

HRH The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp

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The Duchess of Cambridge today (Feb 14th 2017) joined young air cadets at RAF Wittering taking part in their first camp.

As the Honorary Air Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets she attended Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wing's Skill Development Camp and met several cadets experiencing their first camp.

Cadets and RAF Air Cadet instructors led the Duchess through a range of activities including flying training on a simulator, leadership exercises and more.

The Duchess was also shown the Tutor aircraft which thousands of cadets use each year for air experience flights.



Showing the Duchess around the aircraft was Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso, 17, of 1406 (Spalding) Squadron, a qualified aerospace instructor.

Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso said: "Flying is my favourite air cadet activity and it was an honour to show the Duchess the layout of the Tutor cockpit, particularly as the aircraft is used by cadets for air experience.

"It's incredible to have such a high profile Royal as our Patron, especially as she has strong links to the Royal Air Force with her husband being a former pilot."

Spalding air cadets Erin Hope, 14; Emily Empringham, 15, and Joshua Wait, 14 – also met the Duchess at the aircraft.

Later, HRH also took the controls of a flight simulator with help from Flight Lieutenant Michael Slater. She also joined in a leadership exercise demonstrating effective planning and communication skills.



At the end of the visit, the Duchess was invited to join the cadets and volunteer staff for a camp photo and was presented with a limited edition RAF Air Cadet 75th anniversary print by Commandant Air

Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty.

This is the third occasion that HRH the Duchess of Cambridge has met with cadets since HRH The Duke of Edinburgh handed patronage of the national youth organisation to her in December 2015.

Her prior engagements involving air cadets have included the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire in July 2016 and the launch of the RAF Air Cadet 75th anniversary celebrations in London in February 2016.

The event was held at RAF Wittering, Cambridgeshire, which is one of the oldest RAF bases and has played a key role in military operations and the development of air power since 1916.

Camps are an important part of the RAF Air Cadet experience and take place at RAF bases across the country and are centred around leadership, personal development, aerospace, music and more.



Some senior cadets even take part in the International Air Cadet Exchange Programme which includes countries such as Hong Kong, Canada and Australia.

Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore McCafferty said: "It was a delight to see the Duchess again and to witness her engaging with our young cadets and adult volunteers in such a relaxed manner.

"Her personal support of the RAF Air Cadets is very much appreciated and I am sure those lucky enough to meet her today will keep those memories for a lifetime."

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Richard Pratley said: "It has been an honour to welcome HRH The Duchess of Cambridge to RAF Wittering to see some of the facilities we offer to cadets to help inspire the next generation."

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[China mulls revision of maritime safety law](#)

China is considering revisions to the 1984 Maritime Traffic Safety Law to prioritize searches for survivors over searches for property.

The Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council announced Tuesday it is soliciting public opinions on revisions.

The draft states that it is the right of the people in distress at sea to be rescued without charge, adding that life should come before the environment and assets.

Passengers have the right to be informed of developments during maritime accidents when vessels are in distress, and are obliged to obey the instructions of the captain, the draft reads.

The captain should organize evacuation and be the last to leave the vessel if it is to be abandoned.

The State Council and local governments should set up maritime search and rescue centers, if needed, to organize, coordinate and command rescue operations.

In addition to professional maritime rescue teams established by the government, civilian groups are also encouraged to set up rescue teams and participate in operations.

Crews of vessels and maritime facilities are forbidden from concealing, delaying or falsifying reports on maritime accidents.

According to the white paper "Development of China's Transport," an efficient safety regime and maritime emergency aid system has been established in China.

The white paper, released in December, said the nation has improved its maritime search and rescue capability and increased the number of volunteers.

[Demand for urgent Holyrood statement on business rates](#)

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14 Feb 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have demanded finance secretary Derek Mackay addresses Holyrood over the country's business rates crisis.

Increasing numbers of organisations are protesting at the revaluation scheme, which has seen some pay more than double their current taxation.

Now the SNP has been urged to take action and explain what it intends to do to solve the problem.

Two newspapers are campaigning on behalf of businesses, many of whom say they face closure as a result of the hikes.

A formal request has gone into Scottish Parliament authorities from the Scottish Conservatives for Mr Mackay to give a statement when MSPs return next week.

When challenged on the issue previously, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon merely said there would be an opportunity to appeal for individual businesses.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"This revaluation could see businesses across the country going under, it's as simple as that.

"If that's not cause for the SNP government to act, I don't know what is.

"While Nicola Sturgeon obsesses with Brexit and independence, Scottish companies large and small are staring down the barrel of a gun.

"This revaluation is threatening jobs and the wider economy, and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency."

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"This is fast becoming a crisis for businesses the length and breadth of the country.

"Many say they face closure, while others are being forced to hike their prices to cover these increased costs.

"This is not an acceptable state of affairs, and we need to know what Scotland's finance secretary intends to do about this.

"It's time for the SNP to prove it's not an anti-business government and take some meaningful action to help these businesses which are the lifeblood of our economy."

The Scottish Conservatives have raised the issue of business rates on a number of occasions since the revaluation:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/02/ruth-calls-for-immediate-review-of-revaluation-of-business-rates/>

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/09/leading-businesses-appeal-to-snp-over-unfair-rates-hike/>

The Herald launched a campaign today on the issue:

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15089947.Can_t_pay_won_t_pay_Licensed_trade_to_fight_new_Poll_Tax_following_closure_fears/

[News story: VDR data extraction from MV Cabrera](#)

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MAIB assists the Greek Hellenic Bureau for Marine Casualties Investigation in data recovery

Last week MAIB technicians provided support to the Greek Hellenic Bureau for Marine Casualties Investigation in the recovery of data from the general cargo vessel Cabrera's Voyage Data Recorder.

The vessel sank after it ran aground on the northern coast of Andros Island, Greece in the early hours of 24 December 2016. The capsule was recovered by a diver from a depth of 20m.

[Green Party: Government failure to get a grip on gig economy hurts everyone](#)



14 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to news this morning that the gig-economy is

thought to cost the Government £4billion in lost taxes. [1]

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The news that insecure work is hurting public finances reinforces what we already knew – insecure work is bad for everyone.

“The gig-economy offers flexibility but in reality leaves workers without basic rights and vulnerable to exploitation. Add to this the lost tax revenue which could be supporting greater social security or the NHS, and it’s clear that the Government has been left standing by a rapidly changing world. It needs to get a grip on the gig-economy.”

The news comes just days after pressure from the Green Party saw the Government finally publish (on February 10) a report into employment status law which was completed more than a year ago. [2]

Bartley added:

“The extent of the Government’s apathy and inertia was revealed last week when it finally published the Coalition’s shelved review into employment status law, which warned back in 2015 that gig-economy workers were at risk.

“While Tory ministers shamefully sat on the findings of the report workers everywhere have been living with increasing insecurity. People need jobs they can build a life on, and they need them now.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/feb/14/insecure-work-bad-uk-economy-tuc-zero-hours-contracts>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/02/10/green-pressure-sees-government-finally-publish-shelved-employment-status-law-review/>

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