

Five things you need to know today



Well kent faces on the tram – Transport and Environment Committee – Val McDermid at Central Library – Ian Rankin is the best – Tonight at the Cameo

Did you go on the tram yesterday? Author Sarah Sheridan did and she could not resist a sneaky selfie...

*“@sarasheridan: [#tramselfie](#) Had to. S x
[pic.twitter.com/fWfSZRyazC](#)” Yay! [#howwasitforyou](#) ?*

– Katie Spence (@KTSpeaks) [May 31, 2014](#)

The Edinburgh Tram has been a costly exercise in delivering infrastructure that some people think we need and others think we have no need for whatsoever. Now that it is here people we spoke to yesterday were fairly complimentary about it.

[The Transport and Environment Committee](#) take decisions such as those required. to enable the tram to run.

New Edinburgh resident and crime author Val McDermid recently delivered an entertaining talk at the Central Library which our Rosemary Kaye wrote about [here](#) and which you can now watch on video.

Ian Rankin has been named Scotland's favourite writer of all time according to new research by tuition provider, [Explore](#)

Learning.

In a survey to mark the final week to enter the [National Young Writers' Award](#), the author of the Inspector Rebus series was named the nation's top writer, just beating Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle to the crown.

The top 5 writers were listed as:

1. Ian Rankin
2. Robert Louis Stevenson
3. Arthur Conan Doyle
4. Iain Banks
5. Robert Burns

The research also found that Scotland was the most literary country in the UK – with 55% of people in Scotland reading every day for pleasure – when compared with 51% in England, 40% in Northern Ireland and 39% in Wales.

Despite the enduring popularity of reading in Scotland, 83% of Scots believe that children's appreciation of Scottish literature is at an all-time low, and spend far too much time playing games and watching TV.

Lise McCaffery, Curriculum Development Manager at Explore Learning in Scotland says: "We are thrilled to discover that we are a nation of readers but it's important to encourage our children to realise the rewards of writing too. The novels of Ian Rankin and the classics of Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle are testament to the rich culture and history that we have as a nation.

"The aim of the National Young Writers' Award is to encourage children to have a go at writing their own stories, inspire their imaginations and help them to really value the joy that it can bring."

The free competition is aimed at children aged five to 14 where they are asked to write a 500 word story to the theme 'fairy tales and fables'. Judged by best-selling author, Liz Pichon, the winning author will be awarded a trip to Disneyland Paris for their whole family and £500 worth of books for their school. Children can enter by filling in an entry form via their local Explore Learning centre or online at www.explorelearning.co.uk/youngwriters. **The closing date is Tuesday 3rd June.**

Explore Learning has four centres in Scotland – Edinburgh (Murrayfield and Blackhall), Glasgow and East Kilbride and are

set to open their fifth in Aberdeen later this year.

Previous judges of the competition have so far included some of the UK's most prolific authors, like Cressida Cowell, Alan Durant and Andy Cope – and this year is no different with award winning illustrator and author of the Tom Gates series of books, Liz Pichon taking the mantle. With countless awards for the hugely popular Tom Gates, she is perfectly positioned to review this year's stories and inspire even more children to put pen to paper and give writing a try.

Liz says: "I'm thrilled to be the judge of this year's National Young Writers' Award. Competitions like this are a fantastic way to encourage as many children as possible to put pen to paper and write their OWN stories. I'm really looking forward to reading them so good luck to everyone and have some FUN!"

Explore Learning has 90 centres located across the UK and provides English and maths tuition to children aged five to 14. Each session is tailored to a child's needs and Explore tutors work with children in a low ratio (1:6 maximum) to create a fun and vibrant atmosphere for learning that has results.

Here's hoping that today's weather holds up as it ought to according to the forecasts, but if it gets a little misty later you might go to the Cameo for a bit of Marlon Brando.

More details about the showing of the iconic film *On the Waterfront* [here](#).