

Chiefs gas about profits while vulnerable suffer

WHEN the pensioners and the poor are struggling to decide between heating and eating this winter, there is one thought they can warm themselves with. Their sacrifice is helping energy giants rake in billions of pounds in profit – £1.3bn for Centrica to be precise.

Oh, the fat cats in its boardroom will mump and fuss about rising costs and falling profits. But they can't argue away sitting on a billion pound pot while old folk and the vulnerable reach for cardigans to wear in their beds. This is obscene. Just when is David Cameron going to live up to that pledge for a fair society?

Scott Begbie

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

It felt like I was living in a ball of cotton wool

Bunged up lugs were just no joke

WHO needs a TARDIS to see what the future holds for you ... all it takes is a bit of earwax. You see, my delicate lugs decided to bung themselves up, giving me a taste of what my golden years might bring if my hearing fades. It was a gradual process, the only real symptom for the

"Muffled, dull and just not right"

longest time being Mrs B walking into the living room and saying "that TV is loud". Then, one morning, I woke up and just couldn't hear at all on my left side. The right wasn't that much better. Overnight I had become, if not outright deaf, at least hearing-impaired. And if this is what awaits me in my old age, then I can tell you now, I don't like it. For a start, there's the feeling

Youth festival lifts city's spirits

THE folk behind the Aberdeen International Youth Festival deserve a standing ovation. The city centre was a sheer delight on Saturday with so many talented kids doing their thing for free. It created a real carnival atmosphere – along with Tartan Day – that lifted the city's spirits. We're lucky to have the youth fest. Let's all make the most of it.



THURSDAY: COLUMNIST FRANK GILFEATHER PACKS A PUNCH



ELEMENTARY: You need to have all your faculties to enjoy Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman in Sherlock.

you are living in a ball of cotton wool. Everything is muffled and dull and just not right. It's surprising just how out of kilter that makes you feel. Isolated, cut off from the rest of folk. I was in the Marine with mates and just not coping with it. Not only could I not really hear

them – despite staring intently at their mouths in the hope I had picked up lip-reading by osmosis over the years – but the little I did pick up was drowned by the noise of the background hubbub. Normally I love our seshes with the gang (I would like now to apologise to casual observers about how noisy we get at times), but the last couple of times I've been quiet. It's hard to have something to say when you can't hear what's being said. Telly became pointless. It's hard to follow the sparkling script of Sherlock when all you can hear is "mmmm mmm mmm. Watson." And the usual banter around the dinner table was reduced to me saying "what?" a lot. Although it was useful for being able to pretend I hadn't heard it was my turn to empty the dishwasher. I only had to endure a week or

"I counted my blessings"

take for granted, but as soon as we lose it, the world can be a lesser place. I had a few days of it. Some people deal with it for a lifetime, refusing to let it hold them back. They have nothing but my admiration.

Historical trust's bid to go green

A RENEWABLE energy system could be used by a North-east historical trust.

The Gladstone 1987 Trust wants to install a biomass plant room and storage shed near Banchory.

Councillors will decide whether the energy system can be built on land at Glendye Steadings at Bridge of Dye.

ATM bid lodged by superstore

A NEW cash machine is planned for a North-east superstore.

Tesco wants to put a new cash machine outside its store on Deveron Road in Huntly.

The deadline for objections and comments is Thursday, August 18.

Councillors will make a decision on the bid in the coming weeks.

Closure fears for club over bill

PAGE 19

Gala week in store at festival

PEOPLE can explore heritage and culture at a North-east festival.

Ballater Victoria Week will take place on Saturday and runs until August 14.

Aberdeenshire Council's ranger service will also be offering some events and walks exploring the natural and cultural heritage of the Ballater area.

Fun day to help charity raise funds

A CHARITY fun day will be held at an Aberdeen park this weekend.

Charity Sue Ryder, which provides care for people with long-term conditions, will provide a host of entertainment to raise cash at Duthie Park on Sunday.

Youngsters can enjoy face-painting, bouncy castles and much more from midday until 4pm.



HOOT: Karina Stewart, left, Mike Clark, Carol McLean and Sharon Miller.

Happy gang out to prove laughter IS best medicine

By Charlotte Jordan

PULLING funny faces, dressing up in bright, sparkly outfits and running around making silly noises.

It sounds like a typical day at a tiny tots' nursery. But in fact it was a class filled with adults learning about the importance of laughter.

And Sharon Miller, founder of Joyworks! – a company specialising in the medical benefits of laughter – insists the old adage is true, laughter truly is the best medicine.

She hosts "laugh-ins" which involves a group of adults giggling for up to an hour. And her latest session was held at Aberdeen's His Majesty's Theatre.

It began with each person renaming themselves with a child-like fun name, followed by two minutes of joke telling.

Sharon explained that to gain the benefits of laughter people have to chuckle for up to 15 minutes at a time. And although that might seem a challenge, she pointed out the body cannot distinguish between real and fake laughter.

You can be a child again and feel good at the same time." The session was held during the Evening Express revealed Patch Adams – the doctor-come-clown immortalised in the Robin Williams movie of the same name – celebrated his 66th birthday in the North-east.

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

FUNNY GUY: Patch Adams.

"I just want to spread laughter"

Studies have shown a good belly laugh can help improve the immune system, breathing, mental health and wellbeing.

Coco Pop, aka Karina Stewart; Zafe, aka Mike Clark, and Vincent, aka Carol McLean, said they found the session enlightening and fun.

Carol, who stays in the city centre, said: "I felt like a kid again. It was just great."

Archivist Fiona Musk said people interested in the history of the Formartine area or researching family trees could find some gems.

She said: "The items are kept in secure storage in Aberdeen and can normally only be viewed in our searchroom. "By bringing items out to places like Ellon Library, we

Chuckle guru has class in stitches

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sharon – who works with NHS employees, people with mental health issues and children – added: "I just want to spread laughter. We have sessions in Glasgow and Edinburgh monthly and we get really outstanding feedback."

Sharon was at the celebration, held during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth.

Sponsored walk set to help charity

A SPONSORED walk is to be held along a North-east railway line.

The Clifton Road Project walk will be held on August 27 along the Deeside Railway line.

Participants will trek along the Deeside Railway line from Aberdeen to Peterculter to raise funds for the Cyrenians' Clifton Road Project.

It will see much-needed renovations carried out at the organisation's premises. Walker can take part in the event from 1pm to 3.30pm.

Secrets of castle to be unearthed

PEOPLE have been invited to a day of discovery.

Drum Castle will host an Archaeology Day where people can discover what has been unearthed in the gardens.

Keen historians will explore the Old Wood with the ranger at the castle, taking a close look at the ancient trees.

Pre-booking for the free event, which takes place on Monday, August 22, from 11.30am to 4.30pm, is essential.

The Press and Journal Evening Express
travelshopscotland.com
TOP DESTINATIONS UK & ABROAD

READER TRAVEL

SPRINGTIME IN THE PYRENEES

Departs: 16 April & 15 May 2012
For: 8 Days

From only: £639
Quote Ref: AB441

- Return flights from Aberdeen (via London), Edinburgh or Glasgow
- One night HB at Hotel Marvel, Catalan Coast; four nights HB at Hotel Marvel Beret, Vielha; two nights B & B at Hotel Catalonia Plaza, Barcelona
- Journey on the "Train of the Lakes"
- Visits to Lleida and the French resort of Bagnères de Luchon
- Services of a PTS representative

Preferred Travel ABTA 3692; ATOL 5537

WALKING IN MALLORCA

Departs: April & May 2012
For: 8 Days

From only: £619
Quote Ref: AB285

- Return flights from Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow
- Seven nights half board at the Hotel Bella Playa, Cala Ratjada
- Three included guided walks directly from the hotel
- Services of walking guides and a PTS representative

Preferred Travel ABTA 3692; ATOL 5537

CARCASSONNE, CATHAR COUNTRY & CATALONIA

Departs: 25 March & 18 April 2012
For: 8 Days

From only: £599
Quote Ref: AB381

- Fly from Aberdeen (via London), Edinburgh or Glasgow to Barcelona
- Seven nights half board; 4 nights at the Hotel de la Reine Amelie, in the Roussillon area and 3 nights at the Hotel Marvel, Coma Ruga, on the Spanish Catalan coastline
- Visits to Remnes-le-Chateau, Carcassonne, the Dali Museum in Figueras and Barcelona
- Limited availability Sep. 8 Oct 2011
- No single room supplement on 2012 dates

Preferred Travel ABTA 3692; ATOL 5537

WALKING IN TENERIFE

Departs: Nov 11, Feb - May 2012
For: 8 Days

From only: £659
Quote Ref: AB434

- Return flights from Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow to Tenerife
- Seven nights half board at the 4-star Quinta Park Suites, Santa Ursula
- Three included walking excursions; Full day to Mount Teide; the Anaga natural area and the Teno area walking in the hills above Garachico
- Services of walking guides and a PTS representative

Preferred Travel ABTA 3692; ATOL 5537

170 Union Street, Aberdeen
email: holidays@travelshopscotland.com
www.travelshopscotland.com

BROCHURE 01224 338004

Single room supplements apply. Subject to availability.