

Five things you need to know today



Assault & Robbery – Prison officer jailed – Culture and Leisure Committee – Operation Cipher – Book Festival

Lothian and Borders Police are appealing for witnesses following an assault and robbery in the Capital yesterday

The incident happened around 12.30am on Monday morning in Infirmary Street. Two 17-year-old males were making their way towards Drummond Street when they passed two men standing at the junction of Infirmary Street with High School Yards.

At this time one of the men engaged the youths in conversation before punching one of them to the face, causing him to fall to the ground.

The suspect then continued to assault the victim and demanded he hand over his money. The other male grabbed hold of the victim's friend, preventing him from intervening during the assault.

Both suspects then made off from towards Infirmary Lane with the teenager's wallet. Police are now urging anyone who can assist with their enquiries to come forward.

The first suspect is described as white, 17-19 years-old, 5ft 7ins tall with a skinny build, clean shaven face and black hair. He was wearing a dark blue hooded top, black nylon Adidas tracksuit bottoms with red stripes down the side and spoke with a Scottish accent.

The second suspect is described as white, 17-19-years-old, 5ft 5ins tall with a medium build, chubby cheeks and short light-coloured hair. He was wearing a red hooded top, grey Adidas

jogging bottoms and a silver pendant.

A police spokesman said:- "The victim suffered minor injuries to his face, but did not require medical attention.

"Nevertheless he was left badly shaken and deeply upset at the theft of his wallet and we are keen to hear from anyone who was in the area this morning and remembers seeing anything suspicious. Similarly, anyone who can assist us in identifying the men responsible for this attack is also asked to contact police immediately."

Anyone with any information can contact Lothian and Borders Police on 0131 311 3131, or the charity Crimestoppers in confidence and complete anonymity on 0800 555 111.

A prison officer who smuggled drugs and a mobile phone into Addiewell Prison was sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment yesterday.

Garry McDonald, (34), had previously pled guilty to being concerned in the supply of drugs – namely cocaine, cannabis, diazepam and heroin – at the prison in West Lothian between July and September 2011.

Michelle MacLeod, Procurator Fiscal High Court, East of Scotland, said:-"Garry McDonald was smuggling drugs into the prison where he worked over a six month period, and being paid thousands of pounds to do so. He was in a position of trust which he abused, jeopardising not only his job but his freedom to make some extra cash.

Prosecutors will continue to take a robust approach to anyone who involves themselves in the drugs trade."

The council's Culture and Leisure committee meets today. One

of the items on their agenda is a wee bit of back slapping in that the Usher Hall is to be congratulated on retaining its five star status awarded by VisitScotland. However we are sure you will agree it is now such a nice space, and much better than it used to be!

The report before the meeting today states:-“The Usher Hall is the first concert hall in Scotland to achieve a 5 Star award, and is one of only two performing arts venues to have won the award (alongside the Byre Theatre in St Andrews). VisitScotland will continue to carry out unannounced annual inspections of the Hall, to ensure that the 5 Star standard is maintained.” Details of the full agenda in our [article from yesterday.](#)

Operation Cipher is to be launched in the Caldera today. We are proposing to bring you live coverage of the event, mostly updated through the medium of Twitter, but you will be able to [follow the proceedings here.](#) We hope to bring you some photos, audio and perhaps a wee bit of video. True multimedia..

The Reporter was at the Book Festival talk by Professor Sue Black and Val McDermid last week, and we reported on the comedy which permeated the hour [in an article here.](#) The Guardian, as you may know, is one of the sponsors of the festival and they have produced a video of the forensic anthropologist and the crime writer which we reproduce here.

Yesterday the session we attended was chaired by former West Lothian MP, Tam Dalyell who was in conversation with Merlin Waterson who has written a book called A Noble Thing about houses given to the National Trust and the National Trust for Scotland in lieu of tax. Dalyell knows a lot about this as he is of course resident in The Binns near Blackness which his

mother donated, but with the proviso that the family could continue to live there. The session was interesting, particularly as to the size of the organisation which has been accused of bureaucracy, but Waterson insisted that both the National Trust and NTS need a certain core of members so that they have enough funds to cover some of the maintenance of their building stock. Unfortunately, even though Robin Harper, one of the Directors of NTS was in the audience, there was no mention of the current fairly dire financial position of NTS.

Highlight of today for locals has to be Ian Rankin at 8.00p.m. when he is going to do a Desert Island Discs style hour for his character, Rebus, but you probably have to queue most of the day to have any chance of getting a ticket!