

Five things you need to know today



Fire in Fountainbridge – Referendum Question – Abduction – Macmillan Cancer Support Mammoth Quiz – Tonight at the Filmhouse

There was a serious fire yesterday in Fountainbridge and five people had to be rescued after the common stair was deemed unsafe due to the smoke accumulated there. They had a rather more public rescue than they might have wished for as the STV offices are just round the corner and they were on the scene almost as fast as Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service to video what was happening and then stream it live. [You can see the report and the footage here.](#)

More than fifty firefighters were involved in tackling the blaze and five people were rescued from the building on Fountainbridge after a first floor tenement flat went on fire shortly before 10.15am. A further two women who escaped were taken to hospital with severe smoke inhalation and a man also got out of the building on his own, but was not treated as a casualty.

The five rescued by firefighters using a height appliance were all treated at the scene by ambulance personnel.

Five appliances were sent to the scene along with a number of specialist appliances after Fire Control received several calls reporting a flat alight.

The first units were on the scene within two minutes of being mobilised from Tollcross fire station, which is just round the corner from where the fire broke out.

When crews arrived, they saw thick black smoke and flames coming from the window of the affected property and discovered two women who were already out of the building but who had been badly affected by smoke inhalation.

Ten firefighters in breathing apparatus were used to fight the fire and check the six properties in the affected stair for other residents. One woman, who was in the flat above the property where the fire broke out, was given fire survival guidance by Control Room staff until crews were able to get to her and rescue her.

As well as tackling the blaze, fire crews were systematically checking properties to ensure that no one else was trapped or overcome by the smoke from the fire. The incident commander was satisfied that all the premises were thoroughly searched and clear just after midday.

Lothian Road was closed for a number of hours to allow for firefighting operations to take place. Crews remained on site for the rest of the afternoon to clear the debris from the affected properties and begin fire investigation.

The Scottish independence referendum question, **“Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country?”** has been put to the Electoral Commission, who have now delivered their findings on its suitability, and have rejected the question.

The Scottish Government today confirmed it will accept all of the [Electoral Commission recommendations](#) on the referendum question and campaign spending limits.

Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she was delighted with the recommended question – ‘Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes/No’ – and confirmed that it will be this question that is put before the Scottish Parliament.

The Deputy First Minister also said she was satisfied with the recommended spending limits as they provide a level playing field for both sides of the debate.

In line with established practice in referendums throughout the UK, the Scottish Parliament will take the final decision on the wording of the question and campaign spending limits as part of its consideration of the Referendum Bill, which will be introduced in March.

Ms Sturgeon also welcomed the Electoral Commission's calls for clarity around what a 'No' vote will mean for Scotland and its recommendation that the Scottish and UK governments work together to give clarity to the process that will follow a 'Yes' vote. She called on the UK government to accept these recommendations.

Ms Sturgeon said:

"I would like to thank the Electoral Commission for the work they have done on testing our proposed referendum question and giving advice on campaign spending limits. I am pleased to confirm we will accept their recommendations in full. I am particularly delighted with the conclusion the Electoral Commission has reached on the question. While its view is that our proposed question was clear, simple and easy to understand, I am nevertheless happy to accept their recommended change. Their advice is based on rigorous testing and we will submit the Electoral Commission's recommended question – 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' – to the Scottish Parliament as part of the Referendum Bill.

"I am also pleased with the spending limits proposed by the Electoral Commission – they deliver a level playing field and will allow a fair and balanced debate on both sides. I am also pleased that the Commission has modified the position set out in their response to our consultation in March, as this would have resulted in an imbalance between the two sides of the campaign. We have always said that Scotland's referendum

will be run to the highest international standards of fairness and transparency, and the Electoral Commission plays a vital role in that.

“The Scottish Parliament will take the final decision on the wording of the question and campaign spending limits as part of its consideration of the Referendum Bill which reinforces that this is truly a referendum made in Scotland. I also welcome the Electoral Commission calls for both the Scottish and UK Governments to clarify what process will follow the referendum if most voters vote ‘Yes’ or most voters vote ‘No’ vote. The Electoral Commission rightly point out this is in line with the Edinburgh Agreement.

“I have been calling for the UK Government to enter discussions to allow the voters to be better informed, but so far they have refused. This would not be pre-negotiation on the terms of independence but vital information for voters that will allow them to make an informed choice in autumn 2014. Given the Scottish Government is accepting all recommendations from the Electoral Commission I would hope that the UK Government is prepared to do the same.”

Lothian and Borders Police are appealing for witnesses following an assault and abduction in Edinburgh.

The incident happened around 5.30pm yesterday afternoon in Royston Mains Crescent.

A 45-year-old Chinese man was entering a common stair in the street when three men approached and began assaulting him before producing a knife and stealing the personal possessions from his pockets. The victim was then forced into the back of a black car, which drove off towards Crew Road North.

After a short time the car stopped at a walkway, which runs between the Morrisons supermarket and the Ainslie Park Leisure

Centre, and man was removed from the vehicle where he tried to seek assistance from passing cyclists. He was then dragged back into the car and was taken back at Royston Mains Crescent.

The suspects all made off and police were contacted.

Officers are now urging anyone who can assist with their enquiries to come forward.

All three men are described as white, in their twenties, average height and had scarves covering their faces.

Detective Sergeant Andy Macmillan said: "While the victim was not seriously injured, this was a terrifying ordeal for him to endure and he was left understandably distressed.

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"Police are carrying out local enquiries to see if anyone remembers seeing anything suspicious in the area, or can help us identify the men responsible. We are particularly keen to speak to the cyclists who rode past the man after he exited the car. These individuals are asked to contact police immediately.

"Similarly, anyone with other information relevant to this investigation is also asked to come forward."

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



Daphne Fowler

Macmillan Cancer Support is encouraging people in Edinburgh to

get together and organise a Mammoth Quiz to raise thousands of pounds for the charity.

The Mammoth Quiz was created by a Macmillan fundraising committee who write all the questions and distribute the quiz packs, so all people need to do is sign up and get some friends together on February 22nd 2013. To take part and organise a quiz in your area contact anna@webboundle.co.uk

Daphne Fowler, who appears in TV quiz show Eggheads said; "I am delighted to be the Patron for the Mammoth Quiz, I think it's a fantastic event and is so easy for people to get involved. I would encourage everyone to sign up, it's always such fun and I can't wait to head along to my local Mammoth Quiz again this year."

Had enough of January and the long days at work? Cheer yourself up with a visit to the cinema. Tonight at the Filmhouse for example they are showing Life of Pi which we heartily recommend and Jules et Jim in the early part of the evening, the 1961 Truffaut film about a romantic triangle. For the Francophiles among you here is what one YouTube user says is the definitive scene... in French mind you with no subtitles! (We are sure they will have subtitles at the Filmhouse!)