

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Portobello Kilns – Scottish Opera live on your laptop today – Newbattle Abbey’s Gaelic course proving popular – Yomping for charity – Stylish Grassmarket

A ceremony to mark the completion of the Portobello Kiln rebuild project will take place today.

Professor John Hume, an expert on historical monuments in Scotland, will be joined by directors of Portobello Heritage Trust and members of the local community as he cut the ribbon tied round the restored 1909 kiln.

The kilns, built in 1906 and 1909, are the last two surviving pottery kilns in Scotland and the sole remains of the A W Buchan & Co Thistle Pottery which closed in 1972. They were taken over and maintained by the City of Edinburgh Council as a permanent memorial to the once vibrant Portobello Pottery Industry.

Following the partial collapse of the 1909 kiln, City of Edinburgh Council, in collaboration with Historic Scotland, undertook to rebuild the B-listed Scheduled Monument. During the period of reconstruction it worked closely with Portobello Heritage Trust.

John Hume, Chairman of the Commissioners of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), who will open the event, said: “Early in my career I came to Portobello to survey the remains of the recently closed Thistle Pottery and drafted the entry that placed the pottery kilns on the monuments schedule as being of national significance. It therefore gives me added pleasure to be here

again today to celebrate the repair and restoration of the 1909 kiln.”

Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “The kilns are well known and well-loved landmarks in Portobello and it is fantastic to see the restoration project reach completion.”

Scottish Opera is joining forces with 6 other UK opera companies in an online Europe-wide celebration of opera. ***Inside Opera: Live*** combines live streamed and filmed footage and offers unprecedented access to the opera being created and performed in theatres across the country. [Watch the trailer now!](#)

Join them on [YouTube](#) from 2pm on Saturday 10 May for this four hour online event, live from the Grand Theatre in Leeds and presented by **Kirsten O'Brien**.

You can:

- See specially commissioned behind-the-scenes films, including a singer preparing for a new role, the people behind an opera production and what they do, and what it takes to tour an opera.
- Hear live interviews with directors and singers, just before they go on stage.
- Watch live links to rehearsals, backstage and community-based activities.
- Ask questions live via Twitter to the companies' artistic directors using **#insideopera**.
- Be part of it by tweeting your libretto lines to composer **Errollyn Wallen** who will be composing a brand new aria to be performed at the end of the day.

Scottish Opera's contribution to the day will include a film showing the creation of the costumes for **Lisa Milne** as Donna

Elvira in our recent production of *Don Giovanni* and live interviews from a cover rehearsal for *Madama Butterfly* at the Festival Theatre in Edinburgh.

Opera productions on stage in the UK on European Opera Days weekend include some of the best loved works in the repertoire, such as Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*, Puccini's *Tosca* and *La bohème*, Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* and, of course, Scottish Opera's *Madama Butterfly* on Sunday at the Festival Theatre Edinburgh. Find out more at scottishopera.org.uk

Don't miss it – today Saturday 10 May, 2-6pm.

There is a growing appetite among linguists in the Lothians to learn Gaelic, with a beginners' course run by Newbattle Abbey College nearly fully-subscribed.

The Dalkeith-based college prides itself on offering traditional Scottish courses, having introduced a Celtic Studies course this year and running successful Gaelic language classes at the new Gaelic school, Bun Sgoil Taobh na Pairce (Parkside School), on Bonnington Road in Edinburgh.

A limited number of spaces are available for the beginners' course, which covers conversational Gaelic that is useful for everyday situations and introduces learners of all ages to the basic language skills required to speak and understand Gaelic. The eight-week course began this week (on Wednesday 7 May) and runs until Wednesday 25 June.

If you would like to book a space on the Gaelic beginners' course, please contact Morag Macdonald, Gaelic Development Co-ordinator at Newbattle Abbey College, on 0131 663 1921 or at moragm@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk

The cost of enrolling on the course is £65, and learners of 60

years old or older can apply for a reduction of £10. ILA funding is also available.

Local team, The Insurmountables, from Edinburgh will take on a heroic hike through the Scottish wilderness when they take part in this year's Alliance Trust Cateran Yomp. On 28 – 29 June, the yompers will walk 54 miles (gold) to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Alliance Trust Staff Foundation. The challenge will see Jim Allan and his team from McRobb Display in Edinburgh raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity, the Army's national charity since 1944, which supports thousands of soldiers, former soldiers and their families each year.

Jim Allan said: "54 miles in 24 hours is a massive challenge – both physically and mentally. Thankfully it's for an extremely worthy cause. ABF The Soldiers' Charity does such important work for those serving and who have served in the Armed Forces and we want to support those individuals. The Cateran Yomp is a chance for us to challenge ourselves to raise as much money as possible for a really valuable cause."

Encouraging teams to sign up Major-General Martin Rutledge, Chief Executive of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, said: "Yomping 54 miles in 24 hours is a gruelling challenge but something our participants embrace with steely determination and inspiring camaraderie. An official event of Armed Forces Day, this year's Yomp looks set to be our biggest yet. By taking part in the event Yompers like the Insurmountables are helping to support the aftercare of our soldiers, former soldiers and their families. That's why we're urging as many people as possible to sign up."

If you want to set yourself a challenge for 2014, why not get a team together and register now for The Alliance Trust Cateran Yomp just visit: www.soldierscharity.org/yomp or contact yomp@soldierscharity.org

Get involved in the online conversation by visiting facebook.com/cateranyomp.

Edinburgh's Greater Grassmarket and Grassmarket Community Project are offering one creative person the opportunity to

have their Grassmarket-inspired design printed on the area's first ever Bag for Life tote.

Schoolchildren, students, artists, shoppers, amateurs, handbag hoarders and complete beginners are all invited to put pen, pencil, paint, and even pixel to paper to create an image which evokes the rich history, culture and spirit of this ancient and famous part of Edinburgh's Old Town.

Applications are open until 5pm on Friday 30 May 2014 and will be shortlisted before being put to a public vote. The bags will be produced by the Greater Grassmarket's own funky and intrepid boutique, Swish, and will be available to buy throughout the Greater Grassmarket area and at its many events from this summer.

Greater Grassmarket BID Project Manager, Georgia Artus says: "The Greater Grassmarket thrives on its richly creative, mercantile spirit. The area is home to scores of independent and highly individual traders who care deeply about what they sell, the wellbeing of this part of the Old Town and of the wider environment. Our Bag for Life project combines all these causes.

"The winning designer should aim to capture the essence of our vibrant area, and the bag should broadcast it. I am constantly amazed by the creativity of people working in the Greater Grassmarket and I cannot wait to see how our area inspires the competition entries."

Grassmarket Community Project CEO, Emma Galloway said:

"The bag for life initiative is a fantastic idea! The Grassmarket is full of charming independent boutiques and this will help to promote the area whilst supporting our strong environmental policy.

"We are encouraging all our members to submit designs for the competition."

For more information please
visit www.greatergrassmarket.co.uk /[www.grassmarketcommunitypr
oject.co.uk](http://www.grassmarketcommunityproject.co.uk)