

Five things you need to know today



The Reporter used the train yesterday, and went to a conference in Manchester, Salford actually, at Media City. Changing from the train to the tram was pretty easy, but, unfortunately, the tram did not go all the way to the Media City stop, meaning a short walk from the previous stop, and leading to arrival just three minutes after The Princess Royal had left!



Blue Peter Garden Media
City Manchester

HRH was there to officially open the Blue Peter Garden which has a statue to the famous Blue Peter dog, Petra, as its cornerstone. What was great about Manchester, apart from the weather which was positively balmy, and aside from the fact that the royal visit meant that the tram stopped short of the eventual destination, was in fact the Manchester tram itself.

But what made it even better was the fact that, upon arrival at Manchester Piccadilly railway station, it was only a short distance to walk to the tram. We might soon have the same level of connection here in Edinburgh, after £7m spent on upgrading the station including new escalators at Waverley Steps up to Princes Street. Soon we will also have lifts again. (Does anyone else remember that there was a lift which went direct from the station concourse to the front desk in the Balmoral?)

There was much discussion earlier in the week at the Transport

Committee meeting about the proposed closure of Waverley Station to taxis this summer. It transpires that this matter has nothing to do with any terrorist threat around the time of the Olympic Games, as suggested by other local media. The matter was referred to the next Transport Committee meeting in June for action then, with a suggestion nothing could be done till the end of the year, but Network Rail have confirmed to The Reporter that this is not a matter which can wait until the end of 2012. In line with all their other stations, Waverley has to be made vehicle free by July of this year, as part of a wider review of transport facilities across the country.

A spokesman said:-“Waverley is an anomaly, as it is the last Network Rail station where you can bring a vehicle into the main concourse, but the reason for this change is simply government guidelines, not any kind of attack on taxi firms. We are continuing to discuss the matter with council officials, and as a national company we are working towards the same target dates across the UK. We will actually lose revenue as a result of this, since we charge the taxi companies who come into the station, but it is part of a wider need to look at access.” By July the lifts will be in place to allow step free access from the concourse to either Princes Street or Market Street. Last year when the station was closed to vehicles as a result of the works to the roof, blue buggies were used to help those with limited mobility get around the station and up to the taxi ranks.

A fire in Denham Green last night has left a one year old boy in hospital, suffering from smoke inhalation, and a woman was taken to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary was taken to hospital after another fire in Fountainbridge. [The BBC](#) have more on this.

Edinburgh author, Nicola Morgan, was among the winners yesterday at the Scottish Children's Book Awards. Our full report is [here](#).

In other literary news, JK Rowling has confirmed that she is writing a book for adults. [The Herald](#) explain that she has moved from Harry Potter publishers, Bloomsbury to a new company called Little, Brown.

And [The Daily Record](#) tells us how a worker in an Edinburgh Asda store screamed when she found a venomous spider among a bunch of bananas earlier this week...eek!