

Five things you need to know today



Please can we have a Bike Hire Scheme in Edinburgh? – Sounds of Edinburgh – Panda pregnant? – Talk this evening at the Royal Society of Edinburgh – World Book Night

News that [Glasgow is to get a bike hire scheme](#) like London, Paris and Dublin is great news for anyone who knows that getting around on two wheels in a city centre is both good for you and the environment. Sadly, Edinburgh appears to be lagging behind in getting a bike hire scheme. It was proposed as a possible way of getting a hard core of cyclists using the city streets under the last administration, but is it still a possibility?

The council's Active Travel Action Plan says:-“Bike share schemes have had an important role in changing the perception of cycling in cities where they have been implemented.

A study conducted for the Council concluded that there is a significant level of demand for a bicycle share scheme in central Edinburgh. However it found that the scheme would predominantly attract people already walking, using buses and a small number of car users. Revenue income is not expected to cover the operating costs of a scheme and the recharged capital costs of installation. Income from advertising/sponsorship revenue could help to make up the funding shortfall but is expected to be minimal in the short to medium term due to the current economic climate.

The Council will support the development of small schemes. For example, we will discuss the potential for bike share schemes

with employers at Edinburgh Park and Gyle Business Parks. We will also review the potential for a scheme when the Council's on-street advertising contract is next reviewed."

The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to Transport Convenor, Councillor Lesley Hinds who assured us the matter is far from forgotten:- "The contract comes up next year. Work is going on at the moment to put a report to Finance in June this year. The issue of bike hire I hope will be included in the list of services we would want bidding contractors to consider ."

Councillor Jim Orr, Vice-Convenor of Transport and Environment, also confirmed that the council is looking at the possibilities:- "Officers are working on a proposal for a cycle hire scheme to be brought to committee later this year. However, they have informed me that, rather than following the London model, it is likely that the suggested scheme will operate more like a "bike library".

"There is a huge amount of work ongoing to encourage and facilitate more cycling. For example, on the A90 cycle path upgrade (which I'm particularly pleased about) and the North Meadow Walk upgrade. There are many more smaller projects such as the residential cycle parking scheme in South Edinburgh. All these plans are great news for cyclists. And don't forget that we'll be spending a record 6% of our transport budget specifically on cycling this year, much of it boosted by match funding from Sustrans and elsewhere."

In Dublin, advertising company JC Decaux supported the bike hire scheme, which they say has been "phenomenally successful". Perhaps there is an opportunity for potential revenue from the trams when they are introduced in Edinburgh next year, and possibly our councillors will have this in mind as a possible way of combining the two forms of transport into one marketing solution? In Dublin JC Decaux provided the bikes in exchange for advertising positions around the city. And one of those positions is on a Dublin tram. All around the tram in

fact!

According to JC Decaux:-“No other transit format offers as much quality and impact as a Tram Wrap.From travel and tourism to entertainment clients, this is the ultimate in big brand messaging, connecting with motorists and commuters in the city as highlighted in the latest wave of research results.”

Take a look at some of the spectacular tram wraps that have run on the LUAS in Dublin during 2012... And we await news from the Finance Committee later this year.



As part of the Edinburgh International Festival there is a project which aims to get recordings of sound from all over the city as part of the composition of a new orchestral work. Here is the composer telling you what it entails and how you can join in:-



The pandas are not on public show today following yesterday's procedure to artificially inseminate the female panda, Tian Tian. Today's photo is of Tian Tian which we took on Saturday morning when she was a bit shy of the cameras. This was the update we received from the zoo late yesterday afternoon:-

“Edinburgh Zoo's specialist team and experts from around the world performed artificial insemination on female giant panda Tian Tian in the early hours of this morning. Natural mating

was not attempted. Yang Guang had been interested and shown consistently encouraging behaviour, however based on his many years' experience, our Chinese colleague Professor Wang felt that although Tian Tian had displayed all of the correct behaviours, she had also displayed signs that told him she would not be conducive to mating.

Both pandas and humans are sleeping today after an intensive week and there is unfortunately no one available for further comment. The procedures went very much to plan and giant pandas are both well, but will be off show until Tuesday."

Tonight at 6pm, at The Royal Society of Edinburgh

The award-winning author of ten books, Ken McGoogan.

Born in Orkney in 1813, John Rae grew up hunting and fishing. He trained in Edinburgh as a doctor, sailed with the Hudson's Bay Company, and became an outstanding Arctic traveller. In 1854, Rae was mapping the Arctic coastline, slogging overland through snow and ice, when he discovered a strait that proved to be the final link in the Northwest Passage. Returning to camp, he encountered Inuit hunters who informed him that the long-lost, two-ship expedition of Sir John Franklin had ended in disaster and cannibalism. Rae acquired relics. He brought the tragic news to London, where his report scandalized Victorian England and prompted Charles Dickens to join Lady Franklin in a ferocious campaign to discredit him. Rae fought back, but historians and map-makers ignored his achievements, and he remained the only major explorer never to receive a knighthood.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and is marked by World Book Night. [North Edinburgh News](#) report the news that a crime writer will be speaking in Muirhouse Library

at 6:00pm.