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LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1747

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TODAY

LOCAL NEWS

Actors get football training from Dons

Aberdeen Football Club stars have been putting actors through their paces to prepare them for a stage version of the 1981 Scottish film Gregory's Girl. **Page 15**

SCOTTISH

Power grab claims over police reform

Scottish Government proposals to merge the country's eight police forces into one have been denounced as a "centralised power grab". **Page 15**

NATIONAL

Government won't budge on economy

Chancellor George Osborne has insisted the Government will not change course despite a slowdown in the economic recovery. **Page 8**



Pictures recall lives lost in massacre

The first pictures have been released of the young victims of Oslo gun killer Anders Breivik, above, as details of their lives and deaths became clearer. **Page 5**

COLUMNIST

Up, up and away - eventually

New research has revealed that one in 10 people are stressed out by airports. Nicola Barry is one of them and it's getting her down. **Page 12**

BUSINESS

BG unfazed by big hit from tax grab

Oil and gas operator BG Group yesterday revealed a near-£200million tax hit as a result of this year's North Sea tax grab. **Page 16**

FARMING

Search for sheep with extra chop

The search is on for a longer sheep capable of yielding an extra chop in a project commissioned by Quality Meat Scotland. **Page 20**

SPORT

Champions League blues for Rangers

Rangers' Champions League hopes were hanging in the balance last night after they lost 1-0 to Swedish outfit Malmö. **Page 26**

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COUNCIL VOWS TO HELP MURDER VICTIM'S FAMILY ♦ OFFICIALS MEET LEGAL TEAM

We'll fight to seize Claire's grave from killer husband

BY SHONA GOSSIP



ENCOURAGED: Peter Morris, Claire's brother, said he was "delighted" at yesterday's turn of events. Photograph: Kami Thomson

A local authority has vowed to do everything in its power to help a grieving brother reclaim his sister's grave from murderer Malcolm Webster.

The fight to have the killer's name removed from Claire Morris's headstone took an "encouraging step forward" yesterday after the legal team acting for her relatives held talks with Aberdeenshire Council officials.

They discussed ways to get around strict property laws which prevent Peter Morris from erasing all mention of Webster on his sister's memorial at Tarves cemetery.

In May, Webster was convicted of murdering his wife in a deliberate car crash and fire 17 years ago - and last night his solicitor said the killer was still protesting his innocence and had no intention of surrendering ownership of the burial lair.

Council officials had said they were unable to help the Morris family amid fears the

murderer may sue for breach of his human rights.

But yesterday the head of the council's legal department met members of the Aberdeen Law Project - a clinic run by students with help from solicitors - and said they would "work together" to find a resolution.

During yesterday's talks, the law clinic's founder, Ryan Whelan, and law lecturer Malcolm Combe suggested ways the council could challenge the lair ownership.

They outlined their arguments from a legal document that Mr Whelan and Professor Roderick Paisley - who suggested the clinic

take on the case - had put together. The council is now

considering the suggestions put forward, and is likely to decide if any of them are viable in the next three weeks.

Karen Wiles, head of the legal and governance department at the council, said: "We are working together to look at all the legal solutions to resolve this situation."

"We are keen to relieve the anxieties of Claire's family and appreciate the public repugnance felt at the potential situation whereby a murder victim could share the same lair as her murderer."

"We all want the same conclusion. Claire's family want to ensure that her murderer has no claims on the lair and to change the headstone to her maiden name."

"We need to find a way to achieve this within the law - and we will do all in our power to find a resolution."

Mr Whelan, 23, a research masters student, added: "We are very encouraged by the stance taken by the council and will continue to do everything we can to assist them in achieving what is a shared objective."

"I hope that together we can identify the legal means by which to bring closure to the Morris family."

After the talks, Mr Whelan met Mr Morris, who is currently visit-



Claire Morris: murdered



Malcolm Webster: refusal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Just one in 14 incapacity claimants qualify

DISABILITY CHARITIES HIT BACK AT CLAIMS MANY COULD GET JOBS WITH SUPPORT

BY THEO USHERWOOD

ONLY one in 14 people assessed for the new incapacity benefit is entitled to claim the payout in the long-term, new figures reveal.

Statistics show 39% of claimants are fit to work, while more than a third drop their application before it is complete.

The Department for Work and Pensions said 17% can do some work with the right help and support.

Only 7% of first-time claimants are deemed too ill to work and are entitled to claim the Employment and Support Allowance having undergone the government's new assessment.

Work and Pensions Minister Steve Webb said: "These figures show many people are able to work with the right help. We have strengthened the support available, tailoring it to individual needs so

they can overcome whatever barriers they face.

"Those who cannot work will always receive our unconditional support, but for those who can work it's right that they get the help they need to get employment."

"We are improving the medical test to ensure it is as fair and effective as possible."

Under the last government, those claiming benefits because they thought themselves unfit to take up employment were asked to complete a work capability assessment to find out whether they could do a job.

The scheme was piloted in Aberdeen and Burnley before being rolled out across the

country. Officials have started assessing those trying to make new claims to see if they are eligible for ESA, which has replaced incapacity benefit.

Under the new assessment, applicants are either judged too ill to work and receive the benefit or are judged well enough to hold down a job and then told to resubmit a benefits application for Jobseeker's Allowance.

The reforms, brought in under the last government, also include a third category for those whom officials think could do some work if they received the right help and support.

TUC general secretary

Brendan Barber said: "The government needs to do much more to help disabled people back into jobs, rather than cracking down on the benefits they get when they are unable to work."

Disability charities have voiced their concern at the latest figures.

Alice Maynard, from the disability charity Scope, said: "Rather than expending energy smearing claimants, the government needs to re-think its Work Capability Assessment."

Paul Farmer, chief executive of the mental health charity Mind, questioned the government's figures. He said: "People found 'fit for work' have not been cheating the system; rather, in most cases, they have engaged with the system with genuine intentions and been turned down for benefits - often wrongly as appeals figures show."



Steve Webb: stronger support

Boy rapist locked up for five years

A SCHOOLBOY who raped a 16-year-old girl after meeting her at a Highland games event has been sentenced to five years' detention.

Andrew Ewen was 15 when he carried out the attack at Dufftown. He assaulted his victim at a grassed area in the village and raped her twice after she said she did not want to have sex with him.

Ewen, who is now 17, had denied forcing himself on the teenager and maintained it was consensual.

But a jury at the High Court in Aberdeen found him guilty by a majority verdict after a two-day trial last month.

Sentence had been deferred until yesterday.

A judge at the High Court in Edinburgh told Ewen it was clear from the victim's evidence that she had made it plain she did not want to have sex with him.

Lord Pentland told Ewen: "You showed no respect for her wishes, or indeed her as a person."

"At the time you were under the influence of alcohol. This is not an excuse. Indeed, to my mind, it makes matters worse."

"You must understand that the jury convicted you of a very serious offence involving the repeated rape of a young woman you had met for the first time on the day of the crime."

"You have the advantage of a good family, a background denied to many who come



Andrew Ewen: "immaturity"

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