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Forth Estuary Forum E-News Bulletin

August 2016

Forth Estuary Forum AGM and Annual Conference

This year's AGM and annual conference will be held on
Thursday 17th November, at the **North Queensferry Hotel**.

The overall theme will be on climate change mitigation and adaptation; poster presentations are very welcome, as are short five minute presentations for the 'soap box' session at the end of the conference. Please contact the Forum directly at 01383 420104 or sharon.waugh@forthestuaryforum.co.uk if you wish to submit a poster or short talk.

The programme and AGM agenda will be circulated closer to the time, but please put the date in your diaries!

Forum Aircraft Carrier Visit



There was a well attended and highly interesting visit to the Aircraft Carrier Visitor Centre by Forum members on the 12th August. The visitors got as close to the two aircraft carriers under construction at Rosyth as it is possible for visitors to get, and were given a tour of the visitor centre displays and an interesting talk by one of the engineers on the project.

Many thanks to Babcock International for arranging the visit; more details on the aircraft carriers under construction can be found [here](#).

Maid of the Forth sets sail with musical cruise

Maid of the Forth, the family-run sightseeing cruise on the Firth of Forth, has announced ticket sales for its next acclaimed Folk cruise.

On 16 September there will be the chance to enjoy a 3-hour evening cruise featuring

live music from Pure Malt. The band, who have been playing on the Maid since 2009, will perform a whole host of traditional and contemporary Scottish and Irish folk music, with the chance to sing-a-long and make requests.



Also during the cruise, passengers have the opportunity to pre-order food from the BBQ, with vegetarian options available; alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can be purchased from the Maid's bar.

Duncan Macrae, Maid of the Forth Skipper, said: "The Folk Cruises continue to be hugely popular with guests of all ages and the appeal for live Scottish folk music as the sun sets against the iconic backdrop of Edinburgh and Fife has never been stronger.

"Our resident Folk band, Pure Malt, create a fantastic atmosphere, especially when the whole boat is singing along to classics such as 'Whiskey in the Jar'. The August tickets sold out incredibly fast so I would recommend anyone wanting to join us books their tickets in advance."

Tickets for the Maid of the Forth Folk Cruises can be booked online at www.maidoftheforth.co.uk or by calling 0131 331 5000. For further information, please contact Sarah Howden info@sarahhowden.com.

Inner Forth Landscape Initiative Festival 2016

After the success of the first Inner Forth Festival, which took place in September

2015, plans are now in place for this year's Festival to celebrate the unique history, wildlife and people of the Forth.

Click [here](#) to see this year's Inner Forth Festival brochure, which lists all the events so far planned for the month. Also check the [Events Calendar](#), as leading up to September there may well be other events on offer that weren't ready in time for the brochure

.There are a whole range of events and activities - with something happening on nearly every day in September. IFLI have tried to make sure that there is something for everyone - whatever your age, wherever you live in the area, and whether you are interested in history, wildlife, or just like getting out and about in our fantastic landscape. All events are FREE, thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. There are archaeological surveys, a specially-written play, bushcraft adventures, moth mornings, bat hunts, history-themed bike rides, healthy walks, fascinating exhibitions and talks, a rare chance to climb an ancient tower, scrub bashing, wildlife workshops, and loads more exciting and fun ways to discover, explore and get involved in the Inner Forth landscape.

In all there are 33 events listed so far, organised by 15 different organisations, during the month. Last year over 1000 people came along to these events, and there was great feedback from people saying how much they had enjoyed their day, and what a fantastic place the inner Forth is.

First Shipment of shale gas set to arrive in Scotland

The first shipment of shale gas produced by fracking is expected to arrive in Scotland from America in September.

One of a fleet of "Dragon-class" ships is due to arrive with the cargo at the Ineos petrochemical plant in Grangemouth. Ineos says it has invested more than £1bn in the facility since it acquired the site in 2005

The company has constructed the biggest shale gas storage tank in Scotland ahead of the arrival.

Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside.

It does not take place in Scotland due to a moratorium by the Scottish government. A Scottish government spokesman said: "The Scottish government is taking a cautious and evidence-led approach to unconventional oil and gas.

"Our moratorium ensures that no fracking can take place in Scotland. As previously reported, the Scottish government has commissioned a series of independent research projects to examine potential environmental, health and economic impacts to inform our evidence-led approach.

"This process is due to report later this year, with the public consultation taking place during winter 2016/17."

More information can be found [here](#).

Developments in Offshore Scottish Wind farm legal challenge

Conservationists have won a legal challenge in Scotland's highest court against four major offshore wind farm projects. RSPB Scotland opposed the developments in the Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay over concerns for wildlife.

Scottish ministers approved the Inch Cape, Neart na Gaoithe and Seagreen Alpha and Bravo projects in 2014. The projects could provide power for 1.4 million homes.

RSPB Scotland lawyers argued that the Scottish ministers were in breach of the requirements placed upon them by the law when they made their original decisions. The lawyers argued that the ministers didn't give proper consideration to the area being a haven for rare wildlife

Judge Lord Stewart ruled in favour of RSPB Scotland at the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

He ordered that the Scottish ministers will have to reconsider the decisions on whether to grant planning permissions for the developments.

More information can be found [here](#).

However, a Scottish Government spokesperson confirmed that it is appealing last month's judgements.

"Scottish Ministers have begun the process of appealing Lord Stewart's judgements," the spokesperson confirmed. "Due to on-going legal proceedings, the Scottish Government will not be commenting further on this case."

Separately, Mainstream Renewable Power confirmed it has also lodged an appeal regarding the 448MW Neart na Gaoithe project.

"Mainstream can confirm that the company has also lodged a separate appeal against the Scottish Court of Session's decision as it relates to the proposed Neart na Gaoithe wind farm."

More information on the appeals can be found [here](#).