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Freedom to Choose

(Scotland)

FIRST LANDLORD TO COME TO COURT ON SMOKING BAN OFFENCES IS A SCOT!

Hamish Howitt of the Happy Scots Bar in Blackpool received fines totalling £500 with £2,000 costs awarded against him. Hamish, a non-smoker, appeared in court on 5 November. He paid tribute to the fairness of the judge and stated that his quarrel was with the government and that he would not stop his protest. As a matter of conscience, he would not put his customers outdoors.

Freedom to Choose has started a collection for Hamish. Contributions by cheque can be made out to Freedom to Choose Scotland and sent to the address at the foot of this page. We salute him and his family for their courage and indefatigability.

Tony Blows in Herefordshire and Nick Hogan in Bolton face similar charges and we will bring you news as soon as it is available.

UPDATE ON PETITIONS

We wrote to Christine Graham MSP (convenor of the Health and Sport Committee) a long and detailed letter pointing out that we have not had the opportunity to present the 'mountain of evidence' we have collected to support our views. She has responded stating that it is too early to review the evidence properly and it is not likely to be done until the end of this parliamentary session. However, as far back as February, work was already underway, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, to 'evaluate' the health effects of the legislation, and the results of these evaluations were presented at the recent Edinburgh conference 'Towards a Smokefree Society'. Their agenda in undertaking this evaluation is very clear.

Her letter concluded with a refusal to enter further correspondence on the matter – a typically high-handed attitude, showing contempt for the people who pay her salary.

JOINING FREEDOM TO CHOOSE SCOTLAND

Membership is £10 or £5 concessions. We work closely with the UK Freedom to Choose organisation and have international connections. For details, call 07766 966421.

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THINK ABOUT IT ...

'Smoking reduces the sperm count'

'Nicotine is more deadly than heroin'

'Smoking is more addictive than heroin'

These are three of the many claims published by the anti-smoking lobby as FACTS. But consider.

1. Between c. 1945 and 1960, the Western world experienced the 'baby boom'. An unprecedented surge in births, a population explosion. The vast majority of the men responsible for this were smokers – not, by the way, smokers of filter-tipped Marlborough Lights or mild Silk Cut, but smokers of untipped monsters such as Capstan Full Strength, Woodbine, etc. And this unequalled frenzy of reproduction was achieved by men with a reduced sperm count?

If that seems unlikely to you, read on.

2. Perhaps you know someone who is or has been a heroin addict. If so, you will probably have heard them speak of friends who died from their habit in their twenties or even their teens. How many smokers do you know with similar tales to tell? Or think, how many people do you know in their seventies or eighties who have been regular heroin users for 50 or 60 years?

3. If your teenaged child or sibling told you they were using heroin, would you tell yourself that it could be worse – they could be smoking tobacco?

The point is, we have looked at three 'facts' trumpeted by the anti-smokers, which have ranged from the dubious to the downright ludicrous. If you find any of these hard to swallow, ask yourself, 'Why should I accept *anything* they tell me?' We have been told for years by these same people that 'passive smoking' kills, yet there is a wealth of evidence – from groups as diverse as the World Health Organisation and the Health and Safety Executive – to discredit that claim.

The anti-smokers will say that we are pushing our own agenda. Yes we are: that is winning back for the people of Scotland and the UK the *Freedom to Choose*.