

# Charity lands a presidential coup — but it's not the man with Scots links

Daniel Sanderson

With his golf courses and legal battles, not to mention a Hebridean mother, a visit to Scotland from the world's most powerful man was thought to be pending. However, Donald Trump has been beaten to it by his predecessor.

Three months after leaving the White House, President Obama will make a speech in Edinburgh next month. He has accepted an invitation from Sir Tom Hunter, the businessman, to attend a charity event.

The former president, will be making his first trip to Scotland. President Trump has made numerous trips since opening his golf resort near Aberdeen in 2012.

Sir Tom said that he had managed to attract Mr Obama with the help of "a lot of persistence and a great deal of good luck".

Proceeds from the dinner on May 26 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, will be split between Scottish children's charities and Mr Obama's charitable foundation.

Prices for tables of ten start at £5,000 although some local school children will attend for free. Mr Obama has agreed to take questions from audience members after his address.

Sir Tom said: "We're delighted President Obama has chosen Scotland to deliver one of his first speeches since leaving the White House.

He was No 1 on my list. We're very ex-

## Presidential roll of honour

Barack Obama will become the latest American president to visit Scotland next month.

Bill Clinton was greeted by cheering supporters when he arrived at the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh in 2013. He was thought to have played golf at St Andrews. He also visited in 2006.

More controversial was George W Bush's appearance in Gleneagles in 2005 for the G8 summit during the fallout from the war in Iraq. Police made 182 arrests. President Bush crashed into a police officer while riding his bike during the trip, leaving

his victim on crutches. He later telephoned the officer to apologise.

In 1991, a few years after he left office, Ronald Reagan came to Scotland to celebrate his ancestors, who emigrated to Nova Scotia in Canada before settling in the US. He visited Blair Castle in Perthshire and attended a church service in Paisley.

President Eisenhower spent time at Balmoral and at Culzean Castle in Ayrshire in 1959. He had a specially created flat at the castle, given as a "gesture of thanks for America's support in World War II".

cited. I have had the privilege of hearing him speak before, at a town hall event, and he is the best speaker I've ever heard so I'm really looking forward to hearing what he's got to say.

"We know he loves his music so we've got some amazing Scottish talent lined up to entertain him and there will be a few surprises as well."

Sir Tom said that he had received "no word" yet on whether Michelle Obama would be attending.

"We would obviously love to have Michelle and all the family visit Scotland, and to show them some good Scottish hospitality, but as of yet we haven't heard," he said.

Sir Tom, who is organising the event through his own philanthropic organisation, the Hunter Foundation, has a track record of attracting star



Mr Obama will give a speech in Edinburgh

names to Edinburgh, having previously persuaded Bill Clinton, Leonardo DiCaprio and George Clooney to cross the Atlantic.

However, Mr Obama will count as his most impressive guest yet. He has kept a low profile since leaving office, going on holiday to the British Virgin Islands at the invitation of Sir Richard Branson and being spotted attending Broadway shows.

The 44th president is said to have Scottish ancestry. According to Scotland.org, his roots can be traced back to William the Lion, who ruled Scotland from 1165 to 1214.

He also has form for intervening in Scotland's constitutional debate, launching a thinly veiled defence of the union in the months before the 2014 independence referendum.

President Obama, while emphasising that the decision was for the people of Scotland to make, said then: "We obviously have a deep interest in making sure that one of the closest allies we will ever have remains a strong, robust, united and effective partner."

Nicola Sturgeon, the first minister, has suggested that the intervention backfired.

Speaking in June 2015, almost exactly a year on from his statement, she said that his words had led to a sense of empowerment among Scots and a feeling that "if we were independent, the whole world would be talking about us".

# Catholic-run homes part of abuse inquiry

Marc Horne

Residential homes run by the Catholic Church are to be investigated as part of the inquiry into child abuse in Scotland.

Established in 2015, the inquiry is examining the abuse of children in care going back decades. It was confirmed yesterday that the second phase of the inquiry in the autumn will include institutions run by Catholic charities.

Dozens of people have come forward to claim they were physically and sexually abused by nuns and priests at homes throughout Scotland.

A spokesman for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry said residential care establishments to be investigated included those run by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, such as Smyllum Park in Lanark, Bellevue House in Rutherglen, St Joseph's Hospital in Roswell, St Vincent's School for the Deaf/Blind in Glasgow and Roseangle Orphanage (St Vincent's) in Dundee.

Next year the inquiry will look at care establishments run by the Sisters of Nazareth in Aberdeen, Cardonald, Kilmarnock and Lasswade, Midlothian.

The spokesman said: "The inquiry will continue to take statements from survivors in private sessions and from a range of other witnesses and urges anyone with information or experiences of establishments run by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul or the Sisters of Nazareth to contact the witness support team as soon as possible."

At Smyllum a memorial stone was recently erected in memory of the 100 orphans estimated to have been buried there in unmarked graves over the 100 years in which the orphanage operated.

The inquiry, whose final report is expected by late 2019, has had a series of setbacks, including the resignation of all three of its original panellists.

# Child rapist shared his abuse videos

Jeremy Watson

A delivery driver who filmed himself abusing children as young as three and shared the videos online has been jailed for ten years.

Police identified three boys, aged three, six and 12, who Robert McGregor, 36, raped from among child abuse images that officers found during a search of his home in Inverness.

Officers investigating the case described McGregor's actions as "abhorrent and unforgivable".

The High Court in Edinburgh was told that he had groomed and exploited children for 13 years.

Sentencing McGregor, Judge Lady Carmichael said he formed relationships with families to gain access to children who he subjected to abuse. The judge said that the material recovered demonstrated that he persisted despite the obvious distress of victims.

Lady Carmichael told McGregor that she would have jailed him for 15 years but for his guilty pleas. The judge ordered that he be kept under supervision for a further five years on his release.

More than 2,000 indecent photographs and 899 videos were recovered after laptops and other items were seized for analysis during a police raid at his home in May last year.

# Set to spread across the US: a healthy taste of the Scots sea

If getting sand in your sandwiches fills you with dread, the thought of adding seaweed to them might not be appealing (Julia Horton writes). Like or loathe the idea, the latest culinary invention from Scottish harvesters is seaweed butter.

The unsurprisingly salty spread, which has a speckled look described by some as pretty, was launched yesterday for Scotland Week in New York.

While traditional fare such as haggis has been banned in the US for decades because of health concerns about its ingredients, seaside butter is expected to be a big hit after Mara Seaweed, an Edinburgh company, secured a deal to sell it to restaurants from California to Washington state.

Made in collaboration with Brett Graham, an Australian chef of the London restaurant The Ledbury, which has two Michelin stars, it is highly nutritious and versatile. Scots will be able to buy it soon.

Announcing the butter, which comes after the concoction of seaweed ice

cream, Fiona Houston, the co-founder of Mara Seaweed, said: "It is the perfect ingredient to add a boost of umami flavour [a slightly meaty savoury taste], as well as essential nutrients into your dishes.

"It works well as a finishing butter on seafood and meat, as well as enhancing the flavour of vegetables, and we know it will appeal to chefs and home cooks alike."

The butter will be available for American chefs from next month through the Chefs' Warehouse catering business.

It is hoped that it will be added to recipe boxes for US homes, where people already receive Mara Seaweed's seasoning products.

For anyone who cannot wait for sales to start in Scotland, the head chef at the Three Chimneys on Skye has been making his own version using Mara Seaweed's seasoning — and is said to have had rave reviews.

Shirley Spear, the restaurant owner, said: "It's been amazingly popular, people love it. We serve it for the bread and butter in the restaurant. It's salty and



Fiona Houston is confident that her seaweed products, grown and harvested in places such as Fife, below, will prove popular with home cooks and chefs at the most swanky of restaurants



smoky and slightly iodine-y. It looks speckled when you mix the dark flakes of seaweed into the butter, a bit like a vanilla pod might look when you mix it into ice cream. It looks pretty."

Ms Spear, who is also the chairwoman of the Scottish

Food Commission, said: "People in Scotland have used seaweed as part of their diet for a very long time but it's one of these ingredients that has been forgotten about and discarded in modern times. The health benefits of even

the smallest amount of seaweed seasoning are fantastic."

Last November Mara Seaweed secured its first deal with a leading supermarket after Morrisons decided to stock shony and furikake, blends of hand-harvested seaweed seasoning.

The growing company, which gathers seaweed under licence along the coast, including in Fife, also sells its products in Harrods and Marks & Spencer.

In 2015 Mara Seaweed joined forces with Jannettas Gelateria in St Andrews to create the seaweed ice cream. Some reviewers were said to have thought that it tasted "a bit strange".