



IT COULD BE....A FAIT ACCOMPLI

And perhaps a car park with a view to boot!

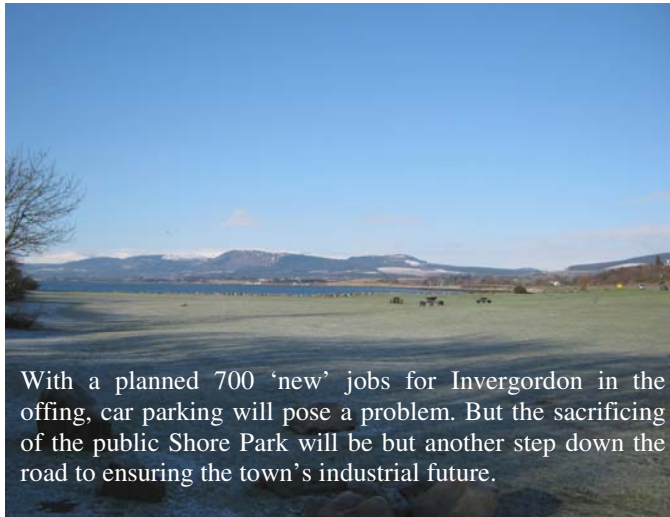
Unquestionably Chairman Roy MacGregor, of Global Energy, kept his own counsel while he negotiated his latest lease with the Board of the Cromarty Firth Port Authority. All other port users were only made aware of his proposals hours before the *Independent Highlander* published his plans on it's web site.

Some say that Mr MacGregor even kept the CFPA Board unaware of the dimensions of the 'Big Shed' until the *Highlander's* disclosure, but I don't believe that rumour. The CFPA Board is made up of astute members and it is unthinkable that they would not know what they were doing.

That assumption also applies when one considers that the CFPA Board were well aware of the impact that Roy's shed will have on the whole of the area surrounding the port, as well as town residents. These very people (the CFPA Board) will leave a historical legacy not to be envied nor admired. The irony of it is that not a single 'Board' member lives in the town, and as such they can ignore the general public's concern for the rape of Invergordon.

SNP HIGHLAND COUNCILLOR MAXINE SMITH who was totally opposed to the establishment of an incinerator on the industrial park on the old smelter site, due to the infamous Tomich Junction being unable to cope with the increase of traffic, (28 lorries per day) as her major objection. Suddenly she has changed horses in mid stream. Now she is wholeheartedly behind Mr MacGregor's proposed quayside development in Invergordon. Is this a case of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds?

Whatever the impact of Global's new building will be on the nearby residents one must look at the positive side of the equation. The promise of some 700 new jobs in the town will be welcomed, not only by the various business concerns which will benefit by the extra cash flow, but by people looking for work locally.



With a planned 700 'new' jobs for Invergordon in the offing, car parking will pose a problem. But the sacrificing of the public Shore Park will be but another step down the road to ensuring the town's industrial future.

Whether Global, after its recent acquisition, will need the extra fabrication facility and the workforce in Invergordon, to the extent that is being claimed at present, waits to be seen.

However it is a glorious opportunity for the Invergordon based Off The Wall Group to display their

artistic bent by approaching Mr MacGregor personally, and seeking permission to cover the undoubtedly 'ugly to be' building with unforgettable 'murials'. Just think how appreciative all the liner passengers would be as they came into the port, lining the ship's rails, cameras at the ready snapping away like blazes.

Apparently Off The Wall have recently been awarded a grant of some £200k. The ladder in the tights however is that the group need to raise a further £100k in match funding. Now wouldn't it be really politic if Global came to the rescue and 'stumped up'. After all their group's profit of the last financial year came to £9.37 million, up from £5.86 million the year before.

GOOD NEWS FOR INVERGORDON!

Wendy Clark, one of the founder members of the Invergordon Naval Museum, despite no longer a resident of the town, has pledged her ongoing support for the project. Ed.

SOVEREIGN OILFIELD GROUP PLC

In administration since 24th Feb. 2010

I fine remember when I was younger, inheriting a few sovereigns and half sovereigns. Not wishing to have one or more converted into a gold ring I decided to offer them for sale. So off I toddled to the capital city and hawked the coins around some traders. Much to my surprise I was told that the half sovereigns were of more value than the 'Full Monties'..... I sold out.

Global Energy entrepreneur Roy MacGregor, this week announced that he had bought from the troubled Sovereign Oilfield Group plc, some six subsidiary companies. With this acquisition Mr MacGregor acquired no less than four fabrication sheds, three in Aberdeen and one elsewhere. With the new shed in Invergordon he may have an over capacity for fabrication work.

Directors of the family-owned firm, whose chairman Mr MacGregor is a former chairman of Ross County FC, (one of Global's subsidiaries) said in a report that the group had an aggressive strategy of organic expansion and acquisition. He added that the aim was to double turnover within three years. (When I spoke to one Ross County FC shareholder she expressed surprise at the news about the 'club').

They also said that during the year the group was reorganised into six business streams:— subsea, offshore, power and process, renewables and utilities, supply chain and resources.

That aside perhaps he will find that half of Sovereign proves more profitable than the whole guinea.

THE STORY OF ICARUS AND DAEDALUS

(Greek Mythology...?)

Among all those mortals in days long gone, Daedalus was one of the most cunning. One of his many achievements was a tangled and twisted Labyrinth, that only a genius could fathom the way out of.

Eventually Daedalus fell from the city fathers' favour and was to all intents and purposes 'confined to barracks'. This did not suit Daedalus one little bit and especially as he had his son Icarus, confined with him.

Day after day Daedalus pined for his freedom and many hours were spent watching the seagulls soaring effortlessly in the breeze along Crete's shore line. Suddenly he thought that the only way out was by air, so he began to collect feathers by the hundred. He used thread and wax to fashion two great wings for himself. Once he mastered how to fly like a bird he began to make two wings for Icarus.

When completed Icarus soon got the hang of them and so father and son planned their escape.

Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too close to the ocean as the spray would saturate the feathers nor should he fly too high as the sun would melt the wax that held the wing feathers together, either of these errors would spell disaster.

Like many impulsive sons Icarus paid little heed to his father and in no time he began to reach for heights that were imaginative but unobtainable.

Father Daedalus flew steadily along at the optimum height but when he realised Icarus was no longer in the air he scoured the ocean surface for his lost son.

After many futile attempts to find him, Daedalus set course for Sicily where in the temple of Apollo he hung up his wings for good.

I suppose that there must be a moral to this story, even if it's only a cautionary "don't fly too high son".

WHAT IN THE HELL DOES INVERNESS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAVE TO DO WITH INVERGORDON?

Chief Executive of the Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Mr Stewart Nicol, said in a statement to the press that 'he was fully behind plans by Global Energy for its proposed quayside development at Invergordon'.

Would the same gentleman be as keen if such a development was to take place in 'his neck of the woods'?

Or is he visualising, like me, an alternative use for the building should fabrication prove to be non-profitable?

Let's not forget that there is a gigantic shed built on the Inverness quay, used to store and process waste.

Personally I still believe that its (the waste) logical destination is Invergordon Industrial site for processing.

UNSOLICITED PERTINENT LETTER

I was recently pointed towards your online newspaper and in particular the news story regarding the new fabrication facility being planned by Global Energy at Invergordon.

I think you have covered many of the aspects that will be of concern to the residents of the town. Although I am not a resident of Invergordon myself, I do work at the service base for one of the companies operating there, and I would like to add a few additional points of interest regarding this new facility.

Firstly the first news that I believe our company heard of this proposed structure was when Roy Macgregor's company, Global Energy started to mark out the positions of the foundations for the building. - It was not mentioned by the CFPA at any of the Port User Group meetings that may have been held in the past. So not only has it been hidden from the residents, it has also been hidden from other port users. It was only upon investigation that our company found out about the actual size of the building and of course its position.

Secondly I noticed you referred to the height of the building as being about the height of one of the rig platforms, which is correct. As yet another comparison if you look over towards the Nigg Fabrication Yard, there are three big buildings in view. The new building will be of the same height and size as one of the smaller sheds. Although I believe it will be around 20 meters shorter.

However it is the position of Global's shed that troubles me. It is to be built right on the quayside (roughly where the red rig is positioned), however it will come back from the quay edge for a distance of 80m. I don't know if you know the layout of the base, but the new shed will come to the roadway inside the base, and to a position close to the new weighbridge.

This will prevent two of the current base users - RBG and Port Services- from being able to transport some of the large structures to the quayside and will give Global

Energy (or probably more so Isleburn) no competition in the subsea market, as they will have almost sole use of the quayside for any substantial structures.

The size of the building will also reduce the lay down space within the base. And this will stop the port from being able to store the wind turbine components that they have been doing for the past number of months - I am sure you will have seen the blades leave on a daily basis since last summer. This I fear will reduce the ports capability to help in the environmentally friendly renewable energy programme.

Global have also said that the new building will create up to 1,000 jobs - maybe not strictly true as 250 of these will be from people relocated from other workshops around Easter Ross (2 at Evanton, 1 at the old Smelter site, and the one at Nigg that Global Energy is being evicted from).

One question though, where will cars for these 1,000 workers be parked? The car park at the base has been overflowing for months just while the rigs are being refitted. So where would another 500 or so cars per shift be parked ?

The other thing is the amenities within the base, at the moment there is one toilet block which serves the existing workers that use the base. Those working on the rigs use the rigs facilities, but a further 1,000 people, will need more toilet facilities, canteen facilities etc. Over and above the various other bits and bobs you mentioned in your article.

Another point maybe worth noting is that the Port Users Group is as it sounds, made up of people representing the users of the port. My understanding is at the moment there are 21 companies who are members of the group. However 8 of these companies fall under the Global Energy umbrella, so when it comes to decisions relating to the operations of the port there is a bit of 'block voting' going on and this I believe could have been a big factor in the eviction of Port services from the base. Anon.

INVERGORDON STILL STINKS

Despite the best efforts of the haulage companies responsible for the transportation of the spoiled fishmeal, the stench of the rotting material still pervades the town's High Street as well as invading households 'all over the place'. At least one resident has called upon the Highland Council for a reduction on his Council Tax.

Its unlikely that he will be successful but he claims that it is worth a try, if only to get rid of the fury he feels over the casual approach the authorities have taken over the *stink*. He claims if it had happened in Inverness the mess would have been cleared up in next to no time and, tongue in cheek, he said that half the council workforce would be out with aerosol sprays running around the High Street.

Letter to your editor



Mr E Ross
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Please ask for: Carol Rattenbury
Direct Dial: (01349) 868489
E-mail: env.health@highland.gov.uk
Your ref: *
Our ref: REH/64307
Date: 3 March 2010

Dear Mr Ross

FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990
FOOD LABELLING REGULATIONS 1996
COMPLAINT: Mislabelling of meat
PREMISES: Morrisons, Ainess, Ross-shire

I am pleased to inform you that I have concluded my investigation in to the alleged mislabelling of Morrisons brisket. I am sorry for the time it has taken to make my enquiries but I have been awaiting answers to my questions.

I raised your concerns with Morrisons Head office and was informed that the meat sold as 'Brisket' was in fact both 'brisket' and a cut know in England as 'Jacobs Ladder'. Jacobs Ladder is above the brisket but adjacent to it. It is known in Scotland as 'Thick Runner'.

I consulted the Highland Council's Public Analyst, as an independent expert, for his opinion on whether or not this would mislead the general public to their detriment. I quote from his correspondence:

"It (Thick Runner/Jacob's Ladder) is a recognised cut in the trade and is of superior quality to 'Brisket'. The general public is unlikely to be familiar with the term 'Thick Runner' as the trade usually describe this cut as 'Brisket' when sold as a rolled joint. The opinion is that a purchaser would not be misled by the description 'Brisket' applied to the cut, as 'Thick Runner' is adjacent to the Brisket and is of higher quality."

In the light of the above I will not be taking any further action with Morrisons over this issue.

Yours sincerely

CAROL RATTENBURY
Environmental Health Officer
Transport, Environment and Community Services – Environmental Health

This saga is far from over. *Euilleam.*