

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Edinburgh Schools to take part in mini trials

Scottish Parliament

RSNO at the Usher Hall

Voluntary Service Overseas

Guide Dogs for the Blind sponsored walk

It sounds like a recipe for anarchy, not just allowing but positively encouraging groups of teenagers to take the law into their own hands.

However, peace will prevail because events this weekend at Edinburgh Sheriff Court have learning very much at their heart.

Pupils from eight city schools are taking part on Saturday 4 October 2014 in the MiniTrials initiative of the Faculty of Advocates. Helped by lawyer volunteers and working from information packs compiled by the Faculty, the pupils act out a criminal jury trial, as it might actually be seen in any sheriff court in the land.

They convene the court, prosecute and defend the accused, and deliver a verdict. The proceedings are overseen by a lawyer acting as sheriff, and the day will also include a visit to the cells complex in the court.

MiniTrials are now in their 12th year, and were the idea of the judge, Lord Kinclaven.

He said: "I would like to see a day when every school pupil in Scotland has an opportunity to learn more about how our courts actually function in real life. Preferably, that should be done in a realistic, structured and organised way. It seems to me that MiniTrials are a great way to achieve those objectives and to help nudge pupils away from common misconceptions."

The Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, James Wolffe, QC, added: "The courts are an essential part of our democracy and MiniTrials give students a real insight into what the court process is really like. I am very proud of the Faculty's continuing role in MiniTrials. We all owe Lord Kinclaven our thanks for this initiative."

The first case involves an attack by two youths on a man who is struck on the arm with a knife as he walks home. Only one of the youths has been caught and he faces a charge of acting with another to assault the victim to his severe injury.

The other trial follows an incident outside a nightclub when the accused approaches a car and allegedly takes part in an exchange with the driver. On being stopped and searched by the police, Ecstasy tablets are found in his jacket. The question for the jury is whether he is guilty of possessing drugs with intent to supply them.

Each school has a chance to be the prosecution and the defence team in the 90-minute trials. The eight schools involved are: Craigmount, Drummond, Firrhill, Forrester, St Augustine's, St Thomas of Aquin's, The Royal High and Trinity Academy.

Our photo today is from the rally in the Meadows the other week when both Yes and No camps were out on the streets. The purpose of the wishing tree was for each and everyone to put

their wishes into written form for all to see. This past weekend there was another YES rally at Holyrood. Part of the democratic process is of course about engagement and certainly the whole message following the Referendum campaign was the great improvement in public engagement in the political process.

So now is your big chance to get involved.

The Scottish Government has many devolved powers and one area which is devolved is education. Mike Russell the Cabinet Secretary for Education is apparently now waiting for your questions.

On 7 October the Committee will hear evidence from the Cabinet Secretary. What questions do you think the Committee should ask the Cabinet Secretary? Get in touch by 1 October by emailing ec.committee@scottish.parliament.uk

There are still some tickets available for the RSN0 concert this Friday. [Ticket details here.](#)

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Friday 3 October | 7.30pm

Wagner Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Rouse Flute Concerto (Scottish Premiere)

Rimsky-Korsakov Scheherazade

Conductor: Peter Oundjian

Flute: Katherine Bryan

Wagner's Meistersinger overture creates a whole medieval city in all its sunshine and swagger; the RSN0's own Katherine Bryan shares an evocative, elegiac concerto by one of America's most popular living composers; and Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade has 1001 tales

to tell, in music that's sensuous, spectacular, and fabulously over-the-top. Prepare to have your ears dazzled, as we launch the new RSN0 Season in a blaze of colour.

LEADING international development charity Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) UK will be hosting a Meet VSO event in Edinburgh this Saturday 4 October, providing locals with an opportunity to learn more about the organisation and how they can apply to take part in a life-changing placement abroad.

The event will feature talks by volunteers, including Rachel Campbell, who worked on an education project in Ghana and Rhona Hogg, a nurse who worked on a health programme in Uganda.

VSO UK volunteer, Rhona Hogg, said:

"My year in Uganda was life-changing and I learned as much as I contributed. It took nursing, holistic care and compassion to a whole new level.

"I am still in touch with everyone at VSO's partner organisation Reach Out and I was delighted that two Ugandan nurses were able to come to Edinburgh for an international community nursing conference and a study tour, which was organised by NHS Lothian nurses.

"VSO provides a unique opportunity to live and work in a developing country and offers excellent support at every stage, from the application to settling back home on return. I would thoroughly recommend it."

VSO's local supporter group in Edinburgh, which consists of returned volunteers, will also be on hand to cover the practicalities involved in volunteering and to share the skills and experience that the organisation is looking for.

David Son, Volunteer Recruitment Marketing Manager for VSO UK, says:

“Our volunteers work in whatever fields necessary to fight the forces that keep people in poverty – from education and health through to helping people learn the skills to make a living. In doing so, they invest in local people, so the impact they make endures long after their placement ends.”

VSO UK is different from most charities and development organisations, as it aims to fight poverty through volunteers, bringing people together to share skills and knowledge to create lasting change.

Meet VSO will take place at The Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR. Doors will open from 14:00 for registration. The event starts at 14:30 and finishes at 17:30. It is free to attend, but booking is essential.

To register for the event visit <http://www.vso.org.uk/events/meet-vso/meet-vso-edinburgh> or to find out more about volunteering roles with VSO UK visit, www.vso.org.uk/volunteer

Guide Dogs Scotland is calling on dog owners in Edinburgh to make their pet pooch a hero for the day by taking part in a three mile sponsored dog walk on Sunday 5 October.

The Dogs Unite event at Arthur’s Seat promises fantastic fun for all the family and their pet. Registration is just £5 and each dog taking part will receive their very own superhero cape, goody bag and a special collar tag as a thank you for helping raise money for Guide Dogs.

Fundraiser Jo Stevenson said: “We’re really looking forward to the day, it will be a really good get together and great way to raise fund for Guide Dogs’ life-changing services.”

Children aged 12 or under and accompanied by an adult go free.

Starting at the Parade Ground (behind the Palace) with registration open from 11am this sponsored walk around iconic Arthur's Seat is guaranteed to set tails wagging.

With its mini lochs, rugged volcanic cliff faces and ancient ruins, Arthur's Seat and Holyrood Park is the ideal place for your four legged heroes to unite for Guide Dogs. If three miles is too long for your pooch, there will also be a shorter route.

More information on how to take part can be found at www.dogsunite.org.uk or by calling **0845 6006787**.

You can raise sponsorship either by using sponsor forms available at www.dogsunite.org.uk or by setting up an online fundraising page. There is no minimum sponsorship but every penny you raise can help change the life of a blind or partially sighted person.