

Opinion

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So, I had better confess, dear reader. Yes, I did find myself in a jail cell on Saturday morning.

Lessons learned. I am trying to move on with my life. Leave me alone.

My gleeful, so-called friends at Police Scotland will now be phoning each other to see who of their number finally collared the annoying git from Stornoway. Sadly for them, they will find no record of the alleged incident, the charges, or the reason for my being allowed to exit Donald Trump-style - without handcuffs.

That is because the circumstances were that I was virtually dragged into those cold, stone-walled cells by Chris Murray, the well-known, Stornoway-based former rescue helicopter winchman, who is originally from Dornoch. And there is your clue.

We were in his hometown, where the once grim penal institution Dornoch Jail - a terror tool of the cold-hearted Duke of Sutherland - is now a bustling collection of wee shops, selling cuddly toys and many, many other fine gifts. It used to be a case of: "Help, let me out." Now it's: "Hey, let me in."

Just a few doors along from the disused jail is the almost-skyscraping five-floor Dornoch Castle Hotel. It, too, has a grim history, and was also once a jail. Now, though, it is a grand hostelry of the "big open fire and immense selection of drams" variety.

After our incarceration, we sought refuge in there where we appreciated the warming embrace of excellent hospitality. Lolloping by that big fireside was also much appreciated.

Having donated many items to the local museum from his winchman days, and from his diving and metal detecting, Historylinks now has a Chris Murray exhibition for a few months. He declared it open. Go, have a look around.

It even includes a running video of an incredible rescue Chris did, filmed from the helicopter. See him smashed against the side of a ship in a raging storm, landing aboard and being blown by the storm back

over the side, where he dangles upside down on the wire. Then he clammers back up and completes the rescue.

No wonder that cove got a Queen's Gallantry Medal, doing that kind of malarkey for a job. Go in and have a look round. Be amazed.

Thank you very much to everyone at the museum for organising the event. Special thanks to Lynne, the curator, who put the multimedia show together.

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