

Trump: Putin insulted by poll rig claims

By Gordon Blackstock
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President Donald Trump has claimed Russian leader Vladimir Putin told him he felt insulted by allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US election.



Vladimir Putin

Mr Trump made the remarks after meeting Mr Putin briefly at an Asia-Pacific summit in Vietnam yesterday.

"You can only ask so many times... he said he absolutely did not meddle in our election," the US president said.

Mr Putin later dismissed the allegations as "political infighting".

It comes after US intelligence agencies concluded Russia tried to sway the poll in favour of Mr Trump.

The US Justice Department has appointed special investigator Robert Mueller to examine any links with Mr Trump's team.

Several key former aides have already been named.

Last month, campaign adviser George Papadopoulos

pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about the timing of meetings with alleged Russian go-betweens.

Former campaign manager Paul Manafort and an associate were also placed under house arrest on charges of money laundering unrelated to the election.

Mr Papadopoulos' contact with the Kremlin is alleged to have been orchestrated by Sitriling Uni professor Joseph Mifsud.

The Maltese national is accused of bragging about how Russia had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton.

CalMac boss moves on

The boss of Scotland's biggest ferry group is set to quit.

Martin Dorchester, the man who steered state-owned ferry company Caledonian MacBrayne to land a new £900m contract, is moving to a new job.

Mr Dorchester took over five years ago - after previous experience with Argos and B&Q.



Thin blue line seek expert green fingers

It's the thin green line of the law.

Police Scotland are looking for someone who is a dab hand at Christmas wreath making and flower arranging.

But it is not a job for Special Branch, as successful applicants must have a SQA in the field of gardening.

The full-time £21,000-a-year civilian post is based at the Scottish Police College in the grounds of

historic Tulliallan Castle, Kincardine.

As well as floristry skills and raising potted plants, green fingered candidates must be experts at sustainable gardening.

They will have responsibility for maintaining the Force's football pitches and ensuring paths and roads throughout the extensive parkland are kept free of snow and ice.

Author reveals how the pioneering department stores of Scotland changed the way we shop and what we buy for ever

Counter culture revolutionaries

By Laura Smith
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They were towering temples of commerce that introduced a new way of shopping that was sociable, exciting, and glamorous - and took place under one majestic roof.

But today, the classy, sprawling department stores that flourished from the mid-19th Century into the early 1900s have mostly vanished from our high streets.

The rise of high street chains, internet shopping, next-day delivery and click and collect services have helped place convenience over pleasure when it comes to shopping.

As we gear up for the busiest shopping period of the year, Edinburgh author Jane Tulloch has been looking back on how we used to shop more than a century ago.

"After delving into the Edinburgh Central Library archives, she found it was a very different - and far more lavish - experience.

"These department stores sound fantastic with their beautiful front-of-house departments and window displays. The theatrics of it all was a real lure," said the 62-year-old.

"Customers would get dressed up, have their carriage or car parked by a chauffeur, and after shopping would relax in tearooms as their purchases were sent to the side door for collection.

"Most opened in the mid to late 19th century and probably the golden age was the earliest part of the 20th Century up until the 1930s."

While there were iconic department stores spread across Scotland, Jane has focused her research on Edinburgh.

The Capital was home to numerous department stores, especially in the late 19th and early-mid 20th Century, including J&R Allan and Patrick Thomson on South Bridge, and Maule & Son and RW Forsyth on Princes Street.

In Edinburgh, the iconic Jenners alone remains standing proudly on Princes Street, although it ceased to be Scotland's last independently-owned department store in 2005 when it was bought over by the Glasgow-based House of Fraser.

Jane's interest in the lost department stores of Edinburgh - she's written two novels based on the subject - stems from her time working behind the counter in Jenners during the 70s.

Launched on Princes Street in 1838 by draper Charles Jenner and Charles Kennington (it was first known as Kennington & Jenner), Jenners was described as The Harrods of the North.

Other stores like Selfridges, launched by Harry Gordon Selfridge, whose story was told in the popular ITV drama, have been hailed for changing how Britain shopped, but would not open for another 70

years. And Jane discovered the store had similarities with its London equivalents, Harrods and Selfridges, which today are as much grand tourist attractions as shopping destinations.

"One of the most interesting things I found was a huge inventory of everything in the store from what I think was 1906," said Jane.

"It included 102 bedrooms for the staff, which was very unusual



TV's Mr Selfridge, main; Charles Jenner, right; his famous store today, below; and Glasgow's House of Fraser in the '60s, above



for Scotland at the time. You could tell their rank based on if they had an iron bed or oak three-bedroom suite. There was a hospital room, medical room and a live-in housekeeper

"They could have their meals as part of their salary and one chap was actually retained full time to slice the staff roast.

"The head cleaner would have six eggs for breakfast, so it sounds like they were taken care of by Mr Jenner."

The store burned down on November 26, 1892 but its canny owner ensured his



It was great fun working

Jane will present her findings at a talk in Edinburgh next month as part of Previously... Scotland's History Festival, where she'll also reminisce about her time as a Jenners shop girl.



staff and customers didn't go without for long.

"He insured the business with 23 different companies so he was back in business within weeks and paid to have all his staff put up in a hotel while the store and their living quarters were rebuilt," she said.

Shopping for ladies' attire, in particular, was a very refined affair, during a period when the shop mannequins actually moved.

"I recently met a lady whose granny

at the store. You really felt like part of something

working there. I remember we had a notice up on the notice board from the writers of Are You Being Served asking for stories, I don't know if anyone sent them in," she said.

"We were very well

was a model in Jenners," said Jane.

"Back then staff would model the clothes and you'd sit and choose what you wanted. Then it would be made in your size."

Departments displayed their miscellaneous wares in gleaming glass topped counters. Customers would take a seat and be shown a selection of goods stored in drawers.

Comfort was also key. "If you were buying gloves there was an elbow pad to put your elbow on as the shop

assistant eased your gloves on to your hand," said Jane.

"There was also someone who would park your car for you on arrival at Jenners.

"Tearooms were popular, especially in Scotland. At Patrick Thompson, you could have two scones and a cup of tea for a shilling."

The South Bridge store, nicknamed P.T.'s, was popular with the middle classes and boasted 60 departments, selling items like shoes, furniture,

carpets, millinery, drapery and toys. Jane discovered mourning wear was a money-spinner with the Victorians.

She added: "I know J & R Allan, which opened in Edinburgh in 1880, had a very large mourning department - it was serious business in Victorian times.

"You could purchase mantles, a type of cloak, hats and gloves in different grades of black depending on how recently you were bereaved."

Of course, things are very different today - so what changed?

"These shops were a way of life for more than a century but tastes changed and they just went out of fashion," explained the author.

"House of Fraser hoovered up the majority of them. And then chain stores popped up in the 1950s-60s offering cheaper products.

"Boutique shopping also became more popular as customers desired specialist retailers instead of going to one big place for everything."

The charity said: "Locations favoured by seabirds may be unsuitable for offshore wind development and these areas will need to be protected through any future leasing or planning process."



Turbine trouble

Villagers' fears over wind farm proposal

Residents of a Sutherland village claim they face being surrounded by windfarms.

If the scheme for Croick Estate near Ardgay is going ahead there could be around 80 turbines near picturesque Rosehall - the result of five windfarms either already in operation or in the pipeline.

The Croick scheme with 21 turbines on the Strathoykel ridge line is the biggest so far for the area.

It follows the recent decision by Scottish ministers to approve plans for 18 turbines at Braemore, around four miles south-west of Lairg.

The wind farm attracted 430 objections who raised concerns about the impact on the surrounding scenery and tourism but a Scottish Government-appointed reporter said it would not impact tourism, despite admitting turbines would cause "significant visual change" from nearby Carbisdale Castle.

Rosehall resident, Lt Col Colin Gilmour, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Sutherland - whose family have lived in the village since 1890 - warned there would be a campaign against the latest scheme.

"We would be encircled if this goes ahead. Rosehall seems to be a honeypot for windfarms because of its access to the grid connections. Nowhere else in the Highlands has such a development of them."

Seabirds warning

RSPB Scotland has warned that any new offshore windfarms need careful siting to avoid "significant harm" to Scotland seabirds.

Scotland could see an influx of new build windfarms due to change in the way the seaboard around the country's coasts is leased out to developers.

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