

Five things you need to know today



Russell Road reopens today – Gordon Brown appearing at Holyrood – Tian Tian is 9 today – Fringe -Rugby

The Russell Road bridge will be formally reopened today by Transport Convenor, Lesley Hinds. This has been closed for some time to allow for tram works to progress here. To remind you what the tram project is the council have issued some Tram Facts:-

- The Edinburgh Trams project is the second largest infrastructure project in Scotland after the Forth Replacement Crossing
- The tram line will take passengers from Edinburgh International Airport to York Place in the city centre
- Trams will have an end-to-end journey time of around half an hour
- Edinburgh Trams will be among the most advanced in Europe, offering a fast, safe and efficient service with low on-street carbon emissions
- With a capacity of 250 people and at around 43 metres in length, they are among the longest trams in Europe, providing passengers with safe, comfortable and accessible travel
- The tramline will have 16 tram stops along its 14 km route, 12 bridges, one underpass and a state-of-the-art depot and control room
- The trams are due to begin passenger services in the city by Summer 2014

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP will headline day three of the Festival of Politics at the Scottish Parliament today. The former Prime Minister will deliver the inaugural Campbell Christie Memorial Lecture from Holyrood's debating chamber.

Some of Scotland's best literary talent – Iain Banks, James Robertson, Louise Welsh – will be discussing how Scottish writing has reflected our politics and society over the past century in Scotland's Bookshelf – Politics and Society in Scottish Writing.

And Is participation in sport a level playing-field? Panellists including rugby player and broadcaster John Beattie and Olympic medal-winning athlete Liz McColgan will be providing the answers.

Other day three highlights include:

Members of the public have the chance to quiz top historians about Sir William Wallace, Scotland and the Wider World and the momentous period in Scottish history that was 1286 to 1306.

And attitudes to migration in Scotland come under the spotlight with Who are Jock Tamson's Bairns?

Friday's music session comes from Mull Historical Society, with songs from Colin MacIntyre catalogue including his recent album City Awakenings.

Full programme details can be found online – see below.

Now in its eighth year, the Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics includes a four day programme of politics, music, art, theatre, literature and debate under the theme of 'Politics. Culture. Creativity. A Force for Positive Change'. Events take place on 17, 18, 24, 25 August at the Scottish Parliament.

Programme availability and tickets

* Tickets are available online via www.festivalofpolitics.org.uk

* A limited number of tickets are available via the Scottish Parliament in person and via telephone on 0131 348 5405.

* Full details of the festival programme are available from www.festivalofpolitics.org.uk

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One of our pandas has a birthday today. The female panda Tian Tian celebrates her 9th birthday today. So what will be happening along at the Zoo today? Birthday cake?

The Fringe is of course in its last few days but we met some people last night that we think you might like. The Blitz Sisters were having a wee night off but gave us a taster of what their show is like.

Edinburgh Rugby play a pre-season friendly tonight against Northampton Saints starting at 7.30 at Murrayfield. This is what they say [on their website](#):-“The head coach has made eight changes to the side that lined up against Newcastle last weekend, with Welsh cap John Yapp and All Black Ben Atiga set to make their club debuts at prop and inside-centre.

Edinburgh Rugby head coach, Michael Bradley, said: “Northampton provide quality opposition for us to measure ourselves against. They’re very strong with a good pedigree – a bit like Munster who we play the following week in the first league match of the season. It’ll be a good challenge for us and they may even play in a similar way. □ □”