

The new

# independent-highlander.co.uk



Issue number 15 November 2010

*Beneath the rule of men entirely great*

*The pen is mightier than the sword*



## HORSE TRADING?

Surely not!

Invergordon received its name from Sir William Gordon, a local landowner in the early eighteenth century and not since then, when a Pictish Stone was hauled on a flat cart by two black horses from Cadboll to Invergordon Castle, has there been claim, as far as I can establish, of 'horse trading in the town'.

That is up until the present day. One prominent business person has now alerted the *Independent Highlander* to the shenanigans that allegedly took place between the Cromarty Firth Port Authority Manager, Capt. Ken Gray and three members of the Invergordon Community Council, Chairperson Marion Mackay, Treasurer Malcolm Harrison, plus one other. Thus equating to the term of 'Horse trading.' But did the councillors look at proverbial Horse's mouth before accepting its halter?

My informant also claims that a unilateral decision was reached between the four aforementioned individuals relating to the requisition of the town of Invergordon's recreational strip, known as The Linear Park, by a substantial cash inducement. Apparently one of the elected Cromarty Firth Ward Highland Councillors was also present but it unclear whether Cllr Smith had any input in the alleged unofficial dealings.

When the unofficial meeting between the participants was raised at the Invergordon Community Council, some astonishing revelations were made including one from the good captain when he acknowledged that there had indeed been an unofficial meeting between himself and, as he puts it, 'community representatives' over a possible land swap which would pave the way for future development of the Linear Park. (For CFPA/Global?)

Invergordon Community Council Chair, Marion

Mackay called for assurances that the community would be consulted on any change of plans for the Linear Park. What a pity the good lady did not consider that at an earlier date. So will Ms Mackay call a public meeting to discuss safeguarding the 'park' or will she and her fellow community councillors take it upon themselves to sell the town down the Swanee yet again?

Whilst the legend of Capt Long John Silver and his pieces of eight springs to mind, so too does the thirty pieces of silver used in the most famous betrayal ever recorded. That scenario casts a doubt in my mind over the integrity of some council members.

Yet another business manager in Invergordon approached your editor last week and asked had I seen the provisional plan for the development of the Linear Park? When I said I did not know anything about it, he replied that it showed a feeder road going into the CFPA yard off the B817. Not only was this forecast by the Independent Highlander quite some time ago but so too was the possibility of a spur rail link being reintroduced into the CFPA yard just as there was so many years ago during the Dockyard era.

When Capt. Gray says 'we need more land' can I take it that what he really means is the CFPA/Global Energy, consortium need room for further expansion? The Capt.. Who has been port manager for 5 years told the meeting that the future lies in renewable energy, (wonder if he listens to our First Minister?) The guid Capt defends the rape of Invergordon's skyline via the 'Big Shed' by saying it was constructed on the base, under 'permitted development'.

My attempt at contacting Capt Gray goes unanswered, apparently he is on holiday, likewise the ICC Treasurer, Mr Harrison, he too is on holiday for a week. So my request for clarification on the unofficial meeting can not be denied or confirmed before the 'Highlander' is published.

# ANOTHER INCINERATOR COMING OR JUST 'A STALKING HORSE'?

Can't get away from equines in this issue!

For the moment the Scottish Executive has delayed any decisions on the aggrieved Invergordon & District waste incinerator planning application.

Meantime the somewhat scare mongering group, known colloquially as *ICARE*, continues to rant and rave whilst quoting their one-sided petition, against the establishment of the incinerator at Invergordon.

The *our TOWN*, an essential guide to local business and service, have a two page spread relating to *ICARE* and their unlimited ambitions for waste disposal while making Invergordon the 'greenest town in Scotland'.

Before *ICARE* goes punting its views globally on what the populace of Invergordon and District really want, they must be honest and tell all and sundry that their so called petition was crassly conceived. It gave no opportunity for approached members of the community to have a choice. As such it is a worthless document and must be totally ignored by all planning divisions.

Now raising a punitive head on the horizon, at least according to one local 'weekly', is a company *Shore Energy (Inverness) Ltd.*

**Quote** 'Shore Energy is in business to develop, deliver and operate facilities which enable Local Authority and commercial or industrial waste producers to meet their obligations under a range of waste regulations.

Shore Energy is not aligned to any particular technology and therefore selects partners who can provide solutions which meet local needs and the main objectives of current legislation which revolve around

- the diversion of waste from landfill
- the generation of renewable energy and
- increased levels of recycling.

Meeting these objectives is a prime aim for us.'

Your editor contacted the company by e-mail on the 29th of October, as follows;

Dear Mr Garvey.,

Thank you for your e-mail. Let me say that there are many forward thinking people in Invergordon and its environs who appreciate that safe economic disposal of our waste is a must. The 'anti' lobby are really in the minority. At this stage I am saving my 'ammo' for a real barrage. Now regarding your offer for further info;-

Has your company received any public money from say the Scottish Executive, The Scottish Enterprise or H.I. E. If so to what extent?

The exact terminology escapes me at this moment, but is there a subsidy for removing lorries off the road? Will your company gain financially if so? Is your facility close to the Inverness Harbour Marina? A photo perhaps for publication? Many thanks. *Euilleam.*

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Euilleam,

Thanks for your email today; as has been reported in the press there are currently two options for the use of the fibre, either as a fuel for a renewable energy facility, therefore helping to meet the Scottish targets of 80% renewable electricity by 2020, or to turn the biomass into bio fuel such as bio-ethanol or bio-diesel.

I'm sure you appreciate that this is a stage by stage process and that today's statement is an important step for the project, however, whilst we have a great deal of information about the potential market for the biomass and the technologies that could deal with it, it is far too early to conclude commercial arrangements. If I can provide you with any further information, just let me know. And thanks for your note which is relatively easy to reply to.

We haven't received any money or subsidies from Scottish Government or HIE.

Our website shows the location of the proposed facility on an OS map and more detailed photomontages and site plans will be available at the exhibition. Hope this helps, *Jon.*

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The company has two registered directors Mr David Cowper and Mr Simon M. Howie. It seems strange to me that a £2 company would appear 'out of the blue' without an apparent feasibility study already done nor is it in receipt of the numerous and generous grants available from the various funding bodies such as Scottish Enterprise or H.I.E. for such an undertaking that claims to be in the region of £20m.

We in the Highlands over the decades, have experienced the ebb and flow (mostly ebb) of companies with grandiose ideas for improving our lifestyle and habitat. I'll wait and see if this company achieves its ends. Ed.

# CON-A-LOT CAMELOT

It's been well documented in previous issues of the 'Highlander' my doubts about the National lottery being a game of pure chance. To date no punter has ever won the top prize twice since its conception way back in the early 1990's, let alone win it with two draws in a row.

Yet the operators Camelot (lets call them the banker) produces frequent Roll Overs and oft times double Roll Overs or even triple a Roll Over now and again, (when the opportunity presents itself.) I believe that the opportunity presents itself when not all of the 14m combination of lines are accessed by punters in any one draw.

The odds, rounded up to 14 million to 1 applies equally to the 'banker' as to the punter. The odds of winning the top prize remains the same every week, but the 'chances' of winning twice in a row are 14m multiplied by 14m which equals a staggering 196 million to 1. Now let us take it a stage further and bring in the double Roll Over. 196 million multiplied by yet another 14 million. (You don't really want me to work out the chances of that happening surely?) You do, OK sit back and gasp, 2,744 million to 1 chances for a double Roll Over, no I am definitely not working out a treble Roll Over but Morag has, and the figure arrived at is an astronomical 38,416 million to 1 chances of that happening. Now do you wonder why I have my doubts over the impartiality of the National Lottery twice weekly draws?

How could it be done one asks, for apparently the draw takes place in front of a live audience, with the selection of the machine and balls used, one of random.

Without too much difficulty is my response. I often question just why the time delay and all the TV hype is necessary for the selection of seven lottery numbered balls on each night that the draw is on programme? Now this is purely a personal belief, but lets suppose the delay in the draw is for convenience. (Camelot's).

Camelot's super computers monitor every single transaction that takes place in the run up for every lottery ticket sale draw. They are very capable of identifying any or all 'non accessed' lines! Now lets say for arguments sake the seven balls arriving on the 'runway' are not actually the seven which allegedly come from the drum in play on the night, but are

preselected to correspond with one of the non accessed lines identified by Camelot's super computers during the lull between the terminals being closed and the draw taking place. Hey presto we have a Roll Over. The only way this belief can be denied is by the operators Camelot to have a member of the audience count the balls remaining in the drum and to ensure that the missing numbers correspond to the seven on the runway.

## YET ANOTHER DOUBTFUL PRACTICE

Still yet another doubtful scenario, relating to the National Lottery operators, has come to my notice. A few weeks ago a friend telephoned from Aberdeenshire. For each of the two weekly draws he buys 40 Lucky Dip lines and like most of the punters, for a time did not really study the so called random generated numbers he had on his tickets.

Until by pure chance he happened to notice that out of the 80 lines in one week, no less than 77 ended with a number from the 'forties'. He then checked the previous week's numbers and unbelievably approximately the same number of lines showed an equally biased leaning to favouring one of the forties ending each line.

Well I had a wee look at the Lucky Dip tickets I held and lo and behold all five lines ended with a forties number. Just for the hell of it I travelled round all the lottery terminals within easy driving distance, buying one ticket from each. Of the eleven purchased 10 had inevitable forties number with only one being different.

It's still happening in the Highlands, this week all my five tickets ended in the forties. On Saturday last I contacted several friends and asked them if they could look at any Lucky Dip tickets they may have bought. When I say I'll bet a tenner that most of your lines end with a forties number, they are amazed and concede that I am correct.

So are we, the punters, really getting a square deal from the National Lottery or not? Personally I believe that we are not and are possibly being manipulated by the thought of massive riches, generated by the too often engineered Roll Overs. Readers from now on check the last number on each of your Lucky dip lines. Look for a common denominator, not necessarily from the 'forties'.

# MSP's BUCKFAST BAN BANISHED

## Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon tumbles from her Hobby Horse

The SNP Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon was claiming that increasing the minimum unit price for alcohol would save 50 lives a year in Scotland, that is but one sad reason for the waste of time and money at Holyrood. One cannot laud her intent however well meaning she believed it to be, whilst OAPs are dying in their thousands every winter in Scotland.

Government of the Scottish population, under SNP Directives in Scotland, is becoming more and more dictatorial as time goes on. Just imagine an SNP Governmental Minister advocating the banning of the sale of one specific alcoholic drink, namely 'Buckfast' because allegedly youngsters drink it to excess. What about the manufactures and responsible drinkers and those who partake of Buckfast as a 'tonic'?

Like most of her supporters, the lady can well afford to pay extra for her tittle if she is so minded, while the man or woman on the street finds it increasingly difficult to make ends meet without additional and unnecessary burdens being imposed on their relaxation beverage. And without being consulted adds insult to injury into the bargain.

However in their folly the Scottish Executive will ban cut-price booze offers, such as 3 for £10. What stupidly as such a sales ban cannot be enforced. Lets say a supermarket offers a bottle of wine on an alleged half price ticket for £3.33. With the following, or similar advice label.

For customers who do not have a university degree in higher mathematics;- 1 bottle of wine at £3.33 means that if you buy 2 bottles at the same time they will cost £6.66. Or 3 bottles bought together the cost is only £9.99. That means a 1p change from your tenner.

Supermarket ½ price offers are nearly always a con as the way they (the supermarkets) justify their half price claim is by putting the said article on sale in some obscure outlet at an inflated price. Normally in a very limited quantity. Marketing directors are not unduly

concerned if few or any items are sold. Shortly thereafter all the outlets in their chain flaunts the item with a claim of being sold at a 50% reduction, on original price. So folks be warned, all is not what it seems at *your* favourite store and its half price offers.

### REGISTER GENERAL

Figures from the RG shows that the death toll during the UK's last winter through hypothermia and malnutrition and associated ailments, was the lowest recorded over the previous 20 winters.

UK Figures show that only 19,688, mostly OAPs, died during the December to March period. Whilst the year previously, the figure was 20,553 during the same period. Surely such a statistic can not be admired.

Whilst our Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon, and her SNP supporters, go on about the threat that Buckfast and other alcoholic drinks have on the younger generation and their future health, some 2,500 to 3,000 Scots OAPs have no future beyond March 2011. It's a sobering thought (if you will pardon the pun). Admittedly the Scottish Executive do not control pensions and the like but it should try to get its priorities right. Helping to look after the older generation must be a priority for all Parties and Governments.

The UK Government is delighted that neighbourliness seems to be on the increase and could account for the drop in deaths of vulnerable people during last winter. But such an attitude of dependability on voluntary care by members of the public is also unacceptable, so instead of foisting millions of pounds on foreign aid and such like, politicians should remember 'Charity begins at home'.

OK the country is about on its beam end but that is not excuse enough for punishing the most vulnerable of the population, who can barely make ends meet and rarely can say that they enjoy their twilight years. We need a revolution particularly in our thinking,