

# Five things you need to know today



**Best of the Fest**

**Stockbridge Duck Race**

**Georgian House below stairs**

**Scottish Parliament report**

**Panda Report**

 Today the Film Festival offers you films at a fiver in the Best of the Fest.

[More details here.](#)

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Today the 26th Duck Race takes place in Stockbridge at 3pm sharp. The money raised will be for Lifecare and St Columba's Hospice.

There are lots of prizes for the winning ducks (actually for their owners!)

Bars in Stockbridge are selling ducks – including the Bailie, The Antiquary, Hectors and The Stockbridge Tap. The Facebook group is [here](#).

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Visitors can get a taste of what the butler saw at the National Trust for Scotland's Georgian House in Charlotte Square with the opening of a brand new room below stairs.

Marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the stunning 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse first opened to the public, expert curators and property staff have worked together to recreate the Butler's Room so that visitors can get a better sense of life 'below stairs'.

The humble basement room was plainly furnished with a fold-up bed, desk and chair and some simple portraits and pictures as decoration. The butler was one of the kingpins of the household, working closely with the cook and housekeeping staff to ensure that the Lamont family were kept in comfort in this cutting-edge residence, with all mod cons.

The room was put together after painstaking research into the house's servants and the records of other servant's accommodation in the city at the time.

Alastair Smith, curator said: "We found fascinating 18<sup>th</sup> century sources to shape the recreation of a butler's room – including records of thefts and stolen items, diaries, rare household inventories and sketches of servants at work and leisure. We discovered the long lost names of servants from New Town tax records, some living in lodgings with their own furniture, but others living a precarious life in basements and attics carrying their worldly possessions in a trunk.

"The butler's life was central to the house and included looking after the silver and stocking the wine cellar. They would arrange travel, book tickets and supervise staff. In one case we found, the butler claimed to dress as a dandy in service, but would change into 'common clothes' for errands so as not to be targeted by thieves!"

Property Manager Sheonagh Martin said: "Visitors are really enjoying the chance to nose around our butler's quarters and contrast the simplicity of his accommodation with the rather grand rooms upstairs. It's an amazing addition to the

experience at the Georgian House, as we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> year of welcoming visitors.”

The Georgian House was conveyed to the National Trust for Scotland in 1966 and opened to the public in 1975.

The team are currently fundraising to support plans to open up even more parts of the house to the public.

To pledge your support visit <https://www.nts.org.uk/Donation/Appeal/Once/Give-to-your-favourite-National-Trust-for-Scotland-place/> and select the Georgian House from the menu, or donate by text – text GHSE50£5 to 70070 to give £5.

The house was designed in 1791 by the eminent architect Robert Adam in one of the most desirable areas of the New Town, and is a fine example of his urban architecture. The first resident was landowner John Lamont and the period furnishings along with original art work faithfully helps recreate the lifestyle of his family.

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It's the end of term for most of our schoolchildren here in the capital and the Scottish Parliament has also ended for the recess. So here's the report for the year. (Except there's no teacher here, they wrote it themselves!)



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Is the panda pregnant or not? Well the answer is we are not quite sure.

Iain Valentine, Director of Giant Pandas for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, said: “Scientific data does suggest Tian Tian has conceived, however this is not pregnancy. Giant panda pregnancies are extremely complex. Pregnancy begins when implantation takes place and this has not yet occurred. There are many hurdles to get through yet, so we would request that people do not get too excited at this very early stage.”

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