

Five things you need to know today



Airport numbers on the up – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee meets today – Reading the tea leaves – Abseil for Queensferry Care – Job with the Scottish Book Trust

A strong performance during this year's Easter period helped Edinburgh Airport enjoy an increase of almost 5% in April passenger numbers.

Last month a total of 842,372 people travelled through Edinburgh Airport – a rise of 4.9% on the same period in 2013. Domestic travel increased by 5.5% with 388,160 passengers. There were more international passengers as their numbers swelled by 4.5% with 454,212 people travelling in April.

The school Easter holidays fell fully in April, which meant that many families were able to travel on Good Friday, compared to last year when the Easter weekend was the last weekend of March.

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, said: "Easter is always a busy time as it marks the start of the summer season.

"We enjoyed strong performances both domestically and internationally last month, with Virgin Atlantic's Little Red service to London Heathrow seeing a strong performance.

"The introduction of new easyJet services to Bodrum and Heraklion, Turkish Airlines adding a new daily flight to Istanbul and Lufthansa's new twice daily service to Frankfurt all contributed to a healthy rise in international passengers. Last month also saw the launch of Scandinavian Airlines' new

routes to Oslo and Stavanger. The airline has also increased to four weekly services to Stockholm.

“May is going to be an extremely busy and exciting month with four major new route launches taking place over the coming weeks. First to launch is Edelweiss with a fantastic new service to Zurich. It’s then time for the highly-anticipated launch of United Airlines’ new service to Chicago, US Airways’ new direct route to Philadelphia and Qatar Airways launching Edinburgh’s first direct link to the Middle East.”

Council Leader Andrew Burns will convene the meeting of the [Corporate Policy and Strategy Committ](#) today in the Dean of Guild Court Room.

The committee will hear that there are 3292 Edinburgh council tenants who are affected by the under occupation rules. Out of this number 2971 have had a 14% reduction in rent and 321 have had a 25% reduction in housing benefit.

By the end of March this year 7587 council tenants were in arrears of rent which totalled £3.5m due to the council. The number of tenants who were in arrears last year when the welfare reform legislation came into effect was 969, and that has risen to 1436, but is a reduction from the December figure which was 2017. The council feels that there are other factors which mean tenants are falling behind with rent payments.

The council thinks that its Welfare Reform Team has been instrumental in ensuring that all possible advice is offered to people affected by the reforms, and is going to continue the service for a further year.

Last week in Westminster Mark Lazarowicz MP spoke out about the ‘bedroom tax’.

Speaking in a debate at Westminster the MP called on the UK

and Scottish Governments to work together to effectively end the bedroom tax in Scotland as swiftly as possible.

He mentioned that by the end of March this year approximately **3,300** social housing tenants in Edinburgh had had their Housing Benefit reduced as a result of the bedroom tax.

He made clear his belief that ending not mending it through Discretionary Housing Payments was the real solution but that in the short term the two governments should work to ensure that no tenants are forced to move as a result of the bedroom tax.

After the debate, Mark commented:-“This is a cruel policy which is leaving people faced with losing their home yet is no answer to the desperate shortage of affordable housing.

“The clinical language of ‘under-occupation’ masks the misery it is causing and the only real solution is to axe the bedroom tax as Labour is committed to do and give councils the cash to build the new homes needed.

“Lifting the cap on funding for councils to make Discretionary Housing Payments is a second best option but I welcome the fact that nobody should now have to move or be left with mounting debts.

“The UK and Scottish Governments should work together to ensure councils can access extra funding quickly to help those hit by the bedroom tax and finally remove the threat of losing their home hanging over them.”

The latest DWP statistics (for November 2013) put the number of claimants affected throughout the UK at 498,174 and 71,682 in Scotland – 21% of all working-age housing benefit claimants in Scotland.



Food and drink scientists from Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh have teamed up with one of the UK's leading artisan tea companies to offer consumers more information about the contents of their tea cup.

eteaket, the loose leaf speciality tea company based on Edinburgh's Frederick Street, aimed to expand its range of speciality teas for the UK and overseas market. It also wanted to provide customers with more detailed nutritional information about caffeine and antioxidant levels to assist them in choosing the best tea variety for their personal requirements.

With a strong research background in supporting the development of Scotland's food and drink businesses, eteaket identified QMU as the academic partner with widest skills and knowledge for analysing the science behind its range of 30 loose leaf teas.

Researchers at QMU have extensive experience of identifying the antioxidant content of a wide variety of food and drink products, including undertaking a number of studies which have assessed the nutritional and health benefits of antioxidant rich drinks.

Varying levels of caffeine and antioxidants found in everyday food and drinks products such as tea, coffee, chocolate and energy drinks, have a number of health benefits as well as some physiological effects. Some studies have revealed that caffeine has anti-inflammatory properties and has an impact on neurological function.

Dr Mary Warnock, Senior Lecturer in Microbiology at Queen Margaret University, discussed the findings: "Tea contains numerous different natural chemicals which act as antioxidants, including vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and tannins. Antioxidants play a valuable role in maintaining good health.

They can help protect cells from damage and are important in the fight against disease.

“Our research showed that some of eteaket black teas have a high caffeine level but some tea enthusiasts might be surprised to learn that it is those teas that also have a high antioxidant level. eteaket’s English breakfast black tea variety had the greatest antioxidant content and the Silver Needle variety of white tea had the least. eteaket’s Oriental Oolong and English Breakfast teas contained the highest levels of caffeine while Decaf Breakfast and Big Red Rooibos contained no or negligible amounts

“Even though black teas have a relatively high amount of caffeine, it is still only about half the amount that is found in coffee and energy drinks.”

Dr Warnock concluded: “Hopefully this information will be really helpful to consumers who are interested to know about the nutritional content of their tea. So for example, those who are looking to reduce caffeine in their diet could choose to select eteaket’s Decaf Breakfast or the Big Red Rooibos varieties.”

Erica Moore from eteaket, added: “We’re passionate about tea and have been rekindling the British love for proper leaf tea since 2008.

“The latest scientific data from QMU is helping us develop product information contained on our website, online shop, promotional materials and labelling. We’re really pleased that we can now offer our customers and tea connoisseurs across the UK and overseas detailed consumer information about the contents of their tea cup.

“Importantly, the valuable information we now have on caffeine and antioxidant levels across our product range is also helping us increase sales and identify other business opportunities.

Consumer information on the full range of eteaket's teas will soon be available from the company's online shop www.eteaket.co.uk



37 volunteers have signed up to take a flying leap off the Forth Rail Bridge on behalf of Queensferry Care during the Queensferry Rotary Club's charity abseil, including the SNP Edinburgh Western MSP Colin Keir. This year's event will take place on Sunday 18 May and is part of Queensferry Care's 21st anniversary celebrations.

A range of ages will be represented at the abseil, indicative of the wide base of support the organisation enjoys from across the community. This includes Jean Sibbald who is a volunteer with Queensferry Care and who will be celebrating her 80th birthday this year. She decided to do the abseil in recognition of this milestone.

In an added twist, companies and organisations across the community are sending teams of participants to the abseil. These include groups from the Queensferry Medical Practice and local police; Alium; Ravenous Beastie; Picnic; Forth Reflections; The G Room; Queensferry High School and Queensferry Rowing Club.

Queensferry Ambition will award a Challenge Cup to the team that raises the most, which will be formally presented at a later date.

In addition, Queensferry Care staff and volunteers will have a space in a marquee in the Hawes Inn garden on the day to meet and greet participants and passers-by. To cap off the event, there will be a cake that will be cut to celebrate the

organisation's 21st birthday. All abseilers and supporters, volunteers, staff and service users are welcome to join in the celebration.

Queensferry Care Chairman David Pomfret said:

"We are thrilled by the response to this year's event. This marks an important date in our fundraising calendar and I'm looking forward to a successful abseil. I want to thank the Rotary Club of South Queensferry for their support and extend our thanks to those who have committed to raising money for our organisation.

"Everyone on the day is invited to our 21st birthday celebrations after the abseil and are welcome to share in some cake and banter."

The Scottish Book Trust have several vacancies for a Reader Development Administrator, Readers in Residence, Early Years Programme Outreach Manager and Early Years Programme Development Manager. [All of the details of these vacancies are here.](#)

