



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Tuesday 27 November 2012

Session 4

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**Tuesday 27 November 2012**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>TIME FOR REFLECTION</b> .....	13903
<b>POINTS OF ORDER</b> .....	13905
<b>TOPICAL QUESTION TIME</b> .....	13907
Shipyards (BAE Systems) .....	13907
Prison Sentences (Early Release) .....	13908
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2013-14</b> .....	13912
<i>Statement—[John Swinney].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney) .....	13912
<b>ST ANDREW'S DAY</b> .....	13925
<i>Motion moved—[Fiona Hyslop].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Patricia Ferguson].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Annabel Goldie].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop) .....	13925
Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab) .....	13930
Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con) .....	13934
Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP) .....	13937
Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab) .....	13939
Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP) .....	13941
Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP) .....	13943
Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab) .....	13945
Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP) .....	13947
Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind) .....	13949
Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP) .....	13951
Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab) .....	13953
Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP) .....	13956
Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....	13958
John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) .....	13961
Fiona Hyslop .....	13964
<b>STATUTE LAW (REPEALS) BILL</b> .....	13968
<i>Motion moved—[Kenny MacAskill].</i>	
<b>BUSINESS MOTION</b> .....	13969
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	13970
<b>SCOTTISH FIRST AID WEEK</b> .....	13973
<i>Motion debated—[James Dornan].</i>	
James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP) .....	13973
Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab) .....	13976
Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP) .....	13977
David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP) .....	13979
Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	13980
Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP) .....	13982
The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson) .....	13983

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## Scottish Parliament

*Tuesday 27 November 2012*

[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 14:00*]

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev Dr Robin Hill, Longniddry and Gladsmuir parish churches, and convener of the Church of Scotland HIV programme.

**The Rev Dr Robin Hill (Longniddry and Gladsmuir Parish Churches and Convener, Church of Scotland HIV Programme):** This week sees two significant dates falling side by side. On Friday, we will mark St Andrew's day at home here in Scotland and also overseas, I am sure; on Saturday, people around the globe will pause to reflect on world AIDS day.

The Church of Scotland HIV programme recently commissioned a badge—I am wearing one—that illustrates that same side-by-side relationship. The lower part features the saltire, while the top shows the red AIDS ribbon. This badge reminds the Church of Scotland that we are committed to tackling the virus in our time. Our HIV programme works to overcome stigma, to educate congregations and to offer assistance to partner projects at home and abroad. This badge speaks eloquently of the hope that we have for a Scotland and a Church of Scotland prepared to meet the challenges of HIV. But this badge does more. It was made by our friends at a women's support project near Nairobi in Kenya. Each member of the project is living with HIV herself, and each member is able to earn a living through that project's business activities.

For those who make it, this badge offers a lifeline in a harsh and discriminatory world; for those who wear it, this badge is a sign of solidarity that unites us here in Scotland with our sisters in Kenya, and with our sisters and brothers around the world who find themselves up against HIV stigma.

I am delighted to say that each MSP has been sent one of our badges. In the run-up to St Andrew's day and on world AIDS day, we in the Church of Scotland HIV programme would be truly delighted if members would join us in wearing their badge to show solidarity with those many millions of people who are HIV positive.

Mother Teresa once said:

"If you judge someone, you have no time to love them."

The response of many in our world to the spread of HIV has for too long been one of mistrust and even condemnation—that is unjustifiable by any measure of humane behaviour. The Church of Scotland aims to show that we hold to another standard—a standard summed up very well in these words from Ghana:

"Christian service and ministry is not about condemnation, but hope and renewal for the soul."

I wish every MSP a happy St Andrew's day on Friday, and a thought-provoking world AIDS day on Saturday. Join us in the movement for change. Keep the promise. Speak out for HIV justice in our land and in our world.

## Points of Order

14:03

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I seek clarity on the statement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning during last's Thursday's debate on further education. While setting out the Government's case for college reform, the cabinet secretary said:

"We must also be mindful of those who work in the sector. There is presently a complete Balkanisation of terms and conditions, with at least 42 different sets. I am keen to continue my dialogue with trade unions on those matters, and I commit myself to that. I think that the reforms will ultimately benefit staff; I know that many of them, while disagreeing with some or all aspects of change, concur with that view. For a start, staff will have the right to representation on boards and there should be a national set of terms and conditions—two things that are long overdue."—[*Official Report*, 22 November 2012; c 13836.]

The cabinet secretary seems to be asserting in that statement that college staff are not represented on college boards, and that that is something that will be remedied by the Government's on-going programme of college sector reform in a move that is "long overdue". However, schedule 2—on the Constitution and Proceedings and Boards of Management—of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, states:

"The board shall include ... a person appointed by being elected by the teaching staff of the college from among their ... number; ... a person appointed by being elected by the non-teaching staff of the college from among their ... number".

Far from such representation being "long overdue", college staff are already represented on boards of management and have been since the 1992 act came into force.

This appears to be another misleading statement from the education secretary. Either Mr Russell is mistaken about that aspect of reform—or in this case, continuation—or he has deliberately misled this Parliament. Under any circumstances, that would be a concern. In light of the background to last week's debate, which I requested on the back of misleading statements by the First Minister and the education secretary on college funding cuts, the situation is all the more serious.

Presiding Officer, can you advise whether an early opportunity can be provided to allow the cabinet secretary to come to the chamber and clarify his comments on the matter?

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** I thank the member for advance notice of his point of order. I am sure that members will never tire of me saying this, but I will repeat it once again. All

the Presiding Officers and Deputy Presiding Officers since 1999 have said that we are not responsible for the content or veracity of a member's speech. The member is also well aware that it is not within the Presiding Officer's power to order any minister to make a statement. However, I am sure that the minister will reflect on what Mr McArthur has said.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I have heard you make such statements many times and it seems likely that you will make such statements many more times in the future. Would it not be better if members quoted the section of standing orders that they believe has been breached when they make a point of order? If they do not, the Presiding Officer could stop members as soon as they know that a member is not making a point of order.

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank Mr Gibson for his point of order, in which he did not quote the standing orders. However, Mr Gibson makes a point that I will reflect on, and I thank him for making it.

## Topical Question Time

14:06

### Shipyards (BAE Systems)

**1. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will make representations to BAE Systems on behalf of the Scottish shipyard sector. (S4T-00144)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** BAE Systems is a hugely important employer in Scotland and we want to ensure that the strongest possible case for the retention of the Scottish yards is made and acted upon. We have to remember that Scotland's yards are in a strong position—a point that union officials are rightly stressing—based on their excellent industrial and engineering capability. The Scottish Government will work with BAE, the United Kingdom Government and Opposition parties in Scotland, with the clear aim of ensuring that any future plans protect Scotland's shipbuilding yards and the people with highly skilled jobs who depend upon them.

**Bob Doris:** I thank the cabinet secretary for his answer and for the efforts that the Scottish Government and others are making to retain those yards and the thousands of jobs that are associated with them. Scotland's defence industry and its engineering capability are second to none and the Clyde shipyards are therefore in a strong position going into the review.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that the greatest threat to the shipyards may indeed be needless political point scoring and that all politicians, no matter their political party, should put aside their differences and show a united front in the battle to save threatened shipyard jobs on the Clyde?

**John Swinney:** I welcome Mr Doris's comments. Over recent years, despite the political differences of opinion that exist, there has been an ability within Scotland for us to cooperate on many of the issues around the changes to defence infrastructure in this country, particularly those around the most recent strategic defence review. The review acknowledged that there was a significant impact on Scotland, and we were able to present a clearly marshalled and unified position across the political spectrum. The Scottish Government will be a willing participant in work with other parties to try to create such unity of purpose to protect the employment opportunities and circumstances of the employees of BAE Systems in Scotland.

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** Shipbuilding is very much in the DNA of communities in west central Scotland and I have met many people who live in areas such as Inverclyde but work in the yards up in Glasgow. Therefore, any closures will have a negative effect on the whole west central Scotland area. With that in mind, will the cabinet secretary undertake an economic assessment of the implications of the potential closure of one of the yards and the subsequent job losses that that would create?

**John Swinney:** The Government engages in a clear measure of dialogue with BAE Systems in understanding the work of the yards and the economic implications of the activity that they support. On a practical level, our principal channel for that dialogue is Scottish Enterprise, and I will consider the suggestion that Mr McMillan has made in relation to the economic impact of the yards. BAE Systems is one of the account managed companies in Scotland and is able to call on a very focused amount of input from the Scottish Government and from Scottish Enterprise. I assure him that, through the channel of dialogue that we have with Scottish Enterprise, we will work to identify ways in which we can strengthen and support that to maximise the security of the opportunities that exist within the BAE Systems operations on the Clyde.

### Prison Sentences (Early Release)

**2. Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what changes it will make in relation to people who have been released from prison early and then reoffend before the end of their original sentence. (S4T-00146)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** The Scottish Government intends to legislate through the criminal justice bill that will be introduced to Parliament next year to simplify the law relating to the powers of the court to impose consecutive sentences on offenders who are still serving sentences for previous offences. Under the current law, the courts have a power to impose an order under section 16 of the Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act 1993, which provides the court with the discretionary power to return an offender to custody as a punitive measure. In addition, the court has discretion to decide whether the sentence for the new offence should run consecutively to any section 16 order that has been imposed. That means that the court is able to impose a section 16 order and a sentence for the new offence that run consecutively.

However, although those powers are already available to the court, we have looked at how the law in this area operates and have concluded that

it is not as clear as it could be. Our proposed changes will ensure that the courts are clear that they can impose a punishment so that the offender completes their previous sentence before the sentence for the new crime starts. Parliament will be given the opportunity to consider and scrutinise the provisions when the bill is introduced.

**Lewis Macdonald:** Is the cabinet secretary's intention simply to amend the 1993 act, which he mentioned in his reply, or does he believe that other statute requires to be amended? Can he tell us why he believes that the existing statute does not provide guidance that is clear enough for the judiciary? Can he offer examples and point to cases in which it is clear that the existing provision has not been properly understood or has not been acted upon according to the intention of Parliament? Can he tell us whether he was asked to produce reform in this area by the Lord President or others who are involved in our criminal justice system and what the genesis of the proposal might be?

**Kenny MacAskill:** The law is clear, and we have stated what the 1993 act prescribes. It is a rather complex area of law that has caused difficulties for some on the bench. We believe that the law would be enhanced by being simpler and more understandable not simply to those with legal qualifications, but to laypeople who have commented. We believe that the current law is adequate but is unclear and would benefit from being clearer.

We have discussed these matters with others in the legal family, if I can put it that way. The issue has also been driven by people who have been the victims of crime who have discussed it. We believe that, although some aspects of law are, by their very nature, complex and require those with specialism to understand them, it is in the best interests of our society that the law should be as clear as possible and, preferably, understandable to all. The bill will clarify the law to make it more understandable and clearer not simply for the judiciary, who are required to implement and act on it, but for the man or woman in the street, who sometimes has to look to the law for comfort and solace.

**Lewis Macdonald:** I share the cabinet secretary's hope that we will see clarity and transparency. What is his response to the victims of crime who say that the existence of concurrent sentences is an obstacle to justice in their circumstances? Given its nature, is not the matter the sort of thing that the Scottish sentencing council might be able to address? If he agrees with that, when does he intend to implement the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, which allows such a council to be established?

**Kenny MacAskill:** The member raises two matters. Concurrent sentences have formed part of the law of Scotland for many a year—centuries, I presume. I do not know whether Mr Macdonald is suggesting that concurrent sentences should not be allowed in any circumstance, but it appears to us that such matters are best dealt with by the judiciary. In our society, it is the judiciary who impose the appropriate sentence, having heard the facts or, indeed, the case. We will retain that, but where complexities exist to do with concurrent and consecutive sentences, and where the 1993 act appears to be rather complex and difficult to read, our law will be enhanced by making the position clearer.

We remain committed to setting up the Scottish sentencing council, on which the Parliament has legislated. I spoke to the Lord President just last week about on-going work on the council's establishment. Options and costs for the council are under consideration and a decision will be made in due course, in dialogue—of course—with the judiciary, who have a fundamental part to play in the council.

**David McLetchie (Lothian) (Con):** I agree with the cabinet secretary when he says that the law needs to be clear and understandable to all. Would we not get that clarity if we ended automatic early release? If we did so, we would not need to have all the elaborate provisions that the cabinet secretary has just outlined to Mr Macdonald.

**Kenny MacAskill:** How did I know that Mr McLetchie was going to ask that? I never tire of him asking the question or of me responding that unconditional automatic early release was brought in by a Conservative Government many years ago. He will be glad to know that, thankfully, this Government has taken steps to ensure that such release is not unconditional. Equally, we remain committed to following the quite sage advice of the McLeish commission, which indicated that it was of the view that automatic early release should go, but that various triggers and criteria would have to be met, such as giving consideration to the impact on the judiciary, the Scottish Prison Service and—not least—social work departments. Those criteria and conditions have not been met. On that basis, despite the fact that there has been appropriate tinkering to ensure that matters are improved, we must live with what a Conservative Government imposed on us many years ago.

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** As one of the laypeople the cabinet secretary mentioned, I was very interested in his answers.

What is the average length of custodial sentence for those who are convicted of serious crimes such as handling offensive weapons?



**Kenny MacAskill:** We should put it on record that progress is being made. Statistics have shown that violent crime is at a 30-year low. Yesterday, when I announced the increase in the maximum sentence for possession of an offensive weapon from four years to five years, I indicated that the average sentence for knife crime and handling of weapons was nine months. At 9.30 this morning, we published statistics that show that the average sentence for such crimes is now 10 months.

Despite the progress that has been made, we still face problems with a minority who seem to think that they can carry weapons with impunity. They should realise that we have tough laws, which are getting tougher. Our visible police presence will enforce the law through stop and search. The courts are taking the appropriate action to implement what we, as a Parliament, believe is necessary to target the misuse of weapons that damages many communities.

## **Local Government Finance Settlement 2013-14**

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a statement by John Swinney on the local government finance settlement 2013-14. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:19

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** My statement will cover two areas. I will set out the terms of the provisional local government finance settlement for 2013-14 and I will make a number of announcements on business rates.

The settlement is firmly set in the context of the on-going relationship between the Scottish Government and local government. We have reaffirmed our commitment to working together on our joint priorities to deliver better outcomes for the people and communities of Scotland.

As a result of our partnership working, we have worked closely with local government to provide fair and equitable settlements. Between 2007-08 and 2012-13, the resources available to the Scottish Government through a combination of the departmental expenditure limit and non-domestic rates increased by 6.4 per cent. Over the same period, local government's budget increased by 8.9 per cent, demonstrating the strength of the financial settlement that we have agreed with local government in challenging financial times.

Following spending review 2011, total funding for local government from 2012 to 2015 would be a larger share of the funds controlled by the Scottish Government than the position we inherited when we first came to office in 2007-08. Although in 2013-14 our DEL will in cash terms decrease by £162 million compared with the previous year—the equivalent of a real-terms cut of 3 per cent—our record shows that we have provided a fair settlement to local government that continues to represent the best outcome that can be achieved in the current financial climate.

The draft budget 2013-14, which was published on 20 September, confirmed our draft budget for the second year of our current spending review period, including the headline allocations for local government. However, this local government finance settlement comes at a time of major restructuring of the services that are delivered by local authorities with the creation of the new Scottish Police Authority and fire service. As a result, funding for police and fire has been

removed from the settlement from 2013-14, which means that exact funding comparisons with previous years are no longer possible.

Today, I can announce the provisional funding allocations to individual local authorities for 2013-14. Copies of summary tables containing the key information in my statement are available at the back of the chamber.

The Government reached an agreement with the leadership of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on an approach to delivering joint priorities between national and local government. That was described in my letter to COSLA of 21 September last year, which set out the terms of the local government settlement for 2012 to 2015. As part of the settlement, local authorities will deliver certain specific commitments: freezing the council tax, which is continuing to help families during tough economic times, maintaining teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers and securing places for all probationers under the teacher induction scheme.

However, the package being offered to local authorities is conditional. Although it is agreed between the Government and COSLA's leadership in principle, it is now up to individual authorities to decide whether they wish to accept it. If they accept, they will receive their needs-based share of the overall revenue funding; if they choose not to accept, they will not receive their full share of the package of resources. The conditional amount of the overall package is worth in total £109 million across the whole of local government and includes £70 million for the council tax freeze and £39 million for the teacher commitments.

Total support for local government in 2013-14 will amount to more than £9.9 billion, which includes revenue and capital funding along with income raised from business rates. That represents an increase in funding of £35.2 million on a comparable basis with 2012-13.

Within the total available, support for revenue will amount to £9.4 billion in 2013-14, which represents a flat cash settlement on a like-for-like basis. There have been a number of changes to the local government budget for 2013-14, and the changes to revenue funding included in the draft budget were as follows: a net reduction of £954.7 million as a result of the transfer of responsibility for policing to the new Scottish Police Authority; a net reduction of £274.8 million as a result of the transfer of responsibility for the fire service to the new Scottish fire and rescue service; an increase of £23 million following the United Kingdom Government's abolition of council tax benefit—as agreed with local government, 80 per cent of that sum will be distributed initially, with the final 20 per cent distributed as a redetermination when 2012-

13 data is available—and an additional £3 million for free personal and nursing care.

There have also been a number of changes to the local government budget since the draft budget was published: £1.5 million for the provision of early learning and childcare for looked-after two-year-olds; £3 million for family support funding; and £720,000 for the blue badge scheme. In addition—and not included in today's figures—are the moneys transferring from the Department for Work and Pensions for the devolved social fund programme, which is subject to final agreement with the DWP and COSLA.

Although the net reduction for police included in the 2013-14 draft budget document was £954.7 million, there might be a slight reduction in that figure following on-going discussions with individual local authorities and the current police boards. The outcome of the consultation process will determine the exact figure to be removed.

Following the outcome of spending review 2011, overall local government capital funding was increased by £34.7 million in 2013-14 and £47.6 million in 2014-15 as a result of consequential funding announced at stage 3 of the 2012-13 budget bill. That delivered on the Government's commitment to maintain local government's share of the total capital budget at 28 per cent.

Following the transfer of responsibility for the police and fire services, capital funding has been reduced by a total £29.9 million in 2013-14. That means that capital funding for local government in the settlement for next year amounts to £0.5 billion. In addition, local government will benefit from capital funding for the school building programme, which is estimated at £61.2 million, and funding for digital infrastructure of £14.8 million in 2013-14.

I turn to business rates, which are a key issue for Scotland's business community and an integral part of local government finance. This Administration acknowledges that business rates play a part in attracting and retaining businesses in Scotland. We are delivering the most competitive business rates available anywhere in the United Kingdom, for example through the small business bonus scheme. I am delighted to say that the scheme is at a record high, with more than 89,000 business properties benefiting from it.

In our election manifesto and in our economic strategy, we committed that we would not allow the poundage for business rates to rise above what it is in England during this session of Parliament. The UK Government is expected to announce the English poundage in the next few days. I reaffirm my commitment to match the English poundage and will confirm the Scottish

poundage rate as soon as possible after the rate for England is announced.

As well as maintaining a competitive approach to business rates, we must acknowledge that business rates are an integral part of our public finances that help to fund the services on which our communities and businesses rely. That is why I have committed to embark on a review of business rates in advance of the next revaluation to provide the best support that we can for business.

I am pleased to confirm today the publication of our business rates consultation, which will provide a comprehensive and fundamental review of the rating system. The consultation delivers on my commitment to undertake a review and enables us to seek the views of all business ratepayers, representative bodies, professional advisers and agents, and citizens. The scope of the consultation will seek views on the full spectrum of business rates policy, including the effectiveness of current reliefs, transparency and openness, and tax avoidance. In addition, I am aware that some ratepayers are dissatisfied with the appeals system and the consultation poses questions on how that can be improved.

Any changes to the rating system resulting from the consultation will be put in place in time for the next revaluation, but early actions that are identified and affordable can be implemented much sooner. However, I must emphasise that the needs of all ratepayers must be balanced against the need to fund services, so the cost of any reforms must be balanced from savings elsewhere within the rating system.

The next revaluation would normally take place in 2015, but, as Parliament knows, the United Kingdom Government has taken the decision to delay its next revaluation to 2017. That decision creates a set of circumstances that could undermine our commitment to match the poundage rate south of the border. Given that for many years before we took office business rates were set at a higher level than in the rest of the UK, I believe that that danger must be avoided. I confirm, therefore, that the date of the next revaluation will be 2017. The Scottish Government is confident that by that stage we will have a range of economic powers achieved through independence that can create further competitive advantages for businesses in Scotland.

The outcome of spending review 2011 maintained local government's revenue funding and ensured that local authorities would receive a larger share of the funds contributed by the Scottish Government, including business rates, than they did under the position that we inherited in 2007-08. The provisional allocations that I have announced to Parliament today maintain our social

contract with the Scottish people, and ensure that the revenue funding available to local government for its remaining responsibilities is maintained.

The revenue allocations are inclusive of resources to enable local authorities to continue to freeze their council tax, which is a crucial element of the social contract with Scotland. That is one bill that, in the face of increasing costs, families can know will not rise. I hope that all local authorities will take up that offer and deliver a much-needed boost for hard-pressed families in these tough times.

In line with our manifesto and economic strategy, I am delighted to have confirmed for 2013-14 that the Scottish Government will again deliver on our commitment to businesses that we would not allow the poundage rate for business rates to rise above what it is in England during the lifetime of this session of Parliament. To keep Scotland's competitive edge, I have today launched our consultation on business rates to provide a thorough and comprehensive review of the business rates system in advance of the next revaluation in 2017.

Today marks the start of the normal consultation period with local government on the provisional allocations. I will bring the final figures to Parliament as part of the local government finance order early in the new year.

**The Presiding Officer:** The cabinet secretary will take questions on the issues raised in his statement. I intend to allow around 20 minutes for questions; we will then move to the next item of business.

**Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for the advance copy of his statement, but I am disappointed by its contents. The settlement is no surprise, given that local services took the lion's share of the cuts last year, but the reality is that it will be tough across Scotland.

Most of the questions in Professor Bell's report to the Finance Committee this year focused on local government, but we have yet to hear answers from the cabinet secretary to those vital questions.

The cabinet secretary calls the budget "fair", but where is the analysis of the impact on jobs and on the people who rely on services and who will see those services cut or face increased charges? As the Scottish Government publishes its paper on supporting growth, where is the acknowledgement that capital for local authorities has been slashed and that the squeeze on revenue will mean that prudential borrowing simply is not an option for the projects that are needed locally? Local companies rely on local authority projects and on people

spending in local shops and businesses. The squeeze will not make things easy for them.

The Scottish National Party likes to talk about shovel-ready projects and local authorities are ready with their shovels, but they do not have the cash to get social rented housing built again. That is a key building block for Scotland's recovery.

Where is the fairness for people who will find their services rationed and their charges increased? That is the cost of the underfunded council tax freeze.

We need to know how many jobs will be lost, and there has been nothing about wages. We welcome the fact that the living wage is being adopted across Scotland, but how many jobs will go in our local authorities in the next 12 months?

**John Swinney:** I reiterate that the local government settlement that the Government has put forward is based on a strong series of financial settlements that we have put in place for local government. The analysis that I provided to members was that, between 2007-08 and 2012-13, the Scottish Government's income increased by 6.4 per cent, but the local government budget increased by 8.9 per cent. I will explain matters quite simply. That demonstrates that local government's allocation of resources has grown at a faster rate than the Scottish Government's overall budget. To me, that is a good settlement for local government.

Sarah Boyack talked about reductions in capital. I do not know whether the Labour Party has missed the fact that the United Kingdom Government has dramatically reduced capital expenditure budgets across the United Kingdom. I cannot allocate money that I do not have—I have frequently gone round the houses on that point with the Labour Party. Local government was assured that it would have 28 per cent of the capital budget available to the Scottish Government as part of the spending review settlement, and I have fulfilled that assurance.

I am glad that Sarah Boyack has acknowledged that the Government's leadership on the living wage is encouraging more participation by local authorities in taking up that priority. On behalf of the Scottish Government, I unreservedly welcome the number of local authorities that now pay the living wage, and I am delighted that our partners in local government are working with us so effectively in that respect.

On local government's approach to borrowing, it has a prudential code to follow in borrowing for capital investment purposes. The First Minister and the president of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Councillor O'Neill, wrote jointly to all the local authorities in September to encourage the maximisation of investment in

capital projects. I have seen a number of very helpful and positive responses from leaders of local authorities in Scotland of all political persuasions, and I welcome the contribution that they have made to the process of strengthening the capital expenditure provisions in Scotland in such difficult financial times.

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of the statement on the financial settlement. Given that he said in the statement that the revaluation of business rates will be delayed until 2017, I would be grateful if he could confirm the following. First, who specifically was consulted on that decision? Secondly, why has there been no public consultation in advance of the decision being taken? Finally, why has it taken the cabinet secretary 11 months to launch the business rates review consultation, which last December he promised would follow "shortly"?

**John Swinney:** Clearly, as I have set out, my decision on the business rates revaluation was taken for the reason of ensuring that we can fulfil our commitment to match the English poundage for the duration of this parliamentary session. That was the commitment that we made to the people of Scotland in our election manifesto.

On the question of public consultation, the regulatory provisions that need to be put in place to delay a revaluation will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and dialogue within Parliament. Of course, that gives rise to consultation in that respect.

Finally, on the timing of the business rates review consultation, after making the comment to Parliament that Margaret Mitchell correctly identifies, I took a decision that I would wait for the outcome of a significant case about business rates, which was heard by the Court of Session in May. I expected to have the outcome of that within a number of weeks after May, but I did not get the outcome until much later in the year—in October, if my memory serves me right. As a consequence, I did not think that it was sensible to proceed with the consultation until I had the opinion of the court on what was a fundamental issue relating to material change of circumstances. That is the rationale for why the Government held off from issuing the consultation paper until such time as the court judgment was with us, so that we could have a more open discussion based on the knowledge that we gained from the judgment. Of course, the consultation period is now open, and I very much look forward to the input to that process from all interested parties.

**Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary outline how schemes such as the business rates incentivisation scheme will

benefit councils that are successful in attracting new investment into their communities?

**John Swinney:** Essentially, the business rates incentivisation scheme is designed to provide a motivation for local authorities to encourage economic growth within their localities. The scheme enables local authorities to share a greater proportion of the growth in business rates revenue from their localities than has been the case in the past. We have now given local authorities the framework within which they can operate in that respect, which obviously provides flexibility to local authorities to try to encourage a greater degree of economic activity as a consequence of the work that they undertake. I very much encourage local government to take a full part in that scheme, which I think can deliver real benefits to local economies from the greater growth that could be delivered as a consequence of the actions of local government in Scotland.

**Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab):** What impact will the transfer of financial resources and responsibilities to Scotland's new police and fire services have on local government budget settlements? Furthermore, how will the Scottish Government ensure that any initial or subsequent adjustments to the figures are redistributed in a way that is transparent and accountable both to local government and to residents and businesses across Scotland's 32 local authorities?

**John Swinney:** I have placed at the back of the chamber a note—I think that it is as transparent as they get, although I would be the first to say that it is quite complex—which goes through the way in which we have removed the element of local government funding that is related to police and fire services. A number of adjustments are set out in that note, which is available for members to scrutinise.

With regard to on-going budgets, the police and fire services budget will no longer appear in the local government finance settlement; it will appear in the justice budget. Therefore, parliamentary scrutiny of the issue will be focused on the contents of the justice secretary's budget rather than the local government settlement.

I mentioned in my statement that there is one remaining adjustment to be made, which relates to some of the funding arrangements that affect a couple of police boards in Scotland. Judgments on that are yet to be arrived at. The sum of money that is involved is relatively small in the grand scheme of things, but we are continuing discussions to seek agreement on the final adjustments that will be required. I stress that that applies, I think, to just two police board areas in Scotland.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's statement. In light of Sarah Boyack's questions, will the cabinet secretary tell us where local government would be now if, on assuming office, he had followed the advice of Labour's Wendy Alexander and top sliced the local government budget by at least 3 per cent year on year, and where our businesses would be if the tax rate poundage remained on average 8.5 per cent above England's, as it was for seven consecutive years under Labour and the Liberal Democrats?

**John Swinney:** I have two points for Mr Gibson. I reiterate that, since 2007, the local government budget has increased at a faster rate than the Scottish Government's budget, which demonstrates and validates the strong settlement that we have given to local government over the years. Figure 2 in the consultation document that the Scottish Government has published today sets out the relative poundage rates in Scotland and England in the period between 2000-01 and 2007-08. Mr Gibson will see that, in every year, the poundage rate was higher in Scotland than it was in England. Of course, we have maintained the poundage rate at the same level as in England throughout the period.

On small business rates, between 2003-04 and 2007-08, our predecessors spent between £20 million and £25 million each year on the small business rates relief scheme. Since 2008-09, the Government has spent between a low of £73 million, which was when we started the scheme, and a high of £145 million, which was in 2012-13. That is a clear illustration of the scale of assistance that has been put in place for the small business community in Scotland.

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab):** Although the Local Government and Regeneration Committee has completed its report on the budget, this is my first chance to question the cabinet secretary on the issue. We are asked to accept that the settlement is fair, but how can it be fair that local government is carrying the overwhelming burden of Scottish Government cuts? North Lanarkshire Council is suffering more than most. Services and more than 1,000 jobs are threatened in an area that desperately needs economic growth. Will we get the chance to explore the issue in my committee?

**John Swinney:** I most definitely have not refused an invitation to go to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee to discuss those issues. If that committee wishes to question me about them, I will of course attend. I have not had that request, but I will certainly attend if a request comes.

On Mr Pentland's substantive point about local government and the reductions in public

expenditure, I must return to a point that I have made about three or four times now. Since 2007-08, the resources that are available to the Scottish Government have increased by 6.4 per cent, but the resources that are available to local government have increased by 8.9 per cent. I do not know how one can look at those two figures and say that local government is bearing the lion's share of the cuts in public spending. I point out to Mr Pentland that, between this year and next, on a like-for-like basis, we are actually allocating more resources to local government, albeit for specific purposes that we have agreed with local government in relation to council tax benefit, free personal care and other matters that are included in the settlement that I have announced today.

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** I thank the finance secretary for providing an advance copy of his statement. Last year, he made a commitment that every council in Scotland would receive at least 85 per cent of the average funding. We supported him last year so that Aberdeen could get extra finance. Since then, the fire and police funding has been reviewed, as the cabinet secretary set out. It now seems that Aberdeen City Council's funding has fallen to 79 per cent of the average. Can he confirm that he will make up the difference to 85 per cent?

**John Swinney:** On local government funding, we continue the practice of our predecessors and, once we establish a spending review settlement for a three-year period, we apply various measures—let me call them protective measures—for local government finance over that period. For example, we apply the funding floor to protect a range of different local authorities from changes in the settlement over the three years.

Last year, I applied the approach that gave further protection to the City of Edinburgh Council and Aberdeen City Council, as we had set out that we would do. That approach is applied over the duration of the spending review, so no review of it will be undertaken until we embark on a further spending review to provide for funding after the conclusion of the financial year 2014-15. That continues the practice of our predecessors in office.

**Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary outline how the local government settlement will implement reform of public services and the proposals of the Christie commission?

**John Swinney:** Local government is a central participant in the public sector reform work that the Government is undertaking. We are taking forward a range of different responses to the Christie commission, principally on the integration and collaboration of local public services.

Local government is actively involved in that work with a range of third sector providers, the health service or the police service at a local level. It is also a full and active partner with the Government on implementing the preventative expenditure agenda.

Local government is actively involved in the public service reform agenda on a range of areas, and we welcome its participation in that process.

**The Presiding Officer:** I remind members that they should keep to issues that are in the statement when they ask a question.

**Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary should be aware that, in the past financial year, South Ayrshire Council underspent its budget by just over £7 million and, after provisions, reserves and overspends, still had a net underspend of £3.7 million. It also invested £7 million in Birmingham City Council and Salford City Council at approximately half the Bank of England base rate.

Will the cabinet secretary reaffirm the guidance that the Government and COSLA have given on local council investment and spend strategies? Will he consider the involvement of the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland to ensure that South Ayrshire Council and others fulfil their expenditure and monetary responsibilities in the current economic climate and in the future?

**John Swinney:** Guidance is in place on local government investment strategies as part of councils' treasury function. Individual local authorities must make appropriate judgments about the destination of any investments that they make. They must take into account factors of risk and return. However, that is fundamentally a matter for each local authority to determine.

The Accounts Commission will, of course, be actively involved in scrutinising those issues in relation to local authorities' financial performance, so the independent scrutiny that Mr Brodie requested is part of the existing arrangements.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** I refer to the table that was given with the statement. What additional finance will be provided to West Lothian Council to cope with the appalling situation following the closure of Hall's of Broxburn?

**John Swinney:** As Mr Findlay knows, that matter is the subject of active dialogue between me and West Lothian Council. We are providing practical assistance, which comes at a cost, to support many of the individuals whom Hall's of Broxburn has already made redundant. That financial contribution does not come through the local government finance settlement; it comes through other financial arrangements.

The Hall's of Broxburn task force will also consider issues relating to the economic recovery within West Lothian. I have already signalled that the Government will make a financial contribution towards that.

**The Presiding Officer:** Given the importance of the statement, I intend to continue until all members who have requested to ask a question have had an opportunity to do so.

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary outline what impact the public health supplement has had on businesses and how the proceeds from the supplement will be spent in the coming year?

**John Swinney:** The resources that have been generated from the public health supplement form part of the assessment of non-domestic rates income that I have made within the budget settlement. In addition, we have clearly set out, in partnership with local government, various ways in which we are taking forward a range of preventative spending measures—the total over the spending review period is £500 million—that are designed to ensure that we take early action to remedy some of the challenges and difficulties that we experience in our society.

The public health supplement forms part of the assessment of non-domestic rates income that I have made, and it is reflected in the policy priorities of the spending review.

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Will the cabinet secretary collate the savings packages that the 32 local authorities will produce as a result of the finance settlement that has been outlined today, to allow his department to carry out a full economic impact assessment of them? Will he make that information available to the Parliament?

**John Swinney:** That really is a matter for each individual local authority to take forward. As Mr Griffin will know from his experience in North Lanarkshire Council, a range of options are put forward, a large proportion of which are not pursued by the elected members for the simple reason that they do not have to make all the savings that are suggested.

As we go through a process of reform of public services, we clearly identify other and different ways in which services can be delivered, which can have better outcomes for people in Scotland. We should not be afraid to change the way in which we deliver public services to deliver better outcomes for the citizens of our country.

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Gavin Brown, to be followed by a brief question from Margo MacDonald. That does not mean that Gavin Brown should not be brief as well.

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** How many local authorities will get a cash-terms cut to their revenue budgets in 2013-14?

**John Swinney:** Mr Brown will forgive me if I do not give him an answer to that specific question in relation to the budget today, but if he needs me to write to him about that later, I will certainly do so. I am sure that, given a couple of minutes, I could run my eye down the table and tell him the exact answer.

The reason why any local authority will receive a cash-terms cut is because of the application of the distribution formula for local authorities, which, as he will know, is affected by a wide variety of indicators—principally population change, but also deprivation, sparsity of population, issues such as special island status and a variety of matters of that nature. Those are the relevant factors.

If Mr Brown looks at the table that I have supplied to members, he will see that the expenditure, taking account of the police and fire changes, totals £9.365 billion in 2012-13 and that it will be £9.396 billion in 2013-14, which is, of course, a higher number than in 2012-13.

**Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** Mr Findlay's question made me think of this. Will the budget be affected in any way if the worst happens in Clydeside and a shipyard is closed?

**John Swinney:** The Government responds to any particular circumstances that have an adverse economic impact on different parts of the country with a variety of different interventions. The Government is working, of course, to avoid the outcome that Margo MacDonald suggested, and we will continue to do so with all our efforts.

## St Andrew's Day

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-04970, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on St Andrew's day: a celebration of Scotland.

14:55

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** I am delighted to open the debate, which I hope will give us the opportunity to discuss what is great about Scotland and how we can use St Andrew's day to celebrate our history, our people, our culture and our world-famous food and drink.

It was a remarkable journey that took St Andrew from being a fisherman on the sea of Galilee to being patron saint of Scotland. St Andrew became a disciple of Jesus and later an apostle in Asia Minor, Macedonia and southern Russia, before being crucified in the year AD 70 in Patras, in Greece. His journey did not end there. After his death, legend has it that the monk St Regulus, or St Rule, was instructed in a dream to take St Andrew's remains to the ends of the earth, for safe keeping. St Rule did as he was told, removing some of the bones and taking them to a town called Kilrymont, which is now called St Andrews.

Such was the veneration for St Andrew that St Andrews became the ecclesiastical centre of the medieval Scottish church, with a great cathedral. That, in turn, led to Bishop Wardlaw of St Andrews establishing a centre of learning and, 599 years ago, securing the papal bull that established the University of St Andrews, which is Scotland's oldest university and the third-oldest university in the English-speaking world.

St Andrew's journey can still speak to us today. In life, his missions brought people together across many lands, in new friendship and faith. In death, the journey of his remains to Scotland led, in time, to a flourishing of literacy and learning. I will touch on both themes in the debate.

St Andrew's day is a thoroughly appropriate occasion for Scots and friends of Scotland, at home and abroad, to join together in fellowship to mark our national culture and heritage. The Government will be active on a number of fronts. Tomorrow, the First Minister will host the brave@heart St Andrew's awards in Bute house, and Angela Constance, the Minister for Youth Employment, will host a St Andrew's day concert by celebrated Scottish band Mànran in our European office in Brussels.

On St Andrew's day itself, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Mike Russell, will attend a St Andrew's day dinner at James

Watt College in North Ayrshire and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice will be at Edinburgh castle to witness the St Andrew's day event, which promises to be a carnival of contemporary dance, with a light show, fireworks and a unique twist on the Scottish pipes and drums. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth will attend an event in Perth as part of Scotland sings, which is a brand-new national event that brings together participants and audiences in community singing events—I do not know whether the cabinet secretary will sing, but if members attend they will find out.

I will be at the Saltire Society literary awards 2012 on St Andrew's day. The event is being delivered in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust and the National Library of Scotland. I look forward to presenting the book of the year award.

That is just some of what the Government is doing to celebrate St Andrew's day. I know that members of all parties will join together to celebrate Scotland on St Andrew's day at events across the country. Last week I wrote to all MSPs, setting out a range of events that are taking place and giving details of the Scotland.org website. It is worth exploring the website to find out about the St Andrew's day events that are happening in members' areas and all over the world.

A good example of what happens internationally is the Alexandria Christmas parade. During my visit to the United States of America last November I was privileged to participate in the parade, which takes place over the St Andrew's day weekend in the suburbs of Washington. It was a sight to behold. There were 30,000 walkers, massed pipes and drums and the largest collection of Scottie dogs that I have ever seen.

St Andrew's day is not just important in itself; it fires the starting gun for Scotland's winter festivals programme and a time when we welcome visitors from around the world to bring in the new year at the home of hogmanay and celebrate Burns night in the land of the bard's birth. The Scottish Government will part-fund 17 events in nine local authority areas over the winter festivals period. Five of the events will take place around St Andrew's day, in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, St Andrews and East Lothian.

I welcome Patricia Ferguson's amendment, the sentiment of which is absolutely right. All of us can and should share in the saltire and the celebrations that take place. However, I am rather bemused by Annabel Goldie's amendment, which seems to be a crude attempt to hijack for unionist purposes what should be a celebratory debate.

I was in Cardiff yesterday. If I were to suggest to a Welshman that he could celebrate St David's day only if it was as part of the United Kingdom,



he would just laugh. Annabel Goldie should be comforted that it is perfectly possible for unionists to celebrate Scotland for its distinct and individual identity. There is room in the tent of celebration even for Annabel Goldie. I hope that she will take part.

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Fiona Hyslop:** Indeed.

**Annabel Goldie:** I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for her graciousness in permitting me to intervene.

I know that the cabinet secretary does not care for the impact of history but the fact is that within this enduring union, which receives my approval although it may not receive hers, Scotland has actually achieved many great things—distinctively Scottish things, but as part of that union. I cannot believe that the cabinet secretary would not want to reflect that. That would seem uncharacteristically churlish.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** Cabinet secretary.

**Fiona Hyslop:** We could debate who is churlish. I would accept that Annabel Goldie's amendment is not a crude attempt to hijack the debate for constitutional purposes if she could list for me the whole range of events—if she cannot list a range of events, perhaps she could list a few—that will be taking place on Friday to celebrate Scotland's place in the UK.

As a Government, we have worked hard to increase interest in Scotland's national day. We continue to encourage all parts of Scotland—public bodies in particular—to recognise St Andrew's day but, as a Government, we would be keen to see more participate. It is worth noting that the number of public holidays that Scotland recognises, which is currently nine days, is lower than the number recognised by many of our European neighbours—some have as many as 14 per year.

I mentioned earlier how St Andrew inspired a first flowering of higher education in Scotland. That began the great movement that led to our having four universities at a time when England had only two. Because of the graduates that they produced, we had enough teachers to establish the first universal public education system in the world, with a school in every parish. It is therefore entirely fitting for schools and pre-schools to celebrate Scotland and its culture by marking St Andrew's day.

Edinburgh castle is running activities for pupils in primary classes 4 to 7 in the run-up to St Andrew's day. Pupils are encouraged to visit one

of Scotland's most iconic castles to find out more about Scotland's history.

The St Andrew's day debating championship will take place on 3 December, with the final being chaired by the Deputy Presiding Officer. Education Scotland is working with the English-Speaking Union and the Scottish Parliament to take forward the debate, which will reflect the year of creative Scotland and the forthcoming year of natural Scotland in 2013. Around 20 secondary schools and seven universities will be represented.

We have been building up the offer of free access to key Scottish visitor attractions around St Andrew's day, which is mentioned in Patricia Ferguson's amendment. The initiative, over the St Andrew's day weekend, has proved popular and returns this year. I am delighted to say that as well as St Andrews castle and Edinburgh castle, St Andrews cathedral, where the bones of the saint are said to be interred, will be open for free on St Andrew's day itself.

For the first time this year, some of Scotland's sports centres will take part in St Andrew's day. For example, at Thurso swimming pool there will be free swimming for kids, while at Port Glasgow swimming pool there will be free swimming for those over 60. Many sports centres are offering discounts and free trials right across the weekend, starting on the 30th, in the lead-up to the Commonwealth games in 2014.

I set out a few minutes ago the importance of St Andrew's legacy, which enabled Scotland to become the first country with universal public education. In turn, that led to Scotland becoming the first country with universal literacy. This year, for the first time, we will celebrate that legacy by using St Andrew's day to launch a new initiative on literature. We are celebrating our literary heritage on St Andrew's day through book week Scotland. Yesterday we delivered on one of our manifesto commitments by marking the start of book week, Scotland's first national, inclusive celebration of reading. Supported by Creative Scotland, the initiative is being delivered by the Scottish Book Trust in partnership with many other organisations. I thank everyone involved for creating such an inclusive and diverse programme of activities for everyone to enjoy.

The book week programme of activities will encourage Scots of all backgrounds and all ages to embark or continue on a lifetime's journey of reading. We have a great programme of activities and events taking place, engaging local communities across the country. For example, at 100 authors in 100 libraries events, authors will share their love of books with those attending the events across Scotland. The Scottish library service has created that national programme of writer events in libraries, which has been

supported through the Scottish Library and Information Council.

RNIB Scotland will open its transcription service in Partick to show people how to make a book for someone with sight loss or create writing in Braille.

I encourage everyone to get a copy of the book "My Favourite Place", which contains a collection of stories about Scotland's best-loved places written by the public and some of our best-loved authors, such as Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead. Copies are available in bookshops, public libraries and National Trust for Scotland properties.

**Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** The cabinet secretary has given an impressive list, but I wonder whether there could be something that is a bit more imaginative—a huge St Andrew's day prize where everybody would know what it stood for. She has mentioned many events that are dotted about the country. They are all good, but they do not hang together well.

**Fiona Hyslop:** That is a good point and it is one reason why the national book prize that the Saltire Society runs will be announced on St Andrew's day, as a St Andrew's prize. Our culture is many and varied. This year, we are focusing on celebrating literary culture, but I am attracted to the concept of having a prize.

This year, events will be focused on book week Scotland in particular. If that is successful, it can continue. The week will include events for toddlers and pre-schoolers, for example, and a St Andrew's day reading hour, which will take place at 11 o'clock on 30 November. The idea is to encourage everyone to celebrate reading, and participation can happen anywhere. The national museum of Scotland is taking a lead on that and will hold a read-in event for reading hour with Alexander McCall Smith. There will be reading activities for people from babies to pensioners.

I hope that everyone will celebrate reading as part of celebrating our culture. Reading helps with skills, employability and self-improvement. The turn of a page takes us to new countries, opens new horizons and extends our human sympathies. It is no wonder that Abraham Lincoln was reported to have given credit to the role played by novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe and her great anti-slavery novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in the emancipation of slaves.

Our literary heritage is central to Scotland, which is why we are celebrating literature and giving a prize on St Andrew's day to the best of our Scottish literature to mark the importance of our celebrations.

Robert Burns's message rings out loud and clear. Sir Walter Scott's historical novels enthralled 19th century Europe and inspired writers such as

Alessandro Manzoni in Italy and Adam Mickiewicz in Poland. We have had more recent literary giants. We recently debated "Sunset Song" in the Parliament and we have modern writers such as Liz Lochhead, Janice Galloway and J K Rowling. Book week is an important part of our celebrations.

I said at the beginning of my speech that it was a strange and remarkable journey that took St Andrew from the shores of the sea of Galilee to the shores of St Andrews. That a Jewish fisherman, with the help of a Greek monk, could have such an effect on a country that he never saw in life and probably scarcely knew existed illustrates how Scotland has always depended on the contribution not just of those who are born here but of those who come here as visitors and immigrants—one Scotland, many cultures, indeed.

What matters about St Andrew and Scotland is not the truth of the legend but its effect in helping Scotland to become a nation of learning, literacy and literature. That is why we are particularly using literature this year to help to celebrate and promote our national day.

I finish by quoting one final inspirational author. In his poem for the opening of this Parliament, Edwin Morgan wrote:

"Light of the day, shine in; light of the mind, shine out!"

This St Andrew's day will shine a light on Scotland and I am sure that, during the debate, we will see the light of the mind shine out.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the celebration of St Andrew's Day and the opportunity that it gives Scots, friends of Scotland and those who would like to know the country better, to celebrate Scotland's people and history, world renowned food and drink and traditional and contemporary culture and notes the many events that will take place overseas, in the rest of the UK and in Scotland, on or around St Andrew's Day, which includes the launch of Book Week Scotland, Scotland's first national celebration of reading, which is a diverse programme of book-related events that will be held across the nation between 26 November and 2 December 2012.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Patricia Ferguson, who has a generous nine minutes.

15:08

**Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in today's debate on the continuing relevance of St Andrew's day to contemporary Scotland. I signal that Scottish Labour will support the Government's motion; I doubt that a single member would have any difficulty with the sentiments expressed in it.

I am pleased that the Government will support Labour's addendum amendment, which will

strengthen the Government's motion—I am pleased that the cabinet secretary recognised that. We will also support the Conservative amendment, as we do not have the same difficulties with it as some others seem to.

We Scots cannot claim exclusivity for our nation's patron saint. Greece, Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Barbados and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople all claim St Andrew as their patron saint. Germany and Poland have also long celebrated St Andrew's day.

We in Scotland have only recently begun to celebrate, at least in a co-ordinated and national way, St Andrew's feast day as our national holiday, so we do not yet have the type of traditions attached to 30 November that can be found in many other countries. I was intrigued to read that many of those traditions seem to be associated with young women who are trying to find a husband or work out when they might be married, sometimes by following very complicated rituals that perhaps owe more to wishful thinking than to saintly intervention.

I intend to say more about our celebrations later in my speech, but for now I note that the Scottish Labour amendment is partly intended to stress that we think that St Andrew's Day is an integral part of the Parliament's promotion of a fair, inclusive and diverse Scottish society. In relation to the passing of the St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Act 2007, the former Minister for Communities Malcolm Chisholm remarked:

"Scotland is a place where we can all benefit from a diversity of cultures, religions and backgrounds. The contribution of everyone should be valued and the events taking place on St Andrew's Day will remind us again of how rich our cultural influences are here in Scotland."

The cabinet secretary has outlined all—or at least many—of the events that are taking place, which demonstrates how right Malcolm Chisholm was then and how relevant his words are today.

St Andrew's day is not, and must never become, parochial; it must be about Scotland's place in the world. It is a celebration of our diverse modern Scotland, which today welcomes people from many nations and different ethnic origins. We have as citizens people from a variety of cultures and faiths, as well as people of no faith. I welcome that, because I believe that it helps to make us all stronger.

I place on record my congratulations—and, I am sure, those of every member—to the Scottish Trades Union Congress on its continued and long-standing support for and organisation of the annual St Andrew's day march and rally against racism and fascism. There can be no place for bigotry in 21st century Scotland. As the cabinet secretary rightly said, one Scotland, many cultures

has been a statement of Scottish Government policy over two political Administrations and must remain our approach. Parliament must encourage and support such events to ensure that all citizens of Scotland have ownership of the St Andrew's day celebrations and feel that they truly belong and are as relevant as anyone.

Just as Scots in the past went out into the world, our population is now growing partly because we are attracting more people to Scotland. A modern diverse Scotland welcomes people from across the world and embraces their enterprise, culture and ambition. On St Andrew's day, we should celebrate not just shared Scottish traditions but our shared future.

Just as a broad definition of culture leads to the celebration of diversity, its narrower artistic definition inevitably leads us to the same conclusion. Indeed, as Scottish Labour's amendment reminds us, the winter festival that begins on St Andrew's day culminates in Burns night. Burns was an internationally recognised genius whose art is outward looking and encompasses universal themes that should be celebrated throughout the year, not just on 25 January.

How is Scotland celebrating its national day? I was pleased to find that Historic Scotland is giving free entry to many of its properties on the day. However, on looking again, I found that the offer this year seems to extend only to one day and not to the entire weekend as I recall happened last year. That may just be because of when St Andrew's day happens to fall this year, but it would be helpful to have a weekend offer available for those who perhaps do not enjoy the holiday.

As one would expect, St Andrews is having a celebration, and the Edinburgh Storytelling Centre will host a singalong. Many of Edinburgh's other attractions such as the Edinburgh Dungeon, Our Dynamic Earth, Mary King's Close and—my personal favourite—the Camera Obscura all have special pricing arrangements over the weekend, which is to be welcomed.

The Scottish Book Trust has, as the cabinet secretary mentioned, put out a lovely book called "My Favourite Place". I suspect that, as well as being available in local bookshops, it is probably available in an MSP's office near you, thanks to the Book Trust, which provided copies to us for distribution. I am certainly grateful to the trust for that.

I was intrigued to see that East Lothian is holding a saltire festival, while Glasgow is branding its events under the heading "Glasgow loves St Andrew's day". Apparently there will be a party in George Square on Friday night, with pipes, drums and Highland dancing, and other

events will carry on until Sunday. I noted that the organisers are promising that there will be mayhem and are warning that a kilted caricaturist will be on the loose. I am not sure why a kilted caricaturist should be particularly feared, but I take the warning in the spirit of generosity in which it is clearly meant.

I may be biased in saying this, but Glasgow has got the idea of the celebration better than some other areas—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry, but I missed what Mrs MacDonald said, although I am sure that it was pithy. *[Interruption.]* Ah—she thinks that I am biased. I own up to that; I am guilty as charged.

Glasgow has put together a branded campaign and a coherent menu of new, themed activities over the weekend that are specific celebrations of St Andrew's day, which ties into the point that Mrs MacDonald made during the cabinet secretary's speech. I hope to carry on that theme. When EventScotland and VisitScotland come to review this year's programme, I hope that they will think about what more they can do to badge and brand events around Scotland, so that those become a better known set of festivals and attract more visitors in the future.

I wonder whether more could be done to encourage retailers to become involved. Given that St Andrew's day happens to fall in the run-up to Christmas, it seems to me that special events organised by traders and stores around 30 November would perhaps encourage shoppers to patronise participating stores more than they normally would during that weekend. Such schemes may be under way already, but if so, they have passed me by—and, as an avid shopper, there is not much in that direction that passes me by.

**Margo MacDonald:** I am not in the least biased, so here is an idea. At Christmas, we wear Christmas tree badges, brooches and so on. I am sure that we could get something for St Andrew's day that everybody could wear—it would not be wrapped in a union jack, right enough. That would be something through which we could all celebrate our common identity.

**Patricia Ferguson:** I thank Mrs MacDonald for that helpful suggestion. Perhaps we could have a saltire and a union jack, although that may be pushing it too far. I can just see the competition that we could organise among schoolchildren to identify such an image. Perhaps that is something that we would want to do in future years.

With floods and bad weather the order of the day, it is sometimes difficult to think about celebrating anything at all, but I genuinely look forward to hearing colleagues' speeches and about the celebrations in their areas. I hope very

much to make my own small—and probably modest—contribution to the mayhem in George Square at the weekend.

I move amendment S4M-04970.2, to insert at end:

“; believes that Scotland's national day and flag belong to all of the people of Scotland regardless of origin, current residence and political beliefs; welcomes the decision of Historic Scotland to allow free entry to Edinburgh Castle and St Andrews Castle and Cathedral in celebration of St Andrew's Day, and recognises that St Andrew's Day also marks the start of Scotland's winter festival season, which ends on Burns Night and includes the Christmas, Hogmanay and New Year celebrations.”

15:18

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** On seeing the title of today's debate, I was reminded of a time when the St Andrew's day debate was confined to members' business. It is now elevated to the status of a Scottish Government debate, which is entirely appropriate. I hope that the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs is not too stunned by my acquiescence.

As members are aware, I believe in the United Kingdom and in Scotland's place in that union. A person need not be a member of the Scottish National Party to be proud of Scotland and her achievements. No one in the chamber has a monopoly on patriotism. Patricia Ferguson made that point well; I thank her for her support of my amendment. The Scottish Conservatives welcome the opportunity to celebrate Scotland and the St Andrew's day tradition.

On a mechanism for enhancing the celebration, I say to Margo MacDonald that I celebrate it by just being myself; I think that that is what an awful lot of people in Scotland do.

St Andrew was, of course, the first apostle. He was a fisherman on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. However, it was not until the end of the first millennium that St Andrew's links with Scotland were established, when he was made the patron saint of Scotland after some of his relics were brought by St Rule to St Andrews, where they remain to this day. Other relics can be found in Patras in Greece—I have viewed them there—in Amalfi in Italy, in Warsaw in Poland and in St Mary's Roman Catholic church in Edinburgh, so he was well travelled in death.

St Andrew was no less well travelled in life; he preached along the southern borders of today's Ukraine along the Black Sea, as well as along the Dnieper and Volga rivers, which is why he became a patron saint of Russia, Romania and the Ukraine. However, the temporal reach of St Andrew does not end there, with his patronages in sainthood extending from Luqa to Esgueira, and even as far as Barbados. The global reach of St

Andrew is not limited merely to countries that enjoy him as their patron saint. This year alone, individuals of all nationalities will gather, from Australia and New Zealand to the USA and Canada and from Bonn to Brussels to celebrate the saintly feast day.

The cabinet secretary asked me about UK celebrations of St Andrew. I am quite surprised by the request, because in her motion she notes that many events will take place in the rest of the UK. However, to help her out I can confirm that many Scots will congregate in London, Cambridge, Bedford, Dorset and other parts of England to celebrate St Andrew's day.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I do not dispute that, which is why we have it in our motion. What I do not understand is what are all the celebrations that will take place all over Scotland to celebrate Scotland's place in the UK? Perhaps Annabel Goldie will give us a long list.

**Annabel Goldie:** That is what many people in Scotland—hundreds of thousands of them apparently, according to recent polls—feel instinctively is part of their identity. They do not have a problem with it. I appreciate that the cabinet secretary has a problem with that, but it is not a problem that is shared by the majority of people in Scotland. St Andrew and his saltire are by no means the property solely of Scotland, let alone of the Scottish National Party or of any other form of nationalism.

The debate calls on us to celebrate Scotland, which I genuinely always welcome the opportunity to do, because we have a great deal to celebrate. We have a distinct culture and history, and our contribution to the world at every level cannot be overstated. I celebrate all those attributes as a Scot, but I also—alongside hundreds of thousands of other Scots—celebrate them as a citizen of part of the United Kingdom. Remember: 800,000 Scots live elsewhere in the UK.

From a union that was inspired by pragmatism and rationality, one of the world's most wonderful and remarkable democratic countries has developed and grown. Of course Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland have many individual successes to extol, but I believe that our greatest successes—those that we can celebrate the most, and those that define who we are as people and what we are as a nation—are those that happened not by acting alone and looking inward but by acting together and looking outward as part of the remarkable union that is the United Kingdom.

I remind Parliament that it was together, as part of that United Kingdom, that we led the fight against slavery and delivered huge social reform and the universal franchise, which were made

possible by acts of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, so we can all—Scots and English alike—take pride in that.

**Margo MacDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Annabel Goldie:** I am getting a little tight for time, Ms MacDonald; I have referred to you in my speech.

**Margo MacDonald:** On a point of historical accuracy, we have nothing to be proud of in Scotland when it comes to the slave trade.

**Annabel Goldie:** My point is that it was a United Kingdom Parliament that put an end to slavery and that Scotland was part of that. It was also as part of the United Kingdom that we led the fight against totalitarianism in all its insidious forms, from fascism to communism. Patricia Ferguson quite rightly reminded us of the STUC's role every year in ensuring that we never forget the importance of that fight.

It was together, as part of the United Kingdom, that we created what is perhaps the most respected public health institution in the world—the national health service, which continues to ensure that everyone in the United Kingdom, regardless of status, receives the health service that they need free of charge.

It is interesting that it was also together, as part of that United Kingdom, that we brought a common market to the nations of our union a century before Europe did. That common market brought unparalleled prosperity to the partners of the UK.

However, it is clear from listening to members on the SNP benches and to the cabinet secretary's speech that there is a belief, which we hear about with increasing frequency, that Scotland—they claim—is hampered by the union. We are, they insist, somehow held back because we are part of the UK. Only with independence, they assert, can we really be a successful nation. However, that incantation is nothing more than tilting at windmills, because we did not achieve those defining successes alone. Rather, we accomplished them together as a union of nations. In doing so, we crafted who we are as people as well as who we are as a people. Nationalism, with its instinct to look inwards, neglects that fact.

In a globalised world, separatism cannot be the answer. At exactly the time when we should be working together to face the difficult challenges and uncertainties that abound in our modern world, I must question how separation can help that. The difficulty with separation is the risk—I am not saying that the SNP is culpable; I am just saying that it can happen—of introspection and marginalisation.

St Andrew's reach throughout the United Kingdom as well as the world shows us how interconnected are our identities, cultures, histories, successes and—most important of all—our futures. I add my name to those who proudly celebrate Scotland, speaking out for the majority of Scots who celebrate our successes not alone, but as part of an enduring union.

I move amendment S4M-04970.1, after “culture” to insert:

“, as well as Scotland's place in, and shared history, identity and culture with, the UK,”.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to open debate and speeches of six minutes, please. There is a little bit of time for interventions, at this stage.

15:26

**Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP):** As the MSP for North East Fife, which is home to the town of St Andrews, I am privileged to participate in today's debate on Scotland's day of national celebration. I am delighted that this year's programme of events in celebration of St Andrew's day is busier than ever before. St Andrews is currently holding the St Andrews festival, which runs until the weekend. That is just one of the major events that are planned for Scotland this week, alongside programmes such as Scotland sings and book week Scotland, which tie in perfectly with the year of creative Scotland.

From previous debates, I had understood that there was a general cross-party agreement on having a public holiday on St Andrew's day, on the internationalism of our patron saint and on the need to put aside political differences so that we can celebrate Scotland's national day together, as people of Scotland. As has, however, been pointed out several times in the past, St Andrew is not exclusively ours. Other countries, including Russia and Greece, respect him as their patron saint. Despite its further bail-out, Greece certainly needs a patron saint looking after it and its people.

The date of 30 November has its obvious significance in Scotland, but it also captures worldwide significance. On that day in 1786, Peter Leopold Joseph of Habsburg-Lorraine, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, abolished the death penalty—it was the first European state to do so. Cities across the globe now celebrate cities for life day in memory of that pioneering act of humanity. In 1872, the first international football match took place in Glasgow between Scotland and England, and in 1934 the Flying Scotsman became the first steam locomotive officially to exceed 100mph. Not least important, in 1982 Michael Jackson's “Thriller” album was released. All those events may have only tenuous connections to St Andrews

and Scotland, but they all took place on 30 November and are all of great importance, in their own right.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Perhaps I can supply a connection with “Thriller”. Apparently, the producer of the video was inspired by “Tam o' Shanter”, perhaps reflecting the theme, so there may well be a Scottish connection to “Thriller”.

**Roderick Campbell:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that useful piece of information.

Cities for life day is an event that does not gather as much interest in Scotland as it does elsewhere. In a country that has not had the death penalty since the 1960s, that may be understandable. However, on the day on which we celebrate St Andrew, I feel that we should all consider the importance and on-going relevance of cities for life day.

**Margo MacDonald:** Can Roderick Campbell say who won the football match?

**Roderick Campbell:** It was a 0-0 draw.

St Andrew's day has also borne witness to cultural and historically significant firsts. The first international football match gathered together 4,000 souls as Scotland held England to a 0-0 draw, as I just said. Despite the result, the match helped to invigorate the Scottish people with a love of football, which continues to this day—albeit with little current success.

Of more interest than the 0-0 draw is the first 100mph journey by the Flying Scotsman. The locomotive travelled on countless journeys and covered about 2 million miles between London and Edinburgh after that. I rather fear that it will be a long while before we have a new high-speed train in Scotland.

Some people may question how those examples are linked to St Andrew's day. They are indicative of several things: humanitarianism, peace, equality, national pride and links between nations. As I mentioned, St Andrew was renowned for his humanitarianism and egalitarianism. Is not it right that the first international football match brought together on the terraces 4,000 people from different walks of life, in the same circumstances, to enjoy a game? Surely that demonstrates those values. Cannot it be said that a love of Michael Jackson's “Thriller” album, which just happens to be the best-selling album of all time, brings together millions of people from all walks of life and all corners of the globe in a shared experience?

St Andrew's day is about much more than Scotland and its own history and culture; it is a day for the entire world. It is a day of tolerance, pride and equality. Events that are taking place globally this week reflect that. For example, the Scottish

Society of Central Pennsylvania is hosting its St Andrew's day supper. Over the next few days, St Andrew's day events will take place in Brussels, Den Haag in the Netherlands, Bermuda and Manila. St Andrews is hosting a 10-day-long festival, which includes a food festival, as part of which a food from Fife dinner will be held at the Old Course hotel in St Andrews on Thursday. There will also be a Fife young fiddlers event, a torchlight parade and many other activities besides. Last Friday, there was a major poetry event in St Andrews, at which readings of the Ayrshire poet Rab Wilson, who wrote mainly in Scots, led a highly successful evening.

I wish all the organisers of and participants in those events—which are the first in Scotland's winter festival programme—every success, and I wish those who are involved in later events in the programme every success, too. I also welcome book week Scotland which, I am sure, Fiona McLeod will talk about in more detail.

The internationalism of the day cannot be overstated. St Patrick's day is renowned internationally for people enjoying themselves and celebrating all that is good about Ireland. The same should be true of St Andrew's day in relation to Scotland, so I welcome the work that the Scottish Government is doing to promote it within our borders and beyond them. It is clear that St Andrew's day is very important to the people of Scotland and to the people of the world, so it is right for us, as a Parliament, to hold such a debate. I commend the Government's motion and Patricia Ferguson's amendment. I wish, however, that I could understand the logic of Annabel Goldie's amendment. I see and recognise 300 years of shared history, and I see and recognise a social union, but I do not recognise the narrow prism that her amendment seems to imply.

15:32

**Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in the Scottish Government debate on St Andrew's day, although a Scottish Government celebration of St Andrew's day might be more appropriate than a debate. I am sorry to disagree with Ms Goldie.

St Andrew's day should be a celebration of Scottish culture and tradition and a way for us to highlight that culture and tradition to the rest of the world, and to generate trade and tourism. Scotland has such a rich and vibrant history that we should all be proud to be Scottish and to share our traditions with the rest of the world.

Scotland has many things to share, from the Loch Ness monster to the elusive wild haggis, which frolics around steep mountains and hillsides, but only ever in one direction—the true

“Great chieftain o' the pudding-race”.

Members might ask, if it is so elusive, how am I aware of its habitat? That evidence comes from a study in 2007 of the haggis and the stories of the many thousands of tourists who have come in search of the creatures.

Leaving aside the unique Scottish wildlife for now, my region has a vibrant history and many unique Scottish businesses. Ayrshire is, of course, the home of Robert Burns. There is a museum dedicated to his life in Irvine, where he lived for a time in 1781. It is said that Burns came to Irvine as a farmer but left as a poet. Just down the road in Alloway is the Robert Burns birthplace museum. The Irvine Burns club, which was opened in 1862, has a huge range of artefacts and one of Scotland's most significant Burns treasure troves; I recommend that everyone who has an interest in Burns visit the centre to see the incredible array of Burns memorabilia.

Irvine also has the annual Marymass festival, which is organised by the Irvine Carters Society and North Ayrshire Council. The society dates back to the 11th century, when Irvine was the main port for Glasgow and men transported goods by cart to the city. The festival itself, which dates from the middle ages and arose from Mary Queen of Scots's visit to the town in 1563, is a focal point for the town and attracts visitors from far and wide. Every August, many Irvinites return home to experience the fair's rich pageantry and the week-long festivities. The festival not only promotes Irvine and contributes to the local economy, but brings thousands of people into Scotland.

Meanwhile, across the water in Arran, we have the famous Isle of Arran Cheese Shop and Arran Aromatics. I challenge anyone who goes to Arran not to come back with something from one of those shops or—if it is more members' thing—something from the Arran Whisky distillery, which is one of the few remaining independent distilleries in Scotland. Arran, which is a beautiful island in itself and attracts visitors from across the world, is known as “Scotland in miniature”. Many people who come to the island take a piece of it home through those businesses and many others; indeed, many of those businesses have extended their reach not only in Scotland but throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas.

At a recent Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry event on exporting that I attended, the owners of Arran Aromatics and the Isle of Arran Cheese Shop said that they used to export to the mainland, which was Ayrshire, and then extended their exports to the middle east—or Edinburgh. Now they export to the far east, including Dubai and China. We in this Parliament have a duty to encourage Scottish businesses, culture and

tradition to thrive not only throughout the world, but within Scotland itself.

I find it strange that one of the biggest celebrations of Scotland is tartan week, which takes place in Manhattan every year and is one of the largest outdoor Scottish events. Although it is great for promoting Scotland abroad, I have to ask why we do not have a similar co-ordinated event in Scotland on St Andrew's day to promote our culture, history and businesses.

Everyone in Scotland should be able to celebrate St Andrew's day. When I was a civil servant, we were delighted to be given the day off as a public holiday; however, most of us used the day to make a start on the Christmas shopping, with barely a thought given to St Andrew. Like any public holiday, it comes with a cost. If local authorities and the national health service gave all staff the day off, they would still need people to provide essential services, and those people would have to be paid additional-hours payments. With ever-decreasing resources, public services simply cannot afford such funding.

As the Labour amendment states,

"Scotland's national day and flag belong to all of the people of Scotland regardless of origin, current residence and political beliefs".

Everyone has a part to play in promoting Scotland. Not just one party but all of us in the chamber have Scotland's interests at heart, and we all need to work together to ensure that we promote Scotland and St Andrew's day.

15:39

**Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** First of all, I refer members to my register of interests as the chair of the Scottish Library and Information Council and as a member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. So, yes—Mr Campbell was correct. I am going to talk about book week Scotland.

I usually speak as a very high-tech librarian and talk about evidence, references and citations. However, I am also a book lover. As a result, I want to start with a quotation with which I agree utterly and which I was surprised the cabinet secretary did not use in her speech. In her press release for the launch of book week Scotland just a few weeks ago, she mentioned

"reading's unique capacity for"

empowerment,

"enrichment, education, solace, pleasure and growth".

I am sure that everyone in the chamber agrees with that sentiment.

There are so many aspects to our first book week Scotland. The cabinet secretary talked about it being an inclusive and diverse celebration. I would like to highlight just a few of the areas of book week Scotland, which started on Monday and finishes at the end of the week.

Something I want to highlight as being most important is the league of extraordinary booklovers. I had lodged a motion through which I had hoped to get a members' business debate on book week Scotland. I had hoped to fly into the chamber for my members' business debate, replete with my league cape and mask, but of course that would not have been appropriate behaviour in a parliamentary chamber. However, I have them in my bag, so I will wear them later.

The league of extraordinary booklovers is a group of people who have been recruited in the past year and who will be online all this week. If members need any ideas about what to read, or need to find out about a particular genre or author, they should email the league. Its fingers will fly over the keyboard and make sure that members get back suggestions to keep them busy this week. I thank my constituent from Milton of Campsie, Lindesay Burton, who is one of that extraordinary league.

The cabinet secretary referred to the reading hour, which is at 11 o'clock on St Andrew's day. I do not suggest that everybody stop working then, but it would be nice if we could all, from the long list of celebrations that the cabinet secretary read out, take a quiet moment at 11 o'clock on St Andrew's day to read a piece of Scottish literature. Of course, in my members' business debate, I could have said, "Right, everybody, get your books out and read," and we could have had a quiet 45 minutes.

I will also highlight something that I particularly like, which is the family pack of three books that will be presented to every primary 1 pupil in the country. It is so important that we start children reading at an early age and that we encourage their parents and carers to read with them and to introduce a love of literature. I have a constituency connection again: one of the books in the pack is "Jack and the Flumflum Tree" by the children's laureate, Julia Donaldson, who is one of my constituents.

There are lots of local events in my constituency. On the theme of introducing Scottish literature to young folk, I am pleased that we are having bookbug sessions in Bishopbriggs, Lennoxton, Lenzie, William Patrick and Westerton libraries. All the bookbug sessions this week will be on Scottish themes.

The cabinet secretary referred to the book, "My Favourite Place". I, of course, have a copy with



me, although I am not going to ask all members to read it now. We were all given copies of it. In a motion that I lodged in October, I suggested that although members should of course stay at home and read their copies, they should also think about where they could take them afterwards to donate to others. I have decided this year to take copies to care homes and sheltered housing in my constituency.

When I got the book, I saw that it could perhaps be difficult for someone with arthritic hands to read, so I spoke to Booktrust. There is an audio version of the book on its website, which it is happy for us to download on to a CD and take along to older or visually impaired people. We should make sure that literature is there and available to all of us.

In true librarian fashion, I turn to my bookmarked page in "My Favourite Place". One entry that particularly caught my eye was "Island of (South) Rona" by Valerie McIlreavy, which is about an island off Skye that I visit every year and which my Dalmatian dog is named after. It is a lovely poem to read.

Of course, members would not expect me to finish on anything other than Howard Swindle's little ditty, "Mobile Library Man". Please enjoy book week Scotland. It will be back next year, and I hope that I will get a members' business debate then.

15:44

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** The idea behind celebrating St Andrew's day on 30 November was partly handed down to us by the old church, and we are stumped with that, in a way. We cannot really change the date, although St Columba's day on 9 June is a slightly more attractive time at which to celebrate. However, let us brighten up the day.

A friend of mine who is teaching English as a foreign language in Paris said to me yesterday in an e-mail that she has found that all the students who are learning English with her have an incredible appetite for Scottish culture. We should recognise that international view on St Andrew's day. That shows that, although people are awakened to the possibilities of using the universal language of English, they see Scottish culture through and beyond that prism.

I will discuss our national day in terms of identities. I was interested to note that, earlier this month, Mike Russell gave a lecture in the Neil Gunn centre. I did not manage to attend it, but its theme was "The Writer in a Time of Change: Gunn, Walsh and the Process of Independence". Mike Russell said that he shared Neil Gunn's belief that internationalism is richer when

nationalisms come together. The writer of a review of the lecture said:

"As an SNP politician, it would have been easy for Mr Russell to distort this interest of Neil Gunn's to his contemporary advantage. Instead, he stuck to his brief, indicating that Gunn's political perspective was as an internationalist as much as a nationalist."

That is a great thing for us to bear in mind today. We should recognise and celebrate how Scotland is seen around the world and how people here recognise what they see.

In a debate at the weekend, Alex Salmond talked about the fact that people are entitled to have as many layers of identity as they wish. That is another way of saying that we are celebrating a identity now and let us not mistake other identities with it at the moment. Alex Salmond was responding to Bill Clinton, who had said that what we have in common matters more. Yes, it matters—but if people are not themselves, how can they contribute to that "more"? Today, we are discussing what matters.

On reasons to celebrate, we also have reasons to remember with gratitude some of the people who cannot celebrate with us now. There is David Morrison, who was a librarian in Wick. He went up there from Glasgow and was the author of the *Scotia Review*. He was a great facilitator of arts activities and he died a few months ago. Among the musicians, Ian Hardie and Derek Hoy will not be playing today, nor will the great Michael Marra.

We must celebrate the fact that our music in particular attracts people to Scotland. The new year celebrations are part of the attraction, but St Andrew's day allows us to think why our music has become even more popular. I thank Donald Shaw, who is the director of the Celtic Connections festival, which is part of our winter festival, for enlightening us. He said:

"Partly that is about the changing face of the way the music has been presented. Swapping white heather and kilts for Doc Martens and T-shirts has helped, as has the way the music itself has loosened some of its shackles. Celtic Connections has been at the heart of that process."

Scottish music today is cool. It has always been cool, but it is being heard in many more places where people can judge it against everyone else's music. What Donald Shaw said means that the many people who want to celebrate St Andrew's day throughout our country will do so through poetry and song. I hope to contribute to that, myself. When we talk about the outlook for Scots on St Andrew's day, we should recognise that people from five continents come to play in this country at Celtic Connections. They are preparing to do so now.

Scots are seen around the world as a welcoming people. I think that the winter is not off-putting. St Andrew's day is a national day and is

worth giving a lot more weight to, and I certainly think that people in here singing traditional music of whatever kind they like would be one of the best things that could happen. I see that today's *Daily Record* talks about people who say how they feel much healthier by singing. That was, of course, included in the motion that I lodged on the Scotland sings project, which runs from St Andrew's day to 2 December. That project considers that singing is good for people and that it should make them smile. I hope that St Andrew's day makes us smile and that I can personally add to the contribution that allows us to feel good about ourselves in this country.

If the Parliament does not feel that, we can get bogged down in analyses that might look at such things through the prism of the UK. There is not British literature or British traditional music; there is Scottish literature and Scottish music. Those are means by which we will celebrate our national day, and I hope that even the Tories will recognise that.

15:50

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in today's debate. When I read the motion as I sat down to write my speech last night, I wondered where to begin in seeking to cover, in six minutes, a celebration of Scotland's people and history, our food and drink and our traditional and contemporary culture. There is so much to talk about and so much will be happening on the day itself.

Just the other week, the members' business debate on Scotland's film and television industry highlighted the excellent locations and production talent that we have here. That industry perhaps offers the most effective way for us to celebrate and showcase our traditional and contemporary culture to the rest of the world. In this year of creative Scotland, I am sure that our film and television industry will continue to flourish.

Another area that I want to touch on is our food and drink industry, which we should rightly celebrate and promote as it has tremendous potential for growth and already contributes massively to the economy. Historically, our national drink has been the big-ticket export item, but recently a much more modern drinks company called BrewDog has been grabbing many of the headlines. Within a few years of being set up as a company in 2007, BrewDog was competing strongly in the international drinks market and had become one of the best-selling beers in Scandinavia. In 2010, one of the company's founding members became Scotland's youngest ever entrepreneur of the year.

Scotland's food industry has always performed well and has a good international reputation—as soon as we get past things such as deep-fried confectionery and other caricatures of the Scottish diet—because of our wide range of high-quality produce. For example, Scotland's restaurant sector has successfully blended historical and contemporary influences. With immigration from Europe and Asia, inevitably restaurants have popped up that reflect the cooking styles and foods used by other cultures, but one does not have to look too closely at the menus of our Italian and Indian restaurants and Spanish tapas bars to see the Scottish influence on their cuisine and how they have been successfully blended.

As a country, we also have a rich sporting history to celebrate. In football, the Scottish cup is the world's oldest national trophy and was first contested in 1873. Although the national team often fails to live up to the expectations of a sometimes sport-obsessed nation, our domestic teams often punch above their weight in European competitions. Aberdeen, Celtic and Rangers have all achieved notable success. On that front, some of us—those of a certain persuasion—can only hope that history might repeat itself at Wembley next May.

People say that Scotland's national sport is football, but I worry that it has moved on to become complaining about football. Our national pastime seems to be to complain about the performance of the Scotland football team rather than to become more active and involved in the sport. So much time and so many column inches are dedicated to debating issues about the Scotland team rather than boosting the levels of physical activity to what we have historically known in Scotland. I hope that the Olympics and a successful Commonwealth games will provide both the inspiration and the facilities that many people need.

The motion mentions the launch of book week Scotland, Scotland's first celebration of reading, which takes place around St Andrew's day and which will contribute to the celebration of Scotland's traditional and contemporary culture. Last night, there was an event in Cumbernauld library—unfortunately, I was unable to attend—at which Harry the Polis, or Harry Morris, gave readings from a series of books. Harry, who calls himself an “observer of life”, was a police officer in Glasgow and Strathclyde for 30 years. I have read some of his funny short stories about situations that he found himself in during his time in the job, so I am sure that it was a fantastic night in Cumbernauld and a great way to start book week Scotland.

Book week Scotland and the local events that are planned for the next few weeks highlight the

importance of our local libraries to documenting our people and history and making it possible for everyone in the community to research that, regardless of the ability to access the internet, which many of us take for granted. The other month, I attended an event in Kilsyth library that showcased the contribution that ordinary people from Scotland made to the international brigades that went to fight fascism in the Spanish civil war.

That local demonstration was enough to stimulate debate and to start people researching to find out whether anyone from Kilsyth joined the international brigades. A number of local people have been identified and work has started to erect a memorial to them in Kilsyth. Without the local library as a hub for that sort of activity in historical documentation and research, it would have been impossible for us to come together as a community for the project. I highlight the contribution that our libraries and their staff make to celebrating our people, history and culture.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** I call Willie Coffey, to be followed by Margo MacDonald. There is plenty of time for interventions, and we will be generous with time should members wish to take slightly more.

15:57

**Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** I am still reeling a bit after the offering from Annabel Goldie. In contrast with the positive examples that we have heard about to celebrate Scotland and St Andrew's day, all that Miss Goldie seemed to offer was to trumpet the abolition of slavery—that was the best example that she could come up with. I remind her that, even in the emerging United States of America, slavery was abolished in the majority of states by 1804, but the British empire hung on to the profits from it for another 29 years, before it was abolished in 1833.

**Annabel Goldie:** The member might have misconstrued what I said. I was clear in paying tribute to the cabinet secretary, who, as Margo MacDonald pointed out, listed many welcome and positive activities as part of the celebration of St Andrew's day. I merely observed that hundreds of thousands of Scots believe that we cannot look at the issue in a complete vacuum and that there is a shared history and culture. I think that it is right to reflect that.

**Willie Coffey:** I thank the member for that clarification, but if that is the best example that she can come up with, she is struggling to present her case.

The stories about St Andrew the apostle are many and varied. He was the first apostle and follower of Christ. As many members have said, we share him with many nations such as Greece,

Russia and Ukraine. His relics are found in Scotland, Greece, Italy and Poland and are a crucial part of the Christian tradition of celebrating his feast day on 30 November. Some years ago, I had the pleasure of standing beneath the magnificent statue of St Andrew in the Vatican, which was unveiled in 1640 and above which is a relic from the cross on which he was martyred by the Romans. That led me to appreciate the close association that Scotland has with him.

It is interesting that the flag of the island of Tenerife looks similar to our Scottish saltire. One story is that it was adopted in recognition of the bravery of Scottish sailors at the battle of Santa Cruz in 1797. They were led by Admiral Nelson, but the battle ended in defeat for Nelson and he lost part of his arm as a consequence. That has nothing at all to do with St Andrew, but it has a possible link with Scotland. So every time that members see a picture of Admiral Nelson with his right arm inside his coat, they can proudly share the knowledge of how and when that happened and its connection with Scotland.

It is curious that, in many modern-day manifestations, the cross of St Andrew is depicted as dark blue when, in fact, it is azure blue—as close to the colour of the sky as we can get—and defined as such by the Parliament some years ago, including by colleagues who still serve here, as I understand.

I suspect that the adoption of dark blue had more to do with the limited early methods of producing dyes for colouring garments. Dark blue was easier to produce and provided a stark contrast with colours that opponents in other places adopted.

Andrew's place as patron saint was established early in Scotland's history and provides modern Scotland with not only an association with an apostle of Jesus, but a beautiful and, I hope, plausible explanation of how our flag came to be what it is.

In modern Scotland, we choose to commemorate St Andrew's day in a rich variety of ways, including music, theatre and literary events throughout Scotland. Our schools bring his story to life, celebrate our connection with him and promote Scotland and the best that we have to offer.

Scotland's first national book week, which was mentioned in the cabinet secretary's motion and in her speech, features strongly in my constituency, with events taking place in Kilmarnock that involve contributions from local Ayrshire writers and others.

Something of a cultural renaissance is taking place in Kilmarnock and the town has been shortlisted for the creative places award. We have

had some magnificent events at the Burns monument centre, the Dick institute and the beautifully restored Palace theatre and grand hall buildings. Some incredible work is also going on at the Centrestage music theatre in the town.

Visitor numbers are climbing, and a range of events involving music, the arts and literature has seen the town begin to reclaim its creative heritage. As members know, Robert Burns's first book—the Kilmarnock edition—was printed in the town. We also have the only school in Scotland to have two Nobel prize winners as former pupils—Sir Alexander Fleming and John Boyd Orr.

We also have some contemporary writers—such as Willie McIlvanney or, more recently, Zoe Strachan and our fellow Ayrshire man Rab Wilson—who are making quite a contribution to the literary landscape. We should also not forget our local contemporary rock 'n' roll stars Biffy Clyro, who talk up the town whenever they get the chance.

East Ayrshire Council's cultural development leader, Phillipa Aitken, says—rightly, in my view—that Kilmarnock has been a creative town for generations. Recent investment by the council and other organisations has certainly brought an exciting new era to that part of Ayrshire.

St Andrew's day marks the start of Scotland's winter festival and, as the cabinet secretary remarked, gives us a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Scotland's people and history. I took the opportunity to look back and discover my own family history, using the impressive genealogy search facilities at the Burns monument centre. I discovered that my ancestors arrived in Kilmarnock from County Tipperary in Ireland in 1850, which was a turbulent time for Scotland and Ireland.

Significant past events can explain the present to us and give us a glimpse of our possible future. St Andrew the apostle knew nothing of Scotland and our nation was not yet born at his time. However, as each St Andrew's day arrives, we can reach out to him, retell his story and retell the story of Scotland. In so doing, we can offer an enthusiastic world audience a closer look at the richness of what modern Scotland has to offer.

16:03

**Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** I thank Dennis Canavan in absentia, because he ensured that we would celebrate St Andrew's day in Scotland. He did it against the odds, so I am sure that he will be celebrating, probably with Irn Bru.

Although I appreciate the range of activities—when we heard from Fiona McLeod about the book week, I was even more impressed—the idea

of a big competition is still on. Somebody should think about running that to pull everything together.

St Andrew's day should be a celebration of Scottishness. We should just enjoy being ourselves for the day. If Annabel Goldie wants to be British, she can be, but she will be left out of the party because everybody else will want to be Scottish. I do not see why they should not be. We have nothing to apologise for. Every other day of the year, we can be as international as we like. We can share our patron saint with whoever we want to but, on that one day, let us be Scottish.

**Annabel Goldie:** In this debate, I have tried to illustrate that I believe that we can be Scottish and British. I and an awful lot of other people do not have a problem with that. I am just sorry that other members in the chamber seem to find it completely repugnant.

**Margo MacDonald:** I do not find it repugnant. I find it awful sad that, because of the politics that we have in the Parliament just now, Annabel Goldie feels that she has to be British on the day for celebrating Scottishness.

After that expression of togetherness, I wonder whether I might offer just a little bit of constructive criticism. We are in danger of becoming very divided. We are not having a civil war. We are having a civil referendum. We are in danger of dividing ourselves, and we can gain nothing from it. Unless we run a good referendum, Scots will be much less inclined to celebrate St Andrew's day following the referendum.

By a good referendum, I mean that people must feel that they own it—that it is theirs and not the province of any party. It must belong to the Scots—to each and every one of us—and none of us is any more important than the others in how we interpret it. However, the basis of that is information. Every other member will know that too, because people are saying to us, "But I don't know where the information is. I don't know the answer to this, that and the next thing. I want to know about defence, the currency and Europe." We have time to provide that information in a neutral and balanced way, and not in a party-political way. There are, of course, choices to be made on all the big questions that we will put to Scots, and they will answer them in their own way, but they can do that only if the information is there.

To be perfectly honest, I am really disappointed with the Government for not having the gumption to realise that that comes before all the party-political nonsense that will divide us, I think to no good effect.

Taxi drivers in Edinburgh have told me that they want to be able to discuss what is happening with visitors who come into their cabs. Foreigners who

come to Scotland just now know that something is happening and they want to know what it is. The taxi drivers have told me that they would like to be able to discuss it, but they need information with which to do that. I therefore suggest, as another idea that jumps off from St Andrew's day, that we provide that information for people who want it, because all Scots can be ambassadors for Scotland. That would be much more likely to stimulate interest in and knowledge of the real Scotland.

Although Margaret McDougall gave a very funny speech about one-legged haggises or something, there is a real, deep Scotland about which many of our fellow Scots know little. One thing that we could do is stimulate interest in that. We will not do it if, in some way, we apologise for being Scottish and say that it has to be diluted by saying that we are British. I can feel just as British as anybody else, believe it or not, because I have a great deal in common with all the other folk on this island, but I have a friend in Barbados—she is perhaps my best friend—and I feel something in common with her as well. I do not think that there is any great merit in saying, "I'm Scottish and British," compared with saying, "I'm Scottish and I feel all sorts of other identities too." Those identities might be from all over the world, with different causes. Maybe we should start to think outwardly properly, instead of stopping our internationalism at Dover, because that is a gey limited way to celebrate the fact that, as we say, we come from the country that Robbie Burns described as offering a brotherhood of man throughout the world.

I realise that we do not celebrate Burns until January—although I celebrate him every month, to be honest. However, if we can celebrate St Andrew, his influence in the world and his influence on us just as Scots, that will be much more satisfactory than somehow making it into a half-baked British apology. I appeal to Annabel Goldie, whom I know is as Scots as I am and is just tainted at the moment because we have the possible divisiveness of a referendum, to get up, have a good shoogles around and be as Scottish as I know she is. She does not have to apologise to anybody for it.

16:09

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** Many members mentioned the saltire or cross of St Andrew, which has its origins in East Lothian, in the South Scotland region that I represent. As members said, St Andrew is an international patron saint. He is the patron saint of many countries. However, as far as I can see—I stand to be corrected if I have made an inadvertent error—the only sovereign state that has a saltire in its flag is Jamaica.

In the spirit of the Labour Party's internationalist amendment, I will say that it pleases me that we share a saltire with Jamaica. The Jamaican flag is a gold saltire cross in a black and green field—those are the pan-African colours—and was adopted in August 1962, on the first Jamaican independence day. I hope that all members agree that it is highly appropriate that in the week in which we celebrate St Andrew's day we heard that Usain Bolt, Jamaican superstar athlete and the world's fastest man, will compete in the Commonwealth games in Glasgow in 2014. I look forward to the saltire of Jamaica flying side by side with the saltire of Scotland during the games, I hope as medals of Scottish gold are distributed.

I want to consider Annabel Goldie's warning that national identity could become introspective as a result of political independence. I ask her to look to Jamaica for inspiration. There is a small island nation, which has strong links to Africa, as reflected in its flag, and to the UK. Before 1962 the country flew the union flag and of course it remains a high-profile member of the Commonwealth.

Thousands of Jamaicans have made their home in the UK, particularly in the big English cities, just like the Scots whom Ms Goldie mentioned. Many have joint identities, but that does not make them feel apologetic for being Jamaican. By the same token, thousands of Irish people have made their homes in the UK and can celebrate their cultural identity without feeling that doing so is somehow disloyal or disrespectful to their adoptive home and without feeling that the political sovereignty that complements their national identity makes them introspective or is somehow a threat to anyone.

**Annabel Goldie:** Ms McAlpine makes a legitimate contribution to the debate, but I point out two things. First, I have never in any way indicated that I feel that I have to apologise for being Scottish. Margo MacDonald, to her credit, acknowledged that. I am as proud as anyone can be to be Scottish. Secondly, I think that Joan McAlpine will acknowledge that the Jamaicans to whom she refers, at least in the UK, can vote for a Westminster Parliament. They are not sitting in isolation but making a contribution to the broader sense of fellowship.

**Joan McAlpine:** I accept that Jamaicans—and Irish people—in the UK can vote for the Westminster Parliament. I suspect that that would not change for Scots who live in England after independence.

**Margo MacDonald:** We should not allow the member's analogy with the West Indies to be forgotten. Britain and the British isles that we will have after a successful yes vote in the referendum will be very much like the West Indies. We call the

islands the West Indies, but the people there know the difference between Jamaicans, Barbadians, Antiguans and so on. Relationships in the British isles—as I am sure that they will still be called in furthest China—will be roughly the same as relationships in the West Indies, if we want them to be like that.

**Joan McAlpine:** The member made a fair point. It is worth observing that Jamaica plays cricket as part of the West Indies team but competes in the Olympic games as Jamaica. Given the country's medal haul this year, I do not imagine that there are plans to change that.

I must make progress. I wanted to say a little about more local matters. I said that the saltire has its origins in East Lothian. Way back in 832 AD, a battle was fought near Athelstaneford. According to legend, an army of Picts under the high king of Alba, aided by a contingent of Scots, had a victory over some Angles and Saxons under King Athelstan. I do not know whether it is true, but it is a nice story. More important, apparently a saltire was seen above the battlefield and taken as a portent, which led to the adoption of the St Andrew's cross as Scotland's national flag.

As a result of that legend, we have celebrations in East Lothian. The saltire festival, for example, is a fantastic event, which has been a massive success for the past three years and has expanded to become a nine-day festival celebrating our music, culture and heritage. This year, celebrations began last Friday with the Haddington pipe band whisky dinner. On Sunday, a service was held in the beautiful old church of Athelstaneford, with hymns and songs about St Andrew and a ceremonial handing over of the flag.

After that, we had an amazing week of events, including a race day, a farmers market and educational events. The festival will culminate this Sunday with a Scottish music and literature ceremony, to celebrate the best in music and verse that Scotland and East Lothian have to offer. There will be contributions from Barbara Dickson, North Berwick community choir, Fiona and Kirsty Johnson, Caitlin Bruce, Alan Gay and Colin Will. Those who wish to celebrate St Andrew could do no worse than join the locals in East Lothian for their saltire festival.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Hanzala Malik, to be followed by Stewart Stevenson. There is time in hand for interventions.

16:16

**Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to take part in today's debate on Scotland's national day, the St Andrew's public holiday. The St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Act 2007 was first supported by the

Scottish Labour Party under Jack McConnell MSP's Administration, following a member's bill by Dennis Canavan.

St Andrew's day is Scotland's national day. The Labour amendment reflects that the St Andrew's flag belongs to all Scots,

"regardless of origin, current residence and political beliefs".

That is an important point to take on board.

The amendment also notes that St Andrew's day

"marks the start of Scotland's winter festival season, which ends on Burns Night and includes the Christmas, Hogmanay and New Year celebrations"

and other cultural festivals that take place at this time of year. At a time of economic downturn, festivals are particularly important as an opportunity to attract more tourists to Scotland and promote Scottish products. Some members have touched on that. I welcome that.

Let me show members another side of St Andrew's day celebrations. In Nuremberg, there is a Burns supper every year. It is so successful that anyone who gets a place at that Burns supper is considered lucky. As some members have already done, I suggest that the cabinet secretary pursues that type of activity around the world, not only in the USA but in all the countries with which we have twinning agreements, all the countries with which we engage and all the countries that are friendly with Scottish culture. Such links are important.

There has been some talk that we in Scotland seem to have fallen behind in our overseas activity. We cannot engage with people around the world unless we are willing to get up and do it.

**Fiona Hyslop:** We have absolutely not fallen behind in our overseas activity—it is very extensive. Indeed I was in India only a few weeks ago and one of the celebrations that I had there involved discussing with some villagers I met at a water development project poetry and our internationalism, and the fact that Rabindranath Tagore was inspired by Robert Burns and his brotherhood. Our activity is continuing. That visit also helped to bring jobs to Scotland.

I completely agree with Hanzala Malik that it is important that we encourage all of the international links that we have, to help in celebrating and to ensure that there is activity. As a Government, we absolutely want to do that. However, it is not just the Government that can encourage our twinning organisations; as Hanzala Malik knows from the City of Glasgow, cities and towns throughout Scotland can do likewise with their twin towns and cities and celebrate Scotland.

**Hanzala Malik:** I look forward to the cabinet secretary going to Pakistan to do similar work. Glasgow is twinned with Lahore and we have a close and wonderful relationship. I hope that we will hold a Burns supper in Lahore, which she could lead.

We hope that, in the years to come, St Andrew's day will become embedded in Scotland's culture, of which the Burns supper is an important element. Burns suppers have become popular; we can offer vegetarian haggis for all those who have issues with meat or who require halal food.

How many events among minority ethnic communities to celebrate St Andrew's day has the cabinet secretary or any other MSP visited? I do not think that any such visits have been made; I certainly have not made any. We must deal with that issue and encourage our minority communities to participate in St Andrew's day. Our schoolchildren do that—that is wonderful and positive, and getting to the younger generations is marvellous. However, we need to celebrate St Andrew's day equally with hogmanay and Burns suppers. It is important to look towards building such relationships.

If the winter celebrations are to be truly national, people should not be excluded from them. My comments about engaging with communities to encourage celebration of St Andrew's day and what it stands for relate to Scottish Labour's amendment and its comment on Historic Scotland's decision to allow free access to some of its facilities. I do not understand why only that Scottish heritage organisation is taking on that challenge. I encourage all organisations—including private museums and other centres—to do the same.

I am proud that Glasgow City Council is supporting free swimming for our youngsters at school and for over-60s. I do not understand why the same thing cannot be done in all of Scotland. I encourage that to be done, starting from St Andrew's day as a benchmark position.

There is a charge for entry to our castles, which I do not believe our schoolchildren should pay. If we are talking about heritage, promoting Scottish history and engaging our communities, we need to provide facilities.

**Fiona McLeod:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Hanzala Malik:** Thank you, but I am almost out of time.

Glasgow City Council provides free entry to all its museums and free swimming for children and the elderly community. We should replicate that across Scotland, to encourage engagement and the learning process.

16:23

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** Why should we celebrate St Andrew's day? Some reasons are historical, some are cultural, some are even political, some are humorous and some are personal.

I will start by extending our knowledge of the flag. It is also one of the international signal flags; it stands for the letter M and it means that a doctor is on board, which fits neatly with our tradition of training doctors around the world.

We have heard of countries that have St Andrew as their patron saint. He is also the patron saint of Patras in Greece, Amalfi in Italy, Luqa in Malta and Esigueira in Portugal. He was the patron saint of Prussia and of the order of the golden fleece. Andrew is also the patron saint of the United States army rangers. He certainly gets about a bit—indeed, the Church of Scotland has many St Andrew's kirks around the world, which demonstrates his reach.

Mark Griffin very nicely and properly mentioned my constituents who founded BrewDog, which is a very successful brewery. They are two young lads of Mark Griffin's age rather than my age. My favourite beer from there—which I can just about make relevant to the debate—is Trashy Blonde, which is a very nice blonde beer. That leads me to one of the reasons why it is a little unwise for the Tories to have approached the debate in the way that they have. If we want to celebrate St Andrew's day for party-political reasons, I have a better starting point than any of the other members, because 30 November 1990 was the day on which a removal van arrived at 10 Downing Street to remove Maggie Thatcher from that address. Perhaps the Tories will be celebrating that as well. Others may have celebrated when I left the Bank of Scotland on 30 November 1999, so it is for the goose as it is for the gander. By moving from banking to politics, I sought to improve my reputation.

Any members in the chamber who have done any genealogical research will have seen that many of our ancestors used the St Andrew's cross to make their mark on certificates before the days of literacy.

The order of St Andrew is the highest order of merit in modern Russia. It is a very ancient order, and was suspended during the time of the Soviet Union. I note that the second-highest order in Russia is the order of St George, so they have got things right in that country at least. Recipients of the order of St Andrew in Russia have been Peter the Great, Mikhail Gorbachev and—less encouragingly—Mikhail Kalashnikov.

The name “Andrew” itself is of interest. It comes from the Greek, and means “manly”, “brave”,

“manhood” and “valour”—a whole series of attributes of which I think we can all accept that we should be proud.

There are not just 800,000 Scots living in England, but 40 million Scots living around the world. The majority of my living relatives of whom I am aware live outside Scotland, mostly in the United States but also in Sweden, Denmark, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

**Margo MacDonald:** Does Stewart Stevenson feel any further away, distant and separate from his family members just because they are in different states from him? In my experience of having a daughter working in Ireland and a sister working in England, I was just as close to both of them.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Margo MacDonald makes a good point. Of course, the bounds of geography in the modern electronic world are much shrunk, and emotionally I feel no distance whatever. My niece in Sweden and my nephew in Denmark are Scandinavians, just as after independence we will continue to be Britons, but by geography rather than political choice.

It is interesting to look at what we have achieved jointly with our friends south of the border. I am approximately one quarter English myself, and I have a number of great-grandparents from south of the border. We have achieved a great deal together, which is to our shared credit. We have fought and won two world wars, but many independent countries joined the alliance voluntarily; we did not have to be bound in a political union to do that.

There are a lot of local St Andrew's day events in a lot of different constituencies and we will celebrate in our own individual ways. In my constituency, we will have travellers' tales in Fraserburgh library tomorrow; great reads for winter nights in Peterhead two days later; and, on 1 December, a meet-the-author event with Shona MacLean in Banff castle. Those will be excellent contributions to aiding understanding all around the world.

It is worth looking at what we have on our doorstep. There is a new statue of Robert Ferguson outside the Canongate kirk. He is the man that Robert Burns described as

“my elder brother in the muse”.

Adam Smith's statue is in Canongate kirk's yard, too. He is someone who made an immense contribution and whose works are carried by capitalists and communists around the world.

When Dennis Canavan successfully introduced his member's bill to create a holiday in Scotland, he worked closely within the Parliament's powers,

which allow us to prescribe and create bank holidays. Bank holidays are, in a technical sense, only days on which banks may not charge interest—that is all that a bank holiday is. Of course, he also created holidays for civil servants. Would that he had been able—through that member's bill—to create holidays for wider Scotland. That must be voluntary; it cannot be created by the powers of this Parliament.

**John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** Is Stewart Stevenson saying that the Scottish Government's position is that it would create an extra holiday on this day if the powers were available?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Stewart Stevenson, you should come to a close, please.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I no longer speak for the Scottish Government; John Park will need to ask others whether that is what they want.

The remains of St Andrew were taken to the ends of the earth, so it is no wonder that Scots, who travelled to the ends of the earth, adopted him as our saint. I visited Hebron in the West Bank in the 1970s and, a thousand years later, there were freckled Arabs with red hair. The footprint of the Scots is everywhere, as is the footprint of St Andrew.

16:32

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I am pleased to close today's debate for the Scottish Conservatives. There have been some good, amusing and interesting speeches from members across the chamber. I pay tribute to our former colleague, Dennis Canavan, who has consistently campaigned to raise the profile of St Andrew's day.

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs asked Annabel Goldie for a list of celebrations and I will come on to that a bit later.

I once pointed out to the amazement of Dennis Canavan that Eton College—that unobtrusive school between Windsor and Slough in Buckinghamshire—which educated our Prime Minister and some lesser politicians has, for centuries, celebrated St Andrew's day as a holiday. The reason it does that is to recognise the importance of Scotland and its people as part of the family of nations in the UK. The segment of Scottish boys at the college was usually larger than that from Ireland or Wales. On that day, the unique Eton wall game is played between the scholars and the oppidans, in which opposing scrums push a ball backwards and forwards along a brick wall, and a goal is scored perhaps every 20 years. It is similar to Orkney's annual game between the uppies and doonies. There are plenty



nil score draws of the sort mentioned by Roderick Campbell. However, the point is not the winning; it is the celebration and the continuity.

A number of members, including Joan McAlpine, have talked eloquently about the history of St Andrew and the saltire. I want to enlarge on what she said, and remind members exactly how the saltire became our flag. Precisely 1,180 years ago, in the summer of 832 AD, King Angus the Second, leading a combined army of Picts and Scots, faced a greatly superior force of invading Northumbrian Angles at Athelstaneford in East Lothian, which is just 20 miles from the chamber. The village, which takes its name from the Anglian King, King Athelstan—who would be killed in action that day—is home to our national flag heritage centre. It is housed in a 16th century lectern doocot, built in the reign of King James VI, in whose person the crown of the Scots and the Angles would finally be joined not in battle, but in amity.

Of course, that was followed by a political union, 104 years later, but it got things going in a united direction. The centre is at Athelstaneford because, on the morning of the engagement, as Joan McAlpine said, white clouds appeared in the blue sky overhead and united to form a tremendous X-shaped cross—a crux decussata—above the field of battle. I do not think that it was a UFO. The omen was taken by King Angus to be a sign of favour from St Andrew, the brother of St Peter, because it was in the form of the diagonal cross upon which the saint had been martyred at Patras in Greece. Our arms being victorious on that day, the king decreed that our national flag should be, in heraldic terms, a silver cross upon an azure field—that much beloved emblem of our nation.

The Scottish Conservatives are, like members across the chamber, fully supportive of efforts to promote our world-class contemporary and traditional culture through Scotland's winter festivals, which begin on Friday—on St Andrew's day. We recognise that tourism and other businesses can need extra promotion during the winter months. That extra promotion is good and we want to see a continued focus on boosting winter tourism in Scotland.

Like other members, I wish to highlight some of what is on offer in my own region, in my case the Highlands and Islands. The Highland wildlife park at Kingussie will be free to visit on St Andrew's day, and children can enjoy free swimming at a range of Highland Council swimming pools as long as they are accompanied by an adult. Historic Scotland will have a St Andrew's day ticket giveaway and entry to many Historic Scotland attractions across the country will be free over the weekend of 1 and 2 December. I hope that many

of my constituents and visitors to the area can take advantage of those offers.

I liked Margaret McDougall's speech. She mentioned haggis, but since St Andrew was a fisherman it would surely be appropriate to celebrate his day with festivals of fish across Scotland. After all, we have scallops, herrings, prawns, mackerel, haddock—we have the best fish in the world but where are the festivals? We do not have many festivals. Funnily enough, Willie Coffey mentioned Santa Cruz and I have been to Santa Cruz during the week of the sardine festival, which it has every year. It is a tremendous event, bringing thousands of people there, and it is generally a great success. Scotland is such a beautiful place that it always sells its beauty, but the trick is to give people more excuses to come here to appreciate that—winter festivals are great for that.

I am pleased to welcome this year's focus on Scotland's internationally renowned reputation for literature through book week Scotland—again, I hope that many of my constituents will take part in that. I am delighted that some of my young constituents in Shetland, who are primary school pupils, will be going to care homes for read-aloud sessions—they will read exciting stories to the elderly people in the homes. I commend Shetland Arts for co-ordinating that. The Campbeltown library is today hosting a Bookbug session, with songs, stories and rhymes for babies, toddlers and their parents, and a similar event is planned in Stornoway library tomorrow.

I hope that book week Scotland will be a boost to the many small and independent publishers and book retailers in Scotland who face such intense pressure from huge competition online. Things are difficult for them. Scotland—particularly Edinburgh—has such a wonderful worldwide reputation for publishing, which goes back for centuries. In fact Audubon's "Birds of America", which was sold the other day for £8 million—I think that it is the most expensive book ever published—was published in Edinburgh. We should not forget things like that.

Today's debate has been, for the most part, useful and constructive. I support the amendment in the name of my colleague and friend Annabel Goldie, which rightly recognises that Scotland can enjoy the best of both worlds on St Andrew's day as well as on every other day, celebrating the patron saint who helps to underpin our identity but doing so in the context of our partnership of nations, which is our United Kingdom.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call John Park, who has up to nine minutes.

16:40

**John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I will try my best to keep to that time, Presiding Officer. It is nice to have a few extra minutes in what has been an excellent debate. I will say a bit more about the spirit in which it has been conducted later.

Twice in the past two or three weeks, I have stood in the chamber and realised that I should have stuck in at school a bit more. We had a debate about Malawi a couple of weeks ago during which I learned a lot about what is happening in that country. The information that we have heard in today's debate—about the history of St Andrew, the things that are happening across our country now, and the things that have happened in the past—has encouraged me to have a closer look at some of the things that we do and to learn a bit more about our history.

St Andrews is in the region that I represent. What Rod Campbell said about what is happening in and around that area was excellent. The way in which he managed to bring Michael Jackson into the debate was probably the most impressive and sophisticated way that I have ever heard a celebrity brought into a debate in the Parliament. I congratulate him on that.

The fact that we have focused so much on what the date means to so many other people shows that it is important. Stewart Stevenson mentioned two or three things, although I am sure that he kept out of the debate a few other things that have happened in his life on 30 November.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I wonder whether the member is aware that people of my generation, who learned their Scots history largely from J D Mackie's "A History of Scotland", learned absolutely nothing about St Andrew. I was probably not aware of St Andrew until I was an adult. One thing that today's debate shows is that there is a much wider appreciation now than there was when I and the rest of the members who are older than John Park were youngsters.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is an unknown unknown.

**John Park:** I am not brave enough to comment on people of Mr Stevenson's generation.

It is one of the benefits of devolution, with what has happened in the Scottish Parliament and the work that Dennis Canavan took forward to put the focus on St Andrew's day as a holiday, that there is now a far greater awareness of the day. Everybody in the chamber should take credit for that, along with previous parliamentarians. The focus on literacy and access to our historical attractions must be welcomed. That focus is important in making sure that future generations

have the benefit of finding out about our culture and history in a way that people of Stewart Stevenson's generation did not.

My colleague Patricia Ferguson focused on the work that is being undertaken to organise the St Andrew's day march and rally, which is organised every year by the Scottish TUC. It is only right that we, in the Scottish Parliament, take the time to recognise the significant amount of work that goes into that. As a former employee of the STUC, I know at first hand exactly how much effort goes into making it happen. I am talking about not just the people who work in that organisation but the hundreds of volunteers who support it throughout the year and on the day.

People get involved in such things for many reasons. Patricia Ferguson mentioned the demographic challenges that we have faced in Scotland over the past few years and the fact that we are now growing as a country, having welcomed so many people into our country. We should celebrate that and hope that they will understand and appreciate our culture even more. We have new Fifers, new Glaswegians, new Aberdonians and new people all over this great country of ours. It is significant that the STUC marches annually to recognise that, and I have always been pleased to take part in the rally.

Margaret McDougall talked about local businesses and Arran Aromatics in particular. That shows how such debates give us an opportunity to highlight how successful these things can be. We do not have as many opportunities as we should have in the Scottish Parliament to talk about successes in our own areas.

Rob Gibson's mention of the winter festival and the number of visitors that we get from overseas is pertinent. We just need to lift up our heads as we walk up and down to the Parliament on a daily basis to see how many people have come to Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland to enjoy the things that will happen over the next few months.

Mark Griffin talked about our exports and mentioned BrewDog. As the co-convener of the cross-party group on Scotch whisky, I can see what we are doing in exporting not just products but working and environmental practices, on which we have a lot to be proud of.

Mark Griffin highlighted the fact that the Scottish cup is the oldest football cup in the world. I should have known that, but I did not. I once participated in the Scottish cup for Burntisland Shipyard Amateur Football Club, which was affiliated to the Scottish Football Association. Unfortunately, I got booked during the game and cost the side £150, which was money that we did not have.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I, too, was interested in the idea that the Scottish cup is the oldest cup in the world,

but it is my understanding that the Scottish junior cup—which has been won several times by my home team of Linlithgow Rose—is the oldest cup. As a football fan, does John Park share my understanding?

**John Park:** I am not clear on the use of electronic devices during a debate—at this point, I would probably refer myself to Wikipedia. If the Scottish junior cup is the oldest cup, I have played in it, too, and I did not get booked, as far as I can recollect.

**Mark Griffin:** I am not aware of which is the oldest competition in history, but I understand that the Scottish cup is the original trophy and that, as such, it is the oldest trophy that is played for in world football.

**John Park:** I think that that shows that Mark Griffin consulted his electronic device in an appropriate manner before intervening.

There has been a bit of debate about the Scottish Conservatives' amendment to the Government's motion. Given the effort that Annabel Goldie has put in through her interventions and the spirit in which the debate has been conducted, perhaps the SNP whips could change the whip sheet. I would love to see us smooth a way to emerging from the debate with a consistent position that we can all sign up to. It would mean that decision time would pass a lot more quickly, too.

The second-last thing that I want to say is about the St Andrew's day holiday. I put on record my appreciation for the work that Dennis Canavan did on that and the wider political support that enabled it to be introduced. It is a shame that we cannot drive its implementation in the private sector in the way that we would want to, but the fact that the Scottish Government and many local authorities have taken a lead in this area is a good thing.

I hope that we can go on a journey that results in our having more days' holiday in comparison with other parts of the world. The likes of Sweden, Germany and Austria have more days' holiday, but they also maintain high levels of productivity. The two are not incompatible, and I hope that we can have a sensible debate about that in the Parliament at some point in the future.

I have enjoyed the constructive debate that we have had. Margo MacDonald said that she hoped that it might percolate down into the way in which we hold the wider discussions that the Parliament is having. The past month or so has not been the Parliament's finest period. We deal with serious issues and sometimes we take ourselves a bit too seriously. Today's debate has shown that we can deal with serious issues constructively, and I hope that that bodes well for our future discussions.

16:49

**Fiona Hyslop:** I thank all colleagues for the debate, which has been useful, reflective and informed.

We have heard of a range of events that are taking place across Scotland, but of course only Jamie McGrigor could open with a discussion about Eton school's St Andrew's day celebration. As someone who also spent their early years in the vicinity of Windsor—I was brought up in Maidenhead—I recognise that there are celebrations for our patron saint across the UK and overseas. The list of such international engagements is very impressive indeed. I waited to hear about the list of events for celebrating Scotland's place in the UK on Friday, but I missed that.

On reflections by members, I hope that Annabel Goldie genuinely takes on board the mood and the moment of the contributions in the debate and what has been said about our recognising that people can have different levels of identity. However, surely on our one national day we can enjoy our Scottish celebrations and our identity, and we can celebrate in song and literature, as we have heard. There are 365 days in the year, so surely St Andrew's day is an opportunity to come together. I think that that was the point that John Park made. It is important that we sometimes come together to recognise our strengths as a country and what we have contributed.

In terms of international engagement, a lot of things are happening, from Bermuda to Bangkok: there are celebrations across the globe. Roderick Campbell's excellent contribution started off the reflection on that aspect. Indeed, most of the contributions talked about Scotland's place internationally and the international celebrations. In that regard, I am pleased to tell members that, when I was in Ottawa last year, I helped to launch the Canada-Scotland friendship group on St Andrew's day. The group is holding its St Andrew's day celebrations today, and I hope that we can send the message from this Parliament to the Parliament in Ottawa that we congratulate them on their celebrations. The Scottish Government will be represented at them by the second secretary for Scottish affairs, who is based in Toronto.

Among other interesting contributions were Willie Coffey's comments on the saltire flag and the wonderful statue of St Andrew in the Vatican and Joan McAlpine's comments about the Jamaican connections. We also heard reflections about the importance of helping visitors to Scotland understand Scotland and, of course, about the launch of the winter festivals, which in effect takes place on St Andrew's day.

We want to ensure that there are things for people to do for the celebrations. We are always looking for new and innovative ways to encourage people to celebrate. The decision this year of many sports centres to open their doors for free over the St Andrew's day weekend is therefore a welcome innovation. Patricia Ferguson raised the point that some places might be open only on Friday, but if she looks it up on the web she will find that more than 40 historic sites will have free access and that many of them are open on 1 December and 2 December. Indeed, another 76 Scottish visitor attractions are available for free access.

Another innovative development is that we now have a St Andrew's day smartphone app, which is available on iPhone and Android. It is an essential guide to our national day, and people can download ideas about how to celebrate St Andrew's day.

I talked earlier about the importance of St Andrew himself in terms of the town of St Andrews, the university and the founding of that seat of learning, and about why literature is so important to Scotland's contribution to the world and why it is right that we celebrate this week with book week Scotland. Fiona McLeod gave an excellent speech that outlined some of the issues and some of the events that are taking place around that celebration of reading. It is important that we recognise that there will be a reading hour. I would encourage all those who are able to do so to take part in that reading hour; reading to others in local schools, nurseries, playgroups and old folk's homes is important. That is one of the ways in which we can recognise Scotland's literature.

The winter festivals are very important to our economy. Yes, we have the cultural celebration, but they are also about enticing people from home and abroad to explore all areas of our country, which is a great place to come to study and work, and to invest in and do business.

St Andrew's day allows us to present Scotland as the i-nation: a nation innovative in ideas, imaginative and inventive in spirit, international in outlook and individual in experience. We have so much to be proud of, whether it is our research capacity, our renewables sector or, as the contributions from Margaret McDougall and Mark Griffin clearly demonstrated, our world-famous food and drink and our great tourist assets.

I think that we might have stumbled across something in this debate, and in that regard I pay tribute to Jamie McGrigor for his contribution. Hanzala Malik made the point that a lot of the celebrations—and many of the contributions to the debate—are actually about the celebration of Burns. Burns's poetry is a fantastic asset for our literature that needs to be celebrated throughout

the year but, as there are Burns suppers, people have a hook for their celebrations—an event they can take part in.

I was struck by Jamie McGrigor's speech, in which he spoke about St Andrew as a fisherman. We should think about all the wonderful assets we have. Yes, we want to celebrate our beef and lamb—and our wonderful menus that can be downloaded from the aforementioned app—but perhaps we should think about celebrating St Andrew's day through fish. We could have fish suppers in a variety of formats. Perhaps Jamie McGrigor has stumbled across the extra ingredient for how we can provide a modern-day celebration that is not like the old-fashioned traditional ones. Perhaps the outcome of this debate is that we have stumbled across a fantastic idea to celebrate St Andrew's day.

**Margo MacDonald:** I could not agree with the cabinet secretary more. It is wonderful that Jamie McGrigor made that suggestion, because we can call it a "McGrigor supper"—[*Laughter.*]

**Fiona Hyslop:** Thank you very much, Margo.

**Jamie McGrigor:** Would the cabinet secretary perhaps refer to the extra ingredient as "the saltire X factor"?

**Fiona Hyslop:** We are now cooking with gas, in terms of the creativity here.

I want to make two additional points. One is about the importance, which is reflected in the Labour amendment, of recognising that Scotland is an inclusive country that does not tolerate racism of any kind. That has been demonstrated for many years by the STUC St Andrew's day anti-racism march. I have taken part in that march and my colleague Humza Yousaf did so on Saturday. I encourage more of our MSPs to do so in the future.

It is a testament to this debate that we recognise the importance of what we do internally. As Hanzala Malik pointed out, it is important to involve people from our ethnic minorities in the celebration. I assure members that the Scottish Book Trust is involving the Scottish Refugee Council in the book week Scotland celebrations. That is movement, but more can be done.

I will close by paying tribute to Dennis Canavan, as Margo MacDonald did in her speech. He introduced the St Andrew's day holiday bill to try to make sure that within the confines of the powers of this Parliament we took some steps to celebrate the holiday. I am glad that there was cross-party agreement to do that.

We want to do more. We know that our young people will be celebrating, and we are trying to encourage more schools to celebrate—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Excuse me, cabinet secretary. There is too much chattering.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Local authorities in the Scottish Borders, Angus, Dumfries and Galloway and Renfrewshire will be allowing their schoolchildren the day off to enjoy the celebrations. Increasingly, more attractions are being made available—particularly sports centres, as I said—and we are growing opportunities.

I liked Patricia Ferguson's suggestions about how we could involve retail and shopping on St Andrew's day. Combining that with Jamie McGrigor's fish supper, we are starting to find interesting and exciting ways to make sure that there is plenty on offer during our celebrations.

We should not apologise for celebrating our national day and what makes us a nation. We should celebrate it through our language, literature, song and music. Rob Gibson caught the mood absolutely right in his speech. Yes, we can have different identities and many people have many different identities to celebrate but, on St Andrew's day, please let us be proud in celebrating our great traditions and culture. We should do that in a way that offers a hand of friendship not just to others in our own country, as the Labour amendment suggests, but internationally. I am delighted that across the world on Friday, our friends—our brothers and sisters—will be celebrating St Andrew's day.

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, cabinet secretary. I think that the fish suppers could be improved by adopting the Fife habit of adding salt, vinegar and broon sauce.

## Statute Law (Repeals) Bill

16:59

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of motion S4M-04947, in the name of Kenny MacAskill, on the Statute Law (Repeals) Bill, which is United Kingdom legislation.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Statute Law (Repeals) Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 10 October 2012, relating to statute law repeals, so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, should be considered by the UK Parliament.—[*Kenny MacAskill.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

## Business Motion

16:59

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-05020, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a revision to the business programme for tomorrow.

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** I bring members' attention to a change of business tomorrow to allow a ministerial statement on the United Kingdom Public Service Pensions Bill legislative consent motion.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees the following revision to the programme of business for Wednesday 28 November 2012—

after

2.00 pm          Portfolio Questions  
Education and Lifelong Learning

insert

*followed by*    Ministerial Statement: UK Public Service  
Pensions Bill - Legislative Consent Motion

delete

5.00 pm          Decision Time

and insert

5.30 pm          Decision Time

*Motion agreed to.*

## Decision Time

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are four questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-04970.2, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-04970, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on St Andrew's day: a celebration of Scotland, be agreed to.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-04970.1, in the name of Annabel Goldie, which seeks to amend motion S4M-04970, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on St Andrew's day: a celebration of Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)  
Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)  
Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)

Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine)

(SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 53, Against 62, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-04970, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on St Andrew's day: a celebration of Scotland, as amended, be agreed to.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

That the Parliament welcomes the celebration of St Andrew's Day and the opportunity that it gives Scots, friends of Scotland and those who would like to know the country better, to celebrate Scotland's people and history, world renowned food and drink and traditional and contemporary culture and notes the many events that will take place overseas, in the rest of the UK and in Scotland, on or around St Andrew's Day, which includes the launch of Book Week Scotland, Scotland's first national celebration of reading, which is a diverse programme of book-related events that will be held across the nation between 26 November and 2 December 2012; believes that Scotland's national day and flag belong to all of the people of Scotland regardless of origin, current residence and political beliefs; welcomes the decision of Historic Scotland to allow free entry to Edinburgh Castle and St Andrews Castle and Cathedral in celebration of St Andrew's Day, and recognises that St Andrew's Day also marks the start of Scotland's winter festival season, which ends on Burns Night and includes the Christmas, Hogmanay and New Year celebrations.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-04947, in the name of Kenny MacAskill, on the Statute Law (Repeals) Bill, which is United Kingdom legislation, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Statute Law (Repeals) Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 10 October 2012, relating to statute law repeals, so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

## Scottish First Aid Week

### **The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):**

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-04579, in the name of James Dornan, on celebrating St Andrew's First Aid week. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament congratulates St Andrew's First Aid on its Scottish First Aid Week, which runs from 24 to 30 November 2012 and aims to raise public awareness of the importance of first aid and promote the message that people working together can save lives; understands that some 20,000 people a year take part in first aid courses in Scotland but that there is still much to be done; is concerned that 77% of people feel that they lack the knowledge and confidence to administer basic first aid at the point of need and that this plays a part in the 34,000 cases of common household accidents such as falls, choking and burns that attend hospital rather than being dealt with by a first aider, and considers that this places an unnecessary strain on emergency services.

17:03

### **James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):**

I welcome to the gallery Mary McLuskey, Jim Dorman, Helen Forrest and Stuart Callison, all of whom are from St Andrew's First Aid. We will meet immediately after the debate in room TG.23 to discuss St Andrew's First Aid's work, and I am sure that they would be delighted if other members joined us.

St Andrew's First Aid has a long and glorious history in Scotland, primarily in my home city of Glasgow. It was formed in 1882 by a group of Glasgow doctors and businessmen who were concerned about the rise in the number of accidents that were being witnessed, and it bought its first ambulance in April that year, from which first aid was provided to victims of accidents and which, if necessary, transported casualties to hospital. By 1886, St Andrew's First Aid had six ambulances stationed in towns across Scotland.

St Andrew's went on to play a critical role in the war effort at home in the first world war. Within 48 hours of war being declared, it was able to staff military hospitals in Scotland with volunteers, thus freeing the pre-war staff for other duties. It also assembled two foreign-service units, which served in France and helped on hospital ships, and staffed a military nursing service. It went on to open its first headquarters in Glasgow in 1929.

When I was a young boy back in the 1950s—I know that people would not believe that to look at me—my next-door neighbour Mr Boath, who was a lovely and extremely well-dressed man, used to leave his house in uniform every Saturday and occasionally mid-week. As a kid, I did not

understand why that was, until one day I went to a match at Hampden. It was then that I realised that Mr Boath, like many others, was a St Andrew's First Aid volunteer who helped to keep tens of thousands of football fans safe every week.

St Andrew's continues in that role to this day. Its volunteers administer first aid at a whole host of events across Scotland: from T in the Park to the Connect music festival; from the Cowal Highland games to the Royal Highland Show; and from events at major concert venues to international, Scottish Premier League and Scottish Football League matches at Hampden. The importance of those volunteers in keeping us safe at events cannot be overstated.

The role takes on even more significance when we consider the number of Scots who feel that they lack the knowledge of basic first aid that could save a life. One in 10 Scots says that they have witnessed a medical emergency in a restaurant, hotel or entertainment venue. Only last week, a member of my staff told me about an incident at a theatre in Glasgow where a woman in the audience collapsed. Fortunately for the woman, Kirsty was there with her sister, who is a trained nurse, and there were a number of other medical professionals nearby, including first-aiders, who were able to administer care and keep the woman comfortable until an ambulance arrived. I say "fortunately" because, by her own admission, Kirsty would not have had the confidence to administer first aid if she had been alone. That is why she is looking into signing herself up for one of St Andrew's basic first aid courses. Each year, more than 20,000 folk are taught life-saving techniques at those courses by some of the most experienced and highly qualified first-aiders in the country.

Some 77 per cent of Scots feel that they lack the skills and confidence to administer basic first aid. If we all had those basic skills, we could go a long way towards preventing some of the 34,000 cases of common household accidents such as falls, burns and choking from ending in a visit to hospital when first aid would have sufficed. An unintended consequence of that, of course, is the additional strain that is put on our dedicated front-line national health service staff and the resulting impact on budgets.

Worryingly, research commissioned by St Andrew's First Aid and undertaken by YouGov found that 45 per cent of Scottish parents would not be confident of knowing what to do if they had a 10-year-old child who was choking. Indeed, I remember when my kids were younger—again, this is going back a bit—being in that very situation one Christmas dinner when my son got a bit of meat stuck in his throat and the fright that I got until we managed to get it dislodged.



Those are just some of the reasons why I am delighted to take this opportunity to highlight the work that the organisation does both generally and more specifically in Scottish first aid week. The week aims to highlight the work of St Andrew's First Aid in training people in first aid. The week's theme this year is "You kiss them every day. If you had to give the kiss of life, would you know how?" Using social networks and advertising campaigns—including the effective side-of-bus advertising that has been seen in Glasgow and across Scotland—the organisation has worked hard to get that message across.

Scottish first aid week culminates in the Scottish first aid awards, which will take place in Glasgow this Thursday in conjunction with *The Herald* and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. The awards showcase some of the best that Scotland has to offer through the people who made a difference to the lives of others by administering first aid. For example, Elliot Aitchison resuscitated a toddler who got into difficulty swimming, while the baby's terrified mother looked on not knowing what to do. There is no doubt that Elliot's prompt action saved that baby's life. When Felicity and Mark Brown came upon a car accident, they proceeded to make the area safe by removing the car's ignition key and stayed to offer comfort to a dying woman in the last moments of her life. How many of us could have done that? In my view, those actions were nothing short of heroic, and Felicity, Mark and Elliot deserve the highest praise.

During Scottish first aid week, some online guides to first aid have been published on the St Andrew's First Aid website. The guides offer a wealth of information to parents about basic steps that they can take to prepare for any accidents that might take place. Such training can make all the difference, and I urge everyone to take a look at those great, informative guides.

St Andrew's First Aid asks for a number of things in the briefing that it sent me, and there are a couple that I would like the minister to have a look at. The briefing asks that

"The Scottish Government endorse Scottish First Aid Week and permit the use of the Government logo on Scottish First Aid Week materials from 2012-2014 that reinforce the message that early intervention through even basic first aid can save lives and encourage individuals from across Scotland to learn First Aid to gain life saving skills."

It also asks that

"The Scottish Government endorse the 'Setting the Standard' initiative and to permit the use of the Scottish Government logo on materials to show the business community that Scotland is serious about First Aid."

I ask the minister to consider those requests and to get back to me with a detailed response.

I am delighted to have brought this debate to the Parliament. I hope that first aid week and the award ceremony on Thursday are a great success—I have no doubt that they will be—and that they inspire many more people to learn the basic skills that could mean the difference between life and death. As we prepare for the 2014 Commonwealth games and all the other events that will take place in that year, we should encourage everyone who can do so to take the necessary first aid training to ensure that, as well as being able to help their families and loved ones, they can be ready to help those who visit our beautiful country. St Andrew's First Aid deserves our thanks and gratitude for its work and for highlighting the need for us all to begin to take on that important responsibility for ourselves.

17:10

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I thank James Dornan and congratulate him on securing this debate on St Andrew's First Aid and its first aid week. In particular, I thank him for highlighting the origins of the society in wartime. I must say that, because of my ignorance, I had not fully appreciated that, so it was interesting to hear about it.

Around the time that the motion was lodged, I was travelling on the evening train back to Glasgow when a call went out for a doctor. When one was not found, the call went out for a first-aider. Some passengers grumbled about the delay, but most of us spared a thought for the train guard. Particularly in this week, we should spare a thought for all workers who are left to administer first aid. We can only imagine how stressful that must be for many of them.

I am a former member of the Royal Life Saving Society. For three years or so while I was at school and during my studies, I had the opportunity to work as a lifeguard. Luckily, during that time, there were only a very small number of incidents, but I was always struck by the number of people who told me that they would not know what to do in an emergency. It is particularly interesting that the emergency situations that arose were often more to do with the sweetie vending machine than the pool. James Dornan is right to highlight the specific issues about children and choking and the importance of encouraging parents to understand first aid for their kids.

On water safety, I take the opportunity to make a plea to the minister. I am sure that he shares my view that we need to do a lot more to ensure that all children in Scotland can swim when they leave school, which would make a considerable difference to the number of water incidents in which first aid is required.

St Andrew's first aid week is a time to salute volunteer first-aiders. My dad was a St Andrew's volunteer. As a child, I used to wait for the end of his shift, whether it was at the football, the theatre or a local gallery, to hear where he had been and then to ask him how gruesome any incidents that he had dealt with had been. I remember the uniform that he wore, which was probably part of a direct chain of uniforms going right back to the origin of the society. Thanks to Mr Dornan, I now understand better the role that the society played as a uniformed organisation.

I hope that initiatives such as the current television campaign featuring Vinnie Jones, which encourages us all to understand more about cardiopulmonary resuscitation, raise our awareness about the importance of learning first aid and particularly CPR. In turn, that might lead to further recruitment of volunteer first-aiders.

I mentioned that children in school should be taught to swim. They should also be taught basic life-saving skills and the importance of first aid. Every child should leave school able to deal with an emergency situation and with a basic understanding of life-saving skills. I have raised that issue with the education ministers through questions, and I appreciate the work that the Scottish Government is doing on it, although I feel that we could do more, rather than leave the matter up to individual local authorities and schools to decide.

I thank ambulance men and women across the country; all workers who are qualified as first-aiders; and, particularly at this time, all volunteer first-aiders. I encourage all of us who have previously trained to refresh our skills and those who have not yet trained to take the opportunity to learn more about first aid.

17:14

**Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** I thank James Dornan for bringing the motion to the Parliament for debate. I also thank the members of the St Andrew's Ambulance Association who are in the gallery and the many volunteers around the country who, in their own time, provide the many services about which we have heard.

One of the startling things that I have learned is the national figures for last year: 18,729 people were trained in first aid techniques and more than 3,000 events throughout the country were attended. That is a phenomenal number of volunteers giving up their time to do exceptionally good work.

In doing my research for the debate, I was delighted to find that there is a thriving St Andrew's branch in my constituency—the

Strathkelvin branch, which has a long history. The internet is a wonderful thing. I found that the Strathkelvin branch used to be called the Kirkintilloch section of the St Andrew's Ambulance Corps. A man called James Gordon, who lived in Kerr Street in Kirkintilloch, joined that corps on 8 April 1933. On the internet, you can find an image of the booklet that showed that he was a member and a trained first-aider. The organisation's history is quite amazing. To bring it completely up to date, this year the local branch attended—among other events—Kirkintilloch gala day, the East Dunbartonshire cycle festival in Bishopbriggs and the Bearsden and Milngavie highland games. The Strathkelvin branch would not, of course, have attended that last event; it would have been the Milngavie branch, which is not based in my constituency, but covers it.

One of the really nice things that I learned about the Strathkelvin branch is that it has a St Andrew's cadets branch, which is a programme for 11 to 15-year-olds. They not only learn first aid but attend events as observers and helpers, which is a great way to recruit volunteers for the future.

I hope that St Andrew's First Aid does not mind my mentioning two other organisations with which I work closely on first aid and emergency life support. The British Heart Foundation has made a call for emergency life support to be taught in every school, as Drew Smith mentioned. When it conducted a survey, it found that 78 per cent of children would like to do that training. I was at an event on ELS with the BHF in October. The next day, I was in St Machan's primary school in Lennoxton, where all but one of the primary 7 pupils said that they wanted to do that first aid training and ELS training if it was offered to them. I tell Drew that one thing that I managed to do over the October recess was not only to sign up to the BHF call myself but to get the First Minister to do so. I hope that we are moving towards the realisation of that training in every school.

I will also mention another organisation of which I am a member—Lucky2BHere, which is based on the Isle of Skye. It was formed in 2007 by my friend Ross Cowie after he had a serious cardiac event. That voluntary organisation now has more than 23 defibrillators in public places throughout Scotland. However, it not only puts in defibrillators, but ensures through the heartstart programme that everybody in the local community is trained to use them in the event of an emergency. That is something that I intend to do. The next time I am on Skye, I will get my training and, I hope, become one of the band of volunteers who are confident to do first aid when it is called for.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I remind members to use each other's full names in debates.

17:19

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I, too, thank James Dornan for bringing to Parliament the motion congratulating St Andrew's First Aid on its first aid week.

First aid plays a vital role in everyday life in communities throughout Scotland. The St Andrew's First Aid Scottish first aid week aims to raise public awareness of how important basic first aid is, to highlight the need for individuals to acquire life-saving skills and to highlight how early intervention, even with basic skills, can save lives.

As someone who has held a first aid certificate since I was eight years old, through being a member of a voluntary youth organisation, I have found the training to be extremely beneficial throughout the years. I little realised that the skills that I obtained would become crucial and be put into effective practice in the years to come.

Sadly, in many medical emergencies when an accident occurs, few people intervene to help the casualty—mainly due to lack of knowledge and confidence. Instead, people prefer to wait for the ambulance service or other professional help to come. In many cases, the first few minutes are very important, and if appropriate action is taken, it makes a huge difference to the casualty's chances of survival.

There have been two incidents in my life in which the skills that I learned have played an important part. My first response in administering first aid had a crucial impact, when a friend suffered a large cut to his leg while working and a main blood vessel was hit. Without thinking, I put my training into action and stemmed the flow of blood by applying compression to the wound and elevating the leg. I reassured my friend and kept him calm while sending someone to get an ambulance. This was in the days before mobile phones.

In the second incident, my two-year-old son had swallowed a large boiled sweet that his older brother had given him. Alerted by screams of panic from his mum, I rushed into the room to find him lying on the floor struggling for air. Straight away, I put into practice what I had been taught, and very quickly a large boiled sweet was rolling across the living room floor. To this day, I can remember the look of relief on everyone's faces. Since then, my son—who is now 21—has never eaten a boiled sweet. I have no doubt that, on that day, the first aid skills that I had been taught were life saving, and I am eternally grateful for that.

First aid skills are important not just in individual situations but at large organised events, where there is an increased chance that someone will need first aid. In 2014, Scotland expects a large increase in overseas visitors and large

attendances by Scottish citizens at the homecoming events, the battle of Bannockburn celebrations, the Ryder cup and the Commonwealth games. Basic first aid skills will no doubt be needed—unfortunately—to deal both with minor injuries and, more important, medical emergencies, in which the taking of appropriate action will make a huge difference.

I welcome Scottish first aid week because it promotes basic life-saving skills and raises awareness of how important they are in responses to the most common medical emergencies. Research shows that implementation of those skills greatly improves people's chances of survival in more serious situations. It is essential that a positive message that emphasises the benefits of life-saving skills is sent out to communities throughout Scotland. I hope that that will encourage many adults and teenagers to avail themselves of opportunities to acquire the knowledge and confidence that are necessary to administer basic first aid.

One never knows where and when first aid skills will be needed, but there can be no disputing that possession of those skills can and does make a difference—sometimes the difference between life and death.

17:22

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I, too, salute James Dornan for bringing this debate on Scottish first aid week to the chamber, as it helps to raise public awareness of the importance of first aid and promotes the message that, working together, people can save lives.

St Andrew's First Aid is Scotland's oldest first aid charity. It teaches life-saving techniques to more than 20,000 people a year and it aids the public at thousands of events across the country. However, as the motion states, although some 20,000 people a year take part in first aid courses, there is still much more to be done to give people the knowledge and confidence that are required to administer effective emergency assistance when it is needed. In an emergency situation, it is critical that basic first aid is delivered with confidence.

As a parent and grandparent, I know that everyone dreads a serious injury to their child or grandchild, and basic first aid training can make a life-saving difference. I, too, had a frightening experience as a parent when one of my children, as a toddler, unbeknown to me, had put a golf tee into his mouth just before I laid him down to change a nappy. During the procedure, I became aware that his colour had gone off slightly, then I noticed that his chest was being pulled in instead of expanding with each breath. I looked into his mouth and I could see that, as he breathed, the

golf tee was being sucked between his vocal chords and the wide end was neatly plugging his airway.

With heart pounding and legs shaking, I immediately had him up by the heels and was able to dislodge the obstruction. I was a trained anaesthetist and I was used to observing patients' airways. I dread to think what might have happened had I not had the appropriate knowledge. Needless to say, after that, golf tees were banned from our household for a number of years.

That is just one small example of the simple accidents that happen in homes every day. A knowledge of basic first aid procedures, such as how to stop bleeding, maintain an airway and position someone who is unconscious for whatever reason to ensure that they do not inhale vomit, can be life saving. First aid is an important skill. People can save lives by performing simple procedures, following certain guidelines and giving basic treatment until professional medical help arrives. I know of people who survived cardiac arrest because someone who had the appropriate knowledge was around at the time and was able to maintain circulation and a clear airway until professional help arrived.

I am a great fan of the first responder system, which has rescued many people in our more remote communities, where it takes time for an ambulance to reach a casualty. As a former medical practitioner, I know the strain that is placed on our tremendous emergency services throughout the country when common household accidents result in hospital attendance, which could have been avoided had a trained first-aider been on hand. As many people as possible should have basic first aid training. Our ambulance services do a sterling job in providing training in schools and communities.

Drew Smith made an important point about the need for every child to learn to swim.

I am a north-east MSP, so I am delighted that a member of Braemar Mountain Rescue has been nominated for a prestigious Scottish first aid award. Philip Glennie, who works at Braemar Mountaincraft in my region, has been short-listed for a private sector workplace first aid award. The awards recognise individuals or organisations who champion first aid training for their staff, customers and the public. Phil Glennie regularly assists voluntary groups from Girlguiding UK, the Scout Association and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, by teaching first aid. Over the years he has spoken to thousands of people about first aid. I am glad to take this opportunity to wish Mr Glennie well in the awards on Thursday.

I congratulate St Andrew's First Aid on its Scottish first aid week, which is an excellent way to raise public awareness of the importance of first aid training in saving lives. I am happy to support the motion.

17:27

**Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I congratulate James Dornan on securing the debate.

This afternoon, in our debate on St Andrew's day, we talked about the many celebrations that are taking place in Scotland, including Glasgow loves St Andrew's day, which is a three-day event in George Square, packed with dance, family entertainment, food, hot toddies and ale—a uniquely Scottish celebration in the heart of the city, to which all Scotland is invited.

It occurred to me that without the attendance of volunteer first-aiders such as those from St Andrew's First Aid, the event would not be possible, nor would the many other winter festivals that are planned. That made me think about how much poorer our country would be without the volunteers from St Andrew's First Aid. There would be no gala days, no community fun days or school fundraisers, no mini-rugby tournaments or sports events and no music festivals—nae T in the Park. Organisations such as the Boys Brigade, Girlguiding UK and the Scout Association, and the people who organise and supervise Duke of Edinburgh's Award challenges, could not function without the training that St Andrew's First Aid provides to them. The 1,600 athletes from around the world who took part in the international children's games in Lanarkshire would not have had the opportunity to do so without such support.

Volunteers throughout Scotland should be recognised and celebrated, and volunteers at St Andrew's First Aid are to be highly commended for their professionalism, high standard of training and expertise in first aid. In particular I acknowledge the organisation's work with young people. In July this year, St Andrew's First Aid organised heartstart training for young people who use Action for Children Scotland's young carers service in North Lanarkshire. Fifty young people aged between nine and 18 signed up to take part in an intensive two-week course in the summer holidays, to learn skills that will be vital to them in their caring roles as well as equip them to deal with issues in wider society.

That is just one example of the courses that uniformed organisations deliver to young people. The Young Scot programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award raise awareness of the importance of first aid and support the aims of

Scottish first aid week. Together, we can save lives.

One would have thought that involvement in the organisation might make one a bit risk averse. That does not seem to be the case for Georgette Fulton who, along with 11 daredevil volunteers, will take part in a 165ft SAS-style free-fall abseil from the Forth rail bridge on behalf of St Andrew's First Aid. The abseil is not just to raise essential funds for St Andrew's First Aid; Georgette Fulton is taking part for another reason, which is to mark her 72nd birthday. She is a commandant of the Cumnock and district volunteers group and has been a volunteer with St Andrew's First Aid for more than 19 years. That is a great example of how St Andrew's First Aid works with all of our community and how one is never too old to volunteer, take part and train in such an important role.

We heard some new terminology in relation to the Olympic games this year—games makers. The term could never encapsulate what St Andrew's First Aid brings to Scottish life. Its first-aiders are not just games makers; they are more akin to our Scottish makars. Their skill, expertise and wisdom underpin the cultural, sporting and leisure life of our country, in the way in which our poets define us as a nation. Like our poetic makars, they are ever present and, while we might not refer to them every day, at times of crisis or need we turn to them for comfort and help. Our country would be all the poorer without them.

17:31

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Like other members, I offer my congratulations to James Dornan on securing time for this debate. It is a debate to which I have listened with interest, particularly on the history of St Andrew's First Aid, which was first established in Glasgow. Fiona McLeod was even able to track down the history of her local branch.

This is also an opportunity to congratulate St Andrew's First Aid on the work that it is doing in general and, in particular, on first aid week.

It is important that we recognise the work of St Andrew's First Aid and help to promote its message that together we can save lives. We should also recognise the valuable contribution that I have no doubt it will make to many of the significant events that will take place in 2014—to which David Torrance referred—not least the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup and the homecoming. I am certain that the people responsible for organising those events will regard first aid provision as a key part of their planning and preparation.

In considering the debate, I have been struck by the many and varied ways in which people work together to support each other to save lives. For many years, the Scottish Ambulance Service has been working with a significant range of partners to support community resilience, including our health boards, healthcare professionals, emergency services, community groups, carers organisations, schools, nurseries, and charitable and voluntary organisations. The list goes on.

Members will be familiar with some of the work that goes on in their own communities: the community first responders, who provide vital support while an ambulance is on its way to an emergency; the community resuscitation development officers, who recruit and train community members to provide care; the public access defibrillators in a range of locations, supported by training and awareness raising; and the first aid awareness and training in schools and communities. All of those are examples of how we are working towards our bigger objective of delivering better outcomes and experiences for individuals, to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and attendances, and to strengthen and empower our local communities to be safer and healthier.

As members have said, first aid training is hugely important to our communities. I was a proud holder of my St Andrew's First Aid badge when I was in the scouts, and I had extensive casualty care training when I was in mountain rescue. The value of such training was summed up by the experiences of Nanette Milne and David Torrance that involved a golf tee and a boiled sweet. Those incidents ended in all being well, but one would not want to think about what the consequences could have been if someone had not known how to act appropriately.

It is not just formal training that can make a difference to people in such circumstances. Many of us will have seen the British Heart Foundation's TV advert that features Vinnie Jones, to which Drew Smith referred. In it, someone suddenly collapses, is not breathing normally and is unresponsive, and they might have had a cardiac arrest. The advert advises the public not to worry about giving the kiss of life during CPR but to concentrate on performing hard and fast chest compressions, to the tune of the Bee Gees track "Stayin' Alive".

The latest version of that advert features Alan Linton, who suffered a heart attack while playing golf with friends in Fife. His friends had seen the advert and they kept him alive until an ambulance arrived. He is in no doubt that the fact that his friends saw and acted on that advert means that he can tell his story today. Such tips really can

help people to make the time-critical interventions that can save lives.

The debate focuses on St Andrew's First Aid week. I was interested in the information that St Andrew's First Aid gathered about Scottish parents and their children. Many members will relate to the experiences that people have with their children—as David Torrance did—and to questions about what we can do to ensure that children are safe and that we have the right knowledge to intervene when necessary.

The Scottish Government, with partners, recognises fully the importance of supporting individuals and carers to be confident and equipped with the skills to deal with such situations. That is why in recent years we have taken forward work with organisations such as the Child Accident Prevention Trust, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Barnardo's and Volunteer Development Scotland. We have also provided financial support for work on injury prevention and safety initiatives. Our commitment to this important agenda is set out in a number of ways, which include pursuing it through the curriculum for excellence in our schools.

We are aware that work to tackle unintended injuries takes place in a range of areas, from road safety, fire safety and falls prevention to inland water safety. It is important that we work together so that we learn from one another and share experience about what works best.

James Dornan asked about St Andrew's First Aid working with the Scottish Government and using the Scottish Government's logo. I am more than happy to consider that, to respond to him in detail and to set out the assistance that we might be able to provide.

I thank first-aiders across Scotland and the organisations that train and support them for all their dedication and effort. I congratulate in advance all those who will be recognised at the Scottish first aid awards in Glasgow on Thursday. I have no doubt that St Andrew's First Aid will continue to provide an invaluable service in the years to come, and I look forward to working with it and supporting it in any way that we can.

*Meeting closed at 17:39.*

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