

# Five things you need to know today



**Sir Chris Hoy is now a Freeman...- Portobello High School – Colonies Consultation – Public holiday? – Holyrood**

Sir Chris Hoy is well used to riding into the history books, only on Sunday afternoon he wasn't in the saddle.

The six-time gold medallist [joined fellow Olympic and Paralympic stars on an open-top bus tour](#) through the streets of Edinburgh, before being awarded the Freedom of the City during an emotional ceremony in the Assembly Rooms.

Over 30,000 people lined the route, which began at the City Chambers, to celebrate the athletes' achievements at the London 2012 Games.

Sir Chris was joined on the City's golden bus by Olympians, David Florence, Lynsey Sharp, Josh Taylor, Euan Burton, Chris Sherrington, Sally Conway and Sarah Clark, and by Paralympians, Jim Anderson, Sean Fraser and Sam Ingram.

The newly-refurbished and spectacular Assembly Rooms provided a fitting backdrop for Sir Chris to receive the City's highest honour in the company of his family, friends and fellow athletes – together with many of the volunteers who gave up their time to make London 2012 such a success.

In presenting the scroll, Lord Provost Donald Wilson spoke of Sir Chris' incredible talent, his determination, but also of his humility.

“What makes Sir Chris such an inspirational figure is his humility, his all round human decency and his pride in being part of a team. This is so apparent in the way he has handled

his success, and what has made him such an outstanding role model.

“In becoming a Freeman of the City, Sir Chris joins an exclusive club whose only living members are the Queen, Prince Philip, Sir Sean Connery, Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi – and with previous recipients including the likes of Charles Dickens, Alexander Graham Bell and Winston Churchill, he is deservedly in distinguished company.

“Today has been hugely emotional for me, as I’m sure it has been for the people of Edinburgh who turned out in their thousands to show their appreciation, particularly in Sir Chris, but also in the city’s involvement in what has been an unparalleled summer of sporting achievement.”

In accepting the honour, Sir Chris Hoy said: “To be awarded the Freedom of Edinburgh is an incredible privilege. As this is the greatest accolade the city can bestow upon an individual I am absolutely delighted and deeply honoured to be recognised in this way.

“The reception from the people of Edinburgh today was overwhelming and it meant so much to be able to enjoy the celebrations with my friends and family.

“The London and Glasgow parades were fantastic occasions but when it’s your home city, it’s so much more special. This is a day I will remember forever.”

Also on the guestlist was another of Scotland’s great sportsmen and a hero of Sir Chris when he was growing up, Gavin Hastings.

Speaking in praise of Sir Chris during the ceremony, he said: “Chris has always carried himself in a different way from most other athletes; with calm focus and a quiet confidence in his ability to succeed – but without ever forgetting his roots.

“I would love to have taken the field with 14 Chris Hoys!”

The 500-strong guest-list included 100 Games Makers. Hannah McCaig, 18, was part of a group of 16 Edinburgh school children who volunteered at the Paralympic seated volleyball competition.

“To be part of the London 2012 Games was a once in a lifetime experience. The atmosphere was electric and everyone was so enthusiastic, she said.

“I’ve really caught the volunteering bug and I desperately hope to get another chance at the Commonwealth Games in two years’ time.

“The group were so grateful to be invited the ceremony today and it was really humbling to be thanked by Sir Chris – and to actually meet him was the icing on the cake!”

The ceremony was followed by a Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Provost in honour of the athletes’ collective achievements at the Games. They were each presented with gift, following which David Florence gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the athletes.

The guests were entertained by the George Watson’s College Chamber Choir, Edinburgh Schools Jazz Band and Big Project Choir.

[We have a gallery of our photographs here.](#) A big thank you to Jigsaw who let us camp out on their balcony to get the shots of the athletes arriving at The Assembly Rooms.

\*\*\*

[Last week’s decision](#) by the Court of Session on the future of Portobello High School has of course attracted views on both sides. There is to be a public meeting this Friday when a discussion on a way forward will be held. Here are the details:-

## [Portobello Final](#)

\*\*\*

The council are beginning a series of consultations about the character of the colonies in Edinburgh beginning today in Fountainbridge Library. The council say:-“The aim of this is to examine whether the various Colonies merit conservation area status to protect their historic and architectural importance. ”

And here is the film they have made to tell you more about it.

\*\*\*

It may be a public holiday for some but there are still things to do today. [All the City libraries](#) are open. [Lothian Buses](#) are running a Saturday service, and their travel shops are closed. Most medical practices are closed today.

But are you working?

If you work in a city centre shop then the chances are that you will be. What do you think of the local public holiday set up? Should it be shelved in favour of a day in lieu to be taken when you want? Should we have proper holidays when everyone is really off work as happens at Christmas or New Year? Send us your comments below or send us an email to [theedinburghreporter@gmail.com](mailto:theedinburghreporter@gmail.com)

\*\*\*

Nothing much happens at Holyrood on a Monday but tomorrow morning at 10a.m. the Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, Andrew Dixon is giving evidence at the Education and Culture committee. There are some calls for Creative Scotland to be disbanded, most notably (and with stinging words) by poet, Don Paterson, according to an article in [The Herald](#). One of their recent offers of support has been to STV to assist with making

a cookery programme, and this is seen in some quarters as promoting concern over who decides what creative projects are supported.

[Also at Holyrood tomorrow](#) the Justice Secretary, Kenny Macaskill is to give evidence tomorrow on the Defamation Bill which is UK legislation.