

**0860/403**

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
2008TUESDAY, 6 MAY  
1.00 PM – 1.50 PMENGLISH  
STANDARD GRADE  
General Level  
Reading  
Text**[BLANK PAGE]**

Read carefully the passage overleaf. It will help if you read it twice. When you have done so, answer the questions. Use the spaces provided in the Question/Answer booklet.



# Saddle the white horses

Thurso prepares to host its first professional surf tour, confirming Scotland's status as a world-class surfing destination.

1 It was the stickers that gave it away. Turning left on the A9 at Latheron in Caithness, you were suddenly faced with a sign that looked as though it had been defaced by advertising executives from surfing companies. Like a cairn on a mountain path, the big green board declaring Thurso to be 23 miles away told travelling bands of surfers that they'd taken the right turn-off and were nearly at their destination. Slapping another sticker on the sign was like laying another stone on the pile.

2 Thurso is about to enter surfing's big league.

3 It's hard to reconcile the popular tropical imagery of surfing with the town, a raw, exposed kind of place that enjoys little escape from the worst excesses of the Scottish climate. The Caithness coastline is peppered with surfing spots, but the jewel in the crown and the target for dedicated wave riders lies within spitting distance of Thurso town centre at a reef break called Thurso East. In the right conditions, the swell there rears up over kelp-covered slabs into a fast-moving, barrelling monster of a wave considered world class by those in the know.

4 Now Thurso East is the focus of a huge professional surfing tour. The week-long Highland Open marks the first time a World Qualifying Series (WQS) surfing competition has been held in Scotland. It will also be the furthest north a WQS tour has ever travelled, anywhere in the world.

5 Professional competitive surfing has two tours: the WQS and the World Championship Tour (WCT). The WCT is the premier division, with the WQS being used as a platform for professionals to move up into the big time. Around 160 up-and-coming wave riders are expected to take part in the Thurso event. Prize money of \$100,000 (£57,000) is up for grabs, along with vital tour points.

6 "Travelling and exploring new places is part of the whole surfing culture," says Bernhard Ritzer, the Highland Open event manager. "We've had so much feedback from surfers from Australia and Brazil who want to go. They see it as an adventure and as something new. We did a photo trip there last year with some of our team riders and they were impressed. They're excited about it—although it will still be a shock because I don't think they know how cold and harsh it can be."

7 "Thurso is one of the best waves in Europe, if not the world," he says. "Most people don't even know it, and it's just so good. It doesn't always have to be sunny, warm and tropical. It can also be cold, rough and hard."

8 "The idea is to have a contrast to the summer events in the tropical islands. We also have something in the north to show that this is part of surfing. Very often on the WQS tour the waves aren't that good, but here they are expecting big reef break waves and they like to surf those."

9 Surfers generally guard their local



breaks jealously. It's considered essential to keep your mouth shut about your "secret spot", in case you find it overrun with visitors. So, economic benefits to Thurso aside, some local surfers were a little concerned about an event on this scale descending on their area. WQS representatives met with these surfers to address their concerns and feel that they've pretty much got everyone on board. WQS is also paying for improvements to the car parking area near the Thurso East break.

10 "We're concerned to get the locals involved," says Ritzer. "We want to keep them happy and don't want to look too commercial, coming in with a big event machine. We need them to help organise local stuff. You always have some individuals who will boycott everything, but we understand that most of them are positive."

11 Andy Bain probably knows the break at Thurso East better than anyone, although he'll be watching the competition from the shoreline. Bain, who runs Thurso Surf, has been surfing the reef there for 17 years and is eagerly anticipating

the arrival of the Highland Open. He's aware of the concerns and the possible exposure of his home break, but doesn't anticipate a negative impact.

12 "From the surf school side of things it's good because it'll generate business for us," says Bain, 33. "As a local surfer, it's kind of like closure for me to have this competition. To say the world has now recognised Thurso as a top surfing destination makes me feel proud. A lot of people say it's going to get crowded and exposed, but with it being a cold destination I don't think it's going to be that bad."

13 For professional surfer Adam Robertson from Victoria, Australia, the trip to Thurso will be something of a journey into the unknown. "This will be the first time I've ever been to Scotland," says Robertson, who has competed on the WQS tour for the past three years. "We're all a bit worried about how cold it's going to be. Apart from that we're pretty excited because it's a place we've never been."

14 Robertson, 23, who has been surfing since he was four, criss-crosses the globe with his fellow WQS competitors in pursuit of the best waves and a place on the covered WCT tour. He may as well be going to surf on the moon for all he knows about Thurso East, but that's part of the appeal.

15 "We follow the surf around all year and go to a lot of different places, but Scotland's somewhere probably none of us have been to," he says. "That for me was a big part of wanting to go, to see the place. As a professional surfer, you've got to live out of your bag a lot, travelling around with long stints away from home, but when you perform well in the event or get some really good waves, it makes it all worth it."

16 "I feel pretty good and I'm hoping to do well," he adds. "Everyone who does the tour is feeling good too, so it should be a great event. It'll be interesting to see what the waves are

like."

17 Competitors will be scored by a team of eight international judges on the length of their ride, the difficulty of moves and how they connect it all together. Waves are scored on a one to ten scale, with ten a perfect ride, and the final scores are based on each surfer's two highest-scoring waves.

18 "These events raise the profile of locations, create investment in areas and hopefully provide opportunities for young surfers coming through to grow and compete at world-class levels," says Dave Reed, contest director for the WQS event. "It's a great way to say we've got some of the best waves in the world."

Adapted from a magazine article

[END OF PASSAGE]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Article is adapted from *Saddle the white horses* taken from pages 58–59 of *The Herald* magazine on 22 April 2006 by Dave Flanagan. Published by *The Herald*. Reproduced by permission of David Flanagan.

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TUESDAY, 6 MAY  
1.00 PM – 1.50 PM

ENGLISH  
STANDARD GRADE  
General Level  
Reading  
Questions

Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

Town

Forename(s)

Surname

Date of birth

Day Month Year

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Scottish candidate number

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Number of seat

**NB Before leaving the examination room you must give this booklet to the invigilator.  
If you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.**



QUESTIONS

Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Look at Paragraphs 1 to 3.

1. (a) What had been added to the road sign in Caithness?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

- (b) Write down **two** things the surfers would know when they saw this road sign.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

2. “Thurso is about to enter surfing’s big league.” (Paragraph 2)

How does the writer make this statement stand out?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

3. Thurso is different from the popular image of a surfing location.

- (a) **In your own words**, describe the popular image of a surfing location.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

- (b) **Write down an expression** showing how Thurso is different.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

4. What do the words “jewel in the crown” (Paragraph 3) suggest about Thurso East?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

5. “. . . a fast-moving, barrelling monster . . .” (Paragraph 3)

Explain fully why this is an effective description of the wave.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

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PAGE TOTAL

Look at Paragraphs 4 and 5.

6. In which **two** ways is the Highland Open different from other WQS surfing competitions?

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

7. In your own words, explain the difference between the two professional surfing tours.

WCT \_\_\_\_\_

WQS \_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

8. Which **two** benefits will the winner of the competition gain?

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

Look at Paragraphs 6 to 8.

9. Give **three** reasons why, according to Bernhard Ritzer, surfers will want to visit Thurso.

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

(iii) \_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

10. According to Ritzer, what will surprise the surfers?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

[Turn over



11. Thurso can offer something which many other surfing locations cannot.

What is this?

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2 ■ 0

**Look at Paragraphs 9 and 10.**

12. “Surfers generally guard their local breaks . . . ” (Paragraph 9)

**In your own words**, explain why surfers do this.

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2 1 0

13. What **style** of language is used in the expression “keep your mouth shut” (Paragraph 9)?

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2 ■ 0

14. Which **two key** things have WQS representatives done to gain support?

(i) 

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(ii) 

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2 1 0

15. The WQS representatives feel that “they’ve pretty much got everyone on board.” (Paragraph 9)

**Write down an expression** from Paragraph 10 which continues this idea.

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2 ■ 0

16. **Write down a single word** from this section meaning “refuse to support or take part”.

2 ■ 0

**Look at Paragraphs 11 to 18.**

17. (a) How does local surfer Andy Bain feel about the competition?

Tick (✓) the best answer.

very negative and angry	
quite pleased but worried	
excited and not really anxious	

2 ■ 0

(b) **Write down an expression** to support your chosen answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

18. “He may as well be going to surf on the moon . . . ” (Paragraph 14)

What does this comparison suggest about Thurso?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ■ 0

19. In Paragraph 15, Australian Adam Robertson describes his life as a professional surfer.

**In your own words**, sum up the **negative** and **positive** aspects of his life.

(a) **negative:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

(b) **positive:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

20. What **three** elements of the surfers’ performance are judged?

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

(iii) \_\_\_\_\_

2 1 0

[Turn over

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Think about the passage as a whole.

21. (i) What do you think is the main purpose of this passage?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

to tell the reader some amusing stories about surfing	
to inform the reader about a surfing competition in Scotland	
to argue against holding a surfing competition in Scotland	

(ii) Give a reason to support your answer.

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2 1 0

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]



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p2

p3

p4

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p6

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