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# Local Heroes or Village Idiots?

## Press portrayal of opponents of two controversial coastal developments in North-east Scotland



Image: RCAHMS



Image: *The Scotsman*

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# Location of the Two Developments



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# Newspapers Examined

<b>Development</b>	<b>Local Titles</b>	<b>Regional Titles</b>	<b>National Titles</b>
<b>Gas terminal</b> (Nov 1972 to Sep 1974)	<i>Buchan Observer</i> <i>Fraserburgh Herald</i>	<i>Press and Journal</i> <i>Evening Express</i>	<i>Herald</i> <i>Scotsman</i>
<b>Golf resort</b> (Jan 2006 to date)	<i>Ellon Advertiser</i> <i>Ellon Times</i>	<i>Press and Journal</i> <i>Evening Express</i>	<i>Herald</i> <i>Sunday Herald</i> <i>Scotsman</i> <i>Scotland on Sunday</i>



# 'Jobs versus Ducks': Press Coverage of the Gas Terminal Proposals



Image: Wikipedia



- **Proposal to build terminal at Crimond announced Nov 1972**
- **Airfield adjacent to the Loch of Strathbeg**
- **Britain's largest coastal dune lake, designated a SSSI**
- **Internationally important site for wintering wildfowl**
- **MOD already had clearance to build a radio station on airfield**
- **Alternative terminal site at St. Fergus announced in April 1973**



# Local Press Coverage of Gas Terminal Proposals

- Were the first to report rumours of a development at Crimond
- Warned readers of the 'covetous eyes' of developers
- Fierce opponents of oil and gas industry
- Articles peppered with Biblical references, usually regarding the worship of Mammon
- Critical of lack of detail from Gas Council and Total
- Described the move to St. Fergus as a 'battle well won' by the conservationists



# Regional Press Coverage of Gas Terminal Proposals

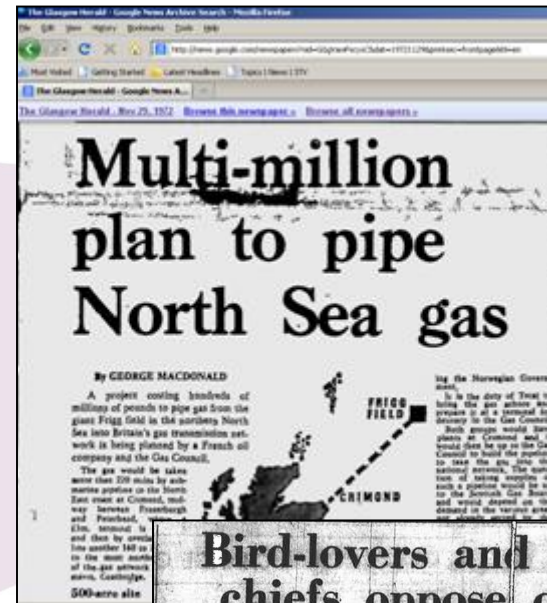
- Editorial stance never stated explicitly
- But generally sympathetic to the environmental arguments
- Also very critical of lack of information from developers
- Did not automatically ascribe victory to the environmental lobby
- But had speculated about financial implications of oil and gas industry conceding victory to conservation interests



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# National Press Coverage of Gas Terminal Proposals

- **Less extensive coverage of Crimond plans; mostly coinciding with Aberdeen County Council meetings**
- **Never mentioned specifically in editorials**
- **Published several letters from environmental bodies highlighting importance of Strathbeg and criticising secrecy of developers**
- **Critical of Scotland's 'cumbersome and confusing' planning procedures**





# **‘The New York Clown’ versus ‘The Village Idiot’: Press Coverage of Trump’s Golf Resort**

- **Mar 2006: Trump announces plans to build ‘the greatest golf course in the world’**
- **£1bn project, to include two championship courses, 5-star hotel, and housing**
- **But part to be built on a SSSI, including a dynamic, shifting dune system**
- **Rejected by Aberdeenshire Council’s Infrastructure Services Committee in Nov 2007**
- **But days later ‘called in’ by Scottish Government, who granted outline planning permission in Nov 2008 after a public inquiry**
- **First course opened in Jul 2012, but rest of resort on hold because Trump objects to plans for a nearby offshore windfarm**

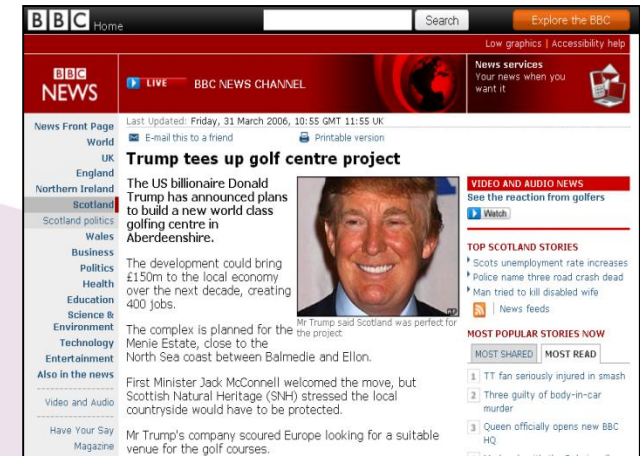


Image: Ramblers Scotland



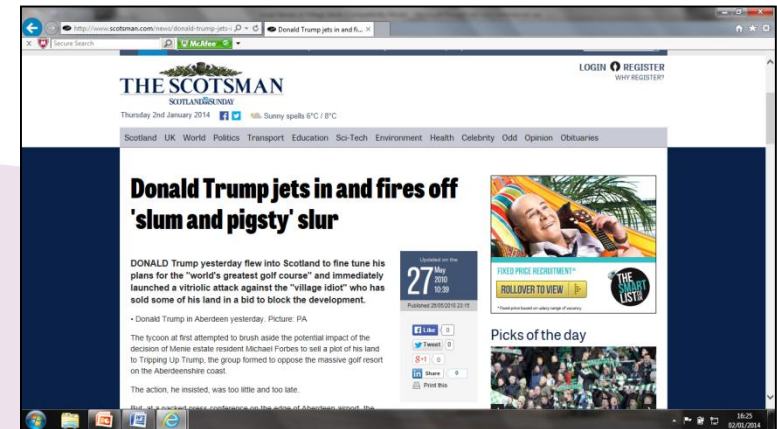
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- **Both papers lacking any outspoken or controversial editorial comment**
- **Both have gone out of their way to appear even-handed and impartial**
- **Devoid of any input or comment from any religious figures (as were regional and national titles)**



# National Press Coverage of Trump's Golf Resort

- More extensive coverage than of gas terminal in 1970s
- Cautious welcomes in editorials of *Scotsman* and *Scotland on Sunday*
- At times, critical of all parties involved in the saga
- Have made extensive use of Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 when compiling stories





# Regional Press Coverage of Trump's Golf Resort (1)

- Editorials immediately expressed unqualified support for the project
- Councillors who voted against resort described as *'traitors', 'no-hopers', 'buffoons in woolly jumpers',* etc.
- Environmental opponents described variously as:  
*'naysayers and nimbys'*  
*'shiny-eyed saviours of a bit of sand'*  
*'whinging, squabbling bairns more worried about birds than people'*
- **Evening Express:** 'celebrity' trivia
- Negligible coverage of *You've Been Trumped* (2011) documentary film



Image: IMDb

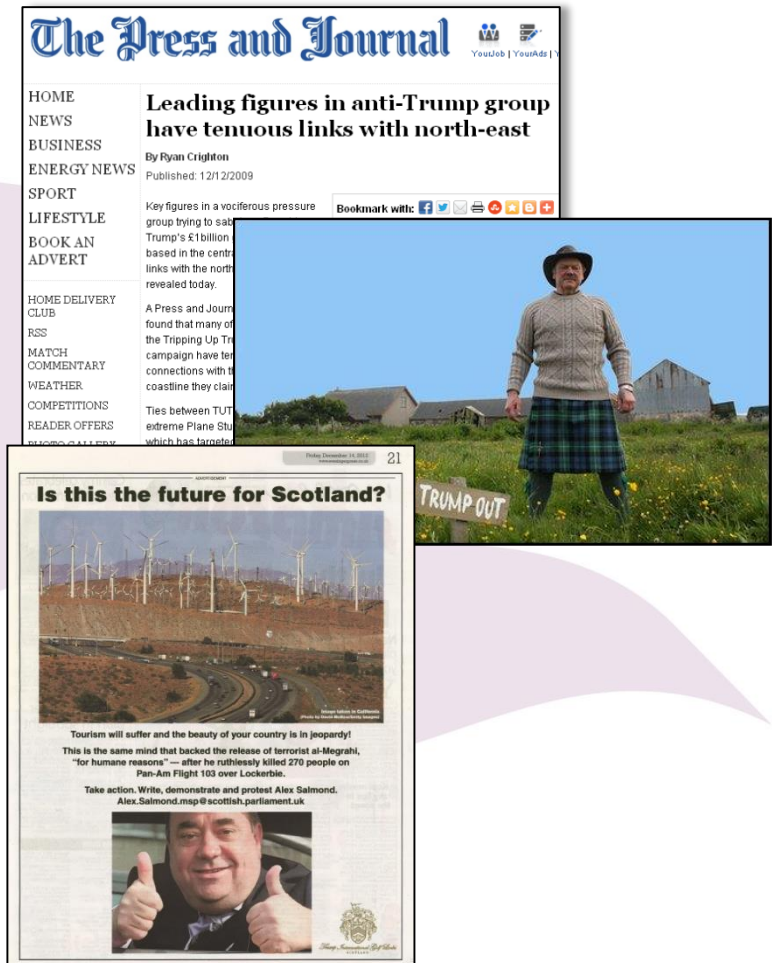




# Regional Press Coverage of Trump's Golf Resort (2)

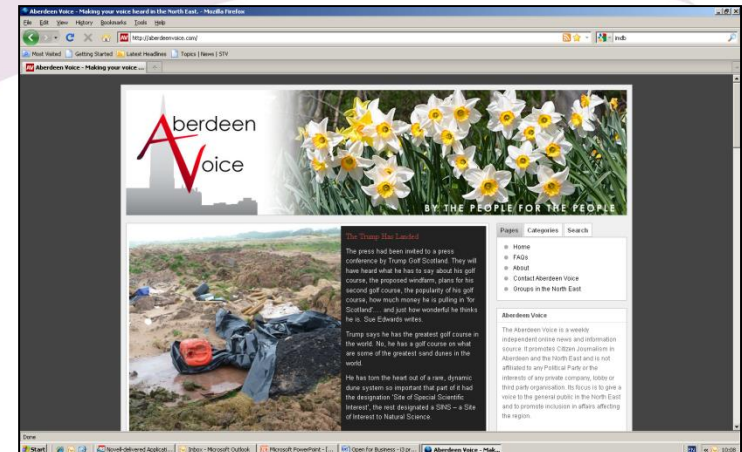
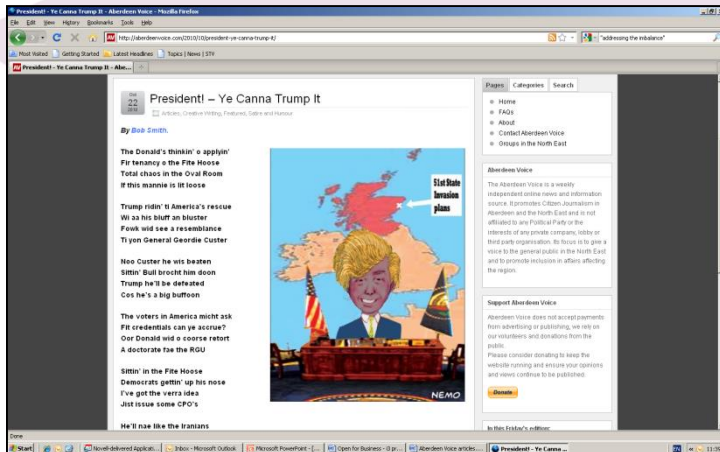
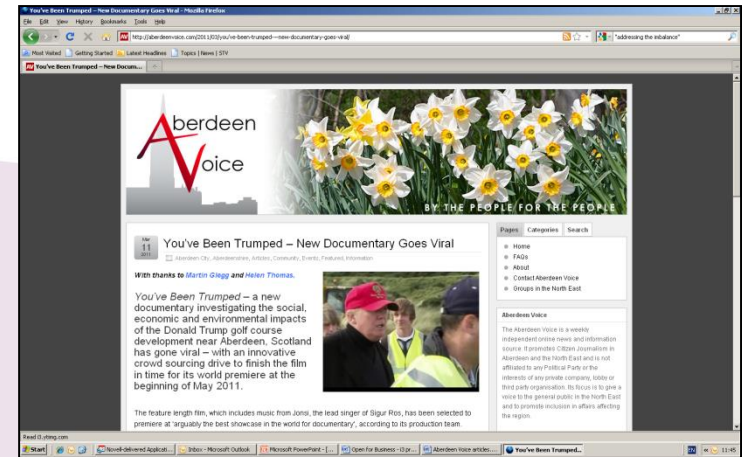
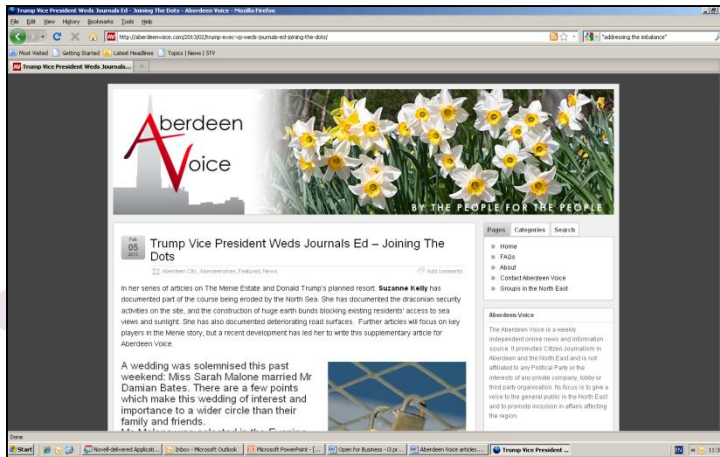
- ***Press and Journal*** ceased coverage of Tripping Up Trump protest group in Dec 2009, because its key figures *'have few links with the North-east'*
- **Reasons?**
  - seduced by Trump's wealth and fame?
  - pursuit of advertising revenue?
  - others...?

Circulation	1973	2013	% Drop
<b>P&amp;J</b>	<b>108,000</b>	<b>65,480</b>	<b>-39%</b>
<b>EE</b>	<b>76,000</b>	<b>38,400</b>	<b>-49%</b>



# Emergence of Citizen Journalism

## Aberdeen Voice (Launched June 2010)



# Thank You...

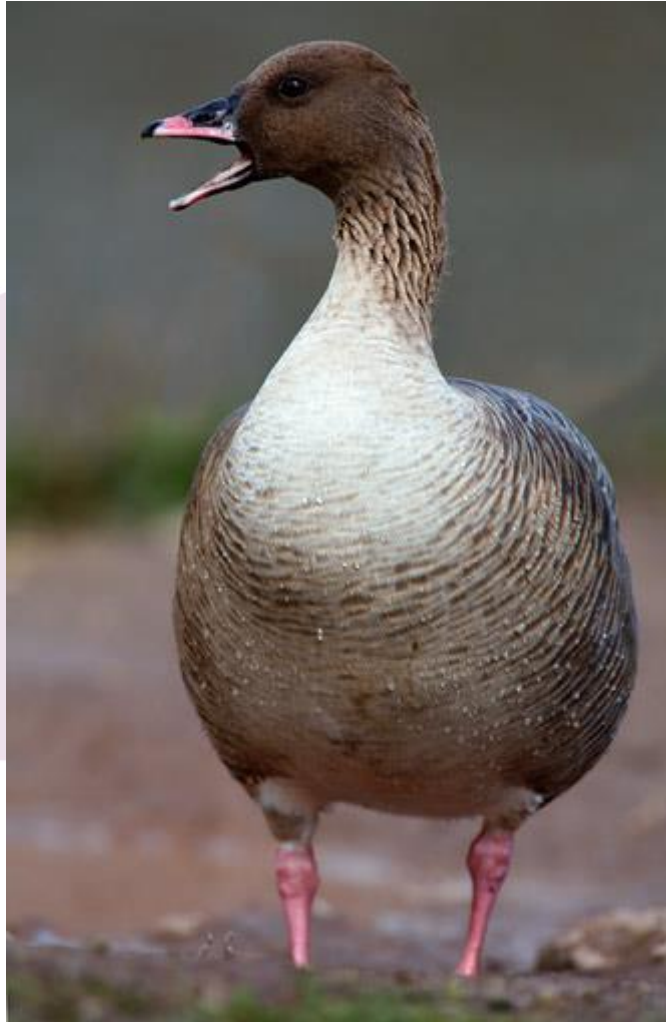


Image: Animal Spot



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