

Dunoon Observer and Argyllshire Standard

No. 7237

Established 1871

FRIDAY 14 MAY 2010

www.dunoon-observer.com

Price 65p

WORRYING FIND AT ARDENTINNY

By GORDON NEISH
gordon@dunoon-observer.co.uk

SIX boxes of unused blank cartridges of the type used only by Britain's armed forces were found by a walker on a footpath near Ardentenny last week.

Community website ardentenny.org first reported the worrying find and the MoD has now confirmed that it is responsible.

The 5.56mm cartridges are of a type used only in the SA80 rifle – used by all branches of the armed services.

The find of 120 cartridges was made on a newly-opened footpath between Ardentenny and Carrick Castle – an area which was used until recently for military exercises involving the Navy, Army, RAF, Marines – and even cadets.

A MoD spokesman told the *Standard*: "There was never any risk to the public. We believe these cartridges to be between eight and ten years old.

"These are blank cartridges which cannot be converted."

The spokesman said that MoD police are investigating the incident, although it will take "some considerable time" for them to work out who the cartridges were

issued to, and why they were left behind.

The walker, who does not wish to be identified, found a sealed green heavy-duty plastic bag bearing the legend "BAE SYSTEMS".

The bag was discovered to contain six boxes of 20 unused cartridges.

A spokesman for Strathclyde Police said: "Strathclyde Police contacted Faslane base when this package was discovered. MoD Police will now dispose of the package accordingly."

Newly re-elected MP for Argyll and Bute, Alan Reid, told the *Standard*: "It is extremely worrying that the MoD lost six boxes of cartridges.

"There needs to be an immediate and thorough investigation and the MoD needs to ensure that this does not happen again."

Cowal councillor Ron Simon saw this find as part of a wider concern when he said: "SNP councillors are to table a motion at council in



• Photo courtesy of ardentenny.org

June calling for independent scrutiny of MoD sites and installations, mainly with regard to monitoring potential environmental contamination.

"Although this is prompted by incidents at Faslane over recent years we believe that

public safety is paramount around all sites and that the involvement of an agency such as SEPA would complement the MoD's internal monitoring giving the public who live in the areas around such installations a degree of confidence which

is currently missing.

"The same applies to training exercises where activity may be taking place on land outwith MoD ownership. We feel it is important that there is a

• Continued on page 3

INSIDE



Rainbows shine – page 5



Sneak thief – page 8



Rotary AGM – page 12

SCHOOL REVIEW 3

HMS DUNOON 6

SAFETY VALVE 9

PUZZLES 11

SPORT 22 – 24

WWW
dunoon-observer.com

Ammunition find

• Continued from page 1

clean land policy, therefore we are also concerned at the recent find of ammunition at Ardentenny and have called for an immediate investigation, which we understand will be conducted by MoD Police.

"We have to understand exactly what has happened here and we have to establish what risk there would have been if, for example, children had found this ammunition and had played around with it.

"Most importantly we

need to ensure that robust measures are in place to prevent such a thing happening again."

Jim Mather MSP said: "I seem to remember in the Falklands War one of the BBC reporters famously 'counted all the planes out' leaving an aircraft carrier and then told us that he also 'counted them all back in again'.

"I trust that this experience will reinforce the mindset with anyone involved in such exercises in the future."