



## SHERIFF OFFICER *FLEES* SEACREST

Once upon a time there was an Austrian Dictator who believed in fairy tales. He claimed that the population of Great Britain was nothing other than a nation of shopkeepers. How wrong Hitler was, as history has proved his erroneous views, lacked substance.

Later an elected President claimed that we in Britain were a nation of animal lovers. That is a fact. Several times a week in one national paper or another there are stories of people getting prosecuted for cruelty to animals, and rightly so, whether it is through malnutrition or neglect or poor accommodation or even uncleanliness, leading to the animal's suffering.

Personally I believe that as a Nation, we revere animals and their welfare, far above our senior citizens who number in total some 11.6m. This winter alone forecasts in the National Press estimate that if the weather is severe, between one and two thousand Old Aged Pensioners will die as a direct result malnutrition and hypothermia. This is a sad reflection on present and past Government's care for the elderly.

Admittedly the Cold Weather Payment for all OAPs, (whether they need it or not,) has risen from £200 pa to £250 this year. But let me, (as an OAP approaching his 77th birthday,) tell you regular readers, three winters ago £200 would have bought 26 bags of top quality coal. This year with the bounty increased up to £250, it just bought 19 bags of top quality coal and £3 left over, perhaps to be used for buying firefighters. Sorry, as I use solid fuel as my main means of comfort I am not qualified to highlight the plight of my compatriots using gas, oil or electricity, as their main means for cooking and heating.

How can we OAPs make this corrupt Government take heed? Well one very easy way is not to take part in any future elections by refusing to 'go to the

polls.' (Just imagine what this stance would do to a General Election result?) Another way is to withhold your Local Council Tax Payments. Forget about writing to your local MP, for he or she could be far too busy rigging their expense accounts to care whether

you are dying of hunger or cold, or both. Just spend the LCTP cash on maintaining your welfare over this winter. With this stance in mind I have refused to pay Highland Council's Local Taxes for a considerable time.

So it was with a semblance of amusement that I was summoned to Seacrest's door last week and be confronted by a man who said "Sheriff Officer, I am here about your overdue

Council Tax." **Chris McEwan** was not particularly amused when I retorted, "You're wasting you're time." Hiding in the background was a lady witness, **Sheila Burton**, and I felt quite sorry for her embarrassment. When I said to Chris McEwan that I was going to take his photograph he replied, "You're not taking my photograph," I retorted, "You wanna bet?"

By the time I dashed into the house grabbed a camera (no more than twenty seconds) the pair had raced out the garden gate leapt into their car and managed to partially reverse out of the drive. I just managed to get one shot of the pair, both hiding their faces behind A4 folders as the driver raced away at a rate of knots over Sid Wyman's anti speed bumps. The car must have been almost airborne by the time it reached the other side. I am disappointed that a Sheriff Officer from Scott and Co should feel insecure in my presence and I hope when Mr McEwan comes back he will at least listen to my 'side of the story'. Chasing up debtors can't be a nice job at the best of times let alone be confronted by someone like me on *the* day.

Ed.



Sheriff Officer Chris McEwan and witness Sheila Burton make their 'escape' from Seacrest 23rd November 2009.

# Robina and the Fairy Lights©

Once upon a Christmas time many years ago in an old oak, not too far away from where you stay, a wee brown bird with a red breast, along with her mate, made a home amidst the tangle of limbs and leaves high up on the tree.

Although Jack Frost was just a boy in those days he was still able to nip exposed toes or beaks, so Robina fluffed out her feathers and crouched lower on her perch as under the slanting rays of moonlight, flurries of snow invaded the gaps between the branches of her abode and caused a shiver to pass over her tiny frame. Its almost Christmas, she thought, and I have nothing to celebrate with.

Close by her mate Robin moved restlessly, opened one eye yawned hugely and said, "Its much too early to start singing," then tucked his head under a wing went back to the Land of Nod. Now while we may well believe that birds are the only thing that survives in our gardens over winter, we are wrong. Although fairies are generally creatures of mid-summer, when the nights are warm and the grass underfoot dry, very occasionally Lap Land fairies arrive in this country about Christmas time for their annual holidays.

As if by magic, first one then another dainty and fragile looking creature emerged from the myriad of cobwebs that festooned the nooks and crannies of the aged sentinel. The phenomena however did not stop there, for yet two more beautiful fairy Princesses appeared. Emerald raised a dainty finger to her lips, signalling the others to be as quite as only fairies can be. Pearl nodded, Ruby smiled and Opal had tears in her eyes. Christmas time you see affected Opal in this manner due to the kind heart the fairy Godmother had blessed her with.

Without much more ado the foursome waved their magic wands and soon the snow covered garden was bathed in reams of Fairy Lights, all twinkling in unison with the Milky Way. Afterwards the four Princesses danced on the frost encrusted grass under the umbrella of the oak's spreading branches, leaving footprints, tiny as a wren's, imprinted on the surface.

Suddenly in the distance a church bell sounded heralding the dawn of Christmas Day. One by one Emerald, Pearl, Ruby and Opal spread their gossamer wings and

flew back to the sanctuary of the Oak Tree, where they pulled threads of spider silk around themselves and went to sleep leaving their fairy lights behind.

When dawn gave way to daylight and the garden birds began to search for titbits they were all chirping with excitement over the twinkling coloured lights. "I wonder how they got here?" Asked the busy Blackbird, "I don't know," said Sparrow splendid in his winter attire. For a while it looked as though not a single bird could answer the question until Robina timidly said that she had not slept too well and so was awake when the lights were put up.

"Go on," said Charlie Chaffie, "tell us?" "Well," said the reluctant Robina, "It was like this, four Fairy Princesses appeared and waved their magic wands before my very eyes and the lights came on." "Oh what a lovely story to start Christmas Day with," said Dormouse, who sat chewing a discarded acorn, "If you'll pardon me I'll go and tell my family."

When farmer John Farmer tugged open his farmhouse door to spread nuts and crumbs for the birds he took a step backwards as the twinkling lights met his gaze. "Quick," he called to his lady wife Ann, "Come and see this." together they stood and tried to count the number of lights as they faded gently in the warmth of the rising sun while drops of moisture fell in elongated shapes to splash as Technicolored offerings for the last time, on the hoar frost below.

"This is the most exciting Christmas I have ever had." said Robina to the her husband Robin, "You could be right at that," he replied.

Over the years the Fairy Light fad at Christmas has spread and now the four Fairy Princesses, Emerald, Pearl, Ruby and Opal are in ever increasing demand, decorating gardens close to where you stay. So from now on YOU can lookout for them as they create Fairy Lights that twinkle in unison with the Milky Way, while you watch on Christmas Eve for Father Christmas.

Euilleam Ross. ©

Dedicated to children of all ages.

# Never Say Die, Say TV Licence Enforcers

Halloween was not long past when a lady stopped me on Invergordon's infamous High Street and asked whether I had had any more encounters with the enforcers from the TV Licensing Authority? I said that I did not have contact with anyone associated with the TVLA for over two years and that as I was now of an age whereby I did not require such a permit I would not be hearing from them again.

They told me they had travelled all the way from Glasgow in foggy conditions just to call on me. I explained that TV licences and I were now no longer an 'item' as I was overage. Well said one that's not automatic, as exempt OAPs need to fill in a questionnaire. When I said that that was news to me, they answered that I was not the only one who knew nothing about that need.

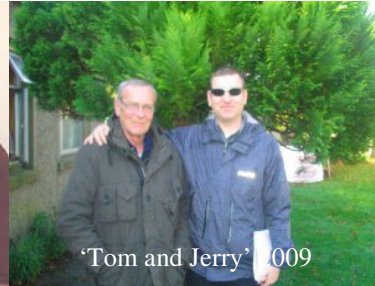
"Don't be too sure," the lady said as she left chuckling to herself.



'Bill & Ben' 2006



Sylvia



'Tom and Jerry' 2009

We parted amicably with some details and copies of past

In bygone days people with the 'second sight' were

often thought to be witches and on occasions burned at the stake. Luckily for Sylvia such practices have long since been discontinued, for within days yet another 2 TV Licence enforcers appeared on Seacrest's door step.

'Highlanders' and me shaking my head at the waste of time and money. Its little wonder why you poor folk out there have to pay so much for so little.

To say I was wild, as only one would be being disturbed from his daily bread, is an understatement but nevertheless when I calmed down and they introduced themselves I saw the funny side and had a good blether with the lads.

One good thing did come out of it however, Sylvia has agreed to forecast 6 numbers for my Lotto selection next time there is a 'double rollover'.

I'll keep you posted. Ed.

# Global-Isleburn Workmen's Lucky Break

For years and years this news sheet has highlighted the lack of modern toilet facilities in the town of Invergordon. Tucked out of sight the unsightly and somewhat forbidding present convenience is quite unwelcoming unless one is desperate to spend a penny.

My delusions about Invergordon's future grandeur did not last overlong, for the three portaloos were soon snatched up by a contractor using modern lifting methods.

One morning last week however it appeared that *Manna from Heaven* had somehow come to the rescue of the Local Councillors and the I.C.C., for 'out of the blue' literally speaking, it appeared that their embarrassment, over the lack of provision for all the thousands of tourists who disembark from the cruise ships, was now a thing of the past.

Two of the three loos stranded on Invergordon's High Water Mark!



Fortunately for the insurers, and the workmen, at the time when the plastic loos became airborne apparently they were not in use, otherwise there could well have been fatalities. Could anyone imagine something as degrading as being drowned in a lavatory?

Despite the high winds and driving rain I 'braved the elements' clambered down the concrete steps and took a few snapshots of the new toilet facilities that had magically landed on Invergordon's doorstep.

It is unclear whether SEPA and the Health & Safety were involved in the recovery of the badly damaged units? Or whether waste material from the loos deposited on the foreshore was cleaned up?

I think I'll give eating shellfish, a break for a while.

# Letters

Sir Iain Gibson CBE.,  
Director,  
Wm Morrisons Supermarkets plc,  
15/11/09.

Dear Sir,

Perhaps in your position as a director of Wm Morrisons Supermarkets plc, you could undertake, on the buying public's behalf, (especially those buying pre-packed meat from stores in Alness and Inverness) an investigation into just why a National Establishment such as 'Morrisons' need to and continue to do so, mislead their customers, especially the unemployed, the low paid and OAPs?

You will clearly see from the enclosed copies of my news sheet that 'Morrisons' is deliberately pre-packing inferior beef cuts whilst labelling them as Brisket of Beef and charging the higher price. I can only claim that there are, to my knowledge, two stores doing so but it could well be a national policy.

I trust that you will appreciate my concern for all like people such as me and that you will ensure remedial action is taken forthwith.

Many thanks. Euillean Ross.



Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009

Ref: IG/jdr

Mr E Ross  
"Seacrest"  
Barbaraville West  
Delny  
IV18 0NA

Dear Mr Ross

Thank you for your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> November sent to my previous home address, which has taken some time to be redirected to me hence the delay in responding to you.

I have read your copies of the leaflets enclosed with your letter and have passed all documents to our Group Trading Director for him to look into. I am sure either he or one of his team will be in contact with you shortly.

Please be so kind as to use the business address at the foot of this letter for future correspondence as I cannot guarantee to receive it if posted to my home address.

Yours sincerely

SIR IAIN GIBSON, CBE  
Chairman

Wm Morrisons Supermarkets plc  
Registered office:  
Millennium House, Cuth Lane  
Bradford, West Yorkshire BD3 7JL  
Registered in England no. 2288493

Telephone: +44 (0)241 611 5000  
www.morrisons.co.uk

## Christmas Stories For the Young at Heart

King Dinbur and the Gardeners

Robina and the Fairy Lights

The Keeper of the Rainbows

Cool Dad, Now Lets Have The Best  
Christmas Ever

Halfmast's Christmas

Euillean Ross ©

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
PROSPEROUS  
NEW YEAR  
TO ALL READERS

Enjoy the  
'Young at Heart Stories'  
&  
Traditional Highland  
Recipes on

[www.independent-highlander.co.uk](http://www.independent-highlander.co.uk)

## Traditional Highland Recipes

Recipes and tips from yesteryear,  
With a true Highland flavour.  
Produced for your enjoyment  
and hopefully...posterity.

Don't forget these are old recipes  
are graced in the imperial weights  
and measures of that day.

Free down load. All photographed  
dishes were produced (and enjoyed  
at Seacrest) using the methods de-  
scribed in the publication.

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Morag MacDonald & Euillean Ross

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