

Five things you need to know today



Royal Highland Show – Launch of the Edinburgh International Book Festival – Nile Rodgers at Summerhall – Rob Hopkins – Help The Scotsman film Scotland

This year's Royal Highland Show opens its doors today amid hopes of weather which is much better than the downpours of last year. With something to entertain all ages it is a huge draw as a day out for many schoolchildren.

Over 25,000 children are expected to visit the show this year as The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) gears up for another busy four days.

Last year nearly 240 school parties from across Scotland benefited from a comprehensive experiential learning programme delivered by RHET. The education charity has a growing reputation for delivering world-class learning opportunities about farming and food production, the outdoors and the countryside.

For 2013, RHET will return to the show with more activities and learning experiences with the specific aim to help young people develop food literacy. Guided tours of partner trade stands and attractions in the showground will offer pupils and teachers the opportunity to understand the links between consumers, farmers and producers from key exhibitors at the UK's largest agricultural event.

Continuing to highlight key themes from the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, RHET will offer youngsters the chance to take part in interactive sessions within the

Children's Discovery Centre.

The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health is the primary funder of the Centre tying in with their centenary year celebration. For the show they will be running a drop in service to educate children about Scotland's naturally healthy produce and why it is good for you.

Other activities on offer at this year's show will include countryside themed badge making with the Game & Wildlife Trust, learning how to make flour from wheat with our very own Gorgie City Farm and the opportunity to milk Mabel – RHET's life-sized fibreglass cow. In 2012, Scottish rugby stars Roddy Grant and David Denson showed off their culinary skills by helping out at the Scotch Beef Cookery Theatre, and more celebrities are expected to attend this year.

The Children's Discovery Centre will be open to members of the public throughout the four-day event between 9.00am-5pm.

The diversity of the activities on offer by RHET at the show provides fun educational sessions for children of all ages, helping youngsters understand more about rural life. With a spotlight on food consumption sponsor, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), will return with the interactive Scotch Beef cookery theatre to teach participants about livestock, as well as the importance of healthy eating.

The Honey Tent offers an insight into beekeeping and gives children the opportunity to experience candle making as well as learning about honey and wax based products.

Focusing on renewable energy, local Edinburgh business, vento ludens will present Timmy the Turbine; a key character used to communicate the importance of developing renewable energy in Scotland. Timmy will come alive in the form of a mascot and storytelling session.

Aside from the interactive activities educational institutes

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and Harper Adams University, will present information and advice for youngsters interested in a career in agriculture.

Paying tribute to the 100 volunteers who work with RHET staff at the Show, RHET manager, Alison Motion said: "We simply could not operate without the invaluable support provided by our volunteers. We need many hands in order to give young visitors to the Discovery Centre the time and attention required to education them on where food comes from. Having such an enthusiastic group of knowledgeable individuals to call upon makes all the difference,"

[RHET](#) was established in 1999 and it provides free resources, farm visits and classroom speakers, which allow children to learn more about Scottish farming, food and countryside. The charity currently interfaces with around one in eight of Scottish schoolchildren through 12 local Countryside Initiatives and hopes to increase this to 1 in 4 by 2020.

RHET is delivered by a central team, trained project coordinators and over 500 volunteers. RHET takes more than 17,000 children out to farms each academic year and provides over 27,000 children with classroom speaker talks. RHET farmers provide £172,500 of time per annum to support the charity and according to Alison Motion, the charity is always looking for more farmers to help by giving as little or as much time as they feel able to help spread their knowledge. She said: "The prospect of having school children on to the farm might seem daunting, but the reality is that the farmer gets a lot from being involved. Seeing what is a day-to-day occurrence through the eyes of a child can be really motivating. The RHET coordinators are hugely experienced and RHET manage all the health and safety requirements so it is a matter of opening your gate and be prepared for lots of questions, some funnier than others!"

RHET receives its core funding from the Royal Highland and

Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) with other operating costs covered by grants and funds from a number of trusts, companies and funding organisations, including Bairds Malt, Clydesdale Bank, DairyCo, NFU Mutual Charitable Trust, QMS, SAYFC, SNH, The MacRobert Trust, The Scottish Government and Tesco.

The Edinburgh Reporter will be at the launch of this year's [Edinburgh International Book Festival](#) later this morning. We already know there is to be an event on 25 August 2013 to mark the passing of author Iain Banks whose last book is being published today. All other highlights will be brought to you as soon as we know them.



Rob Hopkins is speaking in Edinburgh tonight but if you have missed your chance to get to that you can catch him tomorrow instead.

“The Power of Just Doing Stuff: How Communities are Changing our Cities for Good”

This takes place at the [IAD Building](#) Rm 1, The University of Edinburgh, 7 Bristo Sq, EH8 9AL

Transition is a worldwide network of communities who are challenging boom and bust economics from the bottom up. From creating a community led Economic Blueprint, to setting up local enterprises, to investing in community energy and food growing initiatives – communities in Edinburgh, and across Scotland and the world are starting to make the places they live more sustainable, vibrant and enjoyable to live in.

This is a rare opportunity to hear the co-founder of the

Transition movement speak about Transition as the missing piece of the jigsaw in urban development; about how it is starting to change politics, investment and development as local government gets behind it, and about his new book 'The Power of Just Doing Stuff'. Free – All Welcome!

Rob is also speaking at the [Patrick Geddes Commemorative Lecture](#) this evening. You can read his blog at www.transitionculture.org.

You can buy the book online now at <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/power-just-doing-stuff/buy-book> or go to [Word Power Books](#) in West Nicolson St

The Scotsman are running a project to collect pieces of film from around Scotland giving a taste of what is going on tomorrow 21 June 2013 on the longest day. The clip has to be no more than 30 seconds long and you can find out more about what they are looking for and where to send it [here](#).