Kilfinnan - Cowal
Southall - Cowal
High Kirk - Dunoon
Kilbride - Cowal

Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and Islay

Achnabreac Other Sections - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Braeface - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Carse, Mid - Argyll / Knapdale
Inverlussa - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Inverneil - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Keills, Tayvallich - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Killinver - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilmahumaig - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilmalieu - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilmartin - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilmory - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilmory Knapp - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Kilnashn - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale

Lernaghension - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Lochgair - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Lothead - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Tarbert New - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Tarbert O - T - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
Tarbert A - O - Mid-Argyll / Knapdale
English - Campbeltown
Gartnagrenach - Kintyre
Kilchenzie - Kintyre
Kilkivan - Kintyre
Saddell - Kintyre
Waterfoot - Kintyre
Clachan (Old) - Kintyre
Kilnave - Islay / Jura
Kilarrow - Islay / Jura
Kilchiaran - Islay / Jura
Kildalton - Islay / Jura
Tarbert - Islay Jura Islay / Jura
Inverluss - Islay / Jura

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

Carsaig - Mull
Lochdon - Mull

Fionnhport - Mull
Gometra - Mull
Inch keneth - (Gribun) Mull
Kilinalin - Mull
Killean - Mull
Kilmuaig - Mull
Kilninian - Mull
Kilunaig - Mull
Knock - Mull
Laggan - Mull
Tobermory (Old) - Mull
Kilfinichen - Mull
Kilpatrick - Bunessan, Mull
Kilvickeon - Bunessan, Mull
Kilvickeon - Ulva, Mull
Kilbride - Lorn
Kilmelford - Lorn
Kilmore - Lorn
Parish Cemetery - Oban
Crossapol - Coll
Cladbeag - Tiree

Helensburgh and Lomond

Rhu Churchyard - Rhu
Ballyhenan - Arrochar
Cardross Churchyard - Cardross

cemetery per area, but Argyll and Bute has 65 cemeteries available for the purchase of lairs. There are a large number

of lairs that have been sold, but 70 years have lapsed without them being used. The council said one option in areas of

most need could be to investigate if these are still needed and claim them back if not.

Twelve-month ban and £1,000 fine for morning after driver

COURT

A man has been fined £1,000 and disqualified from driving for a year after drink driving.

Douglas Christopher McClymont, of 3 Carey Road, Saltcoats, admitted

being more than twice over the limit on November 5.

Procurator fiscal David Glancy told the court on Monday February 24 that McClymont was staying in a hotel in Adfern for work and had arrived the night before. 'It was a fairly sociable

evening,' Mr Glancy added. 'A considerable amount of drink was consumed.' He said McClymont was assisted upstairs at around 12.30am and the following morning he set off in a car.

Following an incident, the accused became directly

involved with the police, who spoke to him at around 9.50am. He then failed the road-side breath test and was arrested and brought to Oban Police Station.

In his defence, McClymont's solicitor said: 'He has gone to bed and

woke up and thought he was fit to drive, when clearly he was not. He would not be the first person to make that mistake.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes said: 'There's a real lack of awareness among the public to how long alcohol remains

in the system after an episode of heavy drinking.'

Sheriff Hughes banned McClymont from driving for 12 months, which will be reduced to nine if he completes a drink drivers rehabilitation programme, and fined him £1,000.



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Objectors up in arms over fish farm plan

by Kathie Griffiths
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Fish farm objectors are opposing plans to almost double the number of salmon being produced in pens at Dunstaffnage, close to popular Ganavan beach.

This week campaigners on Facebook posted that the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) had issued notification it intends to allow Scottish Sea Farm to increase its fish production from 1,300 tonnes to 2,350 tonnes at the Dunstaffnage site.

Save Seil Sound warns it would mean more pollution being dumped from the pens into the sea next to one of Argyll's few sandy beaches.

Pesticides, fish excrement and uneaten fish food are just some of those 'unsavoury' pollutants, including 'deadly' Emamectin Benzoate used to control the sea lice that live on salmon, says the action group.

The insecticide Emamectin Benzoate is known to be toxic to lobsters and crabs and stay active on the seabed for several years.

The water around Ganavan is well-used in all seasons by kayakers and swimmers, says Ewan Kennedy from Save Seil Sound. 'It's a popular recreation area for Oban, people



kayak and people swim all year round. If these plans go ahead, it's a bigger area that could be out of bounds,' he said.

Argyll District Salmon Fisheries Board has also registered an objection with SEPA over worries any increase in farmed fish at Dunstaffnage could increase the threat of sea lice on wild salmon and sea trout.

Save Seil Sound says the permit being sought by Scottish Sea Farms is permission to pollute.

There is a whole raft of regulations fish farms have to go through to get consent for plans and changes, but there is no particular order to do it in. Following Scottish Sea

Farms' application to SEPA, a planning application to Argyll and Bute Council is expected to be submitted.

If an application goes to the council, people will be able to object said Mr Kennedy.

Earlier this week Save Seil Sound as well as Friends of Loch Etive and Friends of the Sound of Jura were among 18 action groups endorsing and supporting a potential boycott of all Scottish farmed salmon products over what they say is Scottish Ministers' failure to regulate salmon farming to protect wild fish.

Andrew Graham-Stewart, director of the Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland (S&TCS) has issued an ultimatum for Easter.

Ganavan beach is a popular attraction with wild swimmers and kayakers.

He said that despite the Scottish Government setting up two working groups over a year ago to look at the issue, those groups were still way behind schedule and still deliberating without a timeline to reach any conclusions.

Hamish Macdonell of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation said fish health and welfare has never been a higher priority, with sea lice levels at their lowest for six years.

He also said it was 'unsurprising' these pressure groups 'having failed to get what they wanted during an exhaustive parliamentary process which found a lack of definitive scientific evidence of any link between salmon farming and wild fish numbers' were leading this latest initiative.

Motorcyclist died after falling under lorry

A motorcyclist who died after falling under the wheels of a lorry near Connel crashed into another bike in front of him just moments earlier, an inquest



has heard, writes Miles O'Leary, PlymouthLive. As they travelled north, they were approaching a railway bridge. As they approached, an HGV negotiated the railway bridge, which necessitated it

Tristan Horswell, 29, pictured, from Seaton in Devon, was on the A85 at Achnacloch shortly after 6.30pm on May 23 last year when the crash happened. The glancing collision with the motorbike in front caused him to fall off his bike and hit a lorry travelling in the opposite direction just after it passed under the railway bridge. Mr Horswell, an aircraft design engineer, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Coroner Stephen Cavell said at an inquest in Plymouth: 'Tristan was travelling north on the A85 at Achnacloch, near Connel, Argyll, on Thursday May 23.

'He was riding a green Kawasaki 650 motorbike and he was riding behind

to move into the middle of the road, which it did safely, and then returned to the southbound carriageway of the A85. That seems to have required vehicles in front of the two motorcyclists to slow down.'

The motorcyclist in front slowed down, Mr Cavell said, but Mr Horswell collided with the rear of the bike and that caused him to fall off onto his side.

'At the same time, the HGV was passing and, sadly, he fell underneath the second axle of the HGV and sustained fatal injuries,' Mr Cavell added.

The coroner's conclusion, having heard all the evidence, was that Mr Horswell died as a result of a road traffic collision.

Dunbeg nursery to close in June

Little Learners Nursery, Dunbeg, will close its doors on Friday June 26, leaving staff without a job and 32 children looking for a nursery place, writes Fiona Scott.

The announcement follows a three-week consultation with a dozen staff during which operators Argyll College UHI says it has 'explored every option'.

Concerns are now growing that the closure will make it even more difficult for mothers to return to work after having children.

Childminder Katy Pollock was one of several parties interested in taking on the running of Little Learners, but she said all discussions came to an end without a positive solution.

She said: 'Spaces for under threes are very limited in the Oban area.

'There are only 11 child-

mindes offering spaces but we are restricted to caring for three children under school age and only one of these can be aged under one year old, at any time.

'Nursery spaces are also restricted by child/adult ratios. Children are placed in settings for the long term, so I won't have any availability until August 2021 and I already have a waiting list.

Huge blow

'The closure of Little Learners is a huge blow to many families in the area and with all the new houses being built, childcare spaces are seriously lacking.'

Katy first looked at Little Learners in September, along with a colleague, and had hoped they would be able to take it over and continue to run it as a nursery.

'Our offer in December was turned down with no nego-

tiation as we weren't close to what they were wanting for it, but as a financially failing business we felt it was not worth what they wanted,' she added.

'We had spent a lot of time doing business plans, meeting with a lawyer and provisionally sorting finances. Due to time restraints with the Care Inspectorate, we knew it was going to take a minimum of six months to change the registration and Little Learners management had made it clear they couldn't keep it running at a loss for that length of time.'

After announcing the closure last week, College Principal Martin Jones said: 'We will be doing all we can to support staff affected to find alternative employment or help them develop their career prospects by moving into education or training.'

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OT

Golfer Bob tees up for Martyn's Monday Club

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Top golfer Bob MacIntyre is putting swing power behind mental health support in his home town.

Martyn's Monday Club in Oban was surprised to see its logo on Bob's tour bag while the 23-year-old was preparing for the WGC-Mexico Championship.

The peer support group, which works hard across the community with men and women to talk about their mental health struggles and to prevent suicide, now hopes to set up a meeting with Bob and invite him to keep promoting its life-saving message.

Bob tweeted: 'On my bag this year is something that's close to me and my family. Martyn's Monday Club is a mental health support group



Bob on the eighth tee at the Dubai Desert Classic.

in my home town who are doing a great job. If anyone is struggling with mental health please, please don't be scared to talk #togetherwecandothis.'

The tweet prompted a surge of positive messages from followers: 'Nice touch. The Scottish male is not accustomed to admitting to his vulnerability and it is people like Robert who can change that,' said one.

Robert Cruickshanks, whose 37-year-old son Martyn took his own life in 2018, said Bob and his family have always supported the club but seeing the logo on his tour bag, taking the mental health awareness message out to the world, came as a surprise.

Mr Cruickshanks said: 'It was a lovely surprise for all at Martyn's Monday Club. To think the club is now on a world tour with Bob is absolutely amazing.'

'It will be nice when everyone picks up on what has happened with Bob and his bag and we look forward to seeing it travel as far as we can.'

'We get great support from the community far and wide but Bob and his family have been supporters from the beginning, showing that support to us in all forms.'

'Something you can say

for Bob is that he has his feet placed firmly on the ground but I'm sure the pressure of playing at the height of your game has to show somewhere.'

In Scotland one in three people suffer from mental health issues.

'I think we have a meeting arranged to sit round the table with Bob when he gets back off tour and see where we can go from here. Hopefully he will continue to support Martyn's Monday Club and getting our name and message out there.'

Last year more than £2,700 was raised for the club by Martyn's friends and family who climbed Ben Nevis.

This year they are putting together a team to Get Muddy for Martyn, taking on the Tough Mudder Challenge on July 5 at Dalkeith Countrypark. Go to Get Muddy for Martyn 2020 on Facebook to find out more.



Youngsters have had a fantastic time at Oban Easter Fèis in previous years.

Oban Easter Fèis to return this April

The dates have been set for this year's Oban Easter Fèis. More than 200 participants and 30 tutors are expected to take part in the festival, from Monday April 6 until Friday April 10 in Oban Primary Campus.

The main Fèis Latharna is open to those aged eight to 18, however, there is also a 'Wee Fèis'. There will be an event for five to seven-year-olds that will run the length of the festival from 10am until 12.30pm daily, as well as events for three to four-year-olds from 1.30pm until 3.30pm every

day of the festival. The main fèis will run from 10am until 3.30pm daily and will include song, drama, bagpipes, shinty, drumming, clarsach, guitar, group work, whistle, fiddle, accordion, sound production, art and crafts, highland dance, chanter, dance, step dance, piano, and percussion.

Fèis Latharna is organised by a committee of volunteers and has been running its week of traditional music tuition in Oban since 1994.

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Bunessan man admits assault and running from police in Oban

A 23-year-old man from Mull has admitted assaulting another man and attempting to evade arrest.

Darren Craig Clark of 10 Mill Brae, Bunessan, pleaded guilty to the charges when he appeared in Oban Sheriff Court on Monday February 24.

Procurator fiscal David Glancy told the court police officers were watching CCTV at around 1.30am on September 14 last year when they noticed an altercation between Clark and another man in George Street, Oban.

The footage showed the accused 'repeatedly punching a man then kicking him'.



Officers made their way to the scene and spoke to Clark, however, when they told him

he was being arrested, he 'ran for it', heading in the direction of Station Square.

'He got across the road and tripped over a bench and that stopped the flight,' Mr Glancy added.

He was taken to hospital as a precaution, before being taken into custody and being cautioned and charged.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes deferred the matter for reports until April 25, when mitigation will also be heard.

Sheriff Hughes said: 'This is a serious matter and more serious because of your previous convictions. This is a case where the court will consider a custodial sentence.'

Man fined £120 following argument

A 53-year-old man has admitted causing a breach of the peace in Oban's George Street last year.

Andrew Kennedy of 10 Whitegates Court, Lochgilphead, was fined £120 when he appeared in Oban Sheriff Court on Monday February 24 and pleaded guilty to causing someone to suffer fear or alarm.

Procurator fiscal David

Glancy said the incident occurred at around 9pm on November 23 2019.

He said the accused had been in an argument with a female, which alarmed a passing family.

An adult witness asked if everything was okay, to which the accused responded: 'She is fine,' before swearing.

The witness moved to a safe distance away, the police were

contacted and Kennedy was arrested. Both the accused and the female were under the influence of alcohol.

In his defence, solicitor Edward Thornton said the incident was an exception to the norm and that his client had no previous convictions.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes labelled the incident as 'unpleasant' and fined Kennedy £120.

Bishops remember much-loved former Oban priest

by Mark Entwistle
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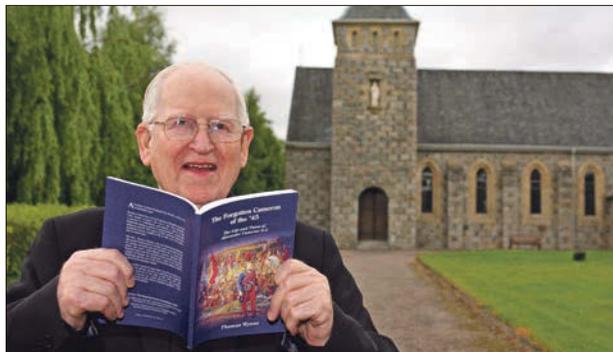
Tributes have been paid to one of Lochaber's most well-loved clergymen, Monsignor Thomas Wynne, who died on Friday, aged 89.

At the time of his death, Father Tom, as he was affectionately known to everyone, was staying with his nephew Deacon Tom Wynne and his wife Sheena at their home in Fort William.

A native of the town, Father Tom had retired from the church in the June of 2017 on the same day he had celebrated 50 years in the priesthood.

He died in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, after a short illness. Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll, Brian McGee, had anointed him the evening before he died.

Bishop McGee told the Lochaber Times: 'Monsignor



Father Tom Wynne with a book he wrote in 2011.

Thomas Wynne was an inspirational priest and a much-loved pastor with wonderful people skills and a formidable work ethic.

'From the first time I met him, I was also lifted by his warmth and encouragement. Of course, I was far from the only person who benefited from his warm personality.

'He touched countless lives

all through our diocese. Father Tom served as a priest for 60 years – into his late 80s – and even after he retired he helped out in parishes until a few weeks ago. I offer my grateful thanks on behalf of the diocese to Deacon Tom Wynne and his wife Sheena for the care which they, together with their wider family, provided to him.'

Tribute was also paid by

Bishop Joseph Toal, currently Bishop of Motherwell but formerly Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, whose home parish is St Margaret's in Roy Bridge.

Bishop Toal said: 'I heard with great sadness that I heard of the death of Monsignor Wynne. He was a great priest of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, where he served his parishes with great fervour and dedication. He will be greatly missed. I extend my deepest sympathy to the bishop and priests of the diocese as well as Monsignor Wynne's family who loved him dearly and the parishioners of my own home parish of St Margaret's in Roy Bridge where he served in his latter days.'

The director of the Scottish Catholic Media Office Peter Kearney paid his own tribute, describing Father Tom as the 'quintessential' Highland priest.

He was, said Mr Kearney, a 'man of deep spiritual convictions, utterly embedded in the communities he served, so much a part of the traditions, history and culture of the West Highlands from a generation of gentle caring pastors who had time for everyone and never forgot a face'.

He added: 'He grew up in Fort William and was at school with my dad and my uncles, all of whom spoke very fondly of him. The last time I met him after mass at St Margaret's in Roy Bridge a few years ago, his interest in me and my family was humbling. May he rest in peace.'

Born in Fort William in 1930, Father Tom attended St Mary's Primary School in the town, followed by secondary schooling in the town then at the junior seminary of Blairs College near Aberdeen. He attended the seminary of St

Sulpice in Paris and continued his studies in Rome before being ordained at St Mary's, Fort William, on June 15 1957. There followed parishes at St Columba's Cathedral, Oban, 1957 to 1965; St Andrew's, Rothesay, 1965 to 1966; Our Lady and St Columba, Kingussie, 1966 to 1968; St Columba's Cathedral 1968 to 1985; St Mary's, Arisaig, 1985 to 1996 and St Margaret's, Roy Bridge, 1996 to 2017.

Interviewed in 2017 on his retirement, Father Tom told the Lochaber Times: 'I first told someone I wanted to be a priest when I was only about 10 or 11. I had served as an altar boy and there was nothing I wanted to be more than a priest.'

A mass of thanksgiving for Monsignor Thomas Wynne will take place from St Mary's RC Church, Fort William, tomorrow, Friday February 28, at 11am.

Praise for Lismore Ferry campaign

Efforts by Lismore residents to highlight their ferry plight have been praised, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Oban North and Lorn Councillor Kieron Green commended their campaign to save their lifeline ferry services between Port Appin and Lismore after confirmation, subject to the budget passing in the Scottish Parliament, that the council will receive £954,000 from the Scottish Government for internal ferry services in 2020/21.

This will cover the full budgeted cost of £454,000 for operating all four council ferries – Lismore, Easdale, Kerrera and Luing – for the year. It will also fund the full cost of building a replacement



Lismore ferry in time to comply with new regulations.

Councillor Green said: 'This is extremely welcome and I would like to thank the Scottish Government for this funding and pay tribute to the massive efforts made by communities on Lismore and elsewhere to highlight this issue, the intervention of our constituency MSP Michael Russell as well as the attention given to the issue by regional list MSPs.'

He added: 'I know this will come as a relief to everyone who depends on these ferry services.'

'I greatly appreciate this support being given to our islands and the recognition that has been given of the importance these services

have in peoples lives.'

Argyll and Bute Council leader Aileen Morton received a letter of funding confirmation from Islands and Connectivity Minister Paul Wheelhouse on February 24. Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron said common sense had 'finally prevailed'.

'It was plainly obvious Argyll and Bute Council, after years of cuts to its budget, was in no fit financial state to fund the replacement Lismore ferry and, frankly, it should not have required such a long period of intensive lobbying of the Scottish Government to secure this outcome. I very much hope members of those communities who have been so worried about the possible loss of their lifeline services can now relax a little and get on with their lives.'

Sentence deferred for good behaviour

An Oban man who admitted breaking a window has had his sentence deferred for six months for good behaviour.

Sean Kelly, 36, whose address in court was care of 91 McKelvie Road, Oban, admitted destroying the property of another when he appeared

at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday February 24.

The incident took place on December 26 2019.

Procurator fiscal David Glancy said he was told the cost of the damage was £160, but that Kelly had already paid for it to be fixed.

In his defence, his solicitor Jane McLaren said: 'He is a man who has managed to keep himself out of trouble since July 2017.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes deferred sentencing until August 12 for Kelly to be of good behaviour.

WHEN IT'S BLOWING A GALE COME VISIT THE JAIL

“Inveraray jail gives such an interesting insight into the past. We spent much longer here than first expected as we were so engaged with the place and its stories. We had two teenagers with us and they didn't even glance at their phones once! The guides were lovely and helpful too. Definitely recommend to anyone visiting the area.”

TripAdvisor Review, July 2019

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OT

Photographers put focus firmly on cancer charities

A Mull photography club is focusing on making a calendar and staging an exhibition to shed light on dark times.

Photographers from the Mull Through The Lens club were inspired after a Marie Curie appeal and a heart-breaking string of cancer diagnoses within their membership and across the island.

They decided to embark on the ambitious project to show their support for those affected by the disease and to give something back to organisations helping their families and friends.

Focusing on the theme Light in the Darkness, the project features 12 people from Mull who had been impacted by cancer. Each of them shared with the photographers what their 'Light in the Darkness' had been before club members did their best to interpret it through a photograph.

Tobermory binman Colin Morrison, who made thousands of pounds for charities



Mull binman Colin Morrison's dad died from cancer in 2017. This photograph of Loch na Keal is on the December page.

on the island with his 2020 calendar, contributed to the Light in the Darkness calendar after losing his dad to cancer.

The club has now produced a moving exhibition that will tour Scotland in 2020. The exhibition will go from Glengorm Castle in April, to Craignure Golf Club and Isle of Mull Hotel in May, Pennyghael community hall in June, a location to be announced by Marie Curie

in July, The Beatson Cancer Charity in August before ending in Edinburgh between October and December.

As well as the exhibition, the club has produced a 2021 calendar to raise funds for cancer charities. The launch of the calendar and exhibition will be open to everyone at Mull's Glengorm Castle on Saturday April 4 at 6.30pm and will be a chance to meet the photographers and buy a calendar.

Oban gets ready to rock with Pride

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk

WHERE IS THIS?



If you are looking for something to do this weekend in Oban, you are going to be spoiled for choice.

As well as the usual fantastic live music in town hostels, the Royal Hotel has its weekend music festival Royal Rumpus, which is always a huge success, and Oban Phoenix Cinema is hosting an Oban Pride event featuring The Rocky Horror Show followed by an after party in The Lorne. So don't be surprised if you see some oddly dressed people wandering about on Saturday night.

That will be especially so as there will be all the retro gear from everyone attending the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s Leap Back Disco in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls in aid of the Dove Centre.

Then there will be all the rockers at the Corran Halls for Bon Giovi, a Bon Jovi tribute band.

It's great to see so many

great events happening and leading us into spring, at last. I know March can still be unpredictable weather-wise but lighter nights, daffodils and tulips will be welcome.

Thank you to everyone who has taken me up on the offer to make use of Oban Town Diary.

It's been so well used, it broke. Not really - it's actually being worked on at the moment and will be up and running again soon.

You can still add events and they will show up imminently.

There are lots of great events being planned for this year

which will be announced in the near future so keep your eyes and ears open.

This is the Year of Coasts and Waters throughout Scotland and in this area we have West Coast Waters so please keep us up-to-date if you are planning any events around this and we can help to promote them.

The photograph last week was of the clock at the Post Office building on Albany Street.

This week I've been noticing office agencies I didn't know existed in Oban and I've probably walked past them hundreds of times.

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Worldwide interest in RowAround Scotland

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Word of this year's RowAround Scotland bid has spread worldwide with requests to take part coming from as far away as Uganda.

Seil's Sue Fenton, co-director of the ambitious expedition which could involve up to 70 rowing clubs, including the island's own, has heard from keen rowers across the globe desperate to join in the attempt to circumnavigate more than 1,800 miles in open boats called skiffs.

'The interest has been amazing.

'We've had inquiries from all over Europe, in particular Holland, and even someone from Uganda who wants a seat,' said Sue.

This weekend a number of organisers gathered at Seil Island Hall for passage plan-



Sue Fenton and Liz Furrrie at Seil with the relay batons to be passed between skiffs, during the RowAround Scotland 2020 bid starting this March.

ning and expedition plotting training. The row sets off from Gretna's Blacksmiths Shop on March 25. All the dates are dependent on the weather and the journey, split into 13 different sections handing over relay batons specially fitted with trackers, is due to

end six months later at Loch Tummel, marking the 10th anniversary of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association.

The Argyll leg is scheduled to start at Ardrishaig up the Crinan Canal for a try-a-row event at Craignish Boat Club in Ardfern on May 4, giving

schoolchildren to octogenarians the chance to get their hands on the oars. Also coming through the Crinan will hopefully be rowing clubs from Islay and Arran.

Coming up next, Dorus Mor round the head of Craignish Point will be just as tricky as going through the Corryvreckan so getting the tides just right at that point of the passage will be essential, says Sue.

There will be experienced help at hand thanks to former Luing creel fisherman Robert Latimer who, well-used to that part of the coast, will be joining the row with members of Whitburn Coastal Rowing Club from South Tyneside where he now lives.

There will also be a stop-off at Craobh Haven before heading to Eilean Gamnah, a small island at the head of Loch Melfort for a picnic

with rowers from Luing, Kimelford and Whitburn.

Balvicar on Seil is next on the itinerary with a row up to Oban where the relay baton will be handed over to the town's rowing club joined by the Loch Awe Coastal Rowing Club. Stops to follow will be Dunstaffnage and Port Appin.

The Port Appin club hopes to have its skiff finished in time to get on the water and be accompanied by members of Glen Coe Rowing Club for a spin round scenic Castle Stalker.

From Port Appin, the baton will be taken to Lochaline by the Glensanda Quarry workboat and be handed over to the Morvern skiffies to take from Lochaline to Tobermory for the Isle of Mull skiff together with the Iona skiffies heading to Kilchoan and finishing off the Argyll stage.

Crossing upgrade gets green light

Motorists driving through Combie Street in Oban last week may have noticed the pedestrian crossing traffic lights were missing.

Work is being done to improve the crossing and, weather permitting, is scheduled to be finished by the end of this week.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'The good news is the crossing is being upgraded. The old traffic lights will be replaced and brought up to standard including new traffic light heads, new poles, buttons and tactile paving.

'If there are no weather-related delays, work should be completed by the end of next week.'



Combie Street crossing.

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Gavin Purdie, Purdie's of Argyll



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OT

Brace yourself, there's a Storm coming

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A tsunami of maritime entertainment is to Oban this summer as the 2020 Year of Coasts and Waters gets into full flow.

The Oban Times can reveal the inaugural Oban International Sea Shanty Festival will take place from Friday June 5 to Sunday June 7, while theatrical phenomenon Storm will rise from the water on Saturday September 26.

Both events are being supported by BID4Oban, Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance and Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative, while working in conjunction with SAMS and other interested parties, the group also hope to recreate Festival of the Seas from May 23-31.

The Sea Shanty Festival will be the first of its type in Scotland and will include ticketed concerts and events in bars and hotels around the town and at Kerrera



Marina. BID4Oban Chief Executive Andrew Spence said: 'I am really happy to be working with these various other organisations to bring these events to Oban.'

'They will have a major economic impact on tourism and business in the town, as

well as bringing the community together in celebration of all things nautical.'

Bands

Community involvement is key to the Sea Shanty Festival and throughout the day on the Saturday and Sunday there will be

street performances by headline bands, community choirs and local musicians. There will also be exhibitions, workshops and face painting.

Headline bands will include Monkey's Fist, The Keelers, The Naze Shanty

Storm makes her way along King Street, Glasgow, during Celtic Connections last month.

Crew, Muldoon's Picnic, She Shanties, Les Brouilleurs D'Ecoutes and Pressgang Mutiny.

'It is hoped organisations and individuals will take part in the festival but also, in the weeks leading up to it, be involved in workshops and meetings which will bring them together either as volunteers in the organisation of the event or as performers or exhibitors.'

A public meeting and school visits are being arranged to get as many people as possible on board with the festival.

More information can be found within these pages once dates have been set.

In September, Storm will rise from the water and stride into town.

Two years in the making, Storm is a new feat of me-

chanical mastery created by the formidable puppeteering duo Symon Macintyre and Kim Bergsagel.

Created in response to the climate crisis, she is a folklore giant made real who will encourage children and audiences to celebrate our seas, encourage care for our coastlines and empower everyone to put the environment first.

Messages

Made from entirely recycled material, pieces of Storm will be found, hauled into shore and brought together by community groups and children, who will then help an expert team assemble the puppet so she can walk through the community, interacting with audiences and bringing people together with her messages.

Storm will be accompanied by a new soundscape and compositions by award-winning contemporary folk musician Mairi Campbell.

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Lifeboat's appeal for launch help

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Tobermory RNLI is looking for more volunteers to help save lives at sea.

The charity has put out an SOS for deputy launch authorities (DLAs) to join its team.

Having maritime experience would be a plus but is not essential although living in Tobermory is and working in the town is preferable too.

The shore-based role of the DLA is mainly to authorise the launch of the lifeboat.

'Because we are separate from the Coastguard, they have to request us to launch. It's the role of the launch au-



Tobermory lifeboat.

thority to decide whether we launch or not. Full training will be given. They would need to carry a pager.'

Volunteers need to be aged between 17 and 70 and the RNLI is creating a new course for it. Volunteers for the position would also need to go on a duty rota.

So far one person has come forward but there is room for more, said Tobermory lifeboat operations manager Sam Jones.

'This is a great opportunity to make a difference in your community, meet new people and use your time and skills to support the RNLI.'

'We are a friendly big family here.'

'The more launch authorities we have, the merrier, as it means we can split the rota up a bit more,' she added.

The Tobermory station gets between 30 to 40 call-outs a year to help fishing boats, yachts, kayakers and walkers.

Anyone interested should email tobermory@rnli.org.uk



A barge brings in heavy machinery to clear the channel at Easdale. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

Lessons to be learned after storm

Lessons must be learned after Easdale islanders were left stranded by recent storms.

Seil Community Council chairwoman Julie Ferris said the island's plight had highlighted the importance and need for long-term planning.

Structural experts from Argyll and Bute Council had already been out to inspect the state of the harbours on Easdale and Seil and, at their last meeting, community councillors had requested to be copied into the reports.

Damage from Storms Ciara

and Dennis sent slates and rubble tumbling into the sea, blocking off the Easdale ferry and trapping the usual boat inside the harbour.

It took a number of days before the council could get an excavator over to the island by barge to clear the debris and re-open the harbour.

Argyll and Bute Council and a local boat operator had attempted to run an emergency goodwill boat, free of charge and with lifejackets, to and from Easdale while waiting for repairs but had to stop when

the Maritime and Coastguard Agency raised regulations and deemed it dangerous.

Seil Community Council also brought forward an interim meeting to devise a plan to get urgent prescriptions from the doctor's surgery and essential food supplies across to islanders.

Mrs Ferris said: 'We need to learn for the long term and it has been good to have had this opportunity to plan in advance. We must not think this was it and it's all over. We need to have contingency plans.'


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OT

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



At the age of 82, Fergie MacDonald has released his 50th album with the vigour and enthusiasm most musicians would feel for their first.

Fergie is a sparkling jewel in the crown of western Scotland and has maintained a position at the very top of the traditional Scottish music scene for well over 60 years. There is no doubt his overflowing positive energy is one of the main factors in his continued success. His natural gifts of music performance and composing and his great warmth as a character are also vital ingredients. It is no accident he holds the undisputed title of 'The Ceilidh King'.

I'm a few weeks late getting a copy as I've been gallivanting over the oceans to far away lands that haven't yet discovered the gift of Fergie CDs. However, a short drive to Europa Music in Stirling today was fruitful and I returned with 'Fergie's 50th Album' blaring out down the M80.

Fergie has lost none of his magic. The 13-track running

order holds within it a perfect combination of new and old Fergie compositions, some great traditional tunes and a humorous song, written and delivered by Fergie, gently poking fun at his good friend Gary Innes, presenter of Scottish dance music radio programme Take the Floor.

Another highlight is a set from his son John. Although John does little in the way of gigs or recording, he is one of the best accordionists in the country. His style is different to his dad's, but he has a similar level of indefinable magic that sets him apart from the field.

As regular readers will know, Fergie has been a musical hero of mine since I first heard his music on the tape 'Kings of the Button Keyed Box' recorded with Iain MacLachlan, when I was nine. His presence as a performer and a composer have been a significant part of my musical life and I have played and recorded many of his tunes over the last 21 years.

It was therefore a great

honour that he included on this album an instrumental version of Maraiche Nan Cuantan (Sailor of the Seas), a song my mother and I composed after my father died in 1999. I remember vividly a sunny Saturday afternoon at the Mull Music Festival in the early 1990s when dad and Fergie outside the Aros Hall in Tobermory and spent hours talking and telling stories, with dad also reciting many of his rhymes and poems to Fergie's great amusement. It is lovely to listen to Fergie playing that tune and think on these happy times.

It would not surprise me if Fergie is still recording, performing and going strong for many years to come, but as he said himself following major surgery a few years ago, every day is precious. Every day that Fergie goes on is indeed precious to our music and heritage and if you get the chance to hear him play live take it. Buy this CD and get to one of his gigs to experience one of the great living legends of our time.

Fantastic firsts

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Oban High School's Support Department is celebrating two fantastic firsts for its outstanding students.

Department head Kirsteen Binnie said staff, students and their families were bursting with pride after some of its pupils received a top achievement award and others performed in the school's dance show in front of a packed audience at the Corran Halls.

Head teacher Peter Bain also praised the staff whose 'passion, drive and commitment' made it possible and the additional support needs staff who supported the pupils in their activities, helping them achieve goals.

The support department was recognised for the achievements of its students earlier this month at the prestigious young people's Argyll and Bute 2020 Youth



Oban High School's Support Department receives the Duke of Edinburgh Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2020 Argyll and Bute Youth Awards.

Awards in Dunoon when it picked up the Duke of Edinburgh Outstanding Achievement Award.

Matthew Binnie, Robert MacInnes, Jade MacKenzie, Aidan MacLeod, Sean MacQuade, Logan McHoul and Brandon Williams are the first group of pupils with additional support needs in Argyll and Bute to achieve the Bronze Award.

The award included an expedition to Knapdale Forest where beavers have been re-introduced into the wild. Staff gave up their time unpaid to accompany the young people and parents also helped.

Support teacher Benita Martin led the award bid and they were supported by Duke of Edinburgh Development Officer Brian

It has to be A2B!

For the past four years, Hamish Meryon has been delivering the goods with his A2B Courier Service, Oban, winning praise from customers along the way.

The business has grown from one man with his van to seven vehicles and nine employees.

Hamish spotted a gap in the market in the West Highlands for a smaller, more personal, 24/7 service than all the big names are currently offering.

Hamish, who learned his courier and logistic skills working for other businesses such as Oban Express, said: 'I started off with one contract

run and gradually built it up from there. It was just me when I started working out of my back porch. Now, we are down to Glasgow six days a week and we are currently doing one run a month down to England.'

While the company has grown in size, it has kept its nimbleness. If the demand is there, Hamish said that the whole business can rotate in a day.

Hamish and his team have three small parcel vans, a LWB, hi-roof Ford Transit Custom, two LWB hi-roof VW/Mercedes parcel vans

each with a 4.3m payload and the fleet's latest addition: a tail lift Luton Box-van.

A2B operates day and night from the old Tweed Mill yard on Soroba Road, where it has been based for almost a year after outgrowing its previous location at Glengallan Industrial Estate.

While its based in Oban, A2B operates throughout Central Scotland, Argyll and the Highlands, and is available for contract courier work, inter-branch stock transfers for businesses, and one-off or regular store uplifts, and light removals for both the

commercial and domestic markets.

A2B is fully-insured with hire and reward, public liability, and goods in transit cover backed by reliable, professional and experienced staff.

But don't just take their word for it: this is what satisfied customers have to say: 'What an amazing team at A2B. I needed an item delivered before going away for the weekend. They responded straight away with a full update on the status of my parcel. What an excellent service; other companies should be learning from this great team.'

'Great friendly service. Show up on time, do what they say, and I'll be using them again.'

'A2B did work at pretty short notice. They also picked up an extra, unarranged item, which was great.'

'The service team replying to messages were also quick, polite, and helpful. Highly recommended.'



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Prizes for 'outstanding' students



Left: Expedition ready, Oban High School students from the support department received their bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award; and above, pupils on stage at Shuffle's matinee performance.

Smith. Students also carried out three months volunteering at Greenshoots garden at Glencruitten, developed new skills from drumming to photography and took on regular walks out and about in Oban to gain the accolade. More than 200 pupils and

staff took part in the annual Oban High School Dance Show called Shuffle earlier this month but for the first time, eight pupils aged 12 to 17 from the support department with a range of needs, from physical disabilities to learning and communica-

tion difficulties, also took to the matinee stage. Their nine-minute long River Dance - Reel Around The Sun routine also got teachers and support assistants on their feet and took months of practice to get ready. The activity was led

by support teacher Anna Knasiecka. Mrs Binnie said: "They all rose to the occasion. There were no stage nerves, no wobbles, no tears. We might not be Ballet West, but everyone danced their heart and soul out. It was fantastic. "Here at Oban High School

we do our best to be an inclusive school and this was just a brilliant example of it. It was an ambitious project but we all need to challenge ourselves and aim high. It also showed that dance is for everyone." Jan Foster, a parent of a pupil in the department who took part in the dance show,

said: "As parents, we were so so, so proud of them all. "It really was a special, magical moment. "Very emotional. I think the teaching and support staff deserve so much praise for all they do. "Fabulous people and we feel lucky to have their support."

WHAT'S ON @ CORRAN HALLS



FEBRUARY

SAT FEB **29** **BON GIOVI**
Doors 7.00pm, Starts 7.30pm
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Get your tickets online at Ent24 tickets.



MARCH

SAT MAR **07** **STIRLING ORCHESTRA CONCERT** Starts 7pm
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APRIL

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Tickets: Adults £10, Concession £9, Family £26



JUNE

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Surreal! 2020 UK TOUR
Starts 8.00pm Tickets: £16 + £1 booking fee.



JULY

SAT JUL **25** **IRELAND! THE SHOW**
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SEPTEMBER

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Make most of indoor winter sports



Oban Healthy Living Town looks at activities people can get involved in to encourage everyone to be more responsible for their long-term health and well-being.

There has been a revival in Oban since the beginning of the year in a team activity aimed at women.

Netball might not be associated with the area but at one time it was the sport for young and teenage girls.

Oban Breakers has been running under the radar at Park Primary School on a Monday evening for the last few years thanks to Chrissie-Leigh Felgate, but a move to Atlantis Leisure in January and a connection with the competitive Fort William Falcons team has seen an increase in interest among



Winter kayak pool sessions are about practising skills that can be useful on the open water.

women aged 19 to 50 plus.

Christina Wood of North Connel, who runs the Oban sessions with Chrissie-Leigh and plays for the Falcons, has been playing netball since primary five.

She explained: 'It is about fun, friendship and fitness. It is accessible to anyone. You can go along and make it what you want. If you don't want to run much, you pick shooter or keeper as you are confined to one third of the court.'

'We have half an hour of passing work and footwork drills then we put the bibs on and get on court.'

'We have a lot of mums with young children who are getting out and doing something for themselves. It's only one hour. It is literally like going to a gym class but it goes quicker, it's more fun and it's sociable. It's good for mental health because it is a team.'

Hazel-Jane Hughes from Oban had seen it publicised on social media but had never played before. She said: 'I have a six-month-old baby and wanted to get back into some sort of fitness. It looked like a nice team, nice girls. It is just nice to get away for an hour and not think about

anything and have a wee bit of enjoyment for myself.'

Student Oriarna Willets had also never played netball but wanted to take part in a team sport that was not too serious and, judging by the laughter on a Monday night in the hall, netball fits the bill. She said: 'It is my second time but it's really fun and I'm definitely going to come back. I like the fact it is only women. It is very friendly and good company.'

Another active team ball game for those aged 15 to 60, which also uses Atlantis, is volleyball. Lorn Volleyball Club has been running since 2010 and has boasted membership from 15 different nationalities.

Peter McCracken, who helps with coaching, said: 'It is not necessarily for someone who has not got a good level of fitness but perhaps someone who has played before and wants to get back into it.'

Anyone who has played before is welcome along

on a Thursday evening at 6pm when they will receive one-to-one coaching before joining the others across the net for an evening of active fun.

Although there is not a ball in sight, another club which over-winters in Atlantis is Oban Canoe Club, with members brushing up on their skills in the pool on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8.45pm to 9.45pm.

It is an opportunity for new kayakers to gain general skills – basic strokes, how to handle a spray deck and paddle and overcome the 'death wobble' before going on the sea.

Club chairman Dave Bleazard said: 'From April onwards we try to get out one night a week and sometimes at the weekends for a longer trip. Those are club trips and most of them are led so you have someone with the necessary qualifications taking out a group of people.'

'You can launch in Ganavan and in five minutes be

around the back of Kerrera looking at seals and puffins and away from everyone else. It's lovely.'

Charlotte Findlay was persuaded to ditch buying a stand-up paddle board in favour of a kayak two years ago and has not looked back.

'It's seeing different bits of Oban or from different angles and different islands and when you go out on paddles with the club it's really good because you learn loads from other people, then come into the pool sessions where you can practise the skills, like the rolling.'

■ Oban Healthy Living Town: join at www.facebook.com/groups/healthyoban

■ Oban Netball Club: www.facebook.com/westcoastnetballscot

■ Lorn Volleyball Club: visit the club's Facebook page.

■ Oban Canoe Club: www.obancanoeclub.org.uk, on the club's Facebook page or from Dave Bleazard at Outside Edge, Oban, on 01631 566617.



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Yet only one in three people who are eligible for a free NHS-funded home eye test are currently benefiting from this amazing service.

About Specsavers home visits

Home eye tests from Specsavers are carried out with the same care and attention as in a Specsavers store. You can request a home visit for yourself or on behalf of someone else and they'll come at a time that is convenient for you.

If the eye test shows that you need glasses, Specsavers' team will help you choose and try on new glasses from a range of 160 different styles. Specsavers' aim is to improve the overall confidence of older people,

helping them to look good and feel good too. What's more, if you qualify for NHS funding, you may also be eligible for free glasses from their £19-£49 range.

A caring partnership

Housebound customers can also take advantage of Specsavers' partnership with Royal Voluntary Service, whose trusted volunteers can support their clients at home during their eye tests. This year the partnership will see the charity's 18,000 volunteers mobilised to inform thousands of eligible UK residents about Specsavers' home-visiting service.

Stella Green, 99, is a Specsavers home visits customer. Macular degeneration and cataracts have left her with impaired vision, which means she needs more support at home, so she's visited weekly by Royal Voluntary Service volunteer John Aylward.

Stella says that she was impressed by the eye test offered by the Specsavers home-visiting team: 'The test was very thorough, and it was really comfortable having it in my own home. Having them come to see me makes me feel like a star and that I'm very important!'



For more information about Specsavers visiting you or your loved one at home, visit [specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests](https://www.specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests) or call **0800 089 0144**

*YouGov omnibus survey of a representative 50+ UK sample, February 2020, 2013 respondents

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BUSINESS NEWS

MSP warns of hit for breweries from recycling scheme

Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron has warned the Scottish Government its proposed Deposit Return Scheme, which is due to be introduced in 2021, could have an impact on smaller businesses, writes Iona Young.

Mr Cameron said: 'In principle, I support measures to reduce waste and re-using bottles is an excellent way of doing that.'

'However, it is crucial any scheme doesn't unfairly put smaller breweries at risk due to them bearing disproportionately high costs compared to larger companies in the central belt.'



'One of the success stories of the Highlands

and Islands has been the establishment of a fantastic range of craft breweries in recent years, such as Fyne Ales or Glen Spean Brewing.

'Setting up a small business can be very demanding and we shouldn't add to that by introducing more costs and bureaucracy, especially if such businesses don't benefit from the economies of scale of larger concerns.'

'Many breweries in the Highlands and Islands also have to bear the extra cost of getting their goods to market using an increasingly stretched transport infrastructure.'

Mr Cameron said he has been contacted by industry representatives and has written to the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, expressing his concern and demanding assurances.

Fort William consultancy company expands team

A Fort William-based consultancy firm has used Business Gateway's one-to-one business support and funding advice to kickstart growth and expand its team.

Northern Light Consulting is a multi-disciplinary consulting business operating principally in the construction, engineering, aquaculture and food production sectors.

The firm helps its clients deliver new products, enter new markets and add value to their existing business. Since it was founded in 2013, Northern Light Consulting has secured new business valued in excess of £20 million

'We appreciate an outside eye when you're implanting a new strategy or process.'

for its clients and supported the delivery of more than £100 million of construction works.

Although well-versed in providing strategic advice for its clients, Northern Light Consulting approached Business Gateway Highland for one-to-one sessions from a business adviser and support to develop a growth action plan.

Business Gateway Highland also supported its successful application to the Highland Council's graduate placement scheme. As a result, Northern Light Consulting received an additional member of staff to help the business grow.

To accommodate the expanding team, Northern Light Consulting also moved into new offices in Fort William.

Greg Riddle, director of Northern Light Consulting, said: 'As a business consultancy firm, we appreciate the importance of an outside eye when you're implanting a new strategy or process. That's why Business Gateway's fresh perspective and wealth of



The Northern Light Consulting team.

experience was crucial to the development of our new growth action plan.

'Thanks to the support, we took on an additional employee via the Highland Council's graduate placement scheme. This new appointment was key to our expansion plans and is a fantastic example of how Business Gateway can help you take the next step on your business journey.'

Emma Lawson, business adviser at Business Gateway Highland, added: 'Through a combination of one-to-one support, the

implementation of a new growth strategy and a successful application to take on a new graduate employee, we were able to set Northern Light Consulting on the path to future growth and expansion.'

'It was joy to provide the team of experienced business consultants with the external perspective that can provide a boost to businesses of all sizes.'

To find out how Business Gateway Highland can help your business, visit www.bgateway.com.

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Fourth Skye restaurant earns three AA rosettes

by Iona Young
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Skye was once known for its mystical settings, enchanting caves and ancient landmarks but there is a new feature bringing the island renown – the cluster of AA rosette award-winning restaurants. Four to be precise.

Edinbane Lodge, near Dunvegan, joins three other elite restaurants on the island with three AA rosette status.

The announcement sees the restaurant rise to the top of the food chain on Skye where it joins the acclaimed Three Chimneys, Kinloch Lodge and Lochbay Restaurant, all current holders of the award.

It is quite an achievement for head chef and island resident Calum Montgomery, who gave up cooking for more than a year to restore the property.

Set in a 16th-century hunting lodge, in a scenic village of the same name, Edinbane Lodge



The Edinbane Lodge team are immensely proud.

has taken Scotland by storm. The chef and restaurant have gained a large local, national and international following, as well as garnering several awards for its use of local ingredients which are served in a casual atmosphere in a building which dates from 1543.

Commenting on the award, Calum said: 'It's a great honour to receive this award and to

contribute to the incredible food scene on Skye.

'I'm incredibly lucky to have such a loyal, hard-working team. We've all worked together at various stages in my career and it's truly humbling that they have all chosen to move to Skye and share the vision for Edinbane.

'We have a golden rule - to only use seasonal, sustainable ingredients from Skye. If we can't source

locally, we may look towards mainland Scotland. Anything past that boundary won't make it onto our menus. And we don't follow trends.

'If anything, we try to reconnect with more traditional methods used in Skye in centuries gone past.'

The AA has been giving out rosettes to restaurants since 1956.

Historic Sir Walter Scott steamship's boilers fail

The 120-year-old steamship that sails on Loch Katrine in the Trossachs has been taken out of service after extensive cracks were found in its boilers.

Over the past month, as part of an annual inspection, cracks were found in both boilers and the trustees have concluded they are beyond repair, which means the vessel will not be sailing this season.

Sir Walter Scott Steamship Limited managing director Gordon Allan said: 'This is a major setback as we were looking forward to a special anniversary year celebrating 120 years of the steamship sailing. This follows a downturn in business linked to major landslides on the lochside last August. We were well on the road to recovery with the prospect of a bumper season ahead.'

'The immediate priorities now are taking steps to safeguard the 55 direct jobs and many indirect jobs dependent on our Loch Katrine operations and ensuring we are in a position to honour existing group business contracts as well as independent travel and walk up business this season. We are fortunate we have other boats available.'

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Story of Gaelic school campaign launched

There has been a significant amount of attention recently on the importance of Gaelic-medium education to Scotland cultural heritage.

It continued this week when Deputy First Minister John Swinney presided at the launch of a new history book by award-winning Gaelic author Tim Armstrong, a lecturer at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture on the Isle of Skye.

This new book, *Às na Freumhan* (From the Grassroots), follows the campaign to establish an all-Gaelic school in Edinburgh, a long and often contentious fight that lasted 14 years, but which was ultimately won by the parents and the other Gaelic activists lobbying for the school, culminating in the approval of Bun-Sgoil Taobh na Pàirce by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2011.

Along with the history, Tim examines the case for Gaelic schools in Scotland and makes the argument that establishing more standalone Gaelic schools to replace Gaelic units over the coming years will be key for ensuring Gaelic-medium education plays its part in securing the future of the language in Scotland.

'All-Gaelic schools have many advantages,' Tim explained.

'Educational, social and linguistic, but the biggest advantage of all-Gaelic schools is the chance to promote a strong Gaelic ethos throughout the school.

'Young Gaelic speakers won't make much use of their Gaelic outside of school or in the future if the language isn't important to them personally, as part of their identity as young Gaels.

'To foster this sort of healthy, positive identity association with the language, educators need to promote a strong pro-Gaelic ethos in all aspects of Gaelic-medium provision and promoting such an ethos is much more practicable in an all-Gaelic school than in a Gaelic unit or in an English-medium/Gaelic-medium shared campus.'

The book launch was on Monday February 24 at Bun-Sgoil Taobh na Pàirce, the Gaelic primary school in Leith.

Milestone inspector

Morvern Lines

IAIN THORNER

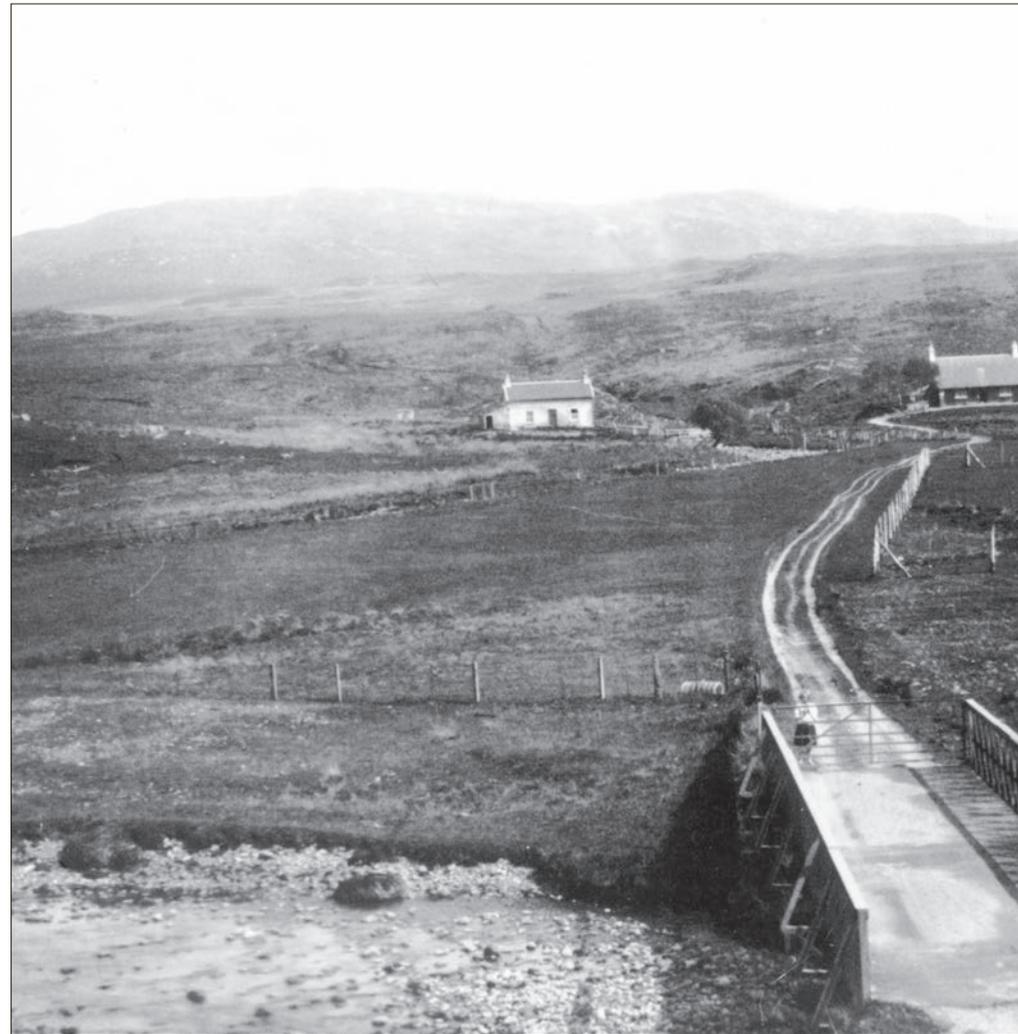
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Iain Thornber continues his article into 'tramps'.

When Steenie found his way in to Morvern he had the pick of a number of lodgings: Donald and Maggie Mackay's hayshed at Ullin in the White Glen, a cave between Claggan and Craigendarroch and part of Gerard Craig Sellar's, state-of-the-art, central-heated dog kennels below Torr Molach on Ardtornish estate. Here he would be under the eagle eye of head keeper John Munro whose daughter, Mrs Betty Wotherspoon, featured in these columns last year.

Steenie, too, composed songs and poems which he had printed and then sold for a few pence at the doors, or gave to his hosts which is no doubt why his name is still remembered by an older generation. It could hardly be said he was in the same league as Burns - the attraction lay in the way he managed to bring local folk and their activities into them. A good example is *The Roadman's Wedding* (sung to the tune of *The Day We Went to Rothesay O*) in which he described the wedding of Jock Robertson, the Argyll County Council roadman who lived at Clounlaid, near Ullin, in lines full of humour: 'Drum a doo a doo a day, drum a doo a daddy O, drum a doo a doo a day O; 'Poor old granny grabbed a sack, and waved it like a Union Jack, and everyone waved their caps for Jockie at his wedding O; through his glass he saw them come, the keeper [Sandy MacFadyen, Eignaig, who moved across the hill to Alltachaich next door to Ullin] up the stair did run, and down he came, with a sporting gun, that day of Jockie's wedding O. Up to his should in a tick, and bang it went, and it gave a kick and made poor old Mack [a collie dog] look sick. that day at Jockie's wedding O.' Steenie's other poems were: *The Loch Ness Monster*; *The Hiker's Song*; *Go with Me Callach, Go*; *Song of the Cuckoo, Island of Lismore*, *The Grey Henny's Well on the Ord* [His Grace the Duke of Portland, the local landowner, erected a stone to mark the spot of the Grey Henny's Well] which Steenie must have visited; *MacDonald's Morag and a Tribute to Ardgour* [on the death of Col Alexander John Hew Maclean, the popular 16th laird and chief of the Macleans of Ardgour who died suddenly in 1930 at the early age of 50] which is full of pathos: 'Around



the bay of Ardgour, for many years have I wondered, now sad is the hour when the chieftain is gone. In cottage or homestead when you mention his name an honest tear is shed for the gallant Maclean.... we bid you in peace adieu and sweet be your rest to our thoughts you were true, you were one of the best'.

In writing about Ardgour, I mustn't forget the story of a family of travellers who used to park their old van in a quarry on Ardgour estate between Sallachan and Inversanda. Hearing that Miss Catriona Maclean of Ardgour, who had inherited the estate from her father Col Alexander, disliked unauthorised parking, they bought half a dozen Maclean tartan towels and hung them on their washing-line. Their quick-thinking met with

the laird's approval, so much so, she allowed them to come and go at will. One year they were there for so long a child was born in the back of the van over the rear axle so he was given the name Axle!

Jimmy the Tramp hailed from east Perthshire or Fife and had been a piper in the Black Watch Regiment in the Second World War. He was captured by the Japanese and had a terrible time in a POW camp. When he was demobbed, he found that his wife had gone off with someone else and he didn't see his daughter again and then went on the tramp. Every spring Jimmy would visit Arisaig and Rannoch where he knew kind people and dug their vegetable gardens for them. He travelled by train, of course. The West Highland Line

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s – part two



Ullin, right, in the White Glen where Steenie lodged with Donald and Maggie Mackay when he came to Morvern. Altachonaich, the home of Sandy MacFadyen, is on the opposite side of the burn.

Photograph: taken in Steenie's time and supplied by Iain Thornber

Invernevis House Care Home on the outskirts of Fort William, which no doubt saved his life. Sometimes Jimmy would go AWOL but the staff knew that if he wasn't in the back bar of the Nevis Bank Hotel, they would find him in the Corpach Hotel. Jimmy had his army pipe chanter which he was very attached to. It must have lain unused for a spell because when he eventually picked it up he found mice had gnawed chunks out of it and it was useless. A member of staff at Invernevis House, realising how much he was missing it, gave him her daughter's one, which she no longer used, which cheered him up.

I remember meeting Jimmy in the late 1970s at Inverailort Castle where Mrs Cameron-Head always made sure he had a hearty meal whenever he called and that when he pedalled off there was enough food in his haversack for the rest of the week. It was raining at the time and hearing that he had lost his cap she went up to the attic and returned with a bowler hat which had belonged to her father in law, James Head, who had been deputy chairman of the Union Castle shipping line. It was made in St James's Street, London, by James Lock & Co - the world's oldest hat shop which also held two Royal warrants. Jimmy was proud of that hat!

I have been fortunate to have met many remarkable and unusual characters in the Highlands but none more so than Donald and Agnes MacAllister, Tobermory. Donald, who was always called 'Doikes' or 'Dykes', was the oldest of a family known on Mull as 'the Dans'.

There were four brothers and two sisters some of whom now and again took up a semi-itinerant life occasioning one of Tobermory's leading ladies to say in their defence, 'They are very respectable tinkers, they live mostly in a house, you see'. At one point Doikes and Agnes, who had a good fund of stories and songs, lived in an old Co-op mobile shop, in a quarry on the Glengorm road. It was an Albion, and presumably had become unviable to repair and was known as Co-operative Cottage. After that they had a nice showman's caravan at the top of Tobermory, but it was hit by a car which had gone off the road and although it was not mortally wounded, was never quite the same again.

Continued next week.

drivers would stop the train and guards would put the ladder down from the old-style guards van for Jimmy and his bicycle and he would be dropped off before they reached a station. Latterly, he based himself in a tiny caravan at Ardgour. From there he would set off for Glenfinnan, Lochailort and Corpach along the Road to the Isles.

One dark wintery night, Mrs Cameron-Head of Inverailort almost ran into Jimmy between Corpach and Kinlocheil in her car. So the next morning she went to Fort William Police Station and gave them some money to paint his mudguards with fluorescent paint for his own safety, knowing that he wouldn't. One hard winter Dr Michael Foxley, the GP at the time, managed to get Jimmy a room in

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



There is little information about this photograph other than it dates from March 1993 and shows cheques for £250 being presented by the Augustus Barnett shop to Soroba Young Family Group and St Columba's Playgroup



Also from March 1993, this photograph shows pupils from Kilmonivaig Primary School, Spean Bridge, with new equipment bought with PTA funds.

WIN: An overnight stay with dinner and breakfast at The Pierhouse Hotel & Seafood Restaurant, Port Appin

Tucked away on the shores of Loch Linnhe, The Wee Hotel Company's Pierhouse Hotel & Seafood Restaurant offers breathtaking views to the islands of Lismore and Mull. The small hotel and renowned Scottish seafood restaurant is one of Argyll's most idyllic destinations, just a short, scenic drive from both Oban and Fort William. Menus are designed by Head Chef, Michael Leathley, to include the freshest langoustines and mussels harvested from Loch Linnhe and Loch Etive, fine handpicked oysters from the oyster beds of Loch Creran, and lobsters from the creels at the end of Port Appin pier.



Retreat to Argyll and enjoy an overnight stay for two people at The Pierhouse, complete with dinner in the renowned AA Rosette restaurant and full Scottish breakfast the following morning.

Make the most of your time in Argyll by hopping on the ferry outside The Pierhouse and crossing over to the rugged Isle of Lismore, where you'll be able to explore sites such as the old Cathedral church, the Iron Age broch and the Sailean limekilns, and discover Lismore's fascinating living heritage in the coastal village of Port Ramsay, situated in a secluded bay with spectacular views of the island and Great Glen. After your day's adventures, relax in the Finnish sauna at The Pierhouse or enjoy a choice of relaxation, therapeutic, aromatherapy or sports massage treatments in the comfort of your own room.

To win this prize, please answer the question below:

Q: What is the name of The Pierhouse Hotel's head chef?

A:

Please post your entry to the Oban Times, Pier House Competition, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Entries to be in by the closing date for entries is midnight, 10th March 2020.*

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OT

LETTERS

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

Heartwarming Oban High School success story

In the midst of what can sometimes seem to be unrelenting bad news, there are stories that are simply heartwarming.

Such a story this week is Oban High School's Support Department celebrating two fantastic firsts for its outstanding students.

As we report this week, department head Kirsteen Binnie said staff, students and their families were all bursting with pride after some of its pupils received a top achievement award and others performed in the school's dance show in front of a packed audience at the Corran Halls.

These successes mark significant achievements for the department, helping, as it does, pupils who often face major challenges.

The staff and families are justifiably and understandably hugely proud of the young people for rising to these occasions. They deserve all the praise that has been heaped upon them.

Death of Father Tom a sad blow for Argyll

It comes as no surprise such fulsome tribute has been paid to Monsignor Thomas Wynne, who died on Friday, aged 89.

Father Tom, as he was affectionately known, served the Catholic Church for more than 50 years following his ordination in Fort William in 1957.

Father Tom's life was one of selfless service to a number of parishes, including in Oban, and he was held in the highest regard by everyone who knew him.

His funeral mass takes place tomorrow and will, quite rightly, be one of thanksgiving for a long life so well lived.

Save Knapdale Ward

A much-loved service for people with dementia is at risk of being shut down by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership.

More than 2,000 people have already called for the Knapdale Ward in Lochgilphead to stay open, yet there has not been any meaningful consultation with the people who work there on how to keep the ward open.

Tens of thousands of people in Scotland have dementia. We probably all know of someone who has the disease, or cares for someone with dementia. Knapdale is a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

The Health and Social Care Partnership must work with patients, carers and workers in Knapdale ward to protect its future and improve dementia services across Argyll and Bute. You can add your voice to the petition by visiting www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/hscp-budget-consultation-2020 by Wednesday March 4.

Polly Jones, Garelochhead.

Recording railway history

In the summers of the mid-1930s, railway timetables show that in addition to the trains which connected Oban/Connel with Ballachulish, an afternoon service from Oban to Benderloch operated for a short period each July.

It paused there just long enough for the locomotive to run round its coaches before they headed back to Oban. In 1933, for example, it only ran from Monday July 17 to Saturday July 29.

Given these exact dates, can any readers suggest what the reason might have been for this service which ran for only a few years up to about 1937?

I can be contacted on bdrummond363@googlemail.com

Robert Drummond, Ayr.

Swallowing mis-information on independence

I would like to respond to the letter printed in last week's Oban Times from Thomas Morris of Coventry advising us that we don't know the cost of Scottish independence. The statistics he has selected and the conclusions made, show only that he has swallowed the mis-information spread by the unionist camp.

He states, 'Denmark does not have another neighbouring population, like the rest of the

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 published, send it to editor@obantimes.co.uk

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UK, of 61 million, to contribute significantly towards its public finances', implying England supports Scotland financially.

This is a well-known Union myth. Scotland receives, via the Barnett formula, about one third back from Westminster of the money it sends to the UK treasury. They keep the other two thirds to spend on Scotland's behalf without consultation, including funding the interest payments on the massively increased national debt and English projects, like HS2.

The Scottish Government does amazingly well with its partial refund of Scottish taxation. Just think what it could do for its people if it spent all the tax raised in Scotland. Scotland is supporting England, not the other way round.

Scotland's GDP is only around £180-£200 billion but our GDP per capita is £32,800 compared to the UK average of £31,600 (May 2019 figures). Scotland is already a rich country and would, in world rankings, be higher than England in terms of GDP per head of



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Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



This week's photograph features Jane Eccles on Tralee Beach, Benderloch, enjoying looking at a stunning sunset on Christmas day 2019. It was sent in by Steve Eccles.

This surplus in international trade is a key strength of Scotland's economy, putting it ahead of the union partners.

The question what does being in this union give Scotland has to be answered. The answer is austerity, nuclear weapons, bedroom tax, universal credit, food banks, loss of trading partners, an eight per cent share of the runaway UK debt and a Tory government that we didn't vote for.

The true cost of the union is that Scotland is surviving in an abusive relationship on one third of its wealth and is being held back economically.

There is much more evidence to show that Scotland will be a successful independent nation.

Rather than being mis-led by Westminster propaganda, we should engage with communities across Scotland and share the facts about the benefits of an independent Scotland.

There is an informative, fact-based booklet, Scotland The Brief, prepared by Business for Scotland and available locally. This gives information with its sources of data about Scotland and its economy. Reading this booklet will transform the way people understand the issues rather than entertaining more anti-Scottish propaganda from the likes of Mr Morris of Coventry.

Jeff Darby, Kilmore.

Letter poorly researched

The letters published in The Oban Times of February 20 were from addresses in Manchester, France and Coventry.

While it is great to see the wide appeal of The Oban Times, the contribution from Mr Morris, Coventry, was not of a high standard as he felt obliged to pontificate to us poor, hapless Scots on the error of our thoughts regarding governing ourselves.

Mr Morris's depth of knowledge has been formed during several visits to our country and he poses arguments using data comparisons with Denmark, Finland and Switzerland.

The obvious advantage those example countries have in common with each other is that they are all self-governing.

Scotland is a rich country and would undoubtedly flourish under a government based in Scotland that has local interests and values at its heart.

I invite Mr Morris to live among us for a while and I am confident he would then be less in thrall to the Westminster government.

Dorothy Macdonald, Oban.

Mun deach mi air chluaineas bha mi aig amannan eadar-dhealaichte nam cheannard air dà bhuidheann a choisinn inbhe "Creideas nar Cosnaichean" (CnC), an t-ainm Gàidhlig a thug sinn air "Investors in People" (IIP). A' chiad turas a chaidh mi an sàs san sgeama b' ann air sgàth cumha a bha an lùib cumhnant taice bho Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean, ach an dàrna turas rinn mi e air mo bhagaiste fhèin ri linn an luach a bh' ann. 'S e inbhe àraid a th' ann an CnC air ire stiùiridh dhaoine nan cuid àitean-obrach, agus tha an inbhe ga bhùileachadh air buidhnean a dhearbhas gum bheil iad a' coileanadh agus a' gleidheadh Ìre CnC. Thòisich an sgeama mar phròiseact leis an Riaghaltas ann an 1991 agus lean sin chun an Fhaoilteach 2017 nuair a dh'atharraich e gu bhith na bhuidheann neo-phrothaideach. Thar nam bliadhnaichean bho thòisich e tha CnC air àrainneachd agus beatha obrach chòrr mòr air 11 millean neach a leasachadh agus tha an Ìre CnC a-nise aithnichte ann am barrachd air seasgaid dùthaich!

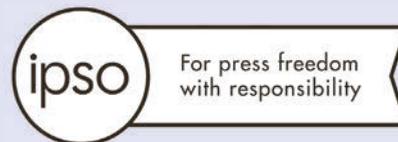
Mur eil eòlas agaibh air an sgeama cha b' iongnadh sibh a bhith a' faighneachd carson a tha mi a' dèanamh leithid de mholadh air! Uill, 's e feallsanachd an sgeama suidheachadh a stèidheachadh ann am buidheann far am bi a h-uile neach-obrach a' tuigsinn amasan na buidhne agus an t-àite a th' aig an neach sin fhèin ann an coileanadh nan amasan sin. Mar a chanas luchd-stiùiridh CnC 's ann ma dheidhinn daoine a tha an sgeama, agus nuair a ruigeas buidheann Ìre CnC tha i a' faotainn luach a saothrach à luchd-obrach a tha toilichte a bhith ann an cosnadh sam bheil luach ga chur orra agus cothrom aca air adhartas. Saoilidh mi gum bheil a' mhòr-chuid mothachail air deatamachd ghnìomhan beag is mòr, sgileil is simplidh, a dh'fheumar a dhèanamh gus obair sam bith a thoirt gu buil. Sin an teachdaireachd aig CnC agus tha e a' ciallachadh gum bheil fèin-spèis gach neach-obrach ga bhrosnachadh mar phàirt de dh'obair na buidhne. Bhithinn aig amannan ga shamhlachadh ri uaireadair nach obraich ma tha am pios as lugha ga dhith! Tha Ìre

CnC ag aithneachadh gur iad cosnaichean òga ùra dòchas an t-saoghail romhainn, agus ma thuigeas luchd-fastaidh an cuid feumalachdan gun coisinn sin toradh dilseachd agus dealas. Bhiodh dùil gum biodh luchd-obrach buidhne aig am bheil inbhe Ìre CnC gam meas fhèin a bhith ag obair aig buidheann sònraichte, agus gach neach dhiubh cudromach dha obair an cuid faisteach.

Leis nach eil inbhe "sgiliseal" ann am feallsanachd CnC, carson a bhiodh poileasaidh Riaghaltais a' cur uimhir de luchd-obrach dhìcheallach na dùthcha ann an suarachas?

The British Government initiative Investors in People (IIP) is recognised worldwide as a people management standard which builds employee self-esteem and job satisfaction by recognising their contribution to corporate objectives. IIP Standard doesn't label any workers as 'lower-skilled' because that would be insulting to thousands of truly conscientious people.

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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population. There is data that shows GDP per head in the central belt and parts of north east Scotland are comparable with London and that many regions of England fall below the worst performing area in Scotland.

Scotland's exports, at £17,456 per head, are more than double England's.

This is hardly the position of a country living on handouts. Scotland's surplus in international trade goods is about £5 billion, whereas England has a deficit of around £135 billion.

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DISTRICT NEWS

ISLAY

A raffle has been organised to help fund Islay High School's expedition to Mongolia and China in 2021.

Tickets cost £10 with winners to be drawn on Sunday May 10.

Prizes include a year's membership of Islay Golf Club, bed and breakfast at the Pierhouse Hotel, five golf lessons at the Machrie and a £50 Machrie golf shop voucher.

Tickets are available from the golf shop at the Machrie Hotel and Golf Links.

The Mactaggart Leisure Centre in Bowmore has introduced a new men's night.

The weekly event started last week and will run every Wednesday from 7pm until 9pm. At the first meeting, the men enjoyed time in the gym, a swim and a sauna. Future sessions, if there is enough interest, will feature circuit training, aquacise and inflatables, or people can put forward their own ideas.

APPIN

Eyes down for the ladies' leap day bingo night in Port Appin Hall.

The event, on Saturday February 29, starts at 7.30pm.

Entry costs £10 per book, which includes raffle tickets and a glass of Prosecco. Tea and coffee will be provided. Bring your own bottle.

All proceeds will go towards Appin playpark.

OBAN

Every Wednesday, 100 Voices - Oban holds a seniors' soup lunch at 12.30pm.

The event, with homemade soup, sandwiches, tea, coffee and cake, is held in the Guide Hall, Oban.

For more information, call Kirsten on 07778 472308 or email kirsten-johnston@argylltsi.org.uk

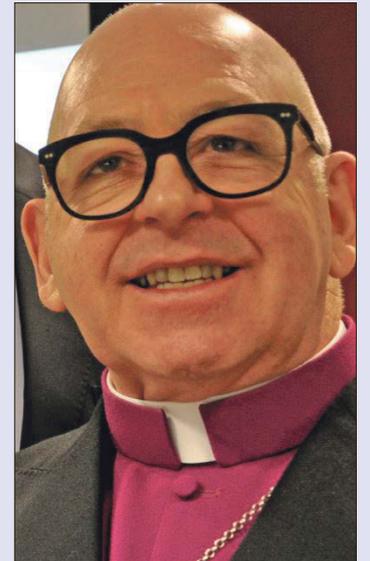
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email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk

Bishop to celebrate final diocesan eucharist

The Right Reverend Kevin Pearson, Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, will conduct his final diocesan celebration of the eucharist on Tuesday March 3.

And he wants everyone who has been a part of his 10 years in the area to join him at St John's Cathedral, George Street, Oban, at 5.30pm for the event.

As members of churches gather from across Argyll and the Isles for the annual conference and synod, Bishop Kevin will be installing the new Dean of the Diocese, the Very Reverend Margi Campbell, Provost of St John's Cathedral, and a new Honorary Canon to St John's, the Reverend Dr Keith Riglin, who has served the diocese over the past 10 years in Lochgilphead, Skye, Oban and at Easter will be on the Isle of Mull. Everyone welcome. For more information, contact the diocesan office on 01631 570870.



The Very Reverend Margi Campbell will be installed as the new Dean of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles by the Right Reverend Kevin Pearson.

MULL

Tobermory fire station is taking part in a new scheme to help young people in Scotland.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's national Youth Volunteer Scheme will promote life skills and offer support and guidance to those interested in the fire service.

It is open to teenagers aged between 12 and 18 years and developed around a three-phase programme designed to deepen and broaden knowledge, skills, competence and confidence.

Deputy Assistant Chief Officer John Miller, strategic lead for the Youth Volunteer Scheme, said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity for young people across Scotland to develop their skillset and make a valuable contribution to their communities.'

'The Youth Volunteer Scheme is not about recruiting future firefighters and we cannot guarantee any young person further employment or involvement with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.'

If you are interested in the scheme, contact sfrs.youthengagement@firescotland.gov.uk

WESTERN ISKES

MSP Alasdair Allan MSP led a Scottish Parliament debate on the benefits of Gaelic-medium education (GME).

The Western Isles MSP, who spoke Gaelic in last week's debate, welcomed Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's decision to enrol pupils entering primary one into GME as the default choice.

The council adopted the GME policy - which was aimed at achiev-

ing 'a significant rate of growth in Gaelic' in the islands - in December.

The debate came after Scottish Tory education spokesperson Liz Smith faced criticism for suggesting educating pupils in Gaelic was a 'worrying' and 'troubling' move, which would put children at a 'distinct disadvantage' to their peers.

Speaking in the debate, Dr Allan said: 'There are wide-ranging benefits to bilingualism, from increased creativity, to heightened cognitive abilities, to greater job opportunities.'

'I commend Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on taking this progressive step to secure the language within its heartland. And I would urge them to continue to go further for the language. Knowing what we know about the cognitive, cultural and social benefits of bilingualism in a regional language or mother tongue,

education in the Gaelic language should be offered in every school, to every child in the Western Isles and continue to grow elsewhere.'

Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron also gave strong support to the proposal.

Mr Cameron spoke during the debate at the Scottish Parliament to voice his support for Gaelic and to argue that the language's future would be best secured by depoliticising the debate about its future and securing all-party support.

Mr Cameron cited the record of the Conservative party in supporting Gaelic over many years in the Scottish Parliament.

Mr Cameron said: 'Bilingualism is plainly beneficial and we are all aware of the mistakes of the past century when one language (English) was promoted at the total exclusion of the other (Gaelic).'



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At random

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



Music and dance festival to be biggest yet

Organisers say the 37th Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival (HIMDF) in Oban is going to be the biggest yet with new venues, more than 1,100 participants, 125 competition classes and lots of fringe events.

The dates for 2020 are Thursday April 30 to Sunday May 3.

Letters are being sent out to businesses asking them to sponsor competitions and the festival committee is hoping for a generous response. Raffle tickets are on sale offering cash prizes to help raise funds.

The HIMDF committee is made up of Caroline Boyle, secretary; Peter Park, treasurer; and Riona MacCormick, chairperson.



Doing the business

I wrote two weeks ago about a number of shops in central Oban that have closed or are about to and mentioned I was sure BID4Oban would be on the case trying to market the premises.

Andy Spence, the estimable chief executive of BID4Oban, was way ahead of me and, as you will read elsewhere in this week's Oban Times, has been proactive in making sure these units are filled as quickly as possible.

The good news is apparently the Fonehouse in Argyll Square has been sold and I've seen lights on behind the painted windows of Abbies Cafe in Argyll Street as someone beavers away.

A wee birdie also tweets to me that Nancy Black's, also in Argyll Square, and which seems to have been vacant for ages, could soon be re-opening in a new guise.

This is excellent news and much of it is down to Andy and his colleagues, who deserve a pat on the back for efforts which often go unremarked.

It just goes to show Oban remains a vibrant centre economically. Well done to the BID4Oban team.

Getting the message

Oban's favourite son, golfer Bob MacIntyre, is making the news this week - but not for the usual reasons.

Bob has come in for praise for taking to the fairways with the Martyn's Monday Club logo prominent on his golf bag. As many will know, the club is the Oban charity which helps people with mental health problems.

From small beginnings as a men's self-help group, Martyn's Monday Club has grown considerably and now includes a women's section.

It is a fantastic club doing remarkable things and Bob deserves praise for flagging up its campaigning work.

The men's group meets every Monday between 7pm and 9pm at Hope Kitchen on Soroba Road. The ladies' section meets at the same times and place but on Tuesdays.

Everyone welcome.

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.

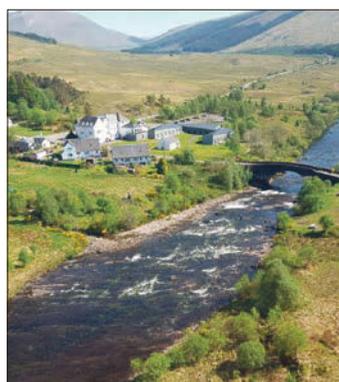
Bridge of Orchy Hotel raises £500 for air ambulance

The Bridge of Orchy Hotel near Glen Coe has raised more than £500 for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA).

Staff and guests at the popular Highland hotel have spent the past year raising awareness of the charity and how it benefits walkers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

As the country's only charity-funded air ambulance, SCAA receives no government payments and relies entirely on public donations to deliver expert paramedic care to the scene of time-critical emergencies, in every corner of Scotland, 365 days a year.

Fiona Dennis, community fundraiser for Scotland's Charity



Bridge of Orchy.

Air Ambulance, said: 'We're really grateful to the Bridge of Orchy

Hotel team and its guests for their generous donation and ongoing fundraising efforts.

'We simply could not continue our lifesaving service without the generosity of valued supporters like Bridge of Orchy Hotel. Every donation makes a difference.

Wonderful gifts

'In the past, these wonderful gifts have helped us to increase our hours of operation from 10 to 12 per day, so we are available even longer to fly to people in need.

'With continued help from our donors, we look forward to making further improvements to our service.'

Bridge of Orchy Hotel's general

manager Szilard Nemeth added: 'We're lucky to be surrounded by some of the most breathtaking natural scenery in Scotland, which attracts visitors, walkers and other outdoor enthusiasts from around the world.

'Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance is a vital service that helps ensure the safety of visitors enjoying our beautiful, but remote, landscape.

'The Bridge of Orchy Hotel team and our guests stepped up fundraising efforts over the summer to show our continued appreciation for SCAA and the great work the charity does in the Glen Coe area, Argyll and around Scotland.'

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OUTDOORS

Book shows the best of both worlds

by Martin Laing
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



Scottish Bothy Walks is the sequel to the best-selling Scottish Bothy Bible and describes 28 walking adventures to Scotland's finest bothies.

Choosing his favourite bothies as the focal point, author Geoff Allan, pictured, guides the reader on a mix of day walks and multi-day excursions, highlighting the incredible mountains, wildlife, geography and history you will find along the way.



Combining beautiful photos, detailed route descriptions, points of interest and downloadable instructions, this is an ideal companion for bothy-lovers and those exploring Scotland's wilds, written by Scotland's premier bothy expert.

The book includes top bothies, the most charming bothies, the finest approaches and the most beautiful landscapes in Scotland. Twenty eight circular or return routes covering the whole of Scotland and suitable for a broad range of fitness levels and experience are covered. Route descriptions and detailed maps, with timings, tips, difficulty ratings and downloadable GPX route instructions and wild swims at a secret beach also feature.

There is also a section on hillcraft and staying safe. This covers what clothing and equipment to take, how to cross a river in spate and coping in an emergency. A bothy is a simple shelter in remote country for the use and benefit of everyone who loves being in wild and lonely places.

Argyll climber hits half-way in winter Munros challenge

by Ken MacTaggart
editor@obantimes.co.uk

A climber who set out from Argyll to reach the peaks of all Scotland's Munros in a single winter has passed the half-way point of his ambitious expedition, after battling one of the stormiest winters of recent decades.

Kevin Woods, recently resident in Ballachulish, started his challenge on Ben More on Mull on December 22, before climbing all the Munros of mainland Argyll. He then completed Perthshire, the Cairngorms and the Southern Highlands, leaving aside Ben Lomond, where he hopes to finish his trek at the end of March.

Forty-three days after setting out, Kevin stepped onto the frozen peak of Stob Choire

'The weather has changed for the worse. I'll just be doing as much as I can – potentially nothing.'

Clairigh in Glen Nevis before dawn on February 2, after starting by head-torch from Lairig Leacach bothy.

It was his 141st peak, half-way to the magical number of completing the ascent of the 282 Scottish mountains more than 3,000 feet high.

But his day had barely started. He continued over the Grey Corries range and after nine hours of climbing, reached the top of Ben Nevis in a swirling snowstorm. Here he met one of his occasional helpers, Lochaber climber Helen Rennard, who brought food and hot drinks up the tourist track.

Kevin ended his exhausting day's climb with a tally of eight Munros, including four of Scotland's highest peaks.

Back in the glen, he tucked into a large meal at the Ben Nevis Inn. Keeping his food consumption up is essential as he is burning calories at a phenomenal rate.



Kevin Woods at Glen Ey, Braemar.

'The season so far has been one storm after another,' said Kevin, who has battled through gales and rain turning to snow in January. As a seasoned winter climber, he points out most winters the air streams shift around the compass.

'This season we've just had westerlies off the ocean for weeks, since I started.'

Late January had seen some of the worst ground conditions so far, with deep soft snow piled over heather tussocks, boulders and hollows in the wilds of Atholl, behind Pitlochry. Coming off Beinn Dearg down Glen Diridh he was 'wading through wet snow, slipping, falling over, on your knees, up again. It was one of the few points where I felt, this is very, very tough'.

On February 8, he crossed the Great Glen and found some blue skies at last, summiting

Meall na Teanga and Sron a' Choire Ghaibh above Loch Lochy. After weeks of normally solo climbing, Kevin was joined by fell runner Finlay Wild, 10 times winner of the Ben Nevis race. They scampered back to Fort William early, before the weather deteriorated again.

'Now the weather has changed for the worse,' he said from Fort William. 'I'll just be doing as much as I can – potentially nothing, depending on the severity of the weather. Onwards and northwards.'

By mid-February he was slowing down due to a stomach bug. 'I was brutally tired, with little appetite and an upset stomach. Energy low and wanting to sleep all the time,' he wrote in his Facebook blog, Kevin Woods Winter 282.

A day's rest and recovery saw him resume his quest in better spirits at the Cluanie Inn. But the punishing gales continue.



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This week's walks



Common dolphin off the Hebrides. Photograph: HWDT

Record numbers in citizen science to protect cetaceans

Record numbers of volunteers took part in research expeditions organised by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) last year, helping to launch a new year-round programme of monitoring marine mammals and basking sharks in the Hebrides.

For the first time, the conservation charity carried out marine surveys from its specialised research yacht *Silurian* during the winter – with crucial data collected every month of the year about the presence and behaviour of some spectacular marine wildlife.

Scotland's west coast seas are globally important habitats for cetaceans – the collective name

for whales, dolphins and porpoise – plus the endangered basking shark, but so far there has been little year-round data.

'Our new winter surveys and the contribution of our wonderful volunteers offer us the opportunity to study the year-round presence and distribution of some remarkable species for the first time,' said Becky Dudley, marine biodiversity officer at the HWDT. 'Our established summer expeditions, when most species are present in Hebridean waters, remain vital. But embarking on year-round surveys will shed new light on marine wildlife and help us answer questions such as whether minke

whales are present in the Hebrides all year and if distribution of harbour porpoise changes between summer and winter.'

As well as increasing understanding of cetacean and basking shark behaviour, this ground-breaking research helps detect trends and changes in the marine environment – including increases in underwater noise pollution and emerging threats like entanglement.

All of this scientific evidence can be used to inform action to protect marine wildlife.

In 2019, *Silurian* covered more than 5,000 nautical miles during 23 research expeditions.

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.lochaberand-lorn-ramblers.org.uk

Saturday February 29, Glen Kinglass, Loch Tulla.

A walk into the wilderness. Start at car park at Victoria Bridge NN270419 head north over bridge then turn west along track on the north side of the Abhainn Shira cross the river by the bridge just south of Clashgour then follow the track passed Loch Dochart to the watershed at NN 200411. Return by the outward route.

Grade: L. Distance: 16Km. Height to climb: 160m. Map(s): LR41, EX392. Meet at: Glencoe CP at 0915. Start of walk 10am. Leader: Stuart McCracken 07502 606711.

Thursday March 5, Fraoch Bheinn and Sgur an Utha, Glenfinnan.

A fine walk on the ancient Moine featuring a garnet-encrusted summit, breathtaking deformed schists and spectacular views of often-hidden Loch Beoraid.

Start from the lay-by on the S side of the A830 just W of the bridge over the Allt an Utha, NM873817. Cross the bridge to the start of a forestry track and follow it N to a junction just before a new bridge over Allt an Utha NM872823. The summit of Sgurr an Utha may be seen to the NE at this point. Turn E and follow the steep ATV track up E to its end at NM880826. The ascent is now pathless over heather and rocky outcrops. Continue E up the open slope of the Druiam na Brein choille, where there are excellent views along Loch Eil. Turn NNE towards Fraoch-bheinn.

Either walk around the corrie or head up on to Fraoch-bheinn and around the line of the ridge. The final ascent to Sgurr an Utha is straightforward to the cairn at 796m. The summit is a rocky knoll with garnet-encrusted mica schists. Look out for the reddish brown pebbles at your feet and embedded in the rocks around you. The summit drops sharply to the N and provides excellent views to Gleann Donn and Loch Beoraid as well as Coal-Ghleann and Glenfinnan Lodge. Head W from the summit to NM878838 and follow the burn back down to the Allt an Utha to regain the track back to the A830. Alternatively head W to Sithean Mòr

(582m) and descend S to the Allt Fèith a'Chatha hydro scheme and follow the track back (adds about 2 km).

Grade: M+. Distance: 9 Km. Height to climb: 750m. Map(s): LR40, EX398. Meet at: Fort William WM NN112742 at 0900. Start of Walk at 9.30am. Leader: Toril Frantzen 07788 264007.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

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

Sunday March 1, Sgurr nan Coire-achan, Sgurr Thuilm, Glen Finnan.

A classic mountain walk taking in the Coire Thollaidh Horseshoe. Easy access to a splendid high level expedition in a rough and remote area.

Start from the car park on the W side of the River Finnan at NM905808. Follow the estate road for 1.5km up Glen Finnan to the bridge over the River Finnan at NM913819. Cross the river, follow the track N for 3.5km then re-cross the river on the footbridge at NM918850. Turn NE on to the track above the bridge. After about 100m, a stalkers' path climbs N up the slope, leading to the SE ridge of Sgurr a' Choire Riabhaich. Climb this to its summit at 852m*.

Continue to the Munro summit of Sgurr nan Coireachan. Descend its NE ridge and follow the rim of the huge Coire Thollaidh over Meall an Tarmachain, 826m and Beinn Gharbh, 825m to reach the second Munro of Sgurr Thuilm. Descend S to a shoulder, then SW down Druiam Coire a'Bheithe to the bridge over the River Finnan. Follow the track back on the W side of the river, past the bothy and join the estate road S back to the CP.

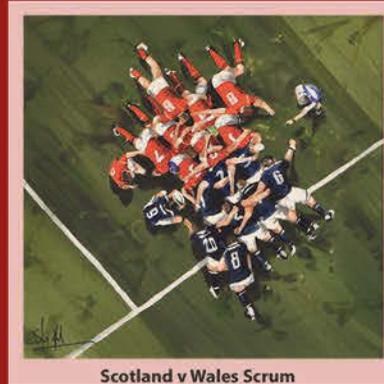
*For a shorter route that omits both Munros but nonetheless makes a fine ridge walk, descend W from the summit of Sgurr a' Choire Riabhaich. Curve S around the rim of Coire Carnaig and up to the summit of Sgurr an Fhuarain Duibh, 749m. Turn SW down the ridge, over minor summits 576m and 553m. Locate and follow a path that descends the steep nose at the foot of the ridge, curves SE, then zig-zags down to the watershed at NM884848. Head E down Coal-Ghleann on the N side of the burn and follow the path to reach the estate road serving Glenfinnan Lodge. Follow the estate road S back to the CP.

24km, 1548m ascent *19km, 974m ascent. Suggested by Jane Ollershaw. Co-ordinated by Christina Tracey.

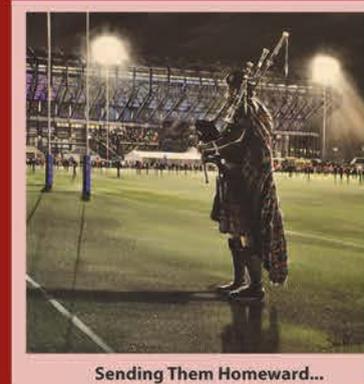


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www.sjpp.co.uk/argyll



ST. JAMES'S PLACE
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The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time and are dependent on individual circumstances.

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The 'St. James's Place Partnership' and the titles 'Partner' and 'Partner Practice' are marketing terms used to describe St. James's Place representatives.

Spring Weddings 2020

A spring wedding what could be nicer – after all the dark, drab days of winter to arrive at a church or venue with the grounds full of bulbs in bloom and trees in bud.

To see everyone in their bright wedding outfits and smart kilts, the bridal flowers and the rooms all decorated for the occasion.

We send our best wishes to all of you tying the knot at weddings and ceremonies this springtime. We hope you and your guests have a wonderful day and here are a few ideas and inspiration for those who will follow you, who are now planning their big day.



Now is the time to get started

Argyll and Bute and Lochaber are such popular places to get married that it is important to start planning early.

If you want a spring wedding you need to be booking 12 months in advance – so start looking now.

Churches and venues, especially the popular ones, are starting to fill up with bookings, not just for the ceremonies themselves but for receptions and parties as well.

If your wedding is going to be planned around work or school holidays it is important that you act fast – especially if guests are coming from away and need to book accommodation. There will also be tourists on holiday as well and you want to make sure you get your first choice.

It is also wise to get your bookings sorted out as soon as possible for photographers, for stills and video, hair and beauty and cars. Make

sure you book your florist now as well.

Parking can be a problem, so it often makes sense to hire a minibus or coach, depending on the number of guests you have because space can be very limited around some village churches.

It is also a good time to start working on your draft guest list.

It is never too soon to start looking for your wedding dress.

Once you are sure you have the vital framework of your special day in place you can start to relax – slightly – and get down to the fun of choosing your invitations, theme, colours, menu the all important cake (traditional, chocolate, cupcakes or all three).

There is the hen night, stag do, the final guest list, wedding present list and all the little fun touches of accessories table decorations and favours.

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The Loch Fyne Restaurant & Oyster Bar is a perfect place to celebrate your wedding day. Set in a stunning location at the head of Loch Fyne in Argyll, the venue is renowned as one of Scotland's finest seafood establishments. It is a perfect place to celebrate your wedding day with family and friends.

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living here**

Do you realise how many people come to the Highlands and islands just to get married?

We should all feel flattered that our local church, or the castle or beach we pass every-day on the way to work, or hotels where we meet for a drink or lunch are considered desirable destinations by people from across Scotland, the UK and even the globe!

This also means that we have an excellent network of wedding services all geared up to meet the needs of any wedding party.

From a simple registrar's ceremony and lunch for a small party to a full-blown cathedral wedding and banquet you can find it all.

In fact, name your spot.

'It is your day, your way,' say Argyll and Bute Registrars and the council has an excellent service on offer; go to the council website and download the brochure which is packed full of information for marriages, civil ceremonies and renewing vows.

They will help you create your perfect day in any location of your choice.

Live Argyll, the charity based trust established to take care of leisure venues and services previously run by the council, is also hosting two wedding fairs this spring. These are taking place at the Corran Halls, Oban and Queen's Hall Dunoon - which, incidentally, are also two very popular venues for ceremonies and receptions.

It's your big day
so we do it your way
Argyll and Bute Registrars

When it comes to life's momentous occasions, getting married, entering a partnership or reaffirming vows are near the top. Our team of professional, caring registrars are there to help you every step of the way. Contact us to help plan your big day.

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or call: 01546 605521

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Union Street/ Argyll Street
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St John Street
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1pm, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel: Rhona 07880 878906

FORT WILLIAM

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tages or beach side Lodges, be it champagne on ice, a special bottle of wine or perhaps some flowers and fruit. The Macleods are not new to the hospitality industry having built up a portfolio of self catering properties over the years in Edinburgh,

Inveraray, Mull and Craobh Haven as well as the Iconic Mishnish in Tobermory (www.themishnish.co.uk) 'We love hosting a good party and we thoroughly enjoy creating individual weddings and special occasions for our guests. Your wedding could

be in the ballroom with the backdrop of glittering chandeliers and a roaring fire or in the garden surrounded by garlands of beautiful flowers, or perhaps in a lovely marquee. For that special occasion to be celebrated the house lends itself to

candlelight dinner parties, champagne receptions with delicious canapés, a buffet of mouth-watering local seafood and meats, a hog roast on a spit or a traditional Scottish feast. We look forward to welcoming you.' www.lungahouse.co.uk



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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Queer history film tour comes to Oban

by Iona Young
editor@obantimes.co.uk

An out-of-the-archives take on Scotland's little-known queer film history comes to Oban this Saturday, February 29, as part of a tour celebrating LGBT History Month.

SQIFF (Scottish Queer International Film Festival) shorts will be screening a variety of unseen and undiscovered films at the Phoenix cinema, with works ranging from bisexual lust in the 1950s, to groundbreaking documentation of Edinburgh queer life in the 1980s and Pratibha Parmar's experimental 1990 shortfilm Bhangra jig, which follows a young Asian woman walking the streets of Glasgow with signs of colonialism ever-present.

Helen Wright, SQIFF



co-founder and coordinator, said: 'The programme will provide provocation as well

as nostalgia. We hope to generate discussion around these older films and archival

content, and across different generations.'

Featuring archival docu-

The delectable Crystal arrived in style for the start of the parade.

mentaries and short films by queer Scottish film-makers, each screening will feature a live discussion examining whether these films are a fair representation of the past and asking what they may be able to contribute to an understanding of the future.

The 50-minute show starts at 6.15pm. Admission is free.

The first fundraising event for Oban Pride 2020 will follow later that evening, at 7.30pm, with a sing-a-long Rocky Horror Picture Show hosted by the town's own drag artist Crystal. The screening is rated 15.

Oban Pride is organised and run by volunteers, anyone interested in volunteering or supporting the group should contact them via their Facebook page or by emailing obanpride@gmail.com

Businesses shortlisted for Nibbies award

The Highland Bookshop in Fort William and Oban-based children's picture book publisher Little Door Books have both been shortlisted for the regional heat of The British Book Awards or Nibbies.

Run by The Bookseller, The British Book Awards are regarded as 'the BAFTAs of the book trade'.

Angus MacDonald, co-owner of The Highland Bookshop said this week: 'There is a great sense of pride at the Highland Bookshop - our great team has worked so hard to create a fantastic shop for book lovers since we opened two-and-a-half years ago.'

And Alan Windram, co-founder of Little Door Books, added: 'As a small, independent publisher, we are delighted to have our hard work recognised, and to be the only children's publisher shortlisted in the regional heat.'

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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



FilmG showcases Gaelic talent

I was so busy last week writing about menus being mistaken for iPads that I forgot to write about a great evening at the FilmG awards in the Fruitmarket that Friday.

Myself and Tide Lines piano player Ross Wilson were to present the award for the Best Youth Group Film. I said a few lines in Gaelic and Ross's line was 'here are the nominees' who were then shown on the big screen. He accidentally said 'here are the winners' and neither of us even noticed his mistake! When it was pointed out to us later in the evening, Ross ingeniously passed it off as a deliberate message that, in his eyes, all the schools were winners!

Congratulations to all involved - especially Sgoil an Rubha who won our particular award.

Mull and Iona Annual Gathering

I ran a bit late for the Mull

and Iona Gathering last weekend but arrived just as Kirsty Netta MacKinnon was singing O Teannabh Dlùth is Togaibh Fonn and the whole of the GU was singing along with the choruses. This homely atmosphere continued throughout the performances of Claire Macaulay, Calum MacColl, Ruairidh MacLean and Camrie MacInnes, and Layla and Cara MacFadyen.

Two personal highlights of the evening were winning a couple of Alasdair Whyte CDs in the raffle and getting the chance to dance a Strip the Willow with Tobermory's Joanie MacKay!

Glasgow Islay announce line-up

The Glasgow Islay Association have confirmed the line-up for their annual gathering concert to take place on Saturday March 7 in the Glasgow University Union. Iseabail MacTaggart is in the chair and the artists are Angus Darroch from Bowmore, Lynn MacDonald from Portnahaven, Ruairidh MacLennan, Mòd Gold

Medalist, Clarkston Community Choir, The Islay Pipe Band, and the Association Piper. The concert begins at 7.30pm and is followed by a dance at 10.30pm.

Choir concert

The Glasgow Islay choir will perform in the Westerton Hall, Maxwell Avenue, Bearsden, this Friday at 7.30pm. The evening will be chaired by Mary Ann Kennedy and the programme will feature last year's Mòd Gold Medalist, Claire Macaulay, as well as Marina MacLeod, Mòd winning quartet Na h-àilleagain, and many more artists. Tickets available at the door.

Tatties and Herring

The Glasgow Skye Association will hold their annual Buntata's Sgadan (Tattie and Herring) night in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street, this Saturday at 7.30pm. The entertainment is always excellent and, of course, the food is tremendous.

WHAT'S ON

In partnership with Oban Town Diary BID4oban.co.uk

THURSDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

Oban Men's Shed
Salvation Army Hall
9:00am - 12:00pm
Oban Health Walks
Oban Congregational Church
10:00am - 12:00pm
Recovery Cafe
New Hope Kitchen
12.30pm
Creative Writing Group
New Hope Kitchen
2.30pm-4pm
Slimming World Fort William
Salvation Army Hall
3:00pm, 5:00pm & 7:00pm
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Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY
FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY
Hope Kitchen Music Group
Salvation Army Hall
1pm-4pm
Parsley's Cat Cafe
New Hope Kitchen
2pm
Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society
Oban Community Fire Station
7.30pm-9.30pm
Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
The Camans
Open till 2:00am

SATURDAY 29TH FEBRUARY

Parkrun
Ganavan Sands
9.30am
Event - Bon Giovi
Corran Halls
19.30pm
Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
Crooked Rell
Open till 2:00am
SUNDAY 1ST MARCH
Morning Service - Refreshments follow
Salvation Army Hall
11:00am - 12:00pm
Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
QUIZ NIGHT at 9:30pm
£1 per person, max of 6 per team
Win £20 bar voucher
MONDAY 22ND MARCH
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 3RD MARCH
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 4TH MARCH
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

PET IDOL
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£3000 WINNERS PRIZE

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www.wyvexmedia.co.uk/petidol

Get the pet shampoo, cute ribbons and inappropriate clothing ready - Entry is now open for our 2020 Pet Idol competition. If you have a cool cat, pampered pooch or any other gorgeous bundle of fur, feathers or even scales, now is your chance to win our £300 first prize. That buys an awful lot of cat litter or you might even prefer to spend it on yourself (just don't tell the mutt!)

THERE WILL ALSO BE TWO RUNNER-UP PRIZES OF £50

How to enter

Our pet idol competition is open to all pets belonging to households across Argyll and Lochaber. Just take a snap of your pet and upload your photograph and details by visiting www.wyvexmedia.co.uk/petidol

Photographs must have been taken on or after 1st January 2020 (we don't want pictures of cute kittens that are now the size of Bagpuss!!)

Our Pet Idol 2020 Supplement

After you enter your pet, look out for our fantastic Pet idol supplement on 2nd April. This will give you the chance to boast to your friends that your little fur-ball really is the cutest thing in Argyll and the West Highlands!!

Vote for your favourite

Readers will then have the serious job of voting for their favourite pet in the supplement. We will then break it down to further rounds of 100, 50, 25 and a final top 10. The pet with the most votes will be crowned our Pet idol champion early in June 2020 - Good luck

The closing date for entries is midnight on Sunday 22nd March 2020

Terms and conditions

Wyvex Media's Pet Idol 2020 competition is open to all pets of owners living in the circulation area of the Oban Times and Lochaber Times. Photographs must have been taken on or after 1st January 2020. Pictures of deceased pets are ineligible. Pictures should only contain one pet. Readers can enter more than one pet, but each pet must have a separate entry. By entering the competition, you agree that Wyvex Media Ltd has the right to publish the images and details of your pet without payment for the purposes of promoting the Pet Idol campaign(s). The winning pet and owner must take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter.

We care about your personal information

The information gathered on the entry form will be used by us to contact you regarding the competition & the photo and name to enter you into the competition. We may also email you at the close of the competition. We will not pass on any of the information supplied by you in the entry form to any third party unless you specifically chose to let us do so. If you choose not to be added to our mailing list we will destroy the information provided by you 4 weeks after the competition winner is announced.

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M'ALBA

MY ALBA

DIARDAOIN 27 An Gearran THURSDAY 27 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 Sgiobair nan Taighean-solais/Northern Lighthouse Board (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Mach a Seo!
22:30 Fo Ghlas/World's Toughest Prisons (rpt)
23:15 Dhan Uisge (Loch Lomond) (rpt)
23:25 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)
23:30 Fonn Fonn Fonn (rpt)

DIHAOINE 28 An Gearran FRIDAY 28th February

17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
18:35 Machair (rpt)
19:00 An Là – News
19:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
19:30 Leugh Mi (rpt)
20:00 Oran na Mna (rpt)
20:30 Air an Smuid (Steaming) (rpt)
21:00 Opry an Luir (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Eadar na Dha 1918-1935/Clash of Futures:1918-1935
22:50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Corcuisk) (rpt)
23:00 Seirm – Celtic Connections (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 29 An Gearran SATURDAY 29 February

16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
17:45 An Là – News
18:00 Am B.F.G./The B.F.G (rpt)
19:30 Leugh Mi (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)
22:45 Ceol bho Perthshire Amber (rpt)
23:00 Na Trads: An Dara Teud (rpt)
00:30 Breabach@Blas (rpt)

DIDÒMHNAICH 1 A' Mhairt SUNDAY 1st March

16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
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/ Scotlands Canals (rpt)
22:00 Seirm – Celtic Connections (rpt)
23:00 Eadar na Dha : 1918-1935/Clash of Futures:1918-1935 (rpt)
23:50 Eadar Chluich (rpt)

DILUAIN 2 A' Mhairt MONDAY 2 March

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 ÙR/NEW: Thar na Loidhne/Crossing the Line
21:00 Trusadh - Croitearean Leodhais(NEXT Customer Please) (rpt)
22:00 Port – Druthag Eile (rpt)
22:30 'San Fhuil / Its in the Blood (rpt)
23:30 Mach a Seo! (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 3 A' Mhairt TUESDAY 3 March

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 Fuine 55 (rpt)
21:00 ÙR/NEW: Ionaid Hiort – Oir an Dochais
22:00 Trusadh - Croitearean Leodhais(NEXT Customer Please) (rpt)
23:00 Fraochy Bay(rpt)
23:05 Togaidh Sinn Fonn/Join in The Music (rpt)
23:30 Alleluia (rpt)

DICIADAIN 4 A' Mhairt WEDNESDAY 4 March

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 'San Fhuil/Its in the Blood (rpt)
22:00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership – Kilmarnock v Aberdeen



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Joy and Andrew gave a stunning performance at this intimate house concert.

Photograph: Charlotte Smith

Sibling sounds create pure magic at St Mary's Space

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Siblings Joy and Andrew Dunlop created a multi-lingual musical treat for the ears at their St Mary's Space house concert on Saturday.

The jocular brother-sister banter brought an extra dollop of delight and charm to the evening of Gaelic mouth work, Scottish and English folk songs, and perfect piano playing in the already eclectically cosy surrounds of the once-upon-a-time church at Fasnacloich – now a performance space and boutique recording studio, as well as being the heartfelt home of welcoming hosts, artist Charlotte and composer Jamie Smith who regularly open their door for informal gigs in return for donations.

To sit in the company of the mighty-talented Dunlop duo, who hail from Connel and have been making music since childhood, was well worth the pitch black journey out on wintry roads of slush and sleet.

Stories of learning Gaelic song from the revered Mrs Pollock as young folk and a sneak peek into growing up

in the Dunlop household, mingled with songs from their debut album Dithis, Gaelic for Duo.

While Joy, well known for her involvement in the Royal National Mòd and a frequent face on BBC Alba and now the TV weather, has absorbed Gaelic song traditions, her brother Andrew followed a classical route, performing globally including a stint in New York and now works as the company/orchestral pianist for Yorkshire's Northern Ballet.

Among heady highlights of the night for me were Joy's

incredible and ear-popping Gaelic mouth work and the siblings' heart-breaking rendition of The Testimony of Patience Kershaw, based on the story of a 17-year-old girl who worked down the Yorkshire coal mines.

Just watching Andrew in motion was mesmerising, his fingers dancing over the piano keys, his poise, his movement, his timing – seamlessly streaming the whole of his being into the music pouring straight from his heart.

Joy and Andrew, you did the Dunlop household proud – and Mrs Pollock too.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Thursday 5th March 2020, 7.30pm

Royal Hotel
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Benderloch author to talk about debut novel

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Author Willie Orr will be talking about his debut novel, *Mick*, at Oban's Waterstones this Friday.

Willie, who lives in Benderloch, has already had several non-fiction books and short stories published, as well as plays performed, but *Mick* is his first work of fiction.

Billed as 'a moving and chastening novel' by modern history expert Professor Lynn Abrams at the University of Glasgow, *Mick* tells the tale of Mick Crossan, who was removed from his widowed mother and slum home in the



Gorbals and placed in 'care'.

After last year's literary offering from Willie, *The Shepherd and The Morning Star* – an autobiography and biography of his father – this fresh piece of work is set in

the 1950s, a rarely talked of time when thousands of children were removed from their families for a better life in the Scottish Highlands as boarded-out children. What Mick finds instead is a life of abuse, first at the hands of

Mick looks at a rarely talked of time when thousands of children were removed from their families for a better life in the Scottish Highlands.

priests and nuns, and then on farms as cheap labour.

But his spirit and determination drive him to find his family and reclaim his identity before drawing him back in search of happiness in his hometown of Glasgow.

Hear more about Mick from former shepherd, crofter, counsellor, teacher and columnist Willie when he appears at Waterstones in George Street, Oban, tomorrow, February 28, at 6pm.

Mick is published by Thunderpoint.

Fab four shortlisted for Highland Book Prize

Four books published in 2019 with a Highland connection have been shortlisted for the Highland Book Prize.

They are *The Frayed Atlantic Edge: A Historian's Journey from Shetland to the Channel* by David Gange; *Surfacing* by Kathleen Jamie; *Spring* by Ali Smith; and *Moder Dy* by Roseanne Watt.

The winner will be announced at the Ullapool Book Festival on Saturday May 9, at a free-to-attend evening event, at which all four shortlisted authors will be present and will read from their work. The winner will receive a cash prize of £1,000

and a place on a writing retreat at Moniak Mhor.

The judges made their selection of which books published during 2019 would make the shortlist, concluding:

■ *The Frayed Atlantic Edge*: 'An impressive intellectual and physical journey, allowing the reader to experience the Atlantic Coast from a fresh, deeply informed and invigorating perspective; rarely have our coastlines and cultures been explored with such understanding and respect.'

■ *Surfacing*: 'A compelling collection of essays, alive with captivating details and large

– indeed, vital – ideas. With precision and eloquence, we are guided through deep time, expressive place and protean culture, the better to understand ourselves and our environment. What emerges is a book that not only melds clarity and depth, but does so while offering, and exemplifying, compassion, empathy and wisdom.'

■ *Spring*: 'An exciting, engrossing and timely novel, richly layered with necessary themes, marvellous characterisation and a transfixing plot. That the book achieves its ambitions with such persuasion, insight and

unwavering commitment to sheer human decency is, in itself, a triumph.'

■ *Moder Dy*: 'To encounter a debut collection that is so emotionally and intellectually vivid is rare indeed. These poems – linguistically rich, profound, imaginative – announce a talent that is already making waves internationally. This is not only thoughtful, lyrical poetry but poetry that will last.'

The Highland Book Prize was established in 2017 to help celebrate the finest work that recognises the rich culture, heritage and landscape of the Highlands.

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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 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

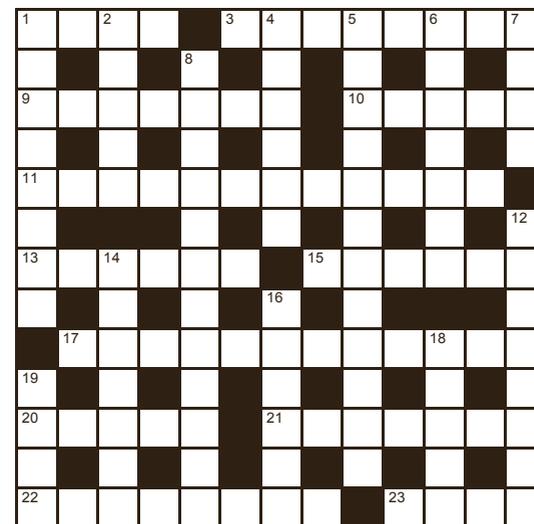
Andy & Sarah, 11am-3pm: Molly's Mix, 3pm-7pm: Drive time with Stephen, 7pm-9pm: Christine's Collection, 9pm-10pm: Anne's Ceilidh, 10pm-12am: Margo till Midnight

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 Breege, 11am-1pm: Sunday brunch 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 Security number (4)
- 3 Railway worker (8)
- 9 So-called (7)
- 10 Standing (5)
- 11 Important time (3-6,3)
- 13 About to happen (6)
- 15 Make (6)
- 17 Agonising (3-9)
- 20 Ring-tailed animal (5)
- 21 The diamond in baseball (7)
- 22 A short musical (8)
- 23 Wrapped up (4)

Down

- 1 Visible condensation from an aircraft (8)
- 2 Rounded (5)
- 4 Tell (6)
- 5 Place to get wifi (8,4)
- 6 Lady of the sea (7)
- 7 Snack (4)
- 8 Occasionally (4,2,1,5)
- 12 Group together (8)
- 14 Bird's feathers (7)
- 16 Portray (6)
- 18 Utopian (5)
- 19 Sound rebound (4)

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FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY	
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	12:00/17:00/18:30
David Copperfield PG	16:00
Emma. U	19:30
Birds of Prey 15	20:45
SATURDAY 29TH FEBRUARY	
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	11:00/15:45
Dolittle PG	11:30★
Onward PG (Preview. Daily from 6th)	13:15
David Copperfield PG	13:45
Emma. U	16:15
Out of the Archive - SQIFF 12A -FREE ENTRY	18:15
Birds of Prey 15	19:00
The Rocky Horror Picture Show 15 (Oban Pride Fundraiser)	19:30
SUNDAY 1ST MARCH	
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	12:30/15:00/17:30
Dolittle PG	12:45
David Copperfield PG	15:00
Emma. U	17:30
1917 15 - Limited Seats. Book ahead!	19:45
Birds of Prey 15	20:15



WINNER
4 OSCARS - 2 BAFTAS
A FILM BY BONG JOON HO

PARASITE 15
WEEKEND 7 - 8 MARCH
ADDITIONAL SHOWS MAY BE ADDED

MONDAY 2ND MARCH	
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	12:00/17:00
David Copperfield PG	16:45
Birds of Prey 15	19:15
Emma. U	19:30
TUESDAY 3RD MARCH	
Emma. U	12:00★/19:15
David Copperfield PG	16:15
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	16:30
Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show	19:00
WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH	
Emma. U	12:00★/19:30
David Copperfield PG	16:45
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	17:00
Birds of Prey 15	19:15
THURSDAY 5TH MARCH	
1917 15	14:30★
Sonic The Hedgehog PG	17:00
David Copperfield PG	17:00
Birds of Prey 15	19:30
Emma. U	19:30



16TH & 19TH MARCH

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SHEXTREME - 6PM (DOCUMENTARY)
WOMEN IN EXTREME SPORTS

HER CENTURY - 6:30PM (ARCHIVE FILM)
RARELY-SEEN FILMS FOLLOW WOMEN'S HISTORIES THROUGH 100 YEARS OF FILM MAKING IN SCOTLAND

HOME - 8PM (DOCUMENTARY)
THIS DOCUMENTARY FOLLOWS UK ADVENTURER SARAH OUTEN AS SHE TRAVELS THE WORLD DURING HER LONDON-2-LONDON: VIA THE WORLD EXPEDITION.

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Kinnaris will open SEALL's spring programme on International Women's Day, March 7.

SEALL ready to march into spring with bumper line-up of the arts

A concert by the award-winning trad sensation Kinnaris Quintet celebrates International Women's Day and kicks off SEALL's 2020 spring programme on Saturday March 7, writes Sara Bain.

Kinnaris, who are the first all-female band to win the Belhaven Bursary for Innovation in Music at the MG Alba Scottish Traditional Music Awards, took home the prize in December and come to Skye to open a season of world-class performing arts events across the island.

The quintet combines Scottish and Irish folk with bluegrass, classical, Scandinavian and Appalachian influences, and band members include Breakish's Fiona MacAskill.

Also coming home for the next SEALL concert is Eilidh Cormack from Portree. Eilidh brings her sensational Gaelic trio Sian to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's An Talla Mhòr on Thursday March 12. These young musicians are

taking Gaelic song to the next level in their lively, exciting performances.

Gaelic drama takes centre stage on Saturday March 21 when Theatre Gu Leòr presents Maim. This is a unique collaboration between the theatre and award-winning electronica band Whyte and will feature live music, dance, spoken word and video. The show is fully accessible to non-Gaelic speakers.

On March 27, the Red Note Ensemble return to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as part of their Ocean's tour. In this inspirational concert, celebrating Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, Red Note's Jackie Shave (violin) and Robert Irvine (cello) blend their styles with Eliza Marshall on flutes and whistles and iconic Indian tabla player/composer Kuljit Bhamra to explore the theme of Oceans and Journeys. They will be joined by local poet Roddy Gorman and actor Crawford Logan.

The last event in March is a concert with popular

Lochaber musicians Iain MacFarlane and Ingrid Henderson. This is the first of two SEALL Easter concerts and takes place on March 31.

SEALL creative director Marie Lewis said: 'We are absolutely thrilled with the line-up of our new spring programme and are particularly delighted to be hosting the Kinnaris Quintet as a special International Women's Day celebration.'

'The spring programme runs until June 30 and there are some familiar faces returning to Skye, such as Hamish Napier, Brighde Chaimbeul, the Old Blind Dogs, the TMSA Young Trad tour and Duncan Chisholm, as well as a few new stars such as Jackie Kay, 2Magpies Theatre and a couple of really great duos from Canada.'

The full programme can be downloaded from www.seall.co.uk now. Printed programmes should be available at the beginning of March.

Tickets and further details from www.seall.co.uk

Fife musician makes welcome return to Fort

Bruce Davies, the Fife-based singer/songwriter, will be appearing at Fort William Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church Hall this evening, Thursday February 27, at 7.30pm.

With 35 years as a professional entertainer behind him, Davies is a musician whose easy on the ear singing and storytelling have gained him many friends on four continents.

Crisp acoustic guitar playing is one of his trademarks and Tom Paxton described him as 'one of Scotland's best singers'.



Bruce Davies plays Fort William tonight.

Davies has recorded many albums, performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and spends summers hosting

and singing in the Spirit of Scotland Show.

Tickets costing £5 will be available at the door.

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North Argyll Blackface sheep breeders enjoy stockjudging success at Dalmally

On Friday February 14, the North Argyll Blackface Sheep Breeders' Association held another successful stockjudging in Dalmally Auction Mart, writes Iona Young.

There were a total of 125 competitors taking part, including a strong turnout of young farmers and under-14s.

The whole event was masterfully judged by Mr Iain 'Chesney' Clark, who is shepherd at Midlock farm,

Crawford. His champion sheep on the night was a gimmer from the Jacksons, at the Pole.

However, the Macphersons from Balliemeanoch had the most to celebrate, with Grant Macpherson winning the young farmer class and individual open class, while sister Lorna won the ladies' section.

Adding to the family success on the night, their brother Alec won first and second

in the tup hogg class, with a homebred tup hogg and 'springbok' respectively.

Also, celebrating was Rabbie, Robert and Innis McKay who won the team competition, with Innis also winning the under-14s class.

A spokesperson for the association said: 'The club would like to thank the judge, organisers and all our sponsors for their continued support. Such a brilliant night would not



The trophy winners from the North Argyll Blackface sheep stockjudging at Dalmally Auction Market.

Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

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have happened without the time, dedication and support of everyone involved.

'The club would also like to thank everyone for coming and taking part, making it a success, and we hope they enjoyed it as much as we did putting the event on!'

Next up for the branch is the AGM on Wednesday March 4, which takes place in the Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel, at 8pm.

Results

There was a total 125 entries; 62 open, 35 Young Farmers, 19 ladies and nine under-14s.

Individual and North

Eastern Trophy: 1st Grant Macpherson 371 pts; 2nd Robert McKay 370 pts; 3rd Lorna Macpherson 368 pts.

Team: 1st Robbie, Robert and Innis McKay 1,079 pts.

Young Farmers class and Suie Lodge Cup: 1st Grant Macpherson 371 pts; 2nd Lorna Macpherson 368 pts; 3rd Ally Dickie 362 pts.

Ladies' and Youngs animal health shield: 1st Lorna Macpherson 368 pts; 2nd Katie Fairlie 354 pts; rd A. McLarty 341 pts.

Under-14s: 1st Innis McKay 349 pts; 2nd Roan Mcvicar 340 pts; 3rd John Bennie 334

pts.

Tup hogg homebred class and Bill Black shield: 1st J. Macpherson and sons, Balliemeanoch; 2nd nd A. Macfadyen and son, Bragleenmore; 3rd J. Macpherson and sons, Balliemeanoch; 4th N. Rogerson, Tayvallich Estate.

Open Tup Hogg Class: 1st J. Macpherson and sons, Balliemeanoch; 2nd J. Macpherson and sons, Balliemeanoch; 3rd J. Jackson, Pole; 4th A. Macfadyen and son, Bragleenmore; 5th J. Macpherson and sons, Balliemeanoch.

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Oban Business Improvement District

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BID4OBAN – how does it work?



The principal aim of the BID is to deliver projects and services that will improve the trading environment of the BID area to the benefit of businesses, their customers and visitors. BID4Oban is clearly focused on improving Oban as a commercial and tourist destination. Our key objectives reflect this.

- Making the best first impression
- Let's shout about what's happening in Oban
- Extend the season
- Making Oban the place to stay, explore and spend
- Working together for a more prosperous future
- Making our town easier to visit

Since the inception of BID4Oban in 2012 and following a successful re-ballot in 2017, we have worked to improve the business and commercial opportunities for Oban. The BID is funded by a small levy that is charged to every business in Oban that has a rateable value of £3000 or above. The smallest levy paid is £150 up to £5000 for the largest businesses. This generates an annual income of £160,000. The levy is used to supplement and fund services and grants for which there would be no funding available if the BID was not in place. In addition to the levy payment BID4Oban generated a further £60,000 in additional grants and funds during 2019.

The BID was originally set up by a group of businesses in Oban. Every five years the business community votes for the continuation of the BID or not. We work to a fluid business plan that can adapt to the economic climate throughout the duration of the BID. Details of the current business plan are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk. We are ideally placed to receive additional funding for key projects from various partners, including Argyll and Bute Council.

BID4Oban has supported not just the business community but other groups and organisations within the town with event funding grants, funding of community projects and offered commercial support for community organisations.

Since 2018, BID4Oban was the organisation chosen by Argyll and Bute Council to supply and install the festive lights for the town. Oban Electrical Services carried out most of the work with an additional 106 lamppost Christmas trees supplied by BID4Oban. This funding is now ending and 2020 will be a challenging year to seek funding for the towns festive trees and displays. BID4Oban have now joined forces with Keep Oban Beautiful to raise additional funds for 2020.

TOWN AMBASSADORS

There is a busy year ahead for Oban Town Ambassadors, Joe and Kay, as we celebrate the Year of Coast & Waters which puts Oban in an ideal situation being the Seafood Capital of Scotland and a hub for water-based sports and events.

Between welcoming passengers disembarking from visiting cruise ships, welcoming guests leaving on the smaller Majestic Line ships, directing people to ferries and for small boat trips, the amount of people heading out on the water who interact with the Ambassadors is massive. Last year from cruise ships alone over 18,000 visitors were welcomed by Joe and Kay and this year promises to be even busier. Add this to the number of visitors they speak to on a daily basis from Easter until the end of October and the number rises by hundreds on a weekly basis. It's just as well that they are doing a job they love, and both enjoy nothing more than meeting new people and enthusing about what Oban has to offer. In the seven years that Joe and Kay have worked as Town Ambassadors there have only been a handful of occasions where a complaint has been received or a moan listened to which is a fantastic result for Oban and for the Ambassadors. Happy visitors are what it's all about and,

looking ahead to the coming summer months, it's time to get ready for another busy year – new walking shoes, a bag full of maps and timetables and a big smile ready to make everyone feel welcome.



LOVE OBAN VOUCHERS

Love Oban vouchers, the Oban pound, was set up by BID4Oban to encourage spending in local shops, restaurants and businesses.

The initiative has proved very popular and over the past year sales of these vouchers have increased by over 40% compared to the previous year. Over the 2019 Christmas period £8500 of vouchers were sold which is a new record for the town. By buying and using the vouchers, you can ensure that the money spent stays within the Oban business community and local businesses. Throughout the year there have been various promotions where purchasers of the vouchers have saved up to 10% off the face value therefore saving on any goods purchased with them.

The vouchers can be used in over 70 businesses. If your business is not listed on our database, please contact our office to find out how you can participate.

The Love Oban vouchers make ideal presents for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays or just to say thank you to someone. They are available from the BID4Oban office, Oban Phoenix Cinema, The Sports Shop, Oban, Alba Art Shop, Button Nose Boutique and Etive Restaurant.

By purchasing Love Oban vouchers, you are supporting local businesses.

Full details on where to purchase and spend vouchers are available by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk



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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

Ensuring the town looks its best is a key priority of BID4Oban.

During times of restraint in council budgets, it is increasingly difficult for the council to fund many of the services previously taken for granted. We are working with Argyll and Bute Council to ensure that the town is maintained to the best possible standard. 2019 saw many meetings with council officials to improve standards across the town. This should have a significant impact on how the town looks for 2020.

Every year BID4Oban install and maintain 256 hanging baskets and planted railing troughs throughout the town. This represents a substantial investment of around £15,000 which covered the installation, maintenance, planting, hardware and delivery. During 2020 we plan to refurbish the planters along George Street and install additional baskets in Albany Street. The costs of supplying not only the plants but the baskets that are used increases every year. We have been working very closely with the Keep Oban Beautiful group (KOB) and 2020



will see even greater partnership working. Plans are being drawn up for the highly successful town tidy-up which is scheduled to take place on March 28 and 29. We would encourage everyone to participate in some small way to tidy up the area around your house or business. Last year Argyll and Bute Amenities Dept in Oban fully supported this event and will offer the same support this year.

A key project delivered in 2019 was the first part of the Shine a Light on Oban Project. Following a funding award of £11,500 from the Oban Common Good Fund which was match funded by BID4Oban. The result was the illumination of the

Black Lynn between Stevenson Street and Airds Crescent. New lighting was installed that has transformed this area of the town with numerous lovely comments and photos appearing on social media. The Ranald Hotel and Lorne Bar also applied for business improvement grants enabling them to install new lighting outside their premises. These projects used local contractors to ensure our investment was spent with Oban businesses. Our Shine a Light on Oban project will continue into 2020 with other installations being looked at.

■ **Full details on how to support or sponsor a basket are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk**

PORT OF OBAN CRUISE GROUP & OBAN GUIDED TOURS



Oban Guided Tours are entering their third year and have gone from strength to strength with a slight tweak to their name to better reflect what they do.

The guides are now a familiar sight in town with their distinctive crooks, introducing groups of up to 15 visitors to the delights of Oban and Kerrera. Two smaller cruise ships will be visiting Oban again this summer and, over the course of the season, 1200 of their guests will take advantage of Oban Guided Tours to make the most of their time here as well as groups from the larger ships which also increasingly seek the services of guides. The work of the guides and Port of Oban Cruise Group are

now paying off with stronger links and direct contacts with the companies responsible for organising ship visits, Oban is now recognised as a welcoming and friendly cruise call by ships and shipping agents. We work closely with Cruise Scotland and will be represented at VisitScotland Expo 2020 in Aberdeen. As a result of this, many of the ships visiting return again and again and we're delighted to be welcoming the Queen Mary II again this summer in August. Her last visit resulted in a carnival feel in the town as cars queued along as far as Ganavan to get a better view.

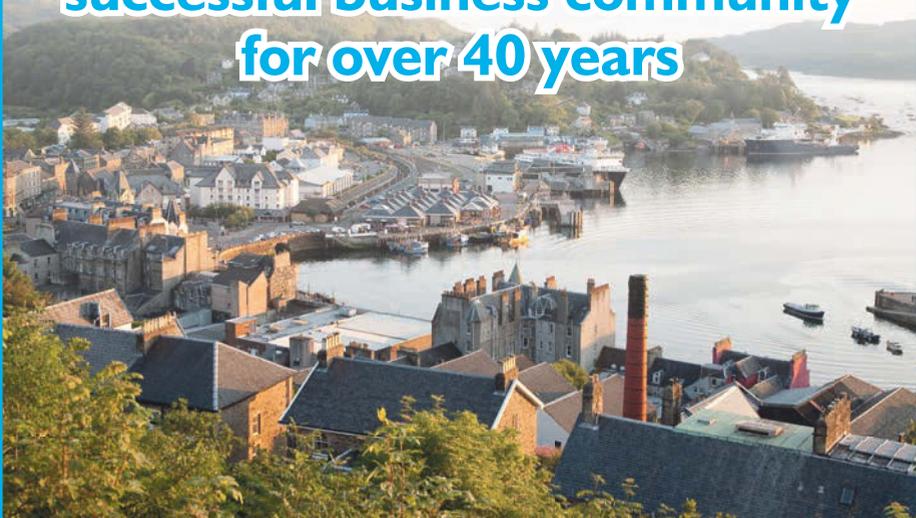
Port of Oban Cruise Group include members from many different organisations such

as Oban Community Council, Oban Distillery, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds, OLTA, BID4Oban, Northern Lighthouse Board, VisitScotland and Argyll & Bute Council who meet monthly and work closely together to promote Oban as a fantastic place to visit and it's not just for cruise ships: the informal title is Oban Welcome Group as they work to welcome everyone to Oban no matter how they arrive, train, ship or road. Every ship is met by pipers courtesy of Oban High School and members of Oban Community Council.

■ **For further information visit www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk or www.bid4oban.co.uk**

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MARKETS AND IMPROVEMENTS GRANTS



One of the key objectives of BID4Oban is to improve the appearance of the town. This takes many forms and the Business Improvement Grants have proved highly successful. To date BID4Oban have awarded £50,000 to eligible businesses with 2019 being another busy year.

These grants enable businesses to invest in the visual impact of their properties by way of improved signage or redecoration of a shop front. Ensuring the frontage of a business premises looks bright and well cared for can have a major impact on the look of the town

and support the cost to the business. Full details on how a business can apply for a grant can be found by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk or contacting the office in Stevenson Street.

Oban Town Markets, which take place over the summer months, have proved highly successful. These take place in Station Square area of the



town. There are normally up to 10 vendors providing local produce and goods. We are very keen to attract additional vendors to the markets. BID4Oban supply the market traders licences, gazebos and infrastructure to enable these events to take place. By having one organisation running the markets we ensure that there is no duplication or unwanted vendors setting up adhoc markets. We are keen to take bookings from any interested parties who may want to sell their goods or services.

Full details are available on www.bid4oban.co.uk

BID PARTNERSHIP WORKING



BID4Oban work very closely with Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance (OLTA) (www.oban.org). We have a minute of understanding that ensures we support them financially with an annual grant of at least £10,000.

This grant ensures that OLTA can gain access to additional funding through match funding of the grant given by BID4Oban. This is used to promote Oban as a tourism destination not only on their website but by way of billboard advertising across Scotland, taxi-wrap advertising and on the Glasgow and London undergrounds. OLTA play a crucial role in marketing Oban as a must visit destination. Their website is testament to this being the first site you will see if you Google Oban! They are part of the Argyll and the Islands Tourism Alliance ensuring their influence is not just felt in Oban but the greater geographical area. Part of the match funding was used to film the Oban



Sportive and this film is available on YouTube and will be used to market the 2020 event. It highlights the town and surrounding area at its best. During 2019 both organisations represented Oban as a destination at the VisitScotland Expo in Glasgow. We had access to over 12,000 tour operators and visitors to showcase what is available in the Oban and Lorn area. From this event numerous enquiries were made, and we were able to attract many additional groups and visitors to the town. For 2020 both organisations will participate at the Visit Scotland Expo in Aberdeen on April 1 and 2.

Our relationship with established town organisations continues to go from strength to strength offering support and marketing opportunities for events and festivals. We are always happy to offer grants to enable clubs etc to bring events to Oban that add to the economic benefit to businesses across the town.

EVENT GRANTS AND FUND

BID4Oban uses part of the levy it collects from the business community to help support local events, festivals and community organisations. Since its inception, we have invested £250,000 in the Oban community ensuring events can function and are supported financially. We have supported festivals, clubs and community organisations. We have supported Oban Live since its inception and this event is now generating in excess of £1.4m in economic benefit to the businesses in Oban.



Another event that has benefited from financial and in-kind support is the Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival held in May each year. This event generates an economic benefit to Oban of £1.2m. Motorfest is an event that has grown since small beginnings in 2015. The event now held in September attracted in excess of 70 vehicles on display, many from outwith the local area. Combined with a mountain bike stunt show in 2019, the event attracted in excess of 2500 visitors. Oban Sportif 2019 attracted large numbers of entrants from across Scotland for the two-day event. With its new base at Oban Distillery and support from Diageo this event brings many visitors to the town and a great economic impact.

The BID4Oban Reindeer Parade and Christmas lights switch-on has proved one of the best attended events in Oban during the busy festive season. In excess of 5000 Obanites and visitors attended this year's parade and celebration. This event could not take place without the terrific support of the Rotary Club of Oban and Oban Lions Club.

Fireworks displays are always well attended and 2019 was no exception.

With the help of Scottish Sea Farms who sponsored the November 5 display, huge crowds lined the Esplanade and the North Pier to view one of the biggest displays ever seen in Oban.

A spectacular display also took place to celebrate the New Year from McCaig's Tower.

During 2020 BID4Oban in conjunction with Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance will be launching a Sea Shanty Festival during June. This is a first for Oban and will bring groups from across the UK and further afield.

We are also in the early stages of bringing STORM, a giant 10-metre high puppet, to the town. This will be a spectacular event and it is anticipated that thousands of visitors will be attracted to Oban.

Details on how to apply for grant funding can be found at www.bid4oban.co.uk or contacting our office in Stevenson Street.



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White, Manual SWB - **£10,750+VAT**



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Black, GT Line, Dci 90, manual - **£11,950**



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White, DYN, Dci estate, manual - **£11,500**



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West Coast. We will deliver your car home to you and collect the courtesy car for an additional fee of £50.00.

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PRESS RELEASE

Do you have a house to clear out? And would you like to be part of an exciting new TV show?

STV Productions is seeking home owners in Oban to uncover treasures

STV Productions is searching for people who are clearing out their homes in and around the Oban area to take part in an exciting new television series, which is being made for Discovery-owned channel, Really, and STV.

The producers of this heartwarming show would love to chat to people who are downsizing, emigrating or have inherited a property – or indeed need to clear their house for any other reason.

Fronted by Angus Ashworth, the expert auctioneer will help bring to life the human story of these house clearances at what is often an emotional time. Every clearance can uncover treasures, such as Persian rugs gathering dust in the garage, war medals and wedding crystal forgotten in the loft, even fossils and rare collectables.

Those taking part will then be put in touch with Ryedale Auctioneers where they can decide if they want to go ahead with auction – and they might make a bit of cash along the way!

Every episode will tell stories and celebrate those hidden gems in what is guaranteed to be a surprising and

uplifting journey of discovery.

Presenter and Yorkshire auctioneer Angus Ashworth, said: 'I'm so delighted to be part of this new series. Clearing houses is something of a passion but equally I can't wait to meet new people and hear their stories as we explore the contents of the houses, hopefully unearthing some hidden gems. It's amazing what treasures can be found in amongst the clutter or hiding in an attic. If they're there, we'll find them.'

'It's a privilege to be invited into people's homes and I'm sure there are lots of people out there who need help with a clearance – so please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you and have a chat.'

If you'd like to take part in this new series get in touch with takepart@clearout.tv or call 0141 300 3214 for an initial chat.



Forest Investment Opportunity: Cnoc Odhar, Argyll Offers Over £1.2m



An excellent opportunity to acquire 226.67 hectares of commercial conifer forest on the Kintyre Peninsula near the port of Campbeltown. Property comprises of a varied age structure including 86.28ha of 1-10yrs, 95.94ha of productive conifer aged 32-42yrs, 13.11ha of land for restocking & 31.34ha of open land, broadleaf & riverside. The property contains substantial volumes with future timber revenue. A windfarm exclusivity agreement is in place with excellent option payments being negotiated. The property can be found at Grid Reference NR 665 154

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**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
20/00437/FUL	Land 20SE Of 35B Ben Nevis Drive Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Fort William	Proposed Alterations and Extension (Re-notification address change)
20/00755/FUL	Great Glen Water Park South Laggan, Spean Bridge	Erection of 10 holiday lodges

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

**Proposed Let of a Croft/
Part of a Croft**
Abigail and Martin Beastall are applying to let the tenancy of part of croft at Keils Croft, Isle of Jura to Catherine and Andrew McCallum of The Byre, Craighouse, Isle of Jura
Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.gov.scot within 28 days from the date of the advert.

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Argyll and Bute Council

Councillor Jim Lynch (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor Lynch will be holding surgeries during the month of **MARCH 2020** as follows:

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Friday 13th March	Municipal Buildings, Albany Street Oban	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Tuesday 17th March	Soroba Community Centre, 8A Scalpay Terrace, Soroba	6.00pm - 8.00pm

He can be contacted by email - Jim.Lynch@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567893

Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor Sir McGrigor will be holding a surgery on **Friday 27th March 2020** in the **Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 10.00am - 12 Noon.**
He can be contacted by email - Jamie.McGrigor@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567853

Councillor Kieron Green (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Green will be holding a surgery on **Tuesday 3rd March 2020** in the **Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 10.00am - 12 noon.**
He can be contacted by email - Kieron.Green@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 562 444

Councillor Elaine Robertson (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Robertson will be holding a surgery on **Friday 27th March 2020** in the **Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.00pm - 4.00pm.**
Councillor Robertson can also be contacted by email - Elaine.Robertson@argyll-bute.gov.uk

**CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD
DECROFTING APPLICATION**

GF Scanlon
I Whowell
175 Newton Ardtoe,
Adnamurchan & Sunart
0.130 ha - Amenity ground
103399

Written comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 27/03/2020. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW - info@crofting.gov.scot

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

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
20/00289/PP	Alterations to include the removal of chimney and replacement of 8no timber frame arched style windows on the west and south elevations of the same style and finish	St Johns Cathedral, 129 George Street, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 5NT
20/00288/LIB	Alterations to include the removal of chimney and replacement of 8no timber frame arched style windows on the west and south elevations of the same style and finish	St Johns Cathedral, 129 George Street, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 5NT
19/02572/PP	External alterations and use of basement level as separate flat with additional separate entrance	Calgary Castle, Calgary, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA75 6QU
20/00295/PP	Renewal of planning permission 16/03372/PP - Erection of 3 dwellinghouses	Former Sawmill Site, Invercreran, Appin, Argyll And Bute
20/00268/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land Approx 180M South West Of Ballinaby Farm, Gruinart, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
20/00224/PP	Installation of replacement windows	Cala Sith, Main Street, Port Charlotte, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA48 7TX

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




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

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

**THE A828 TRUNK ROAD (LEDAIG)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON USE OF ROAD AND TEMPORARY 30MPH SPEED RESTRICTION) ORDER 2020**

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS give notice that they have made the above order under sections 2(1) and (2), 4(1) and 14(1)(b) and (4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 temporarily prohibiting traffic on that length of the A828 Connel - South Ballachulish Trunk Road at Ledaig from its access to the property known as "Cairraigh Mor" in a generally northwards direction to a point North of said access, a distance of 250 metres or thereby. The Order, which is required to facilitate a drone survey on the A828 Trunk Road, will be in operation from 28th February to until 4th March 2020. It is anticipated that the restrictions will be in operation for 10 minutes at a time during off peak hour and will only have effect in relation to such part or parts of the length of road as indicated by the appropriate traffic signs. The Order does not apply to vehicles being used in an emergency for fire brigade, ambulance, police or coastguard purposes or to vehicles falling within regulation 3(4) of the Road Traffic Exemptions, (Special Forces)(variation and amendment) Regulations 2011 when used in accordance with regulation 3(5) of the Regulations.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES
An alternative route is not required. A copy of the Order and this Notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/road-orders/?roadorderregion=1291> For information about roadworks on motorways and trunk roads visit www.trafficscotland.org.uk

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



**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (C1094 GLEN ETIVE)
(TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2020**

Notice is hereby given that on the 21 February 2020 The Highland Council made an Order in terms of Section 14(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended entitled as above. The Order has been requested by SSE to provide a safe working space for their contractors to carry out essential works on the road.

This Order shall come into operation at 20.00 hrs on Monday 2nd March 2020 and will remain in effect until 06.00 hrs on Monday 9th March 2020. Throughout that period, the use by vehicles of the length of road specified in the Schedule hereto except for use by emergency services is prohibited each night during the 10hour period commencing at 20.00 hrs and ending at 06.00 hrs.
A copy of the Order can be inspected at the Service Point, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William, on weekdays during normal office hours.

21/02/2020: Richard Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Highland Council, Carr's Corner Industrial Estate, Fort William

SCHEDULE

Road Affected

C1094 GLEN ETIVE
Commencing at a point 2.5km south east of Dalness House, extending in a south easterly direction for 600m or thereby.

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT
Mr Garry Todd has registered their croft The Dell, Kilmore and Kilbride 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 November 13, 2020.
Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C6789.

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT
Mr Charles Self has registered their croft Mossfield, Isle of Coll 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 November 19, 2020.
Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is A0416

DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

IM Larg
1 Caoles, Tiree
100852
0.104 ha
Reason - Proposed new development
Condition - With fencing and use conditions.

A Henderson
2 Ardery, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
100869
0.217 ha
Reason - Proposed new development
Condition - With fencing and use conditions

A Henderson
2 Ardery, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
100868
0.215 ha
Reason - Existing croft house site & garden ground
Condition - With fencing conditions.

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

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A vacancy has arisen for a qualified motor vehicle engineer to maintain a fleet of cars, estate vehicles and vintage cars, together with some seasonal servicing and maintenance of private boats. There will be a requirement for driver/courier service when required. The successful candidate will be self-motivated and will be required to maintain relevant records, control stocks of spares and equipment and keep excellent garage facilities functioning to a high standard.

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DEATHS

MACAFFER - Sarah Anne (née McKerrrell) aged 82 years, of Kilbarchan, formerly of Aldrach, Islay. Passed away peacefully in Elderslie Care Home, Paisley on February 15, 2020, beloved wife of late James (Jim) and dearly loving mother of late Kenneth and Gordon. Funeral service was held in The Round Church on February 24, followed by interment in Bowmore Cemetery, Islay.

SOLANKI - In loving memory of Mary Ann Solanki (née Currie) of Port Wemyss, Islay, who passed away peacefully on February 15, 2020, aged 79. Dearly loved mother of Nigel, Claire and Sheena.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMERON (Macdonald-Dorlin) - Shona and Ian and all the family, wish to thank everyone for their kind expressions of sympathy,

cards, flowers, telephone calls, and support after the loss of our Mum Morag. Thanks to MacGillivray Buses. Special thanks to Canon Ian MacMaster and Fr. Emmanuel Ndukwu for a lovely service. Special thanks to Mairi Currie, Strathcarron Hospice, Befrienders, District Nurses, The Palliative Care Team. Friends and family for their fantastic help and support over these past couple of months. Thanks to the Coop Funeral Care Gladys and Robert for their kind and professional service throughout. The Grange Manor for providing excellent food and refreshments. Finally a huge thank you to all who attended the service, and generously donated £650 to be split between Strathcarron Hospice and the Jerichos.

COLQUHOUN - The family of the late Joan Colquhoun would like to thank all who attended the service and

acknowledge the many kind expressions of sympathy received during their recent bereavement. Many thanks to the home care team, Ward I in Oban Hospital, Etive House, Lochnell Hotel and Petals. Sincere thanks to The Very Rev'd Canon Margi Campbell for a lovely service to celebrate Joan's life. To St John's Choir and Norman Nicholson, Organist. Thanks also to Munn's Funeral Directors for their efficient and caring arrangements.

COWAN - John, Mary-Ann and their families wish to convey their sincere thanks and appreciation to all family, friends and neighbours for the kind, thoughtful and comforting expressions of sympathy received upon the sad passing of Annie. Special thanks to Dalmally Medical Practice, Rev. Margaret Millar for conducting a comforting and fitting service, Alasdair MacDonald for the music in

the church, Iain MacIntyre for the piping from the church, Ian MacInnes from D & A Munn Ltd. for his personal and professional support in the funeral arrangements, Petals of Oban for the beautiful flowers and all at Dalmally Community Centre for the provision of excellent food and refreshments and finally to all who attended the church and graveside. The generous donations which amounted to £652 were collected for Oban Hospice Ltd.

ELDER - Fiona would like to thank all family and friends for their support after the passing of Donnie. Many thanks to the staff in the Belford Hospital and Glen Mor Surgery for their compassionate care over the last few years. Thanks to both the MacKintosh Care Centre, Mallaig and Moss Park Nursing Home, Fort William. Finally many thanks to John McLellan staff for their support and guidance.

MACMILLAN - Anthony and all the family would like to thank the community for the kindness shown and messages of condolence following the sudden loss of Ruth. This has proved to be a comfort. Special thanks to the Rev Morag Muirhead for her support and for such a personal and moving service. Thanks also to all the staff at Manson and MacBeath and to the team on duty at A&E, Belford Hospital for all that they did. Thank you to the overwhelming crowd who attended Ruth's funeral and to all who donated in her memory. The huge sum of £1197.38 was raised.

McQUADE - The family of Stella would like to thank everyone who sent messages of sympathy, flowers and cards after our recent loss. Angela and staff of Eadar Glinn

Care Home for their care of mum over the last 3 years, staff of Lorn Medical Centre, Teresa Hoey for her Sunday visits to mum and Father James MacNeil for his visits to mum both at McKelvie Road and Eadar Glinn and for Funeral Mass. Lynette of Petals for flowers and Catriona and staff at Hamish Hoey & Sons for their personal and professional help with all funeral arrangements. To the staff in the Royal Hotel for refreshments after funeral. The retiring collection for Eadar Glinn Residents Comfort Fund raised £156.41.

PAISLEY - The family of the late Marion Paisley would like to thank all family and friends for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them at this very sad time. Grateful thanks to Dr John Wallace, all doctors, nurses and staff at Craig Nevis Surgery. Special thanks to all the Castlereare and NHS Homecare teams for their loving care and attention to mum over the years. Sincere thanks to Rev. Richard Baxter and Rev. Morag Muirhead for their spiritual care and heart-warming service. Special thanks to everyone at John McLellan Funeral Directors for all their loving care, kindness and support at this sad time. God Bless you all.

MEMORIALS

CURTIS - Brian, born August 7, 1943 and died February 29, 2016. Much loved and sadly missed. - Mary Ann and family, home and away.

MACLEAN - Treasured memories of Calum, a special husband on his 28th anniversary. Calum, those we love, live in our hearts forever. - All my love Chrissie xx.

MACVICAR - Christina (MacInnes), died March 1, 2007. Forever loved.

- Johnnie. Missed every day. - Catherine, John, John, Niall and Michael.

McLENNAN - In loving memory of Willie, a dearly loved brother and uncle who passed away February 24, 2008.

Always loved and sadly missed.

- Elsie, Margaret and families. **MORTON** - In loving memory of a dear wife, mum and daughter-in-law Catherine, passed away February 24, 1995.

25 years ago we held you hand as you slipped away.

Not a day goes by that we don't think about you.

So many happy times and memories we have.

We miss you just as much now as we did then, love you always.

- John, John, David and Mum. Karen, Norman, Christopher, Lewis and Arran.

NICOLSON - In loving memory of a much loved wife, mother and grandmother, Joan, who passed away February 17, 2019.

Sorely missed. - Your loving family, Derick, Lynda, and Sarah.

WANT - In loving memory of a dear sister and aunt, Margaret MacKinnon, died March 3, 2014, also remembering her husband David, died November 27, 2018.

We love and miss you. - Elizabeth, Roy, Shirley, Aiden and the girls.

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Tiam Lithgow and Stephanie Plant are backing the campaign to reduce stillbirths.

Campaign aims to reduce risk of stillbirth in Argyll and Bute

Pregnant women in Argyll and Bute will benefit from a new public health awareness campaign launched by the Scottish Government, offering important information on ways to reduce the risk of stillbirth.

The campaign, which is the first of its kind in Scotland, will be rolled out nationwide and advises expectant mums of 'three ways to lower the risk of stillbirth' – go to sleep on your side, don't smoke and monitor your baby's movements.

Stillbirth can be a challeng-

ing topic to talk about and knowledge around reducing the risk is limited. This is why the Scottish Government is encouraging discussion with expectant mums in Argyll and Bute around the campaign messages.

Jeane Freeman, Health Secretary, said: 'Stillbirth and the loss of a baby is a tragedy. We need to break the silence around stillbirth and challenge the belief that it is just something that can happen to pregnant women.'

'In 2018, Scotland had the lowest stillbirth rates on

record which was 3.7 stillbirths per 1,000 live births. Although the rate of stillbirth in Scotland has reduced significantly in recent years, there is still more that we can do.'

The campaign has been developed by the Scottish Government-led Stillbirth Group, in partnership with NHS Scotland, MCQIC and stillbirth charities, Sands UK, Held in Our Hearts (formerly Sands Lothians) and SiMBA.

Chief midwifery officer and deputy chief nursing officer Ann Holmes, said: 'In our line

of work we are often asked by expectant mums what they can do to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy, so it's great that three key behaviours have been identified that have the potential to reduce stillbirth.'

'It is important pregnant women receive consistent advice about going to sleep on their side, not smoking and monitoring their baby's movements during pregnancy.'

For more information speak to your midwife, visit parentclub.scot or read the NHS pregnancy guide, Ready, Steady, Baby!

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

During these past two Sundays, Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis ensured that I was unable to cross to the Island of Lismore to conduct worship in the cathedral.

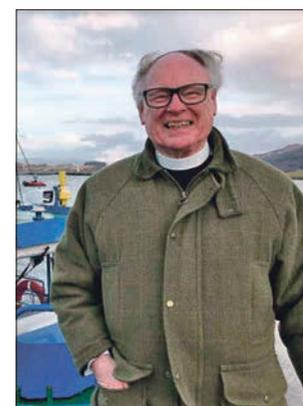
As I sat drinking coffee in the Port Appin Hotel, looking at the enormous waves and squally showers with the ever-changing drama of the skies, I thought: 'I wouldn't like to be going anywhere near that crossing today.'

While that was not an issue as the ferry was not sailing, I began to think of the days when the weather was rough and yet the 'good ship Lismore' did make the journey from Point to Port Appin or vice versa. We may think on those days how vulnerable we feel as the vessel rises and falls with the swell of the sea.

Yet others have been much more vulnerable. Whether it is Alan or Donald or Andy or Mark, a skipper and mate have to sail out to the MV Lismore, clamber on board whether the rise or fall of the sea or the darkness makes this dangerous or not, tie up the dingy on which they have made the journey and start the vessel ready for service.

For the service they provide, not only are the people of the Island of Lismore appreciative but also those who far and wide also benefit from what those ferrymen do, and those who have been ferrymen before them have done.

As we get on and off the ferry on calm summer days, we tend to forget the spells of severe winter weather and those mornings we can



Reverend Iain Barclay.

assuredly say: 'Rather than me.'

But what of Jesus? Just like the days when we do not use the ferry and we forget about the crew, so we can easily forget about Jesus. He doesn't force His presence into our lives, He is just there, being who He is and doing what He does – forgiving us our sins.

To achieve that act of forgiveness took a risk. The risk that we would reject His sacrifice on Calvary's Cross or just forget it. But when a storm hits our lives, and we are surrounded by all manner of difficulties or personal pain, it is then we turn to Him and ask His forgiveness or healing or guidance or love – and we will receive it.

Like the ferrymen, Jesus has a job to do. His was authorised by His Father in Heaven, and He is with us every moment of every day, only asking that we recognise him.

Reverend Iain Barclay, Appin Parish Church, linked with Lismore.

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Oban Camanachd look for a

Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss hopes his side hits the ground running when the new shinty season starts on Saturday March 7.

The first four league matches of 2019 yielded just two points for the side who eventually finished second in the Mowi Premiership.

'The start to the season ruined us in the league last year, so we want to make a good start this time around,' he said.

The opening three league fixtures are Glasgow Mid Argyll, away; Fort William, home; and Kinlochshiel, away, and Sloss knows his team will need to be ready for the challenge.

'Blair [MacFarlane] has been training with GMA so we know they have good, fit players. They have been difficult opponents in the past and I recall our keeper Cammy Sutherland making good saves against them before we ran out winners last year.

'We've not played Fort William for a while but I know their young players Lachie [Shaw], Ryan [Boyle] and Lewis [Clark] and they will be keen to impress after such a good season last year.

'Our third match is at Kinlochshiel who now have a good pitch. It was useful to play on that at the end of last season. Kinlochshiel will be better this season and their final position in the league last term was a false one. Injuries cost them and, when their league chances ended, they took the chance to play a number of their promising youngsters in the first team. That won't have helped them win games, but the young players will be better for the experience so they have boosted their squad size for this season.'

Belief is something Sloss has been keen to install into his squad as he explained: 'We need to believe we can win games. That's something we worked on last year and, by the end of last season, we were going into matches knowing we were going to win. That was a marked improvement and we want to carry that into the new season.'

Another pet subject for the Oban



Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss.

Camanachd manager is the importance of fitness. 'I know I keep banging on about fitness,' he said, 'but it's so important as getting to the ball first is a huge advantage. It's important to us and you can see how it's worked for Kingussie who really used their speed last year. It's the same when you look at Fort William and Glasgow Mid Argyll. They both have young, fit players, who are full of running. I include ourselves in that category. You can see a generation of very good shinty players coming through at several clubs. That is good for the clubs concerned and will be good for the game of shinty for years to come.'

Oban Camanachd made the conscious decision to blood several of their younger players towards the end of last season. That makes for a large first team squad but Sloss is clear he'll need them all.

He said: 'I'm not overly worried about the size of the first team squad as injuries and other commitments will kick in and we'll need everyone. For example, Gary McKerracher won't be available for the first couple of games of the season while Scott MacMillan and Keith MacMillan work shifts so their work commitments will be a factor. When we do have everyone available, we will go with the boys who regularly attend training. It would ruin our ethos to do otherwise and ignore training.'

Sloss acknowledged Aidan MacIntyre's retiral and Lorne Dickie's unavailability during the early part of the season will mean changes. 'We'll re-jig things this year,' he said, 'especially in midfield but we are essentially a really young first team squad with at least six of the boys aged under 20.'

'I have some of the best young shinty players in the country. They have won national competitions as youngsters and there is no reason why they can't continue to do that in the Oban Camanachd first team. I would have liked to have had Lorne [Dickie] to help with his experience but I hope we can push on. Potentially, we can be stronger than last year as our younger players have had another 12 months' experience. However, other teams will be stronger too.'

'It's a hard league and there are good sides which is where fine margins that can work in your favour in relation to belief and fitness come into play.'

Oban Camanachd and Lochside captains confirmed

Scotland player Daniel Cameron continues as Oban Camanachd captain for the 2020 shinty season.

Cameron led his teammates to a second successive Glasgow Celtic Society Cup victory last season with the team also finishing runners-up in all other competitions.

Oban Camanachd manager



Inveraray's Andrew Fraser in action during the friendly match with Glasgow Mid Argyll played on a 3G pitch at Bishopbriggs last Saturday. Photograph: Stephen Lawson.

Stephen Sloss said: 'Daniel Cameron will be captain again next season. Some clubs look to rotate the captain's position but, for me, a captain has a specific job to do and that includes leading by example at training as well as during matches and by showing the behaviour traits you want others to follow. Daniel has all these attributes in abundance which is why he is such a good leader.'

Lochside Rovers manager Gareth Evans, in his second spell in charge, has also named his skipper with Evan MacLellan taking the armband this season with Callum Kirsop vice captain.

MacLellan's return from a series of injuries is a boost for the side who have a difficult start to the season with successive matches against the Glasgow Mid Argyll seconds, Ballachulish and Bute.

Pre-season friendly results

Atrocious weather continued to disrupt the pre-season friendlies on Saturday February 22.

Newtonmore P Oban Camanachd P

Oban Camanachd's 12.30pm throw-up against Newtonmore at the Eilan was switched to Kinraig earlier in the week but a Saturday morning inspection ruled the pitch unplayable.

Oban Celtic P Kilmallie P

Oban Celtic's pre-season clash with Mowi Premiership side Kilmallie

was called off on Friday afternoon as Oban's Mossfield was water-logged.

Beaully P Fort William P

The meeting between Beaully and Fort William was called off on Friday lunchtime as the incessant rain left Braeview Park and An Aird water-logged.

Fort William P Kilmallie P

There was to have been a second team derby between Fort William and Kilmallie but An Aird was ruled unplayable on Thursday.

Kinlochshiel P Glenurquhart P

With the pitches at Rèaraig and Blairbeg unplayable, Kinlochshiel and Glenurquhart were forced to cancel their pre-season friendly match.

Caberfeidh P Skye Camanachd P

Caberfeidh and Skye Camanachd were left disappointed when their friendly was called off on Friday with Castle Leod unplayable.

Both teams hope to see their first pre-season action of the year this Saturday.

Glasgow Mid Argyll 5 Inveraray 2

Glasgow Mid Argyll and Inveraray beat the weather, but their match had to be transferred from at Yoker to a 3G pitch at Bishopbriggs.

Ewen Fraser debuted for Mark

Bain's GMA side after joining the club in the close season and the former Newtonmore player marked his first start with a four goal haul. Duncan 'Ach' MacRae got the other.

The Inveraray goals were scored by Lewis MacNicol.

Glasgow Mid Argyll P Aberdeen University P

The game between Glasgow Mid Argyll's second team and Aberdeen University was called off after the poor travelling conditions for the students were considered.

Inverness P Strathglass P

Strathglass were to make the short journey to Inverness but the game fell to the weather.

Aberdour P Kingussie P

The friendly between Aberdour and the Kingussie seconds was postponed on Thursday lunchtime as Silversands was unplayable and there was a less than favourable weather forecast for the following 48 hours.

Boleskine P Kinlochshiel P

Boleskine's 2.30pm throw-up against the Kinlochshiel second team at Smith Park passed a Friday afternoon pitch inspection but was called off on Saturday morning.

Strathglass P Caberfeidh P

The match between the Strathglass

good start

seconds and the Caberfeidh seconds at Cannich was another weather casualty.

Tayforth 5 English Shinty Association 1
Tayforth beat the English Shinty Association 5-1 at Armadale Academy, Bathgate.

Tayforth led 4-0 at the break but a spirited second half performance from the English saw the second half finish all square.

This weekend's pre-season friendlies

The final round of pre-season friendlies takes place on Saturday February 29.

Oban Camanachd have only managed one February outing and that was on the 4G pitch at Oban High School so their final opportunity to play on grass is this Saturday against Ballachulish at Jubilee Park. Throw-up 1pm.

Both sides will be desperate for the game to go ahead with the new season just a week away. Should the Jubilee be unplayable, they will seek alternative venues including Ganavan.

Oban Celtic and Taynuilt meet at Mossfield to contest the Robert Wylie Memorial Cup. Throw-up is at 1pm. Oban Celtic are the holders, having beaten Taynuilt 3-0 at Taynuilt Sports Field last year. Daniel MacMillan and Ross MacMillan gave Celtic an early cushion before Lee Askew got the third late in the contest.

Kilmallie and Lochaber will hope for an improvement in the weather so they can contest the BSW Cup at Canal Parks. Throw-up is at 1pm. Kilmallie are holders after Bryan Mackay's goal gave them a 1-0 victory over Fort William at Canal Parks last year.

Newtonmore's open day includes a match against newly-promoted Mowi Premiership side Fort William at the Eilan. The sides will look for an alternative venue if the pitch is unplayable.

The MacDonald Cup and Ali Ban Cup are both up for grabs as the Glenurquhart and Strathglass first

and second teams meet for their annual tussles at Blairbeg. The Glenurquhart and Strathglass ladies open with a match at 10.30am. The seconds play at noon, with the seniors at 2pm.

The Glengarry squad head for Fife to play Mowi National Division newcomers Aberdour.

Lovat and Skye clash at Balgate, whilst Kinlochshiel take on Glasgow Mid Argyll at Rèaraig Park.

Kingussie and Caberfeidh play at the Dell for the Bill MacPherson Memorial Plate, whilst their second teams are scheduled to clash at Castle Leod.

There is also a match between Bute and Col Glen.

WCA season starts

Women's Camanachd Association fixtures get under way this weekend.

The Mowi National Division fixtures don't start until next month but Skye Camanachd's second team and Inverness get a full programme of regional matches under way in Mowi North Division 2 at Pair nan Laoch, Portree, on Saturday February 29. The following day, in the same division, Glengarry travel to play Strathspey, whilst Fort William visit Strathglass.

The Lochaber second team have home advantage against Kinlochshiel.

The newly-formed Badenoch second team does not have an opening day fixture in this nine team league.

In Mowi South Division 2, the Oban Celtic squad head for Bute in their opening fixture, whilst Ardnamurchan welcome Uddingston who beat Bute 3-1 in a friendly at the weekend.

Tayforth have home advantage against Cowal and Bute and Glasgow Mid Argyll's second team play Dunadd.

MacDonald to skipper Lovat

New Lovat co-managers Alan MacRae and Jamie Matheson have confirmed Stuart MacDonald will captain their side for the 2020 shinty season.

Continued on page 52



Heavy snow showers during the warm up before the Glasgow Mid Argyll and Inveraray friendly. Photograph: Stephen Lawson

new SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

Win!
THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £2450

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.

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.

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competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

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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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LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



The two entries who got nearest the ball and each receive £25 are:
C MacDonald, Oban
&
I Campbell, Oban

OT

Continued from page 51

Keeper MacDonald, who also skippered the Scotland national squad to a 26-4 victory over Ireland at Abbotstown in last year's shinty/hurling international, takes the captain's armband from Callum Cruden.

This is a second spell as captain for MacDonald who previously led Lovat to 2014 MacTavish Cup success when they beat Glenurquhart 5-1 in the final at the Bught Park.

Another Scotland international, Craig Mainland, is the Lovat vice captain for the season ahead.

National First Disability Shinty Festival boost

Organisers of the Fraser MacPhee Primary Schools Shinty Tournament have presented a £1,000 cheque to organisers of the National First Disability Shinty Festival.

The money was raised from kitchen sales, a raffle and donations on the day of the popular youth shinty tournament on Sunday June 9 2019. It was rounded up to £1,000 by a donation from tournament organisers Rosemary and Duncan MacPhee.

Mrs MacPhee said: 'We're delighted to support this fantastic event.'

'Shinty is a great and inclusive sport which should be accessible to everyone.'

'We sincerely hope this contribution will help to support more disabled shinty players to reach their full potential on the field as well as having the same fun and enjoyment as other youth shinty players.'

Camanachd Association Regional Development Manager, Ronald Ross added: 'The 2019 National First Disability Shinty Festival was a rousing success with a record 12 teams participating in the two-day event.'

'The continuation and development of this competition is testament to the sponsors and the volunteers who give up their time to ensure the festival is a success.'

'We are extremely grateful to the MacPhee family for this kind donation which will go some way to ensuring the National First Disability Festival continues to flourish.'

The 2020 National First Disability Shinty Festival will take place in Aviemore on Wednesday April 29 and Thursday April 30.

This year's Fraser MacPhee Primary Schools Shinty Tournament takes place at An Aird on Sunday June 7.

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email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk



Alvance Aluminium Balliemore Cup first round draw

The draw for the first round of the Alvance Aluminium Balliemore Cup took place on Monday February 24 at Lochaber High School.

Lochaber is one of the Camanachd Association's Schools of Shinty which means the sport is on the curriculum and available to 600 pupils.

This is the third year of partnership with Alvance Aluminium, formerly Liberty. The draw was conducted by Tom Uppington and Rosie Flannigan from Alvance Aluminium.

The full draw is: Beauly v Tayforth; Lochcarron v Skye; Inverness v GU; Oban Celtic v Col Glen; Inveraray

v Glengarry; Taynuilt v Lochaber; Ballachulish v Strathglass; Aberdour v Bute. Ties to be played on Saturday April 11.

Tom Uppington said: 'Alvance is passionate about investing in the community. We have a few employees who play shinty and will be taking part in the Balliemore Cup this year. Arran MacPhee, who lifted last year's Alvance Aluminium Balliemore Cup as Fort William captain, works with us and it is great to see the impact our investment makes to the lives of people within and outwith Lochaber.'

Derek Keir of the Camanachd Association said: 'We were delighted to conduct the Alvance Aluminium Balliemore Cup Draw at Lochaber High School, one of our new Schools of Shinty. This development will mean shinty is delivered to hundreds of pupils every week and reinforces our commitment to working with schools to improve the take up of our most ancient sport.'

Yvonne Clarke, Principal Teacher of Health and Well-being with PE and HE said: 'Lochaber High School is delighted to become a School of Shinty. Shinty is an integral part

of the school's DNA and we are delighted to be able to play a part in providing additional opportunities for all children to participate in. We currently run after school and lunchtime sessions. The next step for will be the introduction of indoor shinty with plans to run inter-house leagues.'

'The Camanachd Association's Regional Development Manager Ronald Ross came to Lochaber High School last year to put PE staff through basic training and from this we have introduced shinty to the PE curriculum.'

Keith Loades, Camanachd Association president; Derek Keir, Camanachd Association Chief Executive Officer; Tom Uppington, Alvance General Manager; Rosie Flannigan, Alvance Executive Assistant and Arran MacPhee, Fort William captain and Alvance employee with Lochaber High School pupils who have just finished their SQA National 5 practical examination on shinty.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson. Distributed by the Camanachd Association.

All teams are welcome to take part in the P7 and under and P5 and under categories. For more information or to register teams, email cmacphee@hotmail.co.uk or text 07768 103643.

Full information will be emailed to coaches.

Inverness bid to secure shinty at The Bught

Inverness Shinty Club is considering making a community asset transfer request in its efforts to keep the Bught Park as a shinty pitch.

Community asset transfers are where community bodies have the right to make requests to local authorities, Scottish Ministers and a range of public bodies for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of. They can request ownership, lease or other rights.

The public authorities must transparently assess requests against a specified list of criteria, laid out in the Act, and agree the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.

Should such a request be refused, the community group has a right to appeal or to ask for a review of the decision.

In this instance, such a request would be made to Highland Council which, when considering the request, must be mindful of the current use of the area and requests for use from other sports and

other bodies. Shinty has been played at the Bught Park since 1887 when it hosted a match between Strathglass and Glenurquhart.

As well as being the home pitch for all Inverness club games, the iconic ground also hosts Scotland internationals, MacTavish Cup Finals and it is part of the prestigious Camanachd Cup Final circuit.

Inverness Shinty Club has made efforts to promote youth shinty in the area since 2015 and, with the support of more than 40 volunteer coaches, they encourage more than 400 youngsters to play shinty every week and are looking to expand into more schools.

The club also runs senior and reserve men's teams, ladies teams and juvenile teams, who all use the Bught for matches and training so any pitch unavailability is a threat to current and future progression.

The club will be making efforts to tell their story and reach out for community support.

They also recently became a charity, adopting the associated policies, and aspire to be a great club in its own right without their best players being a source of talent for other clubs who can offer dedicated facilities.

Inverness Shinty Club will keep an on-going dialogue, mapping their progress on their public Facebook page and club website.

Annie Cowan, Glenorchy

Glenorchy Shinty Club mourned the loss of Annie Cowan who died suddenly on Sunday February 9.

Annie was a lifelong Glenorchy fan and watched her six brothers play for her beloved club. She also held a number of roles within the club, including the position of secretary, and she was key in the formation of the

Glenorchy Ladies team during the 1980s. Her presence on the touchline will be greatly missed at Glenorchy shinty matches. Annie's funeral took place at Glenorchy Parish Church, Dalmally on Monday February 24.

Inveraray players recognised at awards night

A formal occasion on Saturday February 15 allowed outgoing Inveraray Shinty Club chairman Euan McMurdo to thank and recognise the club's sponsors and helpers.

They were: The Inveraray Inn, The George Hotel, D A MacDonald and Londis, which not only helps financially but always provides the club with enthusiastic support.

Thanked

The shinty club also thanked Brian and Audrey, of Londis, who will be moving away later in the year, recognising the great asset they have been to the Inveraray community and wishing them all the best for the future.

Other individuals who help the club throughout the year were thanked, including Roddy and May MacPherson, who have helped raise funds for the club through their annual quiz night and selling lottery tickets, and D J MacDonald, who also sells weekly tickets.

The club also thanked all the individuals involved with making the club an asset to



Left to right: prizewinners Allan MacDonald, Robert Wood, Kenny Kirkhope, Campbell Watt and Kane Kirkhope.

the community, from helping raise funds through the club's annual open day for the newly-formed baby and toddlers group to helping to raise the majority of funds through grants for the new community minibus.

Once the formalities of thanking everyone had been completed, awards were presented.

These went to Campbell Watt, second team top goal scorer; Allan MacDonald, first team top goal scorer; Kane Kirkhope, Jock MacCallum trophy for most

improved/most promising youngster; Kenny Kirkhope second team player of the year; and Robert Wood, first team player of the year.

With the recent bad weather, the club has failed to get any momentum going for pre-season, however, it starts its campaign on March 7 with the first team at home to Glenurquhart and the second team away to Kilmory.

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Mull Golden Eagles soar at SECC Armadillo

Mull's Cheerleaders Seahawks Golden Eagles soared to success at the recent BCA Scottish Sensation event in Glasgow - their first competitive fixture.

After months of preparation, the group of eight to 12-year-olds took to the stage at the SECC Armadillo in front of hundreds of other competitors and spectators to perform in front of a panel of judges.

Competing in a difficult junior division at the biggest cheerleading competition in Scotland, the group from Mull remained

unfazed with the judges only managing to find 0.25 of a deduction in their performance.

Head coach Lucy Wilson said: 'The bond these girls have to work together as a team meant they did everything that was expected of them and more and I've never been so proud to see them own the stage.'

'The smiles on their faces while they performed really makes all the tough training sessions and precise routine planning so worth it.'

Lucy reserved special thanks for the parents who took the time and effort to



CHEER LEADERS

get the team to Glasgow to compete and cheer Mum Pat for keeping everyone's nerves at bay.

'We can't wait to get this dream team back into the gym and work even harder for the next one,' she added.

Mull's Seahawks Cheerleaders Golden Eagles celebrate their third place.

Water, water everywhere - and not a drop of rugby to be had

Competitive fixtures have been thin on the ground for Oban Lorne ladies and gents recently.

Last weekend both the mens West Division Two away fixture against Strathaven and the ladies National Plate match at Kirkcaldy fell foul of the inclement weather.

The Green Machine have been without a game now since January 29 and coach Andrew Johnston for one is questioning whether it is worth trying to play rugby in Scotland throughout the winter.

'Having been involved with the Camanachd Association

when they were discussing the change to summer shinty, I feel we need to revisit the idea of changing the Scottish rugby season to gain the benefits of playing in better conditions,' he said.

'The whole game in Scotland would benefit from the increased skill levels brought about by this change.'

'At present, the rugby season runs from September to May. I would like to see us change to a season that starts in March and runs to the end of October.'

Johnston shared his views after becoming increasingly frustrated with the current

situation. Having had three to four weeks of weekend soakings, Glencruitten is struggling to deal with the volume of water landing on it, despite the club deciding not to train on it and working with senior groundsman Ian Hay to maintain the quality of the pitch for weekend games.

'We can't get on to our own pitch and even last week's game away to Strathaven, scheduled to be played on a 4G pitch, was lost to snow,' he added.

Along with giving matches a better chance of being played, Johnston believes summer rugby would bring

'significant improvements' to the game.

'Being able to feel your hands would instantly improve your ability to handle the ball,' he continued, arguing that players out on the wing suffer the most.

Cold

'Trying to catch a greasy ball covered in mud when your hands are numb from the cold isn't ideal.'

'The only people that enjoy these games are the forwards who get plenty practise at scrummaging and keep warm.'

Johnston also believes summer rugby would lead

to a much more social event on the touchlines with more people likely to come out to support their team and more events organised as there would be less likelihood of games being cancelled.

'I know some people will say it rains in the summer too and we can't get away from that, but it is not the same as the horrendous conditions of late,' he added.

'I know any change in the rugby season would bring challenges to some of the big city teams who share pitches with cricket and athletics clubs but if I was to do what was best for the sport, it

RUGBY

would definitely be playing through the summer.'

This weekend, weather permitting, Oban Lorne 1st XV are due to host title challengers Cumnock and having won the reverse fixture in January they are confident of another good performance.

Oban Lorne Ladies, meanwhile, are trying to get their National Plate group completed. So far the Green Army have only played one of their four fixtures and on Sunday are due to play host to Annan at Glencruitten.

Youngsters show their class at Oban Sports Hall Athletics

A sports hall athletics competition for the Oban area was held at Atlantis Leisure last Sunday.

This was the second area competition to be held in Argyll this winter. The series of competitions is promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club.

After three hours of competition, Rockfield and Achaleven primary schools were the overall winners in the girls contests and in the boys events the champions came from Rockfield, Park and Dunbeg with Oban High School providing the winners in the under 13 contests.

There were no new Argyll age records but the boys under 11 champion Donald Campbell from Rockfield came close in the speed bounce, recording 78 jumps in 30 seconds. Donald was the Argyll under 9 champion last year and on Sunday won the under 11 age group by three points after a close contest with Marco MacGregor, also from

Rockfield. As well as winning the speed bounce, Donald won the high jump while Marco won the long jump and excelled in the running events winning the two-lap race in 25.8 seconds and the four-lap in 59.2 seconds. In the same age group, Finn McKechnie from Lochnell won the triple jump with 5.41 metres and Innes McKinney from Rockfield won the javelin, throwing 13.50 metres.

Oban High School's Jacques Coates and Kia McKechnie were equal on overall points in the under 13 contest. Jacques won the two-lap race in 25.8 seconds and went on to win the high, long and triple jumps.

Kia was highly placed in all the events and won the shot putt with a 6.90 metre throw. In the same age category, Rufus Hughes from Rockfield won the speed bounce and James Muir from the high school impressed by winning the

four-lap race in 53.5 seconds. Luke Taylor from Dunbeg was the under 7 champion ahead of Oliver Gillies from Rockfield and in the under 9 age group, Ciaran Johnston from Park was overall winner, just two points ahead of another Park boy Ruairidh McKechnie. Ciaran won the two-lap race in 27.3 seconds and then won the speed bounce, long jump and standing triple jump recording a leap of 4.77 metres. Ruairidh won the javelin and was first equal in the high jump with Euan McCracken from Rockfield. Fergus Hunt from Lochnell won the four-lap race.

There was a disappointing entry of girls but no shortage of talent and a close contest in the under 9 age group in which Jamie MacIntyre from Rockfield finished a point ahead of Quinn McKechnie from Park. Jamie was the Argyll under 7 champion in 2019 and on Sunday won all three

jumping events including a 4.37 metres effort in the standing triple jump. Quinn impressed by winning both running events, the javelin and speed bounce.

There was a tie in the under 7s between Hayley Ronald from Achaleven and Dannin MacDonald from St Columba's.

Both girls scored 22 points ahead of Niamh Johnston from Park in third place and Ellie Brogan from Achaleven in fourth place.

Islay Muir from Rockfield dominated in the under 11s winning all seven events with her best event being the javelin, throwing 12 metres. Gracie Campbell from Rockfield was second overall just one point ahead of Grace Stewart from Lochnell.

Mia Mason, a first year pupil at Oban High School, was the clear winner in the under 13s with wins in six of the seven events. Mia's

winning time of 25.8 seconds compared well with the winning boy in the same age group and her speed bounce effort of 78 reps also impressed. Mia's mother Carolyn, then Campbell, was a member of the Argyll team competing at the Scottish final of sports hall athletics in Edinburgh in 1998.

In the same age group, Rowan Gemmel from Park Primary School won the shot putt with an impressive 5.91 metres.

Many of the athletes taking part qualify to take part in the Argyll Final to be held at Atlantis Leisure on Sunday March 22. The final will start at noon with registration between 11am and noon. The last two area competitions take place on Sunday March 1 with the Kintyre event at Campbelltown Grammar School starting at noon and the Mull event in Tobermory High School starting at 11.30am.

OT

RUGBY



Ellis Hunter in action.

Congratulations Ellis

Well done to Ellis Hunter on being selected for the Glasgow U17 squad to compete in the FORSOC 4s regional championship.

FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

Limited spaces left for Junior Football Festival

Campbeltown and District Junior Football Association (CDJFA) have limited spaces left for their annual football festival, which takes place on Saturday May 30 at the Meadows Millennium Playing Fields.

The boys' 2011s section is now full, with only one space each left in the 2012s, 2010s and 2008s. There are also limited spaces in the 2014s, 2013s and 2009s.

In the girls' competition, there are spaces in sections 2011s-2009s or 2008s-2006s. Last year the CDJFA football festival welcomed 60 teams travelling from Lochgilhead, Tarbert, Ardencaple, Oban, Helensburgh, Lochnell, Islay, Port Ellen, Port Glasgow, Arran and Dumbarton Riverside, as well as featuring the local teams. Organisers look forward to seeing them all back as well as welcoming more teams.

Email cdjfafestival@yahoo.com to book a space, for more information and to receive a welcome pack.

ADULT FOOTBALL

Results and fixtures

Last Saturday's results: Central Scottish AFL Division 1B – Oban Saints 5, Stedfast 1; Greater Glasgow AFL Division 3 – Kirkfield United v Oban Saints GG, postponed; SAFL – Premier Division 1 – Dunoon v Glynhill Moorcroft, postponed; Campbeltown Pupils and Lochgilhead Red Star no games; Premier Division 2 – Strathaven v Tarbert, postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: Central Scottish AFL Division 1B – Oban Saints v Bridgewater; Greater Glasgow AFL Division Three – Kilbarchan v Oban Saints GG; Scottish Amateur FL – Premier Division One – Carlton YM v Lochgilhead Red Star; Dunoon v Busby; Parkhall v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two – Tarbert v Strathaven.

OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

Results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Under 13s 4, Lochgilhead Red Star 6; Milton Rovers v Under 14s, postponed Under 15s 5, Rossvale 3. Scoring for Saints were Kyle Cooper (2), Andrew Nicol, Couper MacIntyre and Andrew Barclay. Under 17s 3, Ardrossan Winton Rovers 4. Ross Higgins netted a hat-trick for the Oban side.

This Sunday's fixtures: Under 13s v Rossvale; Clydebank v Under 14s; Thistle Weir v Under 15s; Greenock United v Under 17s.

Stedfast anchor

Oban Saints	5
Stedfast K	1
Central Scottish Div 1B	

There was no case of unlucky 13 at Oban High School last Saturday as Oban Saints came from behind to stretch their Central Scottish Amateur Football League Division 1B winning run to 13 games.

Despite taking the lead in the 10th minute, Stedfast K's anchor failed to hold and Saints stormed back with goals from David Beaton, Lewis Cameron, Aaron McKay and a brace from top marksman Craig MacEwan.

Saints co-manager Willie Gemmell was deprived of the services of James Ford, Matty Kelly, Ross Maitland, Kerr Newbigging and Matt Rippon, paving the way for a well-deserved return to the first team set-up for Daniel Croarkin.

Also deserving of their promotion to the starting XI were youngsters Gavin Forgive and Aaron McKay who repaid their manager's confidence with accomplished performances against considerably more experienced opponents.

Saints kicked off attacking the school end from where the gale force wind blew a steady stream of hail showers throughout the match.

Craig MacEwan pressurised former Lochgilhead Red Star youngster Ciaran McPhie into conceding the game's first corner kick in the fourth minute but Lewis Cameron's delivery from the right was fractionally too heavy for Steven MacLeod at the far post.

Despite playing into the strong wind, Saints were making the early running. However, it was Stedfast who struck first with their first attempt at goal. Grant Cathro

was allowed to carry the ball a long way unchallenged before unleashing a fierce wind-assisted left foot shot which flew into the top corner giving Graham Douglas no chance.

The already depleted visitors, with just six survivors from the reverse fixture last August in their ranks, were dealt the first of several injury blows after 18 minutes when Ciaran McPhie hobbled off with a recurrence of the hamstring injury which has troubled him all season. McPhie's place was taken by Richard McGuire.

Saints got back on level terms in the 22nd minute from a good move on the right where David Beaton and Lewis Cameron combined well for Cameron to send a cut-back to Craig MacEwan, who calmly rolled the ball past the helpless Scott Richardson.

Stedfast central defender Mark Byrne did well to cut out a dangerous David Beaton cross before a crazy 60-second spell from the Saints defence saw the visitors hit the woodwork twice.

Graham Douglas was caught in two minds with what should have been a routine 27th-minute clearance which he scuffed straight to the feet of David Casey. The Saints number one was a relieved man to see Casey's first time effort come back off the upright but the danger didn't end there. The Saints defence failed to properly clear their lines and conceded a free-kick 25 yards out and right of centre. The dipping wind-assisted effort from Grant Cathro left Graham Douglas rooted to the spot but cannoned off the crossbar before eventually being forced clear.

Saints deservedly took the lead in the 37th minute with



Lewis Cameron again the architect. Cameron picked the ball up in the centre circle from Dene Cassells and, with willing runners Aaron McKay and David Beaton ahead of him, successfully picked out Beaton who raced through the middle and dinked the ball into the net over the advancing Scott Richardson.

The half-time interval did little to disrupt the Saints momentum and inside the opening 60 seconds of the second half Lewis Cameron opened up the Stedfast defence for Myles McAuley who, after making a good run, unfortunately delayed his shot too long and was crowded out inside the 18-yard box.

Aaron McKay's cross from the left was taken off the forehead of Craig MacEwan by Mark Byrne at the expense of a corner kick which Lewis Cameron whipped, wind assisted, onto the roof of the net.

The visitors goal continued to lead a charmed existence and Lewis Cameron's 55th-minute free-kick from the D came back off the crossbar with Scott Richardson well beaten.

The rebound was turned back towards goal by the outstretched leg of a Stedfast defender who watched in agony as his touch bounced off the inside of the post, across the face of goal and out for a corner kick.

Saints doubled their advantage in the 59th minute from a free-kick on the half-way line. Grant Cathro bundled into Myles McAuley wide on the Saints left with Scott Maitland quickly rolling the resulting free-kick up to Aaron McKay. McKay sent over an in-swinging right foot cross which Craig MacEwan met perfectly with a cushioned volley into the bottom corner.

This proved to be MacEwan's final involvement and he was replaced before the restart by Cammy Hill.

Scott Richardson produced another good save to deny Lewis Cameron before Saints had the ball in the net again in the 64th minute. Aaron McKay once again provided a good cross from the left which



Craig MacEwan thanks Aaron McKay for the cross for his second goal.

David Beaton won a corner kick off David Casey on the right two minutes later with Craig MacEwan rising highest on the six-yard line to meet Lewis Cameron's delivery but was unable to keep his header below the crossbar.

Beaton's pace took him beyond the Stedfast defence once again in the 41st minute but, after flicking the ball over Scott Richardson on the 18-yard line was beaten to the bouncing ball by a last ditch Sinclair Soutar challenge.

Saints youngsters Gavin Forgive and Aaron McKay combined to carve out the final chance of the first half with McKay stretching at the back post to direct Forgive's cross from the corner of the 18-yard box back across the face of goal but agonisingly wide of Scott Richardson's left hand post.



Gavin Forgive, who impressed in midfield for Saints, races past this Stedfast midfielder.

fails to hold



This Lewis Cameron corner lands on the roof of the net.



David Beaton lifts the ball over Scott Richardson to give Saints the lead. Match report and photographs: Derek Black

David Beaton turned in at the far post only for referee Pat O'Donnell, who was well positioned, to disallow the goal for an offside call against McKay.

Central Scottish Amateur Football League Select men Scott Maitland and Lewis Cameron warmed up for the upcoming Inter League Trophy match against the Scottish Amateur Football League by combining for the



Cammy Hill feels the cold.

fourth Saints goal. Maitland made a rampaging run into the Stedfast box and picked out Cameron with a cutback which he slammed into the roof of the net from 10 yards range.

Cameron was then afforded a well-earned rest with his place being taken by Daniel Croarkin.

The visitors were forced to field Ross Henderson, the second of their two substitutes, when goal scorer Grant Cathro limped off with what appeared to be a hamstring injury.

Stedfast couldn't clear a Scott Maitland 73d-minute corner kick from the right and Daniel Croarkin picked out skipper Dene Cassells for a cushioned right foot volley straight into the midriff of Scott Richardson.

The woodwork came to the visitors' rescue once again after 74 minutes when Cammy Hill raced away from Sinclair Soutar and clipped

a left foot finish across Scott Richardson and onto the base of the keeper's left hand post.

Stedfast's injury woes continued when skipper James Harvey was unable to continue after an 85th minute challenge from Daniel Croarkin.

The 10 men quickly fell further behind when Aaron McKay crashed an unstoppable 86th-minute shot from 24 yards into the top corner well out of reach for keeper Scott Richardson.

The desperately unlucky visitors finished the match with nine men when defender Louis Smith had to be carried off with a badly twisted right knee before referee O'Donnell, who handled proceedings well, brought the match to an end.

This coming Saturday Saints welcome first-time visitors Bridgewater to Oban for Central Scottish Amateur Football League Division 1B match number 14.

The teams met earlier in the season with Saints winning 3-0 but the match was a lot closer than the scoreline suggests so a difficult game is in prospect for the D & K Laffery-sponsored Oban side.

Saints secretary David Buchanan said the match against Bridgewater would either be at Glencruitten or the 3G community pitch depending on the weather. The match will be refereed by Michael Kerr and will kick-off at 2pm.

Congratulations to Lewis Cameon and Scott Maitland

FOOTBALL

who played for the Central Scottish AFL Select against the Scottish Amateur FL Select in the semi final of the Inter-League Trophy last Sunday at Holm Park, Yoker.

Lewis scored the opening goal for the Central Select in a 6-3 win.

Central now play the Kingdom of Fife FL on a date still to be arranged

Matty Kelly was also due to be in the Central squad but had to pull out through injury.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Oban Saints	13	13	0	0	51	7	44	39
Blantyre RGM	15	10	2	3	41	22	19	32
Garrowhill Thistle	14	8	2	4	32	30	2	26
Stedfast K	15	5	2	8	22	36	-14	17
Bridgewater	11	5	0	6	22	20	2	15
Lesmahagow	9	4	2	3	26	12	14	14
Cambusnethan	13	3	5	5	20	30	-10	14
Clydebank	14	2	2	10	17	40	-23	8
Craignek	14	1	1	12	8	42	-34	4



Daid Beaton, Myles McAuley and Daniel Coarkin celebrations after Aaron McKay rounded off the scoring.



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WEATHER

Thursday
Sleet showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 6°C.

Friday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
4°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook
Saturday
Hail showers and a moderate breeze
Sunday
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 5°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)

	01.58	1.0	07.51	3.9
Thur	14.17	1.2	19.55	3.7
Fri	02.24	1.2	08.20	3.7
	14.45	1.3	20.21	3.6
Sat	02.48	1.3	08.47	3.6
	15.12	1.5	20.51	3.4
Sun	03.13	1.5	09.18	3.3
	15.49	1.7	21.25	3.2
Mon	03.47	1.7	09.57	3.1
	16.42	1.8	22.09	3.0
Tues	04.43	1.9	10.55	2.9
	17.57	1.9	23.13	2.9
Wed	06.22	2.0	13.47	2.8
	19.16	1.9	** ** *	1.9

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

Stedfast anchor fails to hold

Mull Golden Eagles soar at SECC Armadillo



Bob MacIntyre in action at the WGC-Mexico Championship last week. Photograph: Bounce Sports

No Mexican fiesta for Bob

Oban's Bob MacIntyre saw his hopes of contending in the World Golf Championship event in Mexico all but disappear on Thursday afternoon after opening his account with a five over par 76.

There were no signs of the drama to come after 12 holes of his opening round with the Oban star sitting nicely at level par only three shots behind the leaders.

However, a bogey and two double boges in the next five holes left Bob languishing

near the foot of the leaderboard going into Friday and effectively killed his chances of gaining significant world ranking points.

Bob will, however, take some comfort from a solid display in the final three rounds with scores of 68, 70 and 69 which left him in a tie for 42nd spot on a total of one under par.

His final position looked like it would have been much higher after a magnificent eagle three at the 15th hole on Sunday afternoon.

Unfortunately, two holes later a double bogey six saw his week finish on a disappointing note.

The tournament was eventually won by American former Masters champion Patrick Reed with a score of 18 under par. Bob's world ranking slipped one place to 67th.

Bob may have made his debut in Central America but the Scottish number one felt 'comfortable' teeing up in last week's WGC-Mexico Championship.

Bob enjoyed his first taste of WGC action in the HSBC Champions event towards the end of last year in Shanghai.

'You've got to believe you are one of them,' said Bob of lining up in a field that included world number one Rory McIlroy, third-ranked Jon Rahm and defending champion Dustin Johnson.

'In Shanghai, I played with Kevin Kisner and Billy Horschel in the opening two rounds and I felt comfortable. I started with a double

bogey, but after that I played well the whole week.

'In these big events, it's about meeting the guys more than anything so you can say hello to them and don't feel alone in the locker-room and don't belong here.

Opportunity

'I'm starting to feel I do belong and that's how you need to feel to give yourself the best opportunity to be competitive.'

Bob now has a week off having opted to miss this week's tournament in Oman. He will

GOLF

then dust off the clubs for the Qatar Masters on March 5 before moving on to the Kenyan Open the following week.

Strong finishes in both tournaments will be needed to keep his US Masters qualification hopes alive.



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LOCHABER TIMES

& OBAN TIMES

No 8500

Thursday 27 February, 2020

www.lochabertimes.co.uk

95p



Lochaber's young swim team stars enjoy awards night



Union wants jobs growth at BSW following takeover

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

Corpach sawmill, part of the UK's largest integrated forestry and sawmilling business, announced last week it had been acquired by Leeds-based private equity firm Endless LLP.

The BSW Group, which owns the Corpach sawmill, has operations across the UK and eastern Europe and turns over £350 million annually.

The Corpach sawmill is the company's biggest and one of the largest single employers in Lochaber. Oliver Stephen, manager at the sawmill, said: 'The news is fantastic for BSW, our Fort William sawmill and its 193 employees.'

'The site is the largest in the UK and plans to improve efficiency and productivity are already under way. We will add further value to the position in Lochaber by using locally-sourced timber that is available now or coming to maturity in the coming years.'

'The next phase of growth will be exciting for the site and all the employees and I am

very much looking forward to leading it.'

Endless LLP also owns a number of other UK-based businesses including Menzies Distribution and the acquisition of BSW will support ambitious future growth plans through 'further expansion of its market position', according to the company.

'The news is fantastic for BSW and our Fort William sawmill.'

Unite, the union for BSW employees, wanted to make clear this should not include any loss of local jobs.

Richard Whyte, Unite regional industrial officer, said: 'Unite sees the Corpach plant as the jewel in the crown of BSW plants and we would hope the workforce could grow on the back of the plant's continued success.'

We anticipate constructive talks with local management on the way forward.'

BSW chief executive Tony Hackney and chief financial of-

ficer Alan Milne will continue to lead the group in its future growth.

Mr Hackney said they are 'excited by the opportunities new ownership will bring' and they anticipate rapid growth and development.

Aidan Robson, from Endless LLP, added: 'We are delighted to have been selected to support the acquisition of BSW, a business with fantastic prospects and one we believe has an exciting future.'

'As the country's largest timber producer, BSW plays a critical role in supporting the UK's commitment to using local and sustainable raw materials and becoming carbon neutral.'

'We look forward to working closely with Tony, Alan and the rest of the BSW team to deliver continued organic growth and further diversification.'

Kate Forbes MSP said: 'This is good news if it brings more business and jobs to Lochaber.'

'I hope this indicates the industry's confidence in the Lochaber plant.'

MP Ian Blackford added: 'We look forward to BSW being a leading player in the industry.'

Lochaber mourns for Father Tom



There was sadness in Fort William and the wider Lochaber area this week following news of the death of well-loved priest Monsignor Tom Wynne. Tributes have been paid to Father Tom, described as an 'inspirational' priest, by Bishop Brian McGee of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles and Bishop Joseph Toal, Bishop of Motherwell. Full story, page two.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.


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Bishops pay tribute to much-loved priest

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Tributes have been paid to one of Lochaber's most well-loved clergymen, Monsignor Thomas Wynne, who died on Friday aged 89.

At the time of his death, Father Tom, as he was affectionately known to everyone, was staying with his nephew, Deacon Tom Wynne, and his wife Sheena, at their home in Fort William.

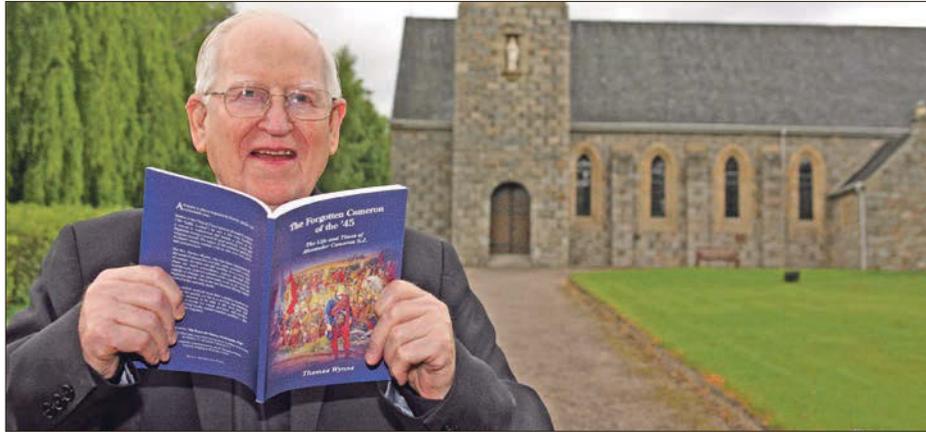
A native of the town, Father Tom had retired from the church in June 2017 on the same day he had celebrated 50 years in the priesthood.

He died in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, after a short illness. Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll, Brian McGee, had anointed him the evening before he died.

Bishop McGee told the Lochaber Times: 'Monsignor Thomas Wynne was an inspirational priest and a much-loved pastor with wonderful people skills and a formidable work ethic.'

'From the first time I met him, I was lifted by his warmth and encouragement. Of course, I was far from the only person who benefited from his warm personality.'

'He touched countless lives



The late Father Tom Wynne with a copy of his own book, *The Forgotten Cameron of the '45: The Life and Times of Alexander Cameron*, which was published in 2011.

all through our diocese. Father Tom served as a priest for 60 years – into his late 80s – and even after he retired he helped out in parishes until a few weeks ago.

'I offer my grateful thanks on behalf of the diocese to Deacon Tom Wynne and his wife Sheena for the care which they, together with their wider family, provided to him.'

Sadness

Tribute was also paid by Bishop Joseph Toal, currently Bishop of Motherwell but formerly Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, whose home parish is St Margaret's, Roy Bridge.

Bishop Toal said: 'It was with

great sadness I heard of the death of Monsignor Wynne. He was a great priest of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, where he served his parishes with great fervour and dedication. He will be greatly missed.'

'I extend my deepest sympathy to the bishop and priests of the diocese as well as Monsignor Wynne's family who loved him dearly and the parishioners of my own home parish of St Margaret's in Roy Bridge where he served in his latter days.'

Director of the Scottish Catholic media office Peter Kearney described Father Tom as the 'quintessential

Highland priest.'

He was, said Mr Kearney, a 'man of deep spiritual convictions, utterly embedded in the communities he served, so much a part of the traditions, history and culture of the West Highlands from a generation of gentle caring pastors who had time for everyone and never forgot a face'.

He added: 'He grew up in Fort William and was at school with my dad and my uncles, all of whom spoke very fondly of him.'

'The last time I met him after mass at St Margaret's in Roy Bridge a few years ago, his interest in me and my family

was humbling. May he rest in peace.'

Born in Fort William in 1930, Father Tom attended St Mary's Primary School in the town, followed by secondary schooling also in the town and then at the junior seminary of Blairs College near Aberdeen.

He attended the seminary of St Sulpice in Paris and continued his studies in Rome before being ordained at St Mary's, Fort William, on June 15 1957.

There followed parishes at St Columba's Cathedral, Oban, 1957-1965; St Andrew's, Rothesay, 1965-66; Our Lady and St Columba, Kingussie 1966-1968; St Columba's Cathedral, 1968-1985; St Mary's, Arisaig, 1985-1996 and St Margaret's, Roy Bridge, 1996-2017.

Interviewed in 2017 on his retirement, Father Tom told the Lochaber Times: 'I first told someone I wanted to be a priest when I was only about 10 or 11. I had served as an altar boy and there was nothing I wanted to be more than a priest.'

A mass of thanksgiving for the repose of the soul of Monsignor Thomas Wynne will take place from St Mary's RC Church, Fort William, tomorrow (Friday February 28) at 11am, followed by interment in Cille Choirill Cemetery.

Search goes on for tourist

Police in Lochaber are appealing for information to help trace Tomas Gafrik, who has been reported missing after travelling to the area.

The 40-year-old from Slovakia arrived in Scotland at Edinburgh Airport on Tuesday February 18.

He contacted family in his home country on Thursday February 20, sending images which indicated he had spent the previous night near the Halfway Lochan on Ben Nevis and intended to continue to the summit that day. He has been out of contact since and has now been reported missing.

Searches have been ongoing on Ben Nevis since Sunday February 23, involving Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and a Coastguard helicopter.

Mr Gafrik is described as being 1.86m tall and of medium build with short brown hair. He is believed to have been wearing a grey jacket and carrying a green and yellow rucksack.

Sergeant Michael Bell of Fort William Police Station said: 'Tomas has not been in contact with his family since Thursday and we are growing increasingly concerned for him.'

'I would ask anyone who may have seen him to let us know. Call 101, quoting incident 2681 of February 23.'



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Groups join call for farmed salmon boycott

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

West coast groups are among nearly 20 bodies backing an ultimatum and threatened boycott of Scottish farmed salmon unless the government confirms it will introduce measures to protect wild salmon and sea trout.

Community groups including Friends of Loch Etive and Skye Communities for Natural Heritage have given support to the ultimatum issued by Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland (STCS).

STCS has accused Scottish Government ministers of allowing parliamentary inquiry reports on salmon farming from 2018 to languish on the shelves without taking meaningful action on their recommendations.

Andrew Graham-Stewart, director of STCS, said: 'Unless Scottish ministers have confirmed by Easter they are putting in place appropriate statutory and/or regulatory measures to protect wild salmon and sea trout and that these measures will be in place and in force by the end of 2020, STCS, together with many other



A farmed salmon infested with sea lice. Photograph: Colin Smith.

organisations supporting this statement, will call and campaign for a full and complete boycott of all Scottish farmed salmon products.'

The ultimatum and potential boycott are already endorsed and supported by the Angling Trust, Community of Arran Seabed Trust, Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitat, Fairlie Coastal Trust, Friends of Loch Etive, Friends of the Sound of Jura, Loch Visions, North and West District Salmon Fishery Board, Open Seas, Orkney Trout Fishing Association, Save Seil Sound, Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation, Scottish Salmon Think-Tank, Sea Change Wester Ross,

Sealife Adventures, Skye Communities for Natural Heritage, South Skye Seas Initiative and Tay Ghillies Association.

Skye Communities for Natural Heritage told the Lochaber Times: 'Two Scottish Parliament committees looked in depth at the open net salmon farming industry, taking input from producers, regulators, planners and objectors.

'Both committees concluded things had to change for the better across the gamut of environment, fish health and pollution, yet nothing of any significance has happened in almost two years.

'Worse still, the Scottish Government appears hell

bent on doubling production over the next 10 years. We do not even see any signs of a willingness to make such changes. There is nothing but talking shops that kick the can further down the road.'

Friends of Loch Etive, where there are rainbow trout farms, said: 'Two Scottish parliamentary committees have told the government the status quo is not an option, but that status quo persists on Loch Etive. Most importantly, MSPs decided fish farms should not be sited near rivers vital for wild salmon, but wild salmon smolts, leaving the River Awe, arguably the best salmon river on the west coast mainland, have to pass close to no fewer than three farms, all within a few kilometres of the river, on their way out of Loch Etive.

'The MSPs recommended there should be immediate dialogue to consider relocat-

ing poorly-sited farms, but that has not yet happened.'

However, Hamish Macdonell, of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, hit back saying: 'It is unsurprising these pressure groups, having failed to get what they wanted during an exhaustive parliamentary process which found 'a lack of definitive scientific evidence' of any link between salmon farming and wild fish numbers, are leading this latest initiative. Scotland's farmed salmon sector has adopted a raft of new measures in the year since the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee report came out, proactively publishing more data than ever before, more quickly than before. Fish health and welfare has never been a higher priority with sea lice levels at their lowest for six years and medicine use significantly reduced.'

Man dies after fall from boat

A man pulled from water in Kyle of Lochalsh on the afternoon of Tuesday February 18 was later pronounced dead at Broadford Hospital, Skye.

The man is reported to have been working on a marine site when he fell from a vessel into Loch Alsh, near Balmacara slipway, shortly before 4pm.

Kyle RNLI lifeboat and a Coastguard helicopter were also called to the scene to help.

Report

Police say they are liaising with the relevant authorities including the Marine Accident Investigation Branch to establish the circumstances, but the death is not being treated as suspicious and a report will be sent to the procurator fiscal.

VISITUS
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Mains gas plan for Fort William appears turned off

Any possibility of a mains gas supply being brought to Fort William has been abandoned.

The news came from Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Lochaber programme manager Alastair Nicolson, speaking at last week's meeting of Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee.

Mr Nicolson's comments came during discussion of a report on the outcome of the 2019 public events held in connection with Fort William's 2040 initiative.

Research that revealed 68 per cent of Fort William residents were in favour of a mains gas supply being installed in the town triggered a 2018 feasibility study to assess ways in which gas could be brought to the town.

The timing of the study was driven by the proposed



Fort William will not be having a mains gas supply.

opening of a new alloy wheels manufacturing plant by Liberty British Aluminium - now rechristened Alvanca British Aluminium - at the smelter in Fort William.

But Mr Nicolson told the area committee: 'The appetite for this has disappeared.'

Speaking to the Lochaber

Times this week, Mr Nicolson explained the reason for the plan now being a non-starter was the declaration of a climate emergency by Highland Council. 'The declaration of the climate emergency has greatly reduced the appetite for new investment in fossil fuel infrastructure,' he said.

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Shock and sadness as family of four killed

A family of four were killed in a horrific road collision on the A82 just outside Fort William early last Thursday evening.

Parents Gemma and Rhys Cousin, aged 26 and 25 respectively, and their daughters Peyton, three, and Heidi, one, who were from the Inverness area, all died as result of the accident near Torlundy.

A statement was issued by their extended family through Police Scotland.

They said: 'Both families are heartbroken by the tragic loss of Gemma, Rhys, Peyton and Heidi.'

'They were a young family with so much to look forward to. To have their lives cut short so suddenly and in such circumstances is utterly devastating.'

'As a young couple, Gemma and Rhys worked really hard to provide a loving, secure



Rhys and Gemma, left, and their daughters Peyton and Heidi died in the accident.



and safe home and family life for their girls, who they were totally devoted to. They were known by many with both families being extended and their loss will be felt far and wide.

'Due to the horrific circumstances, we would like to

thank the emergency services and everyone who was involved on the night. We would also like to thank everyone for the support we continue to receive. As a family, we now respectfully ask that we are given the time and privacy to grieve and to come to terms

with the loss of Rhys, Gemma, Peyton and Heidi.'

The family was travelling northbound in a green Mini Cooper on the A82 at Torlundy when the collision happened around 5.30pm on Thursday February 20.

The other car involved

was a red Ford Fiesta. The 56-year-old woman who was driving suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

A police investigation to establish the full circumstances is ongoing. Anyone with information which has not yet been passed to police is asked to come forward. This includes if you had seen either vehicle involved on the road before the collision or if you have dashcam footage which may be of use. Please call 101, quoting incident 2942 of February 20. The A82 was closed for more than 11 hours following the accident.

Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Kate Forbes said: 'There are no words to express my sadness at this news. I'm sure many friends and family members are numb with shock and grief and my thoughts are with them.'

Arisaig WI holds meeting

Arisaig Women's Institute held its February meeting earlier this month when the speakers were Esther Briars and Kathy Connelly from Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC).

There was a demonstration of gadgets which help people in their everyday lives and an interesting discussion. Funding is becoming limited for LSC and fundraising events are to be held locally.

Refreshments were enjoyed and a raffle was drawn with Barbara Collins winning.

Competition winners: Sensory object – 1 Anne Cameron; 2 June Cairns; 3 Vera MacDonald; 4 Yvonne MacDonald. Mystery object – 1 Ann Lamont; 2 Yvonne MacDonald; 3 Vera MacDonald; 4 June Cairns; 5 Anne Cameron.

The next meeting will be on Thursday March 19 when there will be a visit to Arisaig House for a cookery demonstration.

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Leaving verges uncut would benefit the environment, said a councillor.

Reducing amount of grass verge cutting still an issue

The issue of whether many grass verges should be left uncut by Highland Council workers to benefit wildlife and help tackle climate change surfaced again, this time at the local authority's Lochaber Area Committee last week.

The topic was raised during a discussion about the council's under-pressure

roads budget for the coming financial year.

Committee member Councillor Denis Rixson, Caol and Mallaig, said when it came to saving money, community councils often suggested a number of grass verges should be left uncut.

'A lot of people, from an environmental perspective, are arguing for less of that – verge

cutting – to be done,' he said. Council roads operations manager Richard Porteous explained the protection of biodiversity was something the local authority was conscious of when it came to verge cutting. 'We have been mapping out verges to make sure we can leave certain areas alone if we can from a road safety point of view,' he said.

LT

Concerns over South Lochaber public transport links continue

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Claims of poor public transport links in South Lochaber have been voiced again, this time at last week's meeting of Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee.

South Lochaber Community Company (SLCC) has been looking at re-introducing a former minibus service, which stopped operating several years ago, to link people with scheduled bus services in the area.

At the area committee, a representative from one of the community councils attending to hear an item about the Fort William 2040 strategic vision initiative was Rev Sandy Stoddart, chairman of Duror and Kentallen Community Council. He told the meeting the various elements of the initiative were centred on Fort William and did not head much further



Rev Sandy Stoddart.

south. 'If this improves Fort William, that's fantastic but some people have got very poor access to Fort William,' he said. 'Buses going through our area are relatively rare and it is something that needs attention.'

Rev Stoddart told the Lochaber Times, in his role as chairman of Duror and Kentallen Community Council, he was aware public transport was a great concern

in his area. 'Many elderly people are concerned about the practicality of staying in their home if they are no longer able to drive and some have moved out of this area for just that reason,' he said.

'We hope to attract young families to the area but not only will they have to have a car, they may need two cars if one parent sets off early to work by car before children are needing transported to school.'

'People needing to travel to work or study will find this very difficult, time consuming or impossible without a car. Hospital appointments are, again, difficult or impossible without a car.'

'All this is in the context of pressure to reduce emissions and Fort William is sometimes almost gridlocked with more cars than it can cope with. It's easy to say public transport isn't supported but it has to provide what people

really need for that to happen. If car use is to be discouraged, meaningful public transport infrastructure has to be in place first.

'With limited resources and competing demands the Highland Council must have a difficult time deciding what to prioritise. Perhaps the Scottish Government needs to make this part of its climate emergency spending in rural areas as well as cities.'

A SLCC spokesperson told the Lochaber Times, it is in the process of converting the community company into a charitable incorporated organisation (SCIO) with a view to running a minibus. 'The cost is £25,000 a year, but Highland Council has only been able to give us £6,000. However, we got £4,500 from the Kinlochleven Community Benefit Trust. The aim is to have the minibus on the road in April,' he said.

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

Are you involved in tourism? If you live in Lochaber, there's a strong chance the answer is 'yes'.

A large number of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce member businesses work in the tourism industry whether in accommodation, hospitality, activities or attractions.

As we know, tourism is booming in the Highlands but are we all working together to give visitors the best experience to encourage them to stay longer, do more and come back?

When you are busy running your business, it's not easy to take time out to connect with others in the industry. It's time-consuming but can make all the difference to your business. Whether you are an accommodation provider looking for up-to-date information on activities for your guests or you run an activity business and you want to let accommodation providers know what is on offer, it's vital to make those connections.

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is here to make it easier. We are hosting the first



Outdoor Capital of the UK Activities and Attractions Expo in the Nevis Centre on March 23 where local activity and attraction businesses are invited to take a stand to promote what they do to an audience of accommodation providers in a simple, one-stop shop and others who are interested. It is great for us all to know what's available on our doorstep.

A stand at the expo costs just £50 for non-Chamber members and £20 for Chamber members so it's well worth joining up for the discount. It's free for accommodation providers and others to come along and find out about the range of activities on offer.

Promote your business, make valuable connections and get set for a great season. Register your interest by calling us on 01397 705765.

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New Glen Nevis bus service coming soon

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP), in collaboration with Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) and Shiel Buses, have been awarded funding from Paths for All's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund to trial a new regular bus service from the centre of Fort William along Glen Nevis.

This pilot project was developed in an effort to reduce the ever-increasing congestion in Glen Nevis, particularly during the summer season when more than 400,000 people visit the glen.

The current 'drive, photo, leave' phenomenon affecting many 'honeypot' locations in Scotland increases the use of private cars and vehicles and overwhelms the available parking.



A Shiel Buses vehicle in Glen Nevis.

This leads to environmentally damaging issues, including verge erosion and harmful pollution, and often makes a visit to the glen stressful, devaluing the Glen Nevis experience.

By contrast, this new bus service, running hourly seven days a week from May to October, will provide opportunities for everyone

to experience Glen Nevis in a sustainable and low impact way. It will stop at points of interest giving visitors the opportunity to explore the glen on one ticket, providing a slower, more immersive experience. Passengers will be able to sit back and admire the views or participate in numerous walks along the glen and, even better, take

their dogs. The first service will leave Fort William Middle Street at 7.30am and continue into the early evening with the last service leaving the Lower Falls car park at 6pm for those wishing to take it slow or embark on more adventurous activities.

The reliability and frequency of the service will eliminate the pressure of 'clock-watching' the car and visitors will have greater flexibility in hop-off locations than the current service provides.

Kate Willis, environmental development officer for LEG, commented: 'We need to significantly reduce our carbon emissions and this project provides the opportunity to do this by making it easier to hop on a bus rather than getting in a car. We hope residents of Fort William will take advantage of the bus

service to access Glen Nevis and thank Smarter Choices Smarter Places for funding the pilot and NLP and Shiel Buses for working with us to deliver the service.'

Fort William residents can also take advantage of a concessionary fare with a smart card, which it is hoped will encourage more residents to sustainably explore the natural wilderness on their doorstep, without battling through crowds to find a parking space.

Patricia Jordan, a member of Fort William, Inverloch and Torlundy Community Council, said: 'The new bus service is very much needed to ease congestion in the glen. I congratulate NLP, LEG and Shiel Buses on securing this funding.'

The bus will run daily from Monday May 4 until Sunday October 4.

WHAT'S ON

■ Thursday February 27: Lochaber Music for All presents Palisander recorder consort. St Andrew's Church Hall, Fort William, 7.30pm. Tickets at the door.

■ Sunday March 1: A quartet of musicians from Scottish Opera will perform music relating to the First World War at 3pm in St Mary's Church, Arisaig. The event included singers Fiona MacDonald and Patrick Mundy.

■ Monday March 2: Lochaber Ladies will be gathering at 7.15pm at the Montrose Centre, Inverloch, for their monthly meeting when the guest speaker will be Gladys Johnstone.

■ Tuesday March 3: Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club present a musical evening from 7.30pm. Guest artists will be the Alan Gardiner Trio. Railway Club, Inverloch. Admission £5. Tea and raffle.

■ Thursday March 5: Lochaber Local History Society sees former GP Michael Foxley speaking on 'Working with Communities as a Councillor'. Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William, 7pm.

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Concerns over community benefit of £12m development

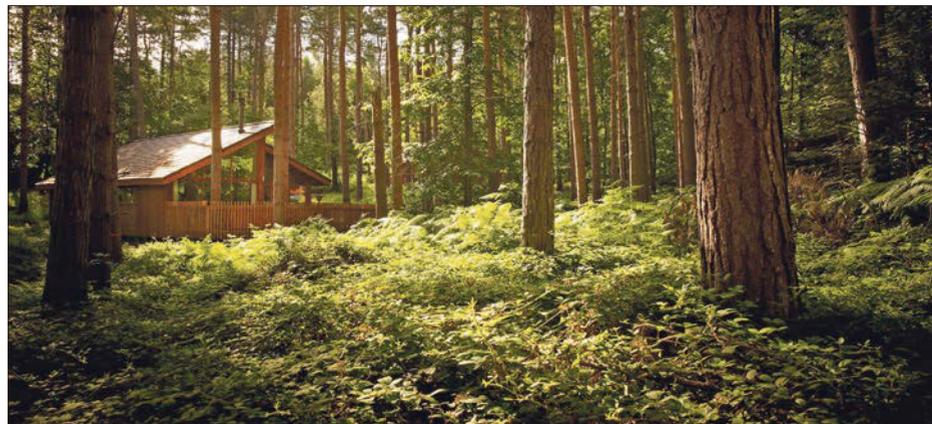
by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

Detailed plans for 50 luxury cabins to be built close to the Nevis Range resort were released last week ahead of developers seeking planning permission from Highland Council.

While not opposing the development, as it will create 60 full-time jobs on site and around the community, three community councils had raised several concerns at a recent meeting.

Representatives from Kilmallie and Ardgour attended the Fort William, Inverloch and Torlundy Community Council (FITCC) meeting to discuss the proposal.

FITCC chairman Alex Farquhar said: 'There was a strong consensus which boils down to getting the roads sorted out so people can slow



The cabins are designed to fit in with the natural landscape and are expected to be priced towards the higher end of the tourist market. Photograph: Forest Holidays

in Scotland, both in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Both have around 40 luxury cabins, complete with hot tubs, and offer family-friendly activities on site including survival and nocturnal adventures.

The Leanachan Forest location would be minutes from Nevis Range with snow-sports, hiking and summer mountain biking available, as well as plans for a zip wire.

This proposal is expected to bring an investment of £12 million into the tourism economy and each of the 50 cabins is expected to generate £30,000 in annual visitor spend in the surrounding area.

A Forestry and Land Scotland spokesperson said: 'We are delighted the Forest Holidays proposals have reached this important milestone. The cabin location forms part of Forestry and Land Scotland's 20-year, £25 million Nevis Forest masterplan.

'The scheme is now with the Highland Council and those interested in finding out more details can access all of the information through the formal planning process.'

Andrew Brook, planning and environment manager for Forest Holidays, said: 'Through our partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland, we aim to help deliver the Nevis Forest masterplan and are confident these proposals will help to maximise the area's economic potential by increasing the number of visitors and encourage them to stay longer.'

down to turn into the access road; the creation of a cycling network and the quality of jobs on offer.

'A big part of this holiday development is that they want people to get around by bike. Cycling is an important issue, especially in the Outdoor Capital of the UK, and we need to be encouraging more people to get on bikes as

opposed to cars. This would be much easier if we had more user-friendly cycle paths throughout Fort William.

'We are suggesting they make it easier for people to get around as the signs at the moment are not up to standard. I passed two people cycling next to a cycle path because they didn't know it

was there. While there are quite a few jobs along with the development, we are concerned as to what quality these jobs will be other than a few higher paid managerial positions.'

Forest Holidays is a long-term partner of Forest and Land Scotland that operates 'eco-sensitive' cabins across the UK. It has two locations

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Don't be fooled into thinking young people of today have all the answers

Having recently spent two days in a room with 100 18 to 23-year-olds, I'm still in a state of shock, but not for the reasons you might imagine.

Highlands and Islands Students' Association chose 'climate' and 'sustainability' as themes for their conference and, over the course of two days, we debated several aspects of the situation.

I'm sorry to report any expectation we might have had that this age group understands the problem, are making the necessary changes and will soon be leading the way in turning around our lack of action was not borne out in that room.

I took the bus to Inverness with some trepidation, since I was likely to be at least twice the age of most attendees, but determined to watch and listen to my new cohort.

The group discussed all manner of issues related to their studies including access to support, virtual

Atlantic Views

JOANNE MATHESON

fort@obantimes.co.uk



classrooms, online submissions, the cost of accommodation, transport and the Inverness canteen.

Proposals were made, debated and voted on covering policies which might be adopted and actions that could be taken.

Unfortunately, when it came to discussing climate-related issues I was surprised and disappointed by their general lack of knowledge and extreme reluctance to act.

Of proposals submitted about actions which could be taken to help mitigate the problem, the one with the greatest potential for impact was banning beef on university premises.

An Our World in Data graph

had been circulating, www.ourworldindata.org/food-choice-vs-eating-local, which showed that of the top 29 food products eaten worldwide, beef has by far the greatest negative impact on the climate.

We might not need to become vegan or even vegetarian if we drastically reduce the production of mass-produced, factory-farmed beef.

Having watered down the proposal from banning beef products in university canteens to a token 'meat-free Mondays', we took a vote.

This proposal came 12th out of 12. That wouldn't necessarily be a

problem if the other 11 proposals were far reaching and ambitious, but they weren't. They included asking the university to install more recycling bins. Really...

The Youth Strike for Climate activists, who in my humble opinion are doing a fantastic job of raising awareness, always read a particular statement at their events.

During one in Fort William last year, I positively squirmed when Holly Gillibrand, Lochaber teenage school climate striker and activist, outlined how those adults of my approximate age have failed miserably to get to grips with the situation.

I was somewhat put out by the way I was castigated for having done so little, but they have a fair point as we now know the oil and gas industry started discussing the likely outcome of their activities at around the time I was born.

There was a great deal of vitriol in

the room about governments and big business not making radical decisions to dramatically change direction and make meaningful progress, but these students weren't willing to do the same themselves.

They all wanted someone else to fix the problem.

'There was lots of well-meaning talk about people doing as much as they feel they can, and everyone needing to accommodate change within their lives, but that's what we've been doing for the past 40 years.

I sat silently applauding when one brave soul stood and said: 'What is it about the word "emergency" that you don't understand?'

To borrow Greta Thunberg's analogy - your house is burning and you can't be bothered to throw one bucket of water onto the flames.

In 20 years, don't blame the adults for not having done enough.


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Photographer Colin Prior is presented with the Excellence in Mountain Culture Award by Julia Stoddart of sponsor Jahama Highland Estates. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



A performance by FlameOZ helped to open the festival in front of the Nevis Centre. Photograph: Abrightside Photography



Climbing instructor Tim Miller is presented with the Youth Award in Mountain Culture by West Highland College principal Lydia Rhomer. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Mountain festival hits new heights

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

Organisers have hailed this year's Fort William Mountain Festival (FWMF) as the best attended they have had with up to 2,000 people going to events.

The 16th annual FWMF began with an energetic launch party which saw runners coming from Nevis Range pass a baton to West Highland Wheelers and a performance from FlameOZ with fire juggling in the

pouring rain. Four days of fringe workshops and official evening events followed in everything related to mountain culture.

Rod Pashley, chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association which runs the festival said: 'In this area, people use the mountains for their livelihood as well as recreation. The festival is a celebration of how the natural environment is enjoyed by people.'

'We had two events where the main theatre in the

Nevis Centre was full - the Mountaineering Night with Nims Purja on Saturday and the Banff Film Festival night on Sunday. Lots of other events were not quite full, but had very few empty seats.

Events

'We have not officially counted all the tickets yet, but we could give a comfortable estimate of between 1,500 to 2,000 people involved in events across the festival.'

'Everyone who organises the festival is a volunteer and very passionate about creating it

but it is an awful lot of work. We would not be able to do it without phenomenal support and those who help out.'

A new addition to the festival this year were the Secret Sessions hosted at the Three Wise Monkeys climbing centre where attendees got a surprise talk from international mountain guide Rob Smith, adventurer Bob Shepton and Rich Mitchell, who was part of the pair that set the record for circumnavigating the UK in a rowing boat.

Mr Pashley added: 'We will

be continuing these sessions into next year as they led nicely into the evening events and people really enjoyed the ones they attended.'

The final event of the festival was the Family Adventure Film Screening on Sunday afternoon, a free event with all donations going towards the official festival charity, Search and Rescue Dog Association (Scotland).

Awards were given to renowned landscape photographer Colin Prior and 23-year-old mountain

instructor Tim Miller for services to mountain culture.

A review of the festival's Polar Night, looking at environmental issues and life in Antarctica, can be found on the FWMF website.

Organisers thanked all the sponsors, speakers, attendees and volunteers that made the festival run as well as it did.

The first meeting to organise next year's festival will be held in April and FWMF 2021 will run from Wednesday February 17 to Sunday February 21.

It has to be A2B!

For the past four years, Hamish Meryon has been delivering the goods with his A2B Courier Service, Oban, winning praise from customers along the way.

The business has grown from one man with his van to seven vehicles and nine employees.

Hamish spotted a gap in the market in the West Highlands for a smaller, more personal, 24/7 service than all the big names are currently offering.

Hamish, who learned his courier and logistic skills working for other businesses such as Oban Express, said: 'I started off with one contract

run and gradually built it up from there. It was just me when I started working out of my back porch. Now, we are down to Glasgow six days a week and we are currently doing one run a month down to England.'

While the company has grown in size, it has kept its nimbleness. If the demand is there, Hamish said that the whole business can rotate in a day.

Hamish and his team have three small parcel vans, a LWB, hi-roof Ford Transit Custom, two LWB hi-roof VW/Mercedes parcel vans

each with a 4.3m payload and the fleet's latest addition: a tail lift Luton Box-van.

A2B operates day and night from the old Tweed Mill yard on Soroba Road, where it has been based for almost a year after outgrowing its previous location at Glengallan Industrial Estate.

While its based in Oban, A2B operates throughout Central Scotland, Argyll and the Highlands, and is available for contract courier work, inter-branch stock transfers for businesses, and one-off or regular store uplifts, and light removals for both the

commercial and domestic markets.

A2B is fully-insured with hire and reward, public liability, and goods in transit cover backed by reliable, professional and experienced staff.

But don't just take their word for it: this is what satisfied customers have to say: 'What an amazing team at A2B. I needed an item delivered before going away for the weekend. They responded straight away with a full update on the status of my parcel. What an excellent service; other companies should be learning from this great team.'

'Great friendly service. Show up on time, do what they say, and I'll be using them again.'

'A2B did work at pretty short notice. They also picked up an extra, unarranged item, which was great.'

'The service team replying to messages were also quick, polite, and helpful. Highly recommended.'



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TV documentary on community's vision for centre celebrating St Kilda

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A new BBC ALBA documentary tells the inspirational story of a Hebridean community's vision to build a world-class visitor centre to celebrate the history of St Kilda.

In 2009, four public bodies and the National Trust for Scotland promoted a competition to create and locate a heritage centre in the Hebrides which would celebrate the human and natural environment of St Kilda.

The final decision was unanimous. Their preferred main site was in Uig, on Lewis, on a cliff edge where an abandoned radar station once kept an eye on the western approaches.

Capital funding required was not forthcoming, however, and the arduous task of developing the project was left to a com-

mittee, which has stuck with the task.

The National Lottery, also reluctant to invest in a project which was literally 'on the edge', encouraged a phased approach which Ionad Hiort Ltd (The St Kilda Centre company) adopted.

Planning approval has been secured for the first phase - A Chiad Cheum - costed at around £2 million. If this is successful, further phases will follow.

Producer Calum Angus Mackay, of Mast-Ard Studio, which directed the programme Oir an Dòchais - Edge of Hope - for BBC ALBA, said: 'Their plans are hugely ambitious. A total price tag in the region of £5.5 million, with a world-leading architect delivering a concept that will bring great opportunities to remote villages that have struggled with depopulation



The concept design for the new visitor centre.

and a changing demographic. The documentary follows the creative everyday challenges one community faces at a time when public funding does not always favour those living on the very edge of Europe.

'The determination shown by the people of Uig in trying to create an iconic landmark is a real human story worth following.'

The new centre is being designed by multi-award-winning Norwegian architect Reiulf Ramstad, who shares his vision for the project.

He has designed numerous groundbreaking structures and buildings across Europe including The Whale Visitor Centre and Trollstigen Visitor Centre in Norway. The Scottish architects supporting this am-

bitious design are Dualchas, based in Skye and Glasgow.

Ramstad draws from nature for the design and appreciates the unique qualities of St Kilda, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Since childhood he has held a passion for maps and his first visit to the Uig site in Lewis was, in his own words, 'like entering dreamtime'.

His designs have taken inspiration from the archaeology of Celtic brochs. Also, while considering a modern interior of the building concept, he said: 'We proposed an interior space as a kind of lens, where the distant silhouette of St Kilda would project itself onto a large glass window.'

Iain Buchanan, chairman and director of Ionad Hiort Limited, a crofter who lives in Mangersta, close to the proposed site, also features in the programme.

He has led the campaign over

the past 10 years. He said: 'Like many in the district of Uig, I'd like to see an ambitious and bold development plan that can shape the next generation's future.'

'I believe passionately in the concept designs for The St Kilda Centre, but I also realise this project was never going to be straightforward.'

Australian-born composer and musician Jessica Danz produced the highly evocative piano and vocal soundtrack for the programme, which was inspired by the emigration story of 36 St Kildans who left the islands bound for South Australia in 1852.

Only half of them survived the journey.

Ionad Hiort - Oir an Dòchais/St Kilda Centre - Edge of Hope is on BBC ALBA on Tuesday March 3 at 9pm and will also be available on the BBC ALBA iPlayer.

WHAT'S ON @ CORRAN HALLS



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APRIL

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Tickets: Adults £10, Concession £9, Family £26

JUNE

FRI JUN **26** **GARY MEIKLE COMEDY SHOW**



Surreal! 2020 UK TOUR
Starts 8.00pm Tickets: £16 + £1 booking fee.

JULY

SAT JUL **25** **IRELAND! THE SHOW**



Doors 7.00pm, Starts 7.30pm
Tickets: £25, Reserved seating

SEPTEMBER

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LT

Skye attraction marks mountaineering history

by Richard Mason
rmason@obantimes.co.uk

A new tourist attraction on Skye marking mountaineering history is to be created after a community heritage group reached its £117,000 fundraising target.

A bronze sculpture will now be commissioned and erected at Sligachan, against the backdrop of the Cuillin Mountains, paying tribute to two renowned mountaineering figures – Professor Norman Collie and John Mackenzie.

Credited with creating many of the routes across the Cuillin range, the pair are considered pioneers. John Mackenzie was from the crofting village of Sconser and began climbing the Cuillin range aged 10 and went on to become the first native Scot to become a professional mountain guide.



This visualisation shows what the bronze statue will look like once erected and, right, Stephen Tinney with a model of his sculpture. Photographs: Collie and Mackenzie Heritage Group.

John met Professor Collie, an internationally renowned scientist and mountain expert, on Skye and they formed a climbing partnership and friendship that spanned more than half a century.

The heritage group has already raised £200,000 to complete the first stage of the project, which included the formation of a 21-space

car park, information panels, stone seating and the removal of an unsightly overhead power system.

Now that the second fundraising target has been met, the group is planning a Skye celebration of the Cuillins later this year to mark the unveiling of the new sculpture.

Morag Nicolson, chairwoman of the Collie and



Mackenzie Heritage Group, said: 'We are so pleased to be able to share this news with everyone that has supported and encouraged us over the past 16 years. Our funding target has been reached and we cannot thank everyone enough for their donations.'

'We are now making plans for the unveiling of this iconic bronze sculpture at Sligachan

in September.'

MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch Kate Forbes said: 'This is an incredible feat of fundraising. It is amazing to see the Collie and Mackenzie Heritage Group has finally fundraised its target to build a monument.'

'The project team has never given up, even when the fundraising target seemed far beyond its reach. Their persistence has paid off, finally, and this monument will be erected in honour of Professor Norman Collie and John Mackenzie.'

Skye councillor John Finlayson added: 'Members of the steering group should be congratulated on their determination. I really appreciate the opportunity I had to be involved in the project at an early stage when I was a head teacher and to be able to support the group in more recent times.'

MSPs back proposal for Gaelic

MSPs from different parties have backed a proposal by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) to make Gaelic-medium education (GME) its default choice for P1 pupils.

Conservative Donald Cameron and SNP Alasdair Allan have both welcomed the idea.

Mr Cameron said: 'Bilingualism is plainly beneficial and we are all aware of the mistakes of the last century when one language [English] was promoted at the total exclusion of the other [Gaelic].'

'Equality of provision is paramount – but such equality is not denied by making Gaelic Medium Education the default language, as long as parents can opt out.'

Dr Allan added: 'There are wide-ranging benefits to bilingualism, from increased creativity, to heightened cognitive abilities, to greater job opportunities.'



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LT

LETTERS

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New bus service a welcome boost for tourism sector

There is no doubt traffic congestion and parking difficulties in scenic locations have become worse in recent times.

So the news we report this week of a new, regular bus service operating in Glen Nevis during the high season is to be welcomed.

Nevis Landscape Partnership, in collaboration with Lochaber Environmental Group and Shiel Buses, have been awarded funding from Paths for All's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places open fund to trial the new bus service from the centre of Fort William along Glen Nevis.

This should be a popular addition to what the tourism sector has to offer, with the spin-off benefit of reducing environmentally damaging issues, including verge erosion and harmful pollution, and devaluing the Glen Nevis experience.

This initiative should go down well with visitors and residents and is to be applauded.

Death of Father Tom a sad blow for Lochaber

It comes as no surprise such fulsome tribute has been paid to Monsignor Thomas Wynne, who died on Friday, aged 89.

Father Tom, as he was affectionately known, served the Catholic Church for more than 50 years following his ordination in Fort William in 1957.

Father Tom's life was one of selfless service to a number of parishes and he was held in the highest regard by everyone who knew him.

His funeral mass takes place tomorrow and will, quite rightly, be one of thanksgiving for a long life so well lived.

Save Knapdale Ward

A much-loved service for people with dementia is at risk of being shut down by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership.

More than 2,000 people have already called for the Knapdale Ward in Lochgilphead to stay open, yet there has not been any meaningful consultation with the people who work there on how to keep the ward open.

Tens of thousands of people in Scotland have dementia. We probably all know of someone who has the disease, or cares for someone with dementia. Knapdale is a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

The Health and Social Care Partnership must work with patients, carers and workers in Knapdale ward to protect its future and improve dementia services across Argyll and Bute. You can add your voice to the petition by visiting www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/hscp-budget-consultation-2020 by Wednesday March 4.

Polly Jones, Garelochhead.

Recording railway history

In the summers of the mid-1930s, railway timetables show that in addition to the trains which connected Oban/Connel with Ballachulish, an afternoon service from Oban to Benderloch operated for a short period each July.

It paused there just long enough for the locomotive to run round its coaches before they headed back to Oban. In 1933, for example, it only ran from Monday July 17 to Saturday July 29.

Given these exact dates, can any readers suggest what the reason might have been for this service which ran for only a few years up to about 1937?

I can be contacted on bdrummond363@googlemail.com

Robert Drummond, Ayr.

Swallowing mis-information on independence

I would like to respond to the letter printed in last week's Oban Times from Thomas Morris of Coventry advising us that we don't know the cost of Scottish independence. The statistics he has selected and the conclusions made, show only that he has swallowed the mis-information spread by the unionist camp.

He states, 'Denmark does not have another neighbouring population, like the rest of the

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 published, send it to editor@obantimes.co.uk

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

UK, of 61 million, to contribute significantly towards its public finances', implying England supports Scotland financially.

This is a well-known Union myth. Scotland receives, via the Barnett formula, about one third back from Westminster of the money it sends to the UK treasury. They keep the other two thirds to spend on Scotland's behalf without consultation, including funding the interest payments on the massively increased national debt and English projects, like HS2.

The Scottish Government does amazingly well with its partial refund of Scottish taxation. Just think what it could do for its people if it spent all the tax raised in Scotland. Scotland is supporting England, not the other way round.

Scotland's GDP is only around £180-£200 billion but our GDP per capita is £32,800 compared to the UK average of £31,600 (May 2019 figures). Scotland is already a rich country and would, in world rankings, be higher than England in terms of GDP per head of



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DISTRICT NEWS

PLOCKTON AND LOCHALSH

■ Plockton and District Community Council met for the first time since its election on Monday February 10 with Dave McGhie voted chairman.

He becomes only the fifth chairman since the formation of the community council in 1975. Previous people in the role were Isobel Nicolson, Geoff Webster, Charlie M MacRae and Mary Jane Campbell. Other officer bearers: vice chairman, James Krisp; treasurer, Catherine Camp; and minute secretary, Johanna Maclean. The next community council meeting is on Thursday April 9.

■ In the windy conditions on Saturday February 8, the popular seal trip boat Sula Mhor broke her moorings and was damaged beyond repair on the shore at the entrance to Loch Kishorn. Owner Calum Mackenzie is devastated by the loss of his boat. His seal trips are popular and he has raised thousands of pounds for charity over the years.

Mr Mackenzie is said to be already looking for a new boat.

■ Plockton Horticultural and Handicrafts Society held a 'pot luck supper' in Plockton Hall on Friday February 7. More than 60 people enjoyed the evening.

■ Kyle Bridge Club held a themed team event in Plockton Hall on Saturday February 1. Ten teams took part with people attending from Skye, Lochalsh, Inverness, Dingwall, Glasgow and Dundee. The winning team comprised Fiona Scully, Annette West, John Johnson and David Olive from Inverness. The evening's £80 proceeds will pay for two new scoring tablets for the club, which has also received a £750 community grant from the National Lottery to expand the cafe bridge event in October when it hopes to have 112 players taking part.

BALLACHULISH

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has announced this year's

Ardnamurchan High School wins two FilmG awards



Left: Ailsa Macgilivray, Kayla Burgess, Parker Dawes, Roanna Rough, John McPherson and Alexander Pervan; centre: Mara Drysdale; and Gaelic learners won for their film *An Cuach, na h-Iuchraichean agus an Dron*. Photographs: Alan Peebles

Young people across Lochaber and beyond were recognised for their film-making at this year's prestigious Gaelic Short Film Competition (FilmG) ceremony in Glasgow.

Ardnamurchan High School in Acharacle won two awards from four nominations for their films. They were the worthy recipients of the FilmG International Representative award for their film *Reòite* and the Gaelic Award for Learners for their film *An Cuach, na h-Iuchraichean agus an Dron*.

Winners of the Film Dùthchais (Community) award and a £1,000 prize to buy new film

equipment were Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust) on the Isle of Lewis, for their film *AN DRÀSTA! (RIGHT NOW!)*.

The film focuses on the effect climate change will have on their communities and across the world, encouraging people to get involved in climate change activism.

Liam Crouse from Uist, who featured in the film, said: 'The Western Isles are among the first areas in Scotland that will be affected by the steadily worsening conditions which climate change and sea-level rise will bring.'

This year's hotly-contested People's Choice

award went to Staffin Primary School, Skye, which mounted a robust social media campaign to garner an impressive 1,210 votes to come out on top. Their tongue-in-cheek tourism 'infomercial' *Fàilte don Eilean* takes a practical but entertaining approach to advising tourists on how to behave when visiting the island. Winning a television production placement through Highlands and Islands Enterprise was Mara Drysdale of Lochcarron, after picking up Most Promising Director. Her documentary, *Gualainn ri Gualainn*, traces the history of Lochcarron shinty team.

FSB Scotland 'Celebrating Small Business Awards' finalists.

Among those shortlisted for a Business and Product Innovation Award are Glencoe Activities, based in Ballachulish.

Finalists are chosen because they are exceptional, not just in the Highlands and Islands but in Scotland and, as the FSB Awards grow from strength to strength and the number of entries increases, it is becoming ever harder for businesses to stand out from the crowd.

FSB Highlands and Islands area leader Hamish Fraser from Skye said: 'As Highlands and Islands visitors' tastes change and evolve, businesses must think outside the

box to come up with new and interesting ideas of keeping themselves ahead of the game.

'It's a real pleasure to see Glencoe Activities taking a lead and being shortlisted for a Business and Product Innovation Award.

'I wish them well and look forward to celebrating the massive contribution all of our small businesses make to Scotland's well-being at the finals in March.'

The Awards Lunch, on March 19 at the Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh - previously The Caledonian - will see more than 200 businesses from across Scotland gather to celebrate small businesses, self-employed workers and the huge contribution

they all make to the Scottish economy and communities.

Winners of Scottish awards, except the Community Award which is for Scotland only, go forward to the UK final in London in May.

FORT WILLIAM

Fort William Area Community Council Partnership is to start up again.

At a Fort William, Inverloch and Torlundy Community Council meeting, representatives from Ardgour and Kilmallie community councils attended to speak of topics of mutual interest and the partnership was agreed.

The first meeting of the community partnership will be on Tuesday March 24.

Other relevant councils, Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry, and Caol, did not receive enough nominations to form at the most recent elections but it is hoped they will join the partnership in future.

The deadline for nominations to these councils was yesterday, Wednesday February 26.

The partnership will work in the same way as the Association of South Lochaber Community Councils which covers all areas south of Fort William.

It will meet quarterly to discuss topics of mutual interest.



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Around Lochaber

ANGUS MACDONALD

fort@obantimes.co.uk



Introducing Lochaber businessman Angus MacDonald, who is providing occasional columns to the Lochaber Times

What makes a great high street today?

Picture this for a moment. A band marching along Fort William high street, devoid of vehicles, crowds of smiling people lining the route.

The next day, a farmers' market with unwrapped vegetables from the garden, homemade jams, duck eggs, cheeses and a stand of delicious sloe gins and other liquors. Charities have tables set up for raffles and fundraising competitions. Children are playing hopscotch in a marked out area, with parents sitting around on benches sipping coffee from the renown café on the corner. Independent shops are thriving, quirky, individual places selling delicious baking and pies perhaps, local knitwear, a hardware shop with paper bags to fill with the nails and screws you want. Two children from the high school are busking, playing the fiddle, there must be £50 in their upturned hats. Next Tuesday night a great local band is playing in Cameron Square. Tickets will be hard to get.

This is where people want to be, not in the soulless out-of-town supermarket boxes, overly chilly, devoid of laughter.

Before my family moved back to Lochaber, we lived near Pitlochry. Despite having a high street full of cars, the town is buzzing, every Monday night for five months. There is 'a highland night' where one of the two pipe bands marches down the high street. All the shops stay open and do a roaring trade. In October 'The Enchanted Forest' has become a mega hit, with 80,000



The parade for the start of the Scottish Six Days Trial always draws a big crowd to Fort William town centre. Photograph: Iain Ferguson

people attending every year. It is a bumper month for the retailers but, in Fort William the streets are emptying for the winter. Its New Year street party attracts huge numbers and the Etape Caledonia is Britain's largest cycling event.

The North Perthshire hospitality industry has a season four months longer than we have here; the owners of the hotels and the many independent cafes are positively prosperous. Lochaber-based Highland Soap Company's shop in Pitlochry has 50 per cent higher sales than their shop in Fort William, despite being the same size, prominence and both having delightful staff. The difference is the non summer spend.

I once read an article that said thriving high streets were about experiences. A high quality farmers' market, a good bookshop and a town centre cinema brought people into the town.

What also made a real difference was a stream of events, especially in those shoulder months.

In Fort William we have the final day of the Scottish Six Days Trial

motorcycle competition and the Christmas Gathering, but so much more can be made of our high street.

Fort William has so much more going for it than Pitlochry - it doesn't have a cinema, a bookshop or our excellent West Highland Museum, not to mention Ben Nevis and the sea. Every event could start and finish on the high street, including the Ben Nevis Race and mountain biking events. We have the fantastic Lochaber Piping Festival hidden away in the Nevis Centre. Get the participants out to play. Our tiny weekly farmers' market is jammed down at the east end of town, so much more could be made of that! I'd love a parade of the cattle and horses down the high street prior to the Lochaber Show - imagine! A ticker tape parade of our victorious shinty team holding the Camanachd Cup aloft...okay, I am getting a bit carried away here.

I wanted to host - and pay for - a street party for the opening of the cinema but it was all too expensive and difficult. Security personnel, barriers and emergency access required for the fire and ambulance service was the killer blow. Alcohol would not be allowed either.

Edinburgh closes off Princes Street for New Year and the Fringe festival, and alcohol is certainly allowed there. I feel that town could be vibrant, a really happening place, but we need help.

Come on Highland Council, become the organisation that wants to say yes. Councillors, show some leadership. See what is happening elsewhere and figure out what can be done to help our town thrive once more.



Helen Jones won the Rotary Young Chef district final.

Lochaline's Helen cooks up a storm

Ardnamurchan High School first-year pupil Helen Jones, from Lochaline, is celebrating after taking first place in the Rotary Young Chef district final earlier this month.

Staged in East Kilbride, the event saw Helen keep her nerves in check to produce what was described as an 'amazing' three-course meal for two people in two hours.

The young culinary star cooked smoked mackerel cannelloni with a beetroot and horseradish remoulade and sauce vierge, followed by braised chicken with haggis, neeps and tatties, savoy cabbage and bacon with roast baby onion jus. Her dessert was a pear tarte tatin with vanilla ice-cream and tuile biscuit.

Patricia Kennedy, who has

guided a significant number of pupils from Ardnamurchan High School to success with young chef competitions over many years, accompanied Helen and Donald Young of Lochaber Rotary Club to the district final.

Ms Kennedy told the Lochaber Times: 'We couldn't have done it without the help and mentoring from Gary Phillips, head chef at Kilcamb Lodge, Strontian, who set the menu, provided the recipes and mentored Helen. Thanks also go to Helen's parents for their support and to Donald Young of Lochaber Rotary Club for organising the competition and supporting us in East Kilbride.'

Helen will now compete in the Scottish and North of England regional final in Stirling on Saturday March 7.

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LT

TEN-PIN BOWLING



Nevis Centre.

Alleycats continue to dominate scratch division

The penultimate evening of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten-pin bowling league at the Nevis Centre sees the uncatchable Alleycats at the top of the scratch division.

With 61 points, the Alleycats will be presented with the top prize at a presentation on Monday March 2 at 7pm in the Nevis Centre, following the final week's action where it will be a competition for second place.

Team With A Bowling Problem moved into second on 46 points followed by British Legion Fort William who drop to third place on 44 points after just losing out 3-2 to leaders Alleycats.

The handicap division is still close at the top with Peaky Bowlers the new leaders on 43 points.

Alleycats drop to second on 41 points after losing out 2-3 to third placed British Legion Fort William who are now on 38 points.

This week's top individual scratch game came from Iain Gregor (British Legion Fort William) with a 194 followed by Ron Gretton (Retrovators) with 186.

Iain Gregor also had the top two-game scratch series of 327, the top handicap game of 245 and the top two-game handicap series of 429.

The best team scores this week came from Alleycats with the top scratch game of 560 and the top two-game scratch series of 1083 whilst Retrovators had the top handicap game of 780 and Peaky Bowlers had the top two-game handicap series of 1492.

The top scratch averages over the season so far are currently held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 156 followed by Steve Day (Team With A Bowling Problem) with 148 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 146.

FIXTURES

Lochaber sports fixtures

Saturday, February 29: Football - Fort William v Huntly (Highland League), Claggan Park, kick-off 3pm.

Rugby - Lochaber U15s v Stornoway in Caledonia U15 Youth Cup, at Banavie, kick-off 11am. **Rugby** - Moffat v Lochaber RFC (Tennent's West Region League Division 3 Men), Holm Park, Moffat. Kick-off 3pm;

Wednesday, March 4: Football - Fort William FC v Strathspey Thistle FC (Highland League), Claggan Park.

Saturday, March 7: Rugby - Stornoway Under-15s v Lochaber U-15s, at Stornoway, kick-off 11am. **Football** - Fort William FC v Nairn County FC (Highland League), Claggan Park, kick off 2pm.

Saturday, March 14: Rugby - Lochaber RFC v Cumbernauld, Banavie, kick-off 3pm. **Football** - Fort William FC v Deveronvale FC (Highland League), Claggan Park, kick off 2pm.

Sunday, March 15: Netball - Caithness v Fort William Falcons, in Inverness. 3.15pm.

LOTTERY NUMBERS

Lochaber club lotteries

Ballachulish Shinty Lottery: Numbers for 23/2 23/2 shinty lottery numbers were 11, 13 and 20. Still no winners this week, so it's an £800 draw next week.

Caol Community Centre Bingo Club Lotto:

Numbers for 23/2 were 8, 12 and 15. No winners so £1100 next week.

Fort William Golf Club Lotto: Numbers for 20/2 were 5, 7 and 14. No winner so £1,000 available for draw on 27/2.



Most improved 12 and under – Charleigh Adams.



Most improved 15 and under – Dobrochna Czaplá.

Lochaber's young stars enjoy awards

Lochaber Leisure Centre Swim Team held its annual awards night on Friday at Fort William Shinty Club. The award winners are pictured on this page.

Meanwhile, at the end of

January, the first part of two weekends making up the North District Age Group Records was held.

Lochaber Leisure Centre Swim Team had 10 swimmers travelling to participate –

around half the swimmers from the club who had qualifying times.

It was a successful weekend, as the swimmers involved all achieved at least one Long Course Personal Best time,

so progress is being made, as they try to qualify for the Scottish National Age Groups event which will be held in early April.

There was a silver medal from Danni MacLean, as well

Fort's Falcons take on top city sides

There was a gruelling day of netball at Lochaber High School on Sunday when Fort William Falcons played two league matches back-to-back against Inverness Rubies and Inverness Diamonds.

The first match against Rubies started well with the Falcons taking an early lead. The Rubies fought back but not quite enough to catch up.

Fort William pushed on and with some strong defensive interceptions and fantastic shooting were able to secure the victory 56-36. Falcons team captain Rebecca Christopher was awarded player of the match for her work at goal defence.

After a full-on first match the somewhat exhausted Falcons took to the court again ready to take on the leading team in the league,



The victorious Falcons team, left, with the Inverness Rubies.

Inverness Diamonds.

The Fort outfit fought hard for the whole 60 minutes but it wasn't to be, with the Diamonds emerging victorious 51-43. It was an enjoyable game, though,

with everyone coming away with a smile on their face.

Star shooter Karen Breslin was awarded player of the match – not surprising considering her tenacity in the circle and consistently

GOLF

on-target shooting.

Looking back on the same matches last season, Falcons were overwhelmed to see the comparison – Falcons versus Rubies was 30-27, while Falcons versus Diamonds saw a 21-71 result.

So it is fair to say Falcons have come a long way and are in no doubt they can carry on improving.

An the Falcons told the Lochaber Times: 'We have to say a massive thank you to Sharyn Morgan for umpiring both games for the Falcons. And also to everyone who came along to support the team and help out with scoring and time-keeping.'

'A team can't survive with players alone so we're always grateful for the support we receive.'

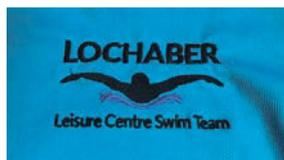


Most improved 15 and under – Indigo Grier.



Swimmer of the year and most improved 12 and under – Calum Stewart.

Swimming team night



as 17 finalists (top 10), which must be a record for the club, as seven of its swimmers achieved top 10 placings.

Round up of results in age order: Andzelin Gerasimuka (10) – 6th and 8th in Breaststroke finals and two club age group records.

To put her swims into perspective, Andzelina was swimming in the 13 year and under age group, and not surprisingly, was the only 10-year-old to make the finals.

Mya MacCallum (11) – to qualify for the 13 year and under shows the potential that Mya has over the next couple of years as she will be competing in the same age group for next two years.

Sean Cann (12) – five swims, five club Long Course age group records, four top 20 placings; a little extra push will take him into the finals soon.

Yasmin MacCallum (12) – 2 swims, 2 club age group records, first time at Long Course meet and North District Championships. Yasmin's improvement this year has been down to hard work.

Looks good to keep on this upward trajectory for the rest of the season.

Dobrochna Czaplá (14) – 4 Long Course Personal Best

times; another hard worker who has made a quick progression from last year to a 7th place in the 400m was a big step up and there is more to come!

Hannah Loughray (14) – 6 Personal Bests Times, four top ten finishes including a 4th and 5th place. Hannah has moved up from outside top twenty, to top ten in her best strokes; again improving leaps and bounds..

Danni MacLean (14) – Silver Medal in 50m Butterfly, 4th place in 100m Front Crawl and swam in four finals. All the above were firsts for Danni who also produced a new club age group record in 50m Butterfly. Danni is becoming more skilled and therefore just keeps getting quicker. .

Evie-Jay Clark (14) – 3 Long Course Personal Best Times, including three finals and with Hannah and Danni, gave Lochaber amazingly three finalists in the 50m Butterfly and 200m IM. In the 14/15 year old age group, Evie-Jay is swimming back to her best again.

Alice-Ann Macpherson (15) – a new Personal Best Time in the 100m Back Crawl, four top twenty finishes. Alice-Ann has a lot of talent and between her and our other 14 year olds, the club might get another sub 60 seconds 100m girl front



Swimmer of the year and fastest 100m front crawl swim team awards – Jenna MacLean.

crawler, but who will be next?

Jenna MacLean (16) – 2 club age group records, 3 finals and 4th place in 50m Front Crawl. All achieved without swimming at her very best; just a wee tweak here and there, should produce more great swims for part two in March.

As previously mentioned, the club is moving onwards and upwards, especially, with what was the result of the day, when Alice, Ann, Danni, Hannah and Jenna achieved fourth place in the 4x100m senior front crawl relay and only losing out on a medal to two teams from the Aberdeen Performance Team whose

SWIMMING

winning team averaged 22 years old, whilst the Lochaber team's average age was 14 years old.

The same team with Evie-Jay replacing Hannah, also finished in 8th place in the 4x50m medley relay event. The club also had its first qualifiers for the Scottish National Age Group Championships.

Hannah and Danni both in the 50m Butterfly, Evie-Jay 100m and 200m Backcrawl

Jenna has a remarkable nine times including 50/100/200m Frontcrawl and Fly, 100/200m Backcrawl and 200m Individual Medley.



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WEATHER

Thursday
Sleet showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 6°C.

Friday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
4°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook
Saturday
Hail showers and a moderate breeze
Sunday
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures
2°C to 5°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	01.58	1.0	07.51	3.9
	14.17	1.2	19.55	3.7
Fri	02.24	1.2	08.20	3.7
	14.45	1.3	20.21	3.6
Sat	02.48	1.3	08.47	3.6
	15.12	1.5	20.51	3.4
Sun	03.13	1.5	09.18	3.3
	15.49	1.7	21.25	3.2
Mon	03.47	1.7	09.57	3.1
	16.42	1.8	22.09	3.0
Tues	04.43	1.9	10.55	2.9
	17.57	1.9	23.13	2.9
Wed	06.22	2.0	13.47	2.8
	19.16	1.9	**.**	1.9

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

Lochaber's young swim team stars enjoy awards night

Fort's Falcons take on top city sides

Late goal torpedoed Fort hopes at Lossiemouth

Fort William	0
Lossiemouth	2
Highland League	

This was the battle of the league's bottom dwellers, with the game being switched from an unplayable Claggan Park at Fort William to Grant Park on Saturday.

Almost half an hour of a tense first half had been played before Fort had any shots on goal, while the Coasters had two chances, one of which forced Fort keeper Daniel Hoban into action to stop a near-post strike.

It was in the 29th minute when Fort's Connor Moore had a chance but the ball hit the wrong side of the post from a tight angle.

Fantastic save

Three minutes later and Lossie's Kyle Willis's effort needed a fantastic save from Hoban to keep a clean sheet. Just before the interval, Fort's Roddy Kennedy had a shot blocked, leaving the scoreline 0-0 at half time.

Kennedy saw another effort go wide shortly after the re-start and on the 57th minute mark, Willis's determination paid off when his shot saw the ball find the net making it 0-1.

But Fort were not giving up without a fight and five minutes later the hard-working Kennedy saw his shot hit the bar, while Rafal Mendyk, who came on for Moore in the 59th minute, saw his shot cleared off the line.

Lochaber's young swim team stars enjoy awards night



Lochaber Leisure Centre Swim Team held its annual awards night last week. See pages 54 and 55 for more photographs and report.

Photograph: A Brightside Photography.

The final nail in Fort's coffin, however, was not long in coming when, on the 81st minute mark, Liam Archibald prodded home his side's second goal to seal the win.

Fort manager Calum MacLean admitted his side just were 'just not at the races, plain and simple'.

MacLean continued: 'We just weren't very good on Saturday. The weather was

pretty bad with a really strong wind, but I'm not making excuses - we didn't have enough passion, there were too many touches. In the end Lossiemouth wanted it more.

'We've done well on the road in the past few games with a couple of wins and a draw. But we gave up home advantage on Saturday and Lossiemouth have now picked up two wins at home against us. I think we could've taken

them if the game had been at Claggan.

'There's talk about going away to play games if they can't be fulfilled at Claggan - we've got to get some dry days.'

Important

MacLean also said it was important to remember how young a lot of his players actually were: 'As I've said before, some of these are only kids - 16 and 17 years old. So

they're going to have inconsistent days.'

Looking ahead to the home game - hopefully - this Saturday against Huntly, MacLean said his side have to get back to winning ways.

'We've got to get off the bottom of the table. That's the immediate aim and it's certainly achievable. I'm confident we can do that - I don't think we can play as bad again as we did on Saturday.'

FOOTBALL

Fort William are due to host Huntly on Saturday at Claggan Park with a 3pm kick off.



SSSSHHH!!

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