

Five things you need to know today



99 days to the General Election

New Scottish Tax body at the ready

Soundhouse at the Pleasance

Connor's a star in the making

Scottish Opera still have tickets for this weekend

Today marks 99 days until the General Election 2015. We are keen to hear from you about arranging a time to conduct an interview if you are standing for a Westminster seat. theedinburghreporter@gmail.com

Some parties have already nominated their candidates for the five Edinburgh seats, although there are still some announcements to be made.

Do you know of any candidates? Then let us know!



Deputy First Minister John Swinney has confirmed that Scotland's new tax agency is ready to start operations from April 1st this year.

Revenue Scotland was officially established on January 1st, with the aim of collecting Land and Buildings Transaction Tax

(LBTT) and Scottish Landfill Tax from April 1st – the first Scottish taxes for more than 300 years.

Reflecting the progress made by Revenue Scotland, Mr Swinney has now written to the UK Government confirming the agency's readiness and asked for the necessary legislation to be laid at Westminster to "switch off" the two UK taxes in Scotland – stamp duty land tax and UK landfill tax – from April 1st.

Mr Swinney said:

"Revenue Scotland staff have been working extremely hard to implement our long-standing plans to be ready to hit the ground running on April 1st, to collect and manage the two devolved taxes.

"A group of senior Scottish and UK government officials have agreed that all necessary preparations are now in place and arrangements can now be made to introduce the devolved taxes.

"I have written to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury asking for the required orders to be laid at Westminster to allow Revenue Scotland to take the reins – effectively switching off stamp duty land tax and the UK landfill tax.

"These two new taxes are the first national taxes for Scotland in 308 years and it is important that they are administered fairly and correctly.

"Last week, I announced a revision of LBTT rates, which will mean 50 per cent of all household transactions paying no tax and more than 40,000 buyers paying less on the purchase of a new home.

"Our ultimate aim is to apply a fair tax regime to help grow the economy and increase opportunities for people. I am confident Revenue Scotland is up to that challenge."

In the Soundhouse at The Pleasance series, Moishe's Bagel will be appearing on Monday night 2 February 2015. Soundhouse say: "This is a five-piece firecracker of a band presenting thrillingly original cutting-edge klezmer and folk music. Featuring virtuoso performances from some of Scotland's finest musicians, these guys play an intoxicating, life-affirming mix of Eastern European dance, jazz grooves, folk tunes, and Middle Eastern rhythms."

[More booking information here.](#)

Here's a taster:

[Uncle Roland's Flying Machine from Horo Gheallaidh ©BBC Alba 2011](#) from [Moishes Bagel](#) on [Vimeo](#).

A budding young actor from Loretto School has landed a role in a top BBC drama set to air in the Spring.

Connor McKinley, aged 14 from Edinburgh, stars alongside an impressive cast including Peter Mullan, Gary Lewis, Sharon Small, Christian Cooke and Charlotte Spencer in a new BBC drama, Stonemouth , a two-part dramatisation of acclaimed author, Iain Bank's novel made by BBC Scotland and Slate North.

[Read more here.](#)

Still time to buy tickets for Inés de Castro which is on at the Festival Theatre this week.

Commissioned by Scottish Opera in 1996, James MacMillan's extraordinary first opera, after the play by Jo Clifford, has established itself as a modern masterpiece. Shocking, intense and utterly compelling, it is all the more macabre for being

*based in fact. This new production is directed by **Olivia Fuchs** (A Midsummer Night's Dream 2013) and is conducted for the first time by the composer himself, bringing new musical insights to the fore.*

Here is the writer in conversation:

Festival Theatre, 13–29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT

Thursday 29 January 7.15pm•Saturday 31 January 7.15pm

Free events

Inés de Castro Unwrapped Friday 30 January 6.00pm

Pre-show talk Saturday 31 January 6.00pm

[Booking details here](#)



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