

[Victims of crime: letter from the Home Secretary to Mayor of Greater Manchester](#)

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[Red letter day for Royal Navy in Scotland](#)

The start of construction on a vast building hall for the Royal Navy's next-generation Type 31 frigates and the naming of the fifth Clyde-bound Astute Class submarine Anson marked a red letter day for the Royal Navy in Scotland today, (Friday 11 Dec 2020).

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace welcomed the steel structures being put in place and main work getting underway on Babcock's mammoth Rosyth module hall in a virtual message of support, while the Venerable Martyn Gough QHC, Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy, blessed the 7,400 tonne, 97m long nuclear-powered boat in Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria.

Robertson of Elgin has been awarded a £31.5 million contract by Babcock to build the module hall. This project will maintain 100 jobs, create five new full-time roles and will support a further 100 positions nationally throughout the supply chain.

The company has also committed significant orders to local Scottish suppliers for the assembly hall build. Robertson also recently completed the new strategic facility for the submarine hunting Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft at RAF Lossiemouth.

Anson will eventually join her sister boats HMS Astute, HMS Ambush and HMS Artful, already in service, at HM Naval Base Clyde. Together they will be contributing to operations and supporting the Scots-based Continuous at Sea Deterrent. HMS Audacious, the fourth of class, left Barrow earlier this year and is currently undergoing sea trials. Boats six and seven – Agamemnon and Agincourt – are in construction at the Barrow shipyard by BAE Systems.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Defence underpins a wealth of jobs and investment across the entire United Kingdom. Babcock's 'frigate factory' in Rosyth demonstrates the huge footprint of prosperity that UK Government investment in defence brings.

This vast industrial facility will see Scottish shipbuilders build our latest warships that will take pride of place in the Royal Navy fleet.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

HMS Anson will play a vital role in defending the UK from deep-sea threats posed by adversaries around the world and provide a competitive edge for decades to come.

The name Anson already exemplifies the long and rich history of our Royal Navy and now, thanks to Anson's latest maritime technology, showcases excellence in UK shipbuilding.

Standing at 147 metres long, the new shipbuilding hall, when completed, could comfortably fit three Olympic size swimming pools. Towering at 30 metres high the aptly named 'megadoors' will accommodate the vital crane system, known as Goliath. Once the Type 31 build begins next year, the hall will be able to accommodate two vessels being assembled at the same time side by side.

The start of work follows the substantial £16.5 billion UK Government settlement for defence over the next four years that will modernise the armed forces, reinvigorate the shipbuilding industry and bring jobs and prosperity to every part of the UK.

Type 31 will be the beating heart of the Royal Navy's surface fleet, deterring aggression and supporting the UK's national interests across the world. The programme employs more than 1,250 people across the UK, which will create a legacy of infrastructure, innovation and skills for the shipbuilding sector. Off the back of the programme, Babcock has also jumpstarted a further 150 apprentice roles to set the sector up for success in the next generation.

Advanced nuclear technology means the Astute Class submarines never need to be refuelled. The extremely capable boats can circumnavigate the world without surfacing and are limited only by the amount of food that can be stored and the endurance of the crew. The submarines manufacture their own oxygen and fresh water from the ocean.

The last HMS Anson (1942-1951) was a King George V-class battleship, which saw active service in World War Two. All eight Anson vessels have been named after an Admiral of the Fleet, George Anson (1697-1762), who commanded at the first battle of Cape Finisterre and was First Lord of the Admiralty during the '7 Years War'.

[New UK Government Covid testing site opens in Hamilton](#)

The UK Government has today, Friday 11 December, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at Eddlewood Public Hall in Hamilton (ML3 8BG). The centre is easily accessible for people without a car.

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of six drive through sites, 20 walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all Covid testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 500,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people. I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts for the good of the country at this difficult time.

Gabe Docherty, Director of Public Health, NHS Lanarkshire said:

The public health department continues to contact-trace positive cases and clusters in our community and this addition to the UK testing provision is welcome.

I want to thank the public for their co-operation in reducing spread of the virus and ask that they please remain vigilant. The general measures to minimise the risk of Covid-19 remain the same – face coverings, avoid crowded places, clean your hands, two metre distance, self-isolate and go for a test if you have symptoms.

Please do not hesitate if you have symptoms. It's critical that you go for a test and this walk-in centre is a very welcome addition to our testing capacity.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Hamilton, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

[Beck is fish for the future thanks to Highways England project](#)

As part of its commitment to reduce the impact of its roads on the environment, Highways England has remodelled the culvert which helps Skitwath Beck at Penruddock, about six miles from Penrith, flow under the busy A66.

The work was completed in July and will make it easier for fish like brown trout, eels and even Atlantic salmon to travel through the culvert – especially important during the autumn spawning season for salmon and trout when they need to travel upstream to lay eggs.

Dion Auriac, Highways England's Project Manager, said:

This is a small but important project which will help support aquatic biodiversity at a location right along on the A66.

It also underlines our commitment to reducing the impact of our roads on the environment – in this case by modifying a structure originally provided during the construction of the road.

As part of the modifications, which took a month to complete, a meandering two stage channel was fitted to the culvert base by bolting timbers to the concrete and backfilling the sides with gravel. Stones were also fixed to the floor of the low flow channel to further break up the flow and provide refuge for juvenile fish making their way upstream. New water gates, known locally as hecks, and fences were replaced.

An innovative design was used so that as many river dwelling species as possible, including otters and eels, could benefit from the improvement. It includes measures to reduce the speed of the flowing water and make it easier for more fish to move upstream but also provides multiple depths and roughened surfaces through the culvert giving a wider variety of species the capability of passing through the culvert.

Rachel Osborn, Highways England's senior environmental specialist who developed the Skitwath Beck project, said:

The purpose of this particular project was to enable fish to migrate through the culvert and access more habitat upstream. The addition of natural features in the culvert benefits fish populations and the overall 'health' of the watercourse.

The scheme also supports other work delivered by local interest groups. Danny Teasdale of Ullswater Catchment Management Community Interest Company said:

The improvement to Skitwath culvert is welcomed and complements other community work underway to improve natural habitat along the beck and the wider Ullswater catchment such as installing fencing to protect river banks and tree planting.

Although not the first in the region, the fish easement is the first to be provided from a national five-year programme of special 'designated funds' – worth £936 million between 2020 and 2025 – to improve the environment along roads. The money is designed to secure a better deal for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, tackle air and noise pollution and look at innovative ways of delivering a better strategic road network for everyone.

In September, Highways England's staff in the North West marked the delivery of the first five years of designated funds environmental improvements with the completion of layby and other improvements in Cumbria.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Kidderminster child rapist has his sentence increased](#)

News story

Callum Haycock has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A man who raped a five-year-old girl has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, intervened and referred his sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme.

Callum Haycock, 21, denied the offences but was later convicted of raping the girl.

Haycock was sentenced to a 3 year community order on 1 October 2020 at Worcester Crown Court and was ordered to pay the victim £2,500 in compensation. He was also placed on the Sexual Offenders Registry for a period of 5 years.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, on 11 December the sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to a 3 year Community Order with a 12 month electronically monitored curfew, between the hours of 7pm to 7am.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

Haycock's sickening actions have had a significant impact on the victim and her family, and it is right that the Court of Appeal has increased his sentence today. My thoughts remain with the victim and her family for their ordeal.

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