

Five things you need to know today



Ghost Bikes – Christmas Jumper – Tennis Tournament at Meadows Tennis Club – Wikileaks at The Filmhouse – Andrew Graham Dixon at the Fringe

Angered and shocked by the deaths of two people on bikes in the space of a week, a group of Edinburgh cyclists took action this morning on behalf of all cyclists in Scotland to draw attention to the latest tragedies. Two 'ghost bikes' – white-painted bikes which represent a fallen bike rider – were left outside the Scottish Parliament representing not just the two latest deaths, but the eight people, two of them children, killed on bikes already this year in Scotland. A memorial to all the fallen in the last five years is also being created.

Last month, figures were released showing that the number of cyclists killed on Scotland's roads last year had risen, from seven in 2011 to nine in 2012 and, shockingly, looks set to rise again even more in 2013. This year, there have already been eight deaths, including 14-year-old Connor Shields and 79-year-old Douglas Brown. The Scottish Government has rejected calls made by Pedal on Parliament, public health experts and MSPs to increase the amount spent on cycling infrastructure, including safe, separated cycle tracks, to £20 per head. The recent Cycling Action Plan for Scotland also rejected calls for the implementation of 'strict liability' laws in civil cases where vulnerable road users are injured, claiming that, as road casualty figures were falling overall, there was no case to be made for it.

Ghost bikes have been used around the world to mark places

where a fatal accident occurred, acting as both a memorial and a warning. Andy Arthur, who was one of the cyclists involved explained why these ones were being installed at Holyrood instead, "the bikes are being brought to Parliament because we feel that the blame for these avoidable deaths must lie as much with the inaction of the Scottish government as with the drivers concerned. It is the political leadership in Holyrood who have the power and the budgets to do something about the safety of cycling, yet they seem to lack political will. By leaving the memorial in full view of Parliament we hope it will stir some of our elected representatives to action, or else shame them for their inaction. It emerged spontaneously out of the real anger and hurt we felt at the news of yet another death this week – coming on top of the loss of two members of the Edinburgh Triathletes club in separate crashes this year".

Sara Dorman, one of the organisers of Pedal on Parliament, said:- "Only two months ago 4,000 people pedalled on the Scottish Parliament to ask for just £100 million a year to make Scotland's roads safer for everyone – from 8 to 80 – to cycle. Sadly, this year we've seen the death of an eight-year-old and someone who's almost 80. Unfortunately, the state of our roads means that deaths are inevitable as bikes are regularly brought into conflict with fast-moving traffic. Despite the government finding £3bn to dual the A9 – supposedly on safety grounds – they've told us there's no money to increase investment into safer cycling and all they've suggested is an information campaign urging mutual respect, the sort of campaign which has failed over and over in the past. It seems that there's no sum too large to make the roads safer for driving, but when it comes to the safety of people on bikes, even children, then even the smallest sum is begrudged. We hope that Scotland's politicians will see these memorials and show real leadership in making cycling safer for everyone."

The bike(s) and monument will be installed this morning at

8am, by a delegation of Edinburgh's cyclists outside the Parliament building.



This photo shows a ghost bike outside King's Cross Station in memory of a cyclist killed there. Our main photo is courtesy of Chris Hill.



During the hottest period that Scotland has seen for years, Save the Children is making a plea for donations of Christmas jumpers for their Edinburgh charity shops – in return for a free ice cream.

The charity are in their second year of their annual Christmas jumper day fundraiser – this year held on Friday December 13th – and are desperate for festive wear for their shops.

Susie Dunstan, Save the Children's Retail Manager for the East of Scotland said:-

“Whilst Scotland basks in temperatures of up to 32c, charity shops are already planning for the months ahead and at Save the Children, our Christmas preparation starts during the hottest months of the summer. We want to have plenty of Christmas jumpers to sell to our customers throughout Scotland to encourage them to take part this December. What better time to get rid of your woolly jumpers than right now when it's just too hot to wear anything but a t-shirt?

“We don't mind what they look like – decorated with snowflakes, reindeers or Santa Claus, adorned with tinsel or a more tasteful Fair Isle pattern, we simply love them all.

“Christmas Jumper Day is a simple concept – we're asking people up and down the country to make the world better with a

sweater by wearing a festive looking jumper and giving £1 to Save the Children. We hope that by offering the incentive of ice cream, we can get people to clear out their wardrobes and unload their bulky jumpers. Every jumper donated will win you an ice cream, create space in your closet, raise money for a vulnerable child, and in some months to come, will be spreading some festive cheer to someone else – everyone's a winner!

Save the Children's designer charity store, Mary's Living and Giving shop, in Stockbridge, Edinburgh, will reward all jumper donations with a token that can be exchanged for an ice cream or ice lolly at any Margiotta store throughout the city. Mary's Living and Giving, fronted by Queen of Shops, Mary Portas, opened in December 2010 and is one of Edinburgh's busiest charity shops. The jumpers will be stored in their colossal safe downstairs – a relic of the former bank that was previously at the shop's premises – and unveiled for sale in November. The appeal is being supported by a special Christmas Jumper display in their window during the months of July and August, complete with decorated trees and tinsel.

Local grocers Margiotta has supported Save the Children for years with coin collections and bag sales and bosses there have already confirmed that they'll be taking part in Christmas Jumper day on December 13th this year.

Christmas Jumper Day was held for the first time in December 2012 and saw the UK go Christmas Jumper crazy, with over 600,000 people taking part, including celebrities and politicians, which raised over £360k.

For more information about Christmas Jumper Day, please visit:

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/christmas-jumper-day>

On Saturday 27 July from 1400-1630 Meadows City Tennis Club's

annual round robin singles event will take place – open to all members and non-members, male and female – also (aimed at players of reasonable standard, not complete beginners!)

Entry fee £4 to cover court hire costs, balls, prizes etc.
Great chance for non-members to come along and meet club members and learn more about the club.

www.meadowstennis.co.uk

We Steal Secrets is on at the [Filmhouse](#) this afternoon just in case you need some diversion from the Royal baby saga.

This is the story of Wikileaks and Julian Assange who is still living in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London more than a year after taking up residence there.

Tomorrow after the 5.45pm screening of the film, there will be an open discussion on the issues raised by the film, led by a representative of the Humanist Society of Scotland. □ Humanism is an ethical stance which asserts that we can lead good lives guided by compassion and reason, rather than religion or superstition. Humanists are vitally concerned with issues that affect our world.

