

Five things you need to know today



Police to hold Festival Surgery this morning – Alasdair Gray on independence and knighthoods – The Edinburgh International Book Festival pick of the day – Edinburgh Festival Fringe pick of the day – Free Wifi

Police in Edinburgh are holding a special street surgery this week to engage with the public as part of their Festival policing operation.

Between 11am and 1pm today officers will gather at the iconic police box in the Grassmarket to speak with local residents, businesses and visitors to the city, where they will offer crime prevention advice and discuss any issues requiring police attention.

The City of Edinburgh Council's Community Safety Officer will also attend this surgery as part of Police Scotland's commitment to partnership working.

The Grassmarket is one of the city's busiest locations, particularly during the summer months, and police are keen to ensure they speak to a large and varied proportion of those staying within the Capital.

While a number of police boxes have been sold to private buyers in the past 18 months, the one in the Grassmarket is still in operation and Edinburgh Police think it will provide an ideal location for the surgeries.

Everyone is welcome to attend this event and officers say they look forward to engaging with the diverse community the

Festival brings to the city centre.

Inspector Gary Dickson from Edinburgh's City Centre Policing Team said: "As part of Operation Assure, we are committed to engaging with the public in a number of different ways to offer advice on keeping themselves and their belongings safe and to ensure they do not fall victim to crime.

"We wanted to host our street surgery in an popular location and the Grassmarket has long since been a destination for the city's visitors, as well as those who live here.

"Our iconic police boxes are always a great photo opportunity for tourists, but they are also instantly recognisable and associated with the police, providing the perfect hub for our street surgeries to take place.

"I would strongly urge anyone wishing advice on crime prevention and personal safety to attend at the Grassmarket on Thursday.

"If, however, you cannot make it to this event, then you can contact Police Scotland with a non-emergency enquiry on 101; visit your local police station or follow @EdinburghPolice on Twitter using #FestivalPolicing."

Author Alasdair Gray appeared at the Edinburgh International Book Festival yesterday afternoon to talk about his recent eclectic creative projects, the looming prospect of an Independent Scotland and to set the record straight on the 'anti-English' debacle that erupted around him in December 2012.

In an event chaired by Book Festival director Nick Barley, Gray talked about Scotland's great history of exporting its own citizens – citing, among other things, a disparity between

Scotland's relatively high level of education and low standard of living compared to England – and how Scottish emigration has enriched the wider world, both in cultural resource and financial fortune. Gray's definition of a Scot as 'any adult living in Scotland able to vote' may be too narrow for some, but the value he places on those who seek to contribute to society was articulately and passionately displayed. Gray sought to use his event to clarify, "in case there is still any lingering doubt", as Barley put it, that he was not anti-English in the slightest, but rather felt that those with the power to put people in the top creative jobs in the country – bodies such as Creative Scotland and the NTS – should look to the people with a deep understanding of the culture of the country in addition to excellence in their own artistic medium. Gray roused a laugh from the rapt crowd when, in response to an accusation that was part-and-parcel of the flak he got after his *Settlers and Colonists* article that he was 'attention-seeking', he remarked that he didn't think he was but "I must be seeking attention, otherwise I wouldn't get so much of it.

Inevitably the conversation between Gray and Barley moved from Scottishness to Scottish Independence, and Gray used the opportunity to outline a few key things about his vision for a post-referendum Scotland. Gray said his interest was in proportional representation, a country where people didn't necessarily know how they would vote in every election, and for political dialogue driven by issues rather than ideology. The discussion then turned to Gray's recent work; most prominently his recent mural on the wall of Glasgow's Hillhead subway station. He also discussed his latest project-in-progress: a new translation of *Dante's Inferno* written in his inimitable poetically swearsy-Scots. When discussing the accuracy of his text to the original, in light of his lack of Italian language, Gray said he "...decided I was going to be

inaccurate to the extent that the words within it were words I could say.”

In the final stages of the conversation, Gray’s status as a national institution was warmly commented upon by an astute audience member, who observed that if he were English he’d have been knighted by now. Gray’s reply that he actually was offered a knighthood by “Mr. Brown’s administration”, but “turned it down when [he] realised there was no money attached to it” will go down in Book Festival history.

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Today in Charlotte Square there are many good things happening at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. From the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams (you may get a return ticket if you are lucky) to one for which tickets are still available – [Alistair Moffat with James Naughtie on What makes Scotland the best](#):-

If there’s one man who typifies Scotland’s gallus pride in

its heritage and landscape it is Alistair Moffat, the historian and cultural impresario who once ran Edinburgh's Fringe. He has written a beguiling book about what he describes as Britain's Last Frontier: the line which separates the highlands from the lowlands. Moffat is joined today by broadcaster James Naughtie, author of the introduction, to share stories about this unique country.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival continues until Monday 26 August. Full details of the programme, and tickets, can be found at www.edbookfest.co.uk.

One for tomorrow night at the Fringe. Get some friends together and catch the last performance of [Man Feelings at Jekyll & Hyde](#) on Hanover Street. It is a late show at 00:45 but well worth staying up for! And it is a free non-ticketed event so you can simply give the guys a donation at the end depending on how much you like it. We have to admit a certain allegiance here as one of the Men, Kevin Kennedy, is about to become our latest contributor on computer games and films....and we are looking forward to that! In the meantime go and see Man Feelings on Friday night – late!

Love. Fear. Joy. Anger. Indifference. These are but a few of the feelings a man may experience (the last one is hunger). But what is a man? And what does him having feelings entail? We'd like to think we have the answer, traveller. Enter: Man Feelings. A show expelling forth numerous sketches, depicting varying degrees of ridiculousness, fearlessness and, of course, manliness. So come... Feel like a man with us.



Free wifi has become more and more widespread and expected

over the last couple of years, but this year during the Festival there are free wifi benches in George Street. [The Herald](#) has picked up this good news story, but we have a couple of photos of the benches, which started off in St Andrew Square and now seem to be all along George Street which is currently pedestrianised along some parts.

Now although we love this whole wifi idea can someone tell us how they work..??

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