

The new

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*Beneath the rule of men entirely great*

*The pen is mightier than the sword*



## ‘KING’ SALMOND

After the massive change of attitude last month among the voting population of Scotland, and the emergence of the first majority Government at Holyrood, politicians (or even chess players) will be studying the opposite side of the board, wondering just how they can get the ‘King’ into checkmate and so win the game. Losing the game has huge implications for the ‘Union’ so there is a lot at stake. But when the opposing King is protected by numerous pawns it can prove a physical impossibility to ‘check’ his progress, and so the game is lost.

Unfortunately, as far as I am personally concerned, some of the ‘Kings’ pawns, due to their lack of ability and possibly their attitude, needs to be moved around on the board, at least until their inability to see the whole picture is resolved.

Public attitude in Scotland is changing at an amazing rate, due no doubt to the disillusionment we are experiencing with the corruption that was, and possibly still is ongoing, at Westminster. Where MPs appear to be all but bullet proof, evading prosecution and being allowed to ‘pay back’ what they fraudulently acquired in the first place. Namely cash from the public purse.

Imagine some poor soul charged with shoplifting being given a total discharge and told to payback what they took? More often than not shoplifting may be the result of desperation or need or just a ‘on the spur of the moment failing’. That cannot be said about the proven rogues who represent us in Westminster. Their ‘crimes’ were calculated and premeditated, (Don’t forget the ‘Lords’) where corrupt practices are apparently freely

Not all of the SNP policies are creditable, but many are so, so one wonders just where can one put his/her trust?

One national newspaper ridicules the First Minister’s belief in wind farm generators, and so do I, but let’s not forget that Scotland has huge deposits of coal, so coal fired power stations are a distinct possibility, as the generated carbon can, and will be, stored underground off shore.



Just think of the amount of work such a development would generate, the technology needed, and developed in Scotland, is mind boggling. This development would outlast the North Sea oil boom that various writers are predicting, is coming to an end. Nothing lasts forever.

Believers in UFOs know that ‘out there’ on our planet there is another source of power as yet untapped. They also believe that when this

happens the fear of power failures will be a thing of the past.

In the past the SNP policies was not too pleasing to my way of thinking. And even today my opinion has not altered greatly, yet Independence for Scotland brings a feeling of romance to the cockles of my heart.

When I look at David Cameron and Nick Clegg in Westminster and those who are the ‘also ran’ in Holyrood well who have we other than Alex Salmond, I ask myself?

So if there was a Referendum on Independence I as an ethnic Highlander would personally be tempted to sever the yoke and go it alone. Not I hasten to add am I trying to influence any of the thousands of ‘Highlander’ readers. Ed.

# HIGHLAND COUNCIL IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF PUTTING THEIR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER! GETTING RID OF THE *DEAD WOOD* THAT CLOGS UP A SYSTEM THAT HAS GENERATED DEBT OF £603 MILLION...IS LONG OVERDUE.

Whilst the Legal Department of Highland Council, no doubt with the blessing of the Chief Executive Alistair Dodds, along with his predecessors, rendered some 154 individuals (including me) or businesses, sequestrated or liquidated, since 2005, Highland Council themselves have acquired debts amounting to some £603 MILLION during the same period.

Well this is quite an amazing mismanagement of many millions of public funds annually. And it is not acceptable. Perhaps it is time that the Scottish Government at Holyrood called for a new broom and swept the Highland Council clear of those officials who glean large salaries and pension pots, without the ability to manage public funds annually, properly.

It has been established that Highland Council is the biggest spender north of the Border, splashing £2.8 MILLION through the use, by officials, of council credit cards over the last three years. This is despite the council being mired in debt to the tune of £603 MILLION.

Last year the council was proposing to curtail street lighting in an attempt at saving money. Yet in February it spent £2,418 on a trip to a South African spa-retreat near Johannesburg called the African Leisure Hotel Guest Lodge and Travel Centre. (That's some mouthful to say over the phone!)

A further £1547.83 on electric guitars, (perhaps the failing management will take up singing in the street for extra coppers?) and a further £6,800 for environmentally friendly windows.

Could this be an attempt by officials who will playing with the aforementioned guitars to compose another 'hit' this time named *The Green Green Glass of Home?*

Even the council umbrella body COSLA was unable to explain the scale of expenditure and local authorities are reluctant to 'come clean.' all in all across the country an estimated £100 MILLION of public funds have been spent via council credit cards.

With such a scandalous expenditure of public funds by Highland Council exposed, I have addressed a FOI to the H.C's. Freedom of Information Officer, Mr Miles Watters, with several questions:-

Dear Mr Watters,  
Under the FOI please provide me with the following info. Are all or none of the elected Highland Councillors required to produce receipts for their personal expenses? Thank you.

**Dear Mr Ross,  
I can confirm that all elected Highland Councillors are required to produce receipts for their expenses claims. Yours sincerely, Miles Watters.**

Dear Mr Watters,  
Thank you for your answer re elected Highland Councillors' expense receipts. You may not be aware that some time ago Highland Councillors were not required to provide receipts for their claimed expenses.

Notwithstanding your confirmation I see in the *Daily Mail* today, that Highland Council is the biggest spender north of the border relating to use of credit cards, so..

Firstly, under the FOI I require details of all elected Highland Councillor's expenses claims for the last available audited fiscal year?

Secondly, do elected Highland Councillors have access to H.C. credit cards?

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Personally I believe that it is long past the time when the Scottish Executive instigated an enquiry into Highland Council and its failures. Perhaps Audit Scotland could appoint totally independent auditors to undertake a close look at all 'the paperwork' relating to the so called justified expense expenditure. Mind you if the H.C. musicians do have a 'hit' and the Royalties are fed into the public purse, things could improve. Ed.

# The DILETTANTE GARDENER.®

July 2010 Supplement

and incorporating

## The Dilettante Cook



## GARDENERS BEWARE!

For 'Highlander' readers who may not have accessed my other publication at <http://www.dilettantegardener.co.uk> I take the liberty of reproducing part of an issue published in July of last year.

All over the country at that time amateur gardeners were complaining publicly about the devastating affect the Herbicide called *Forefront*, and produced by Dow Chemicals, was having on numerous growing, and established, plants plus fruit and vegetables.

We at Seacrest did not escape but despite calling in the Highland Council's

Ms Carol Rattenbury,  
Environmental Health Officer,  
Highland Council,  
Ross House,  
Dingwall.

No satisfactory outcome was concluded.

Next I contacted  
Dr Kevin Woods,  
Director General Health,  
St Andrews House,  
Regent Road,  
Edinburgh.  
EH1 3DG.

Again assurances were forthcoming that the Herbicide posed no real threat to human health .

Now however comes the crunch. Only yesterday fellow gardeners on <http://www.gardenersclick.com> were complaining that yet again this year, using straw purchased from a pet shop, their strawberries were ruined along with other produce.

As chance would have it whilst delivering the

paper copy of the 'Highlander' I happened to meet with the farmer, who unwittingly provided numerous amateur gardeners in East Ross with free, but contaminated cow dung, thus causing serious problems to all of us.

When I asked him if he was still using the damaging Dow Chemical product *Forefront* he said he was but that new regulations were in force and that farmers must sign an agreement that they will not use the Aminopyralid based Herbicide on land growing grass for use as winter cattle feed (Silage)!

So one must ask is the 'big business' knowingly advocating the continued use of *Forefront*? And if so why have they set out new safety instructions to users?



Illustrated is a wee example of what *Forefront* does to root vegetables but it also damages, potatoes, tomatoes, shrubs and bedding plants.

Now is the time for the First Minister Alex Salmond to sep in and ban the use *Forefront* from Scotland Final warning, if the residue of Aminopyralid should leach into Scotland's rivers it could well devastate the salmon and trout stock, worth MILLIONS of revenue via the tourist trade. Over to you Mr Salmond. Ed.

# INVERGORDON'S 'HEAD TURNING' MURALS MAY BE UPSTAGED!

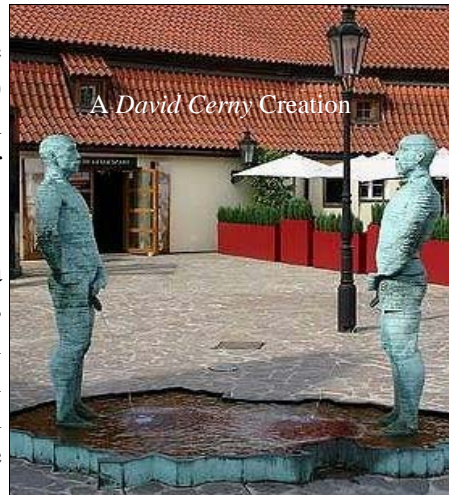
What a wonderful idea the 'Invergordon Off The Wall' has come up with. The one thing the town needs at this time, other than jobs, is most certainly some sculptures to compliment the 'head turning murials', adorning the walls of a number of buildings in the town.

According to one local weekly the sculpture project will cost (initially) some £297,000. With no less than three sculptures being constructed for public display and wonderment.

One accolade that has appeared in a travel company's brochure is as follows: "Invergordon itself is a small friendly **village** with a famous mural trail including 11 large coloured wall paintings representing life in the Highlands past and present". It is hard to envisage just what the next brochures will herald?

Reading several such publications I have failed to come across mention that it is extremely difficult to find suitable accommodation in the town, when one needs to answer the 'call of nature'. Unfortunately due to misreading the invitation to a ceilidh held in Saltburn Hall I missed lodging my suggestion. But I suppose better late than never.

With some "£297,000 at their disposal *Off The Wall* has a wonderful opportunity to commission a sculpture replicating men having a piss in the street. This sculpture is world famous and can be viewed in Prague.



In days of yore it was possible to have a piss in the street if you were by chance driving horse and cart. Such an opportunity in today's climes is most unlikely, so when all else fails its round the corner against the wall. Not I hasten to add against 'Off The Wall's facades ..... please.

But should the OTW committee sponsor such a sculpture as the one illustrated, it might just shame the 'Powers That Be' to realise

Invergordon, with all its acclaimed tourist trade and the alleged 'gateway to the numerous wonders in the Highlands', (Nessie is but one,) desperately needs modern toilet facilities.

Not what one might be tempted to describe as a part-time BOG, that smells, is oppressive to the general public, but only when its open and available!

## Multi purpose gazebo



For the DIY enthusiasts I am attaching an image of the partly completed gazebo at Seacrest. This six sided structure caused me several problems initially, but now that it is taking shape I'm sure that it will be worth it.

Several names have been suggested for the gazebo when it is completed, so far the favourite is 'TeaPee'.

As there are several sources in Invergordon where it is possible to buy a tea, perhaps at least one, could incorporate such a title on their shop front and so gain more trade whilst providing access to a toilet facility for the thousands of cruise passengers who pass through Invergordon, every summer.