



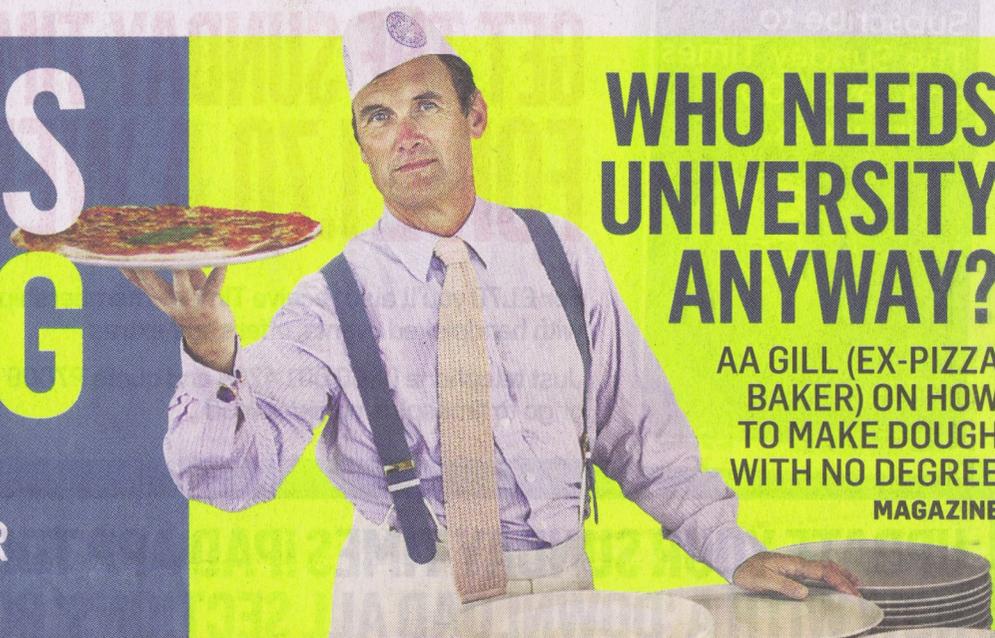
# THE SUNDAY TIMES



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## WHO NEEDS UNIVERSITY ANYWAY?

AA GILL (EX-PIZZA  
BAKER) ON HOW  
TO MAKE DOUGH  
WITH NO DEGREE  
MAGAZINE

## Man Utd 'will net Glazers £1.8bn'

Ben Marlow

THE Glazers, the American family who provoked rage among Manchester United fans when they bought the football club and loaded it with debt, believe they are on course to net themselves £1.82 billion when they float the Premier League champions on an Asian stock market.

The Florida clan expect to generate more than six times their original investment.

It would be a triumphant reversal of fortune for Malcolm Glazer and his sons — although hardly likely to endear them to fans at Old Trafford tomorrow night for a match against Spurs. The family's takeover in 2005 left the club with a crippling annual interest bill total

## REBELS CLOSE IN ON TRIPOLI

PAUL CONROY



# Shell had oil rig safety warning

Mark Macaskill

AN internal investigation by Shell eight years ago raised serious concerns about safety in the Gannet oilfield, where the company has been battling to contain the worst spill in British waters for a decade.

Documents obtained by The Sunday Times reveal that

forms, Brent Charlie. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspection in May found parts of the installation were "suffering from severe corrosion".

The agency warned Shell last month there was a risk of injury from plant equipment. It also found that redundant plant equipment "did not appear to be

plung annual interest bill totaling tens of millions of pounds. The family, which also own the Tampa Bay Buccaneers American football team, put up only £300m of their own cash when they bought United. They financed the rest of the £900m takeover with loans from banks and hedge funds. Since then, the interest bill on the debts has wiped out the club's profits, stoking the opposition to the Glazer regime. Some fans protested that the £80m generated by the world record transfer of Cristiano Ronaldo to Real Madrid was not reinvested in the squad. In con-

## Glazers eye Man Utd float in Asia

Our report on June 12

trast, the club's Manchester City rivals have spent vast amounts in the transfer market for the world's top players and nearly poached United's star striker, Wayne Rooney.

The Glazers fought off a £1 billion takeover approach last year from a group of wealthy United fans calling themselves the "Red Knights".

The family expect the club to be valued at £2.4 billion when they sell a 25% stake on the Singapore stock market. They plan to raise £600m — some of which would be used to pay off loans — and to retain a 75% holding worth £1.82 billion.

Some analysts have questioned the valuation as too high, given that the club made a net loss of £84m last year.



**A Libyan rebel tries to flush out Gaddafi loyalist snipers in the town of Zawiya. Rebels claimed last night to control both Zawiya, 30 miles west of Tripoli, and Zlitan to the east of the Libyan capital, as they tightened their stranglehold around the shrinking territory controlled by the dictator. Preparations for an advance on the capital were under way, said rebel leaders, with units including a**

**"Tripoli brigade" establishing forward positions. Jeffrey Feltman, US assistant secretary of state, said after visiting rebel headquarters in Benghazi that Gaddafi's days were numbered. The dictator's former No 2, Abdel-Salam Jalloud, was said to have defected and be ready to urge his tribe to desert the regime. Onslaught on oil town, pages 26-27**

# 30,000 rioters hunted by police

David Leppard

AS many as 30,000 people were involved in looting, arson and criminal damage during the London riots, Scotland Yard now believes.

Metropolitan police figures released today show 3,296 crimes were committed during four days of rioting in the capital.

With between five and 10 people linked on average with each crime, police estimate

they have between 15,000 and 30,000 suspects.

"There were a lot of people out on the street engaged in criminality. There were thousands and thousands of people committing crimes," an insider said. "It was the true definition of mob violence and the Met is keen to find out who all these people are."

As it emerged that a gunman had fired shots at a police helicopter during the riots in Birmingham, the huge

numbers of suspects will add to fears about a logjam in the courts and violence breaking out in overcrowded prisons.

On Friday the prison population swelled to record numbers, for the first time surpassing 86,000 inmates in England and Wales. Prison governors have been warned to take steps to ensure the safety of inmates — especially those who have been remanded in custody for the first time.

Paul McDowell, the

governor of Brixton prison until 2009, and now the chief of the crime reduction charity Nacro, said the difficulty in finding prison places would be nothing compared with the repercussions of so many people serving short sentences without adequate support.

The overcrowding crisis will be made worse by the tougher sentences that are being handed out by some judges. Last week Jordan Blackshaw

Continued on page 2 ▶▶ **A man shoots at police**



# Challenge to 'unlawful' university fees

Jason Allardyce

SCOTLAND'S university funding system faces a legal challenge from a leading human rights lawyer, who claims it is unlawful to charge fees to English students studying north of the border.

Phil Shiner, who has already embarrassed the British government by winning the right to a judicial review of its decision to

let English universities triple their fees, now intends to end what critics term anti-English discrimination in Scotland.

More than 20,000 English students in Scotland pay up to £2,895 a year, which will rise to up to £9,000 next year, while Scots and other European Union students do not pay.

The Scottish government contends that under the European Convention on Human

Rights it is permissible to discriminate within a member state such as Britain.

However, Shiner believes the policy is in breach of the convention, which prohibits discrimination on grounds that include national origin and of the first protocol to the convention, which gives everybody in the EU a right to education. It may also breach Britain's Equality Act, implemented last year.

Jennifer Watts, founder of a new campaign group, Make Uni Fees Equal, is prepared to become the subject of a test case. The 19-year-old, studying law at the University of Manchester, said: "It is not acceptable to put some people in a significantly more privileged position because of their address."

A challenge is expected to be welcomed by the National Union of Students, which has

accused the SNP government of making "entirely the wrong choice" in charging fees to English students.

IN THIS SECTION ▶▶

**Lawyer to tackle anti-English fees**

P5

Sunday Times reveal that dozens of unapproved repairs were carried out on Shell's Gannet Alpha platform. The audit in 2003 also showed 317 fire and gas sensors were unreliable.

The concerns were gathered by Shell after the Brent Bravo tragedy that year killed two oil workers. Issues relating to that platform and Shell's other North Sea installations, including Gannet Alpha, were notified to Scottish authorities investigating the tragedy.

Details of the audit are contained in papers held by Bill Campbell, a former senior Shell employee, who has raised concerns about the company's health and safety record.

Last night, Shell said efforts to turn off a valve that had been leaking oil over the past 10 days had been successful. The cause of the leak 300ft below the surface was not known. The section of pipeline had been inspected in October last year. An estimated 214 tons of oil escaped.

The incident has dealt a blow to British companies keen to expand the industry by drill off Greenland, despite protests from environmentalists.

Charles Hendry, the energy minister, has said such operations are "entirely legitimate" as long as they adhere to Britain's "robust" safety regulations.

Shell has been at the forefront of plans to drill in the Arctic's Beaufort and Chukchi seas. Since January the company's North Sea operations have been hit by the death of a maintenance worker, a series of gas leaks, equipment collapsing off a platform into the sea and a 15,000-hour repair backlog.

Shell is also under pressure to deal with safety issues on another of its North Sea plat-

equipment did not appear to be inspected or maintained". Shell was given until last Thursday to respond with a plan.

The latest spill is the largest in British waters since 2000, when about 344 tons of oil

IN THIS SECTION ▶▶

**On the brink, Focus**

P17

escaped in Conoco's North Sea Hutton field.

Last week, Campbell said more leaks and equipment failures are likely as platforms, many from the 1970s, get older. "In my view, Shell hasn't invested enough money over the last 10 years in maintaining its facilities," he said. "More has been done recently but it's too little, too late."

Richard Lochhead, the rural affairs and environment minister, has written to Chris Huhne, the UK government's climate change secretary, calling for greater transparency in the reporting of oil incidents.

The HSE recently warned that only one in 30 of Britain's North Sea oil platforms was in good condition and expressed concern that companies were neglecting workers' safety.

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## STYLE

■ Immaculate conception: the designer Tom Ford is expanding his beauty range beyond scents and lipstick in the pursuit of female perfection

## NEWS

■ Shark attacks are on the increase. Are we to blame?



## NEWS REVIEW

■ The broadcaster Laurie Taylor on why so many over-70s are ready to walk down the aisle again



## BUSINESS

■ America's tech raid: how a Silicon Valley giant snatched our brightest and biggest software company



## MONEY

■ Maths lessons: our top 20 tips for saving cash at university



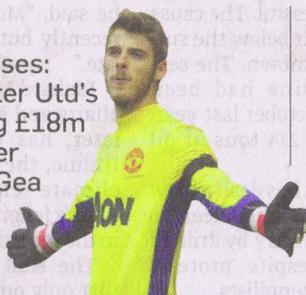
## HOME

■ Country collection: inside the Wiltshire pile of Jigsaw's Belle Robinson



## SPORT

■ Net losses: Manchester Utd's struggling £18m goalkeeper David de Gea is in the firing line



## TRAVEL

■ Take a hike: the new frontiers of walking holidays, from Oman to Ecuador



## INGEAR

■ Plug and pay: electric car hire schemes are charging your way



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2 3 18 30 34 35  
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**Last night's Thunderball game**  
6 7 11 22 33  
**Thunderball** 10

**Friday night's EuroMillions game**  
6 14 16 28 31  
**Lucky stars** 2 11  
**Millionaire Raffle**  
M J R 5 3 2 7 6 3

# Politicians volunteer to adopt 'hard-core workless families'

**Margarette Driscoll and Marie Woolf**

SOME of David Cameron's ministers and closest advisers will "adopt" workless families to help the long-term unemployed off benefits and into work.

A group of ministers, MPs and special advisers will set an example by becoming "family champions", under a scheme devised by Emma Harrison, the social entrepreneur whose company manages £300m of government training contracts.

Chris Grayling, the employment minister, Tim Loughton, the children and families minister, and Jane Ellison, Tory MP for Battersea, which was hit by looting during the recent riots, have

each volunteered to mentor a workless family. Rohan Silva, one of Cameron's senior policy advisers, has also volunteered.

Harrison wants the middle classes to follow their example to help families in which two or three generations have never worked. The mentors will introduce the families to their contacts, help them to manage their housekeeping money, guide them through bureaucracy and give advice on keeping regular hours.

"This isn't a gimmick, this is me seriously looking them in the eye and saying: come on then. Let's all get together and tackle this thing," Harrison said.

"Standing beside a workless family and saying: I will make myself responsible for making this a working family, is really

daunting. The thought scares a lot of politicians because they don't know how to do it, but I have said: I'll show you once and for all how this is done. And they are very enthusiastic. They keep saying: have you found my family yet?"

"This is a simple idea, it's not the big society, it's people helping people," she added.

"If you've got a job you can get a job for somebody else. There are so many jobs out there to be got because of who you know and all I want to do is drag some people who are outside of that in..."

"An MP might ask an employer to pop in and say to him, 'I've got a family that needs work, mate, how are you fixed?' The families we're talking about don't know anybody who knows anybody,

and that's why they're stuck where they're at."

Harrison, who chairs A4e (Action for employment) is piloting her idea in Hull, Blackpool and Westminster with family champions paid for from her own money.

The government estimates there are 120,000 families in Britain locked into generations of welfare, costing the exchequer £8 billion a year.

Loughton said there were 50,000 "hard-core families with multiple problems" and 70,000 "second-tier" problem families. He said he planned to help his "adopted" family with their financial planning — to make sure they can live within their means.

*I dare you to find jobs for feckless families, News Review, page 5*

joining the Red Arrows and lived in Rutland with his wife, Emma.

He became a qualified flying instructor on the Hawk jet at training.

Red Arrows was frightening. "There isn't the time. You are so focused and working so hard to

required to complete the aerobatic displays, the Red Arrows have a good safety record.

## Calls to expand oil disaster threat inquiry

►► Continued from page 1 safety. More than 96% of installations in the North Sea were found to require improvements during inspections over the past three years, with 20% showing "major failings".

Ministers have pledged to hold an inquiry into the Gannet spill but environmental bodies said the remit should be expanded.

"It is important that the inquiry examines the manage-

ment of the incident both by Shell and the various public agencies," said Stuart Housden, from RSPB Scotland.

He added: "The inquiry should also investigate the readiness of UK and Scottish agencies to predict, monitor and minimise any environmental impacts."

Conservationists have warned that the oil leak poses a threat to seabirds, including kittiwakes, puffins, guillemots

and razorbills. An operation to lay concrete mats on the pipeline where the leak occurred in order to secure it to the seabed is continuing.

Shell said safety was a "foremost priority" and that the company had invested more than £600m in recent years to upgrade North Sea facilities.

A company spokeswoman said: "We constantly inspect, monitor and review all our assets. At present we do not

know what caused the leak from the Gannet Alpha flow-line. This will be the subject of a full investigation, together with the authorities.

"Work continues to progress on the Brent Charlie platform about which Shell is in regular liaison with the regulatory authorities, including the HSE."

The Gannet Alpha leak was spotted during a routine North Sea helicopter flight.

# Armed rioters shot at police and helicopter

**Mark Hookham**

POLICE officers and one of their surveillance helicopters came under gunfire from youths during this month's riots in Birmingham, it emerged yesterday.

At least two gunmen fired a total of 11 shots during one of the most serious outbreaks of violence against police during the disturbances across England.

West Midlands police yesterday took the "unusual" step of releasing closed-circuit television footage that showed one gunman firing at officers and another pointing his weapon at a helicopter that was hovering overhead and filming a 40-strong mob.

Chris Sims, the force's chief constable, described it as a "concerted and organised attempt to kill or injure police officers".

He added: "This footage shows seemingly co-ordinated criminal behaviour with no regard for people's lives, whether it be through the setting of a fire, shooting at unarmed officers or shooting at the police helicopter. This investigation is being treated as attempted murder and arson and I am only thankful that this is not a murder inquiry."

The guns were fired on police in the Newtown area of Birmingham on August 9 as officers arrived to deal with an attack by looters on the Bartons Arms pub. As officers drew up



A rioter points a gun at a police helicopter in Birmingham

at the scene, petrol bombs were thrown at a marked police car.

When riot police were called in, CCTV caught the first gunman taking aim with a handgun, firing and then fleeing the scene. Another looter was then filmed aiming his weapon at the helicopter. The group of rioters dispersed only when armed police finally arrived. No one was injured during the incident.

Police said that at least four separate firearms had been

identified from the footage. Spent bullet casings were found at the scene.

Siriporn Thumjaroen, 38, and her husband Wichai, 41, who manage the Bartons Arms, told how they were forced to hide from looters who stormed the premises. Wichai, who moved to Britain from Thailand five years ago, said: "They burnt the bar and they put two petrol bombs in the restaurant but we were very lucky that they didn't work."

## Riot suspects

►► Continued from page 1 and Perry Sutcliffe-Keenan were jailed for four years at Chester Crown Court for posting messages on Facebook trying to stir up riots in their neighbourhoods.

Lord Judge, the lord chief justice, is understood to be clearing his diary to hear the first of what is expected to be a wave of appeals against the long sentences being handed down by some judges. Sentences handed out by magistrates for the first 1,000 riot-related crimes were on average 25% longer than those meted out in normal circumstances.

Judge is understood to recognise the urgent need for clarity and the procedure for hearing the first Court of Appeal case is likely to be fast-tracked.

A spokeswoman for the judiciary said: "If and when appeals are lodged, the Court of Appeal will deal with them. It is in a position, if appropriate, to do so quickly."

In its first detailed breakdown of the violence that swept London between August 6 and August 9, the Met said today there had been 1,101 burglaries in non-residential buildings, 399 offences of damage to vehicles, 310 cases of theft of personal property and 162 reports of arson.

□ Jeremy Hunt, the cabinet minister responsible for the 2012 Olympics, said the army may be used to help police secure the Games.

*How justice got tough Focus, page 16*

# ON THE BRINK

Gannet leaked hundreds of tons of oil into the environment. So how serious is the North Sea drilling industry about updating its rigs — and how long before another disaster, ask Gillian Bowditch and Mark Macaskill

It was a routine flight from Aberdeen, but as the Bristow helicopter ferried oil workers across the North Sea, one passenger noticed something unusual. On the surface of the water, just a few miles from the Gannet Alpha platform, was a large oily sheen.

The alarm was raised with air-traffic control. Within the hour, Shell, the rig's owner, warned the Department of Environment and Climate Change that a leak had been detected more than 100 miles off Scotland's northeast coast.

larly as the rates of platform decommissioning and new installations are relatively low."

John Bradbury, of the specialist publication *Petroleum Review*, says: "For operators today, keeping corrosion at bay — or at least within safe limits — while continuing to eke out tail-end production at an economically viable level is a constant battle. Corrosion control and monitoring is made harder still in an environment where cost is paramount and resources are limited."

Despite its size and profitability, Shell's safety record is by no means exemplary. The North Sea spill came just weeks after the company admitted liability for a massive oil spillage in Ogoniland, Nigeria. Shell says the vast majority of spills in the Niger Delta are due to sabotage, but it faces substantial legal claims.

Closer to home, Shell's North Sea Brent field platforms — Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta — were temporarily shut down in January after "metal fatigue" led to a chunk of protective railing falling into the sea. Just days before the Gannet spill, leaked HSE documents showed that the government agency feared "catastrophic consequences" on Shell's ageing Brent Charlie platform. The scale of a long-running series of gas leaks meant that ignition was "almost inevitable," according to the document, leading to fears of another disaster on the scale of Occidental's Piper Alpha, when 168 men were killed in an explosion in 1988.

One report, dated July 18, revealed that Shell was facing a 15,000-hour maintenance backlog on mechanical equipment. This is on top of extensive work being carried out to overcome leaks of hydrocarbon gas and hydrogen sulphide, known as glugs, that have led to the shutdown of Brent Charlie and the loss of the output of 30,000 barrels of oil a day. According to Upstream, the July 18 document, sent by the HSE to Shell after an inspection on May 30 and 31, also reveals that inspectors found that areas of the platform were corroding.

Corrosion is a sensitive issue for Shell. A 2006 report into the deaths of



Scotland's northeast coast. Ministers were not unduly concerned — Shell was confident that it was just another one of the hundreds of minor spills that are reported in the North Sea every year. It gave assurances that the situation was under control. Within days, however, it became apparent that the spill was far more serious than Shell wanted to publicly admit.

Privately, department officials were forced to concede that the leak was “substantial”, as Shell sought to minimise negative coverage by strangling the flow of information to the national media and environmental bodies.

Last night, Shell confirmed that, 10 days after it was first detected, the leak had been completely stopped. The company's problems, however, will not stop with the release of oil into the North Sea.

The incident, the worst leak in British waters since 2000, is a huge embarrassment for the company not least because, despite millions of pounds of investment in its North Sea operations, it failed to spot the leak. Alex Salmond, the first minister, has been criticised for playing down the significance of the spill and accused of being too close to the oil industry.

Ever since BP's Deepwater Horizon spill in April last year, which killed 11 and resulted in 4.9m barrels of oil flooding into the Gulf of Mexico — the biggest disaster in the history of the industry — environmental campaigners have stepped up their targeting of the oil sector.

In the aftermath of Deepwater, Shell's chief executive Peter Voser claimed the BP blowout could never have happened to his company. “The risk-management practices of some companies in the Gulf of Mexico do lag behind the standards set by other companies,” Voser told analysts in February.

“We at Shell have been applying the best of the North Sea standards to our worldwide operations for many years.”

It is a quote that may come back to haunt him.

The company estimates that during the Gannet leak, 1,600 barrels of oil or 218 tons — more than triple the amount of oil discharged into UK waters in the whole of 2009 — has spilled into the North Sea from a pipe 300ft below the surface.

The leak could not have come at a worse time for Shell, as it attempts to persuade regulators to allow it to carry out drilling in the sensitive waters around the Arctic.

But the questions it raises go far beyond Shell and the safety of its drilling activities. Conservationists want to ask how safe is the North Sea oil industry? Is a large-scale environmental disaster lurking around the corner and is the SNP government too close to the industry for Scotland's good?

IT was only on Friday August 12, after the oil industry journal *Upstream* ran a short article on the leak based on its own sources that



Ageing oil rigs put North Sea at risk

Shell issued a press release stating that it had stemmed the leak “significantly”. Even then, the company was unable to provide information on the size and cause of the leak. Early last week, a second leak was discovered.

It wasn't until Friday, nine days after oil was first found, that Shell was finally able to close off the vital valves. The task of removing the residual 660 tons of oil in the depressurised flow-line would take some time the company said.

The drip, drip, drip of negative information has been every bit as corrosive to the company's reputation as the oil leaking from its pipe. It was not until a week after the oil was first spotted that the company apologised.

Glen Cayley, a technical director

of Shell's exploration and production activities in Europe, said: “This is a significant spill in the context of annual amounts of oil spilled in the North Sea. We care about the environment and we regret that the spill happened. We have taken it very seriously and responded promptly to it.”

The oil sector is arguably Scotland's most important industry. Tax revenues from oil and gas production were £9.3 billion in 2010/11 and are expected to rise to £13.4 billion this year.

About 196,000 people are employed by oil and gas companies in Scotland, 45% of the UK total, and the industry satisfies about two-thirds of the UK's primary energy

demand. But UK oil production is in decline. The North Sea produces about 2.3m barrels a day, half of what it produced at its peak 12 years ago, and the industry is waging a constant battle over the economics of extracting the North Sea's remaining “black gold”.

Although four-fifths of North Sea production is controlled by 14 companies, traditional, global oil and gas companies, such as Shell, which made profits of £5 billion in the past quarter, are gradually reducing their presence and investments in the region. The big companies see their futures in the larger fields of Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. In their place, smaller, lesser-known firms are exploiting the remaining North Sea resources.

“It used to be a good field if it was

100m barrels,” says one industry expert. “Now 25m barrels is considered a significant field, and even smaller fields are being developed. There is a constant battle to keep platforms profitable in the face of declining asset integrity.”

As a result, many North Sea oil platforms are working way beyond their envisaged lifespan.

When they were built, most were expected to last 20 years, but according to figures from the oil specialist Det Norske Veritas and the Energy Department, 44 North Sea platforms — more than 15% of the total — are more than 40 years old. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), it is “evident that this proportion is steadily increasing, particu-

“  
**THERE IS A  
CONSTANT  
BATTLE TO KEEP  
PLATFORMS  
PROFITABLE**

Shell. A 2006 report into the deaths of two workers after a gas leak on Brent Bravo in 2003 ruled that the deaths could have been avoided if Shell had repaired a corroded pipe properly.

Bill Campbell, a former senior manager with Shell, told BBC Scotland's investigative programme *Frontline Scotland* at the time that the company faked safety reports and ignored vital maintenance to allow it to carry on producing oil at all costs, an allegation Shell denies.

Shell is working towards reopening 35-year-old Brent Charlie early next year, but has pledged that production will not resume until all necessary work is complete. At a press conference earlier this year, Voser said: “Do we make mistakes? Yes, we do make mistakes, but we learn from and we avoid them in the future.”

Yesterday, a spokesman for Shell said safety was the company's “foremost priority at all times”. Shell also insists that the Gannet spill does not undermine its efforts to drill in Arctic waters, where environmentalists warn it will be virtually impossible to contain a large spill in winter.

“We have taken significant steps to make sure we can operate safely and responsibly in the Arctic. We recognise oil-spill prevention and response capability as a critical element of all plans to develop oil and gas resources in the Arctic and we have developed advanced technology to locate, contain and remove oil in various ice conditions which we test regularly.”

Oil company insiders believe environmental activists have overstated the impact of the Gannet leak, which, while significant in UK terms, is tiny compared with Deepwater Horizon or even the 85,000 tonnes of crude oil that leaked into the sea off Shetland in 1993, when the oil tanker, *Braer*, ran aground.

Richard Lochhead, Holyrood's environment minister, said little tangible damage has been done to wildlife from the Gannet spill. But there are fears that the SNP's love affair with oil — a key plank in its independence campaign — may mean it is too close to the industry.

“Alex Salmond is quick to throw his tuppence-worth into stories where there is no discernable direct Scottish interest,” says Murdo Fraser, deputy leader of the Scottish Conservatives. “He was quick to comment on the riots the other week and yet here we have a major situation occurring in Scotland, which potentially has serious consequences, and the first minister has been remarkably reluctant to make any public comment on the matter.”

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds wants a full inquiry. Stuart Housden, its director, believes an inquiry should look beyond the causes and the ability of government agencies to predict, monitor and minimise the environmental impact to the “question of whether our North Sea Oil infrastructure is sufficiently robust to meet the high standards required” and whether maintenance is adequate.