

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Sir Tom to receive the Edinburgh Award

Santa at the Botanic

CALA hosts Incentive Weekend in Ratho today and tomorrow

Plague – new exhibition at the National Library of Scotland

Edinburgh Napier student off to New York to hear his own music played



The Edinburgh entrepreneur and philanthropist Sir Tom Farmer has been named as the ninth person to receive the prestigious Edinburgh Award.



Sir Tom has been selected to receive the accolade from a shortlist of nominations cast by the Edinburgh public. He will receive an engraved Loving Cup from the city's Lord Provost at a ceremony within the City Chambers in early 2016.

[Read more here](#)



Meet Santa at the Botanic today and tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday next weekend 19 and 20 December and then every day till Christmas Eve.

Hope those reindeer don't make a mess of the lawns....



✖ CALA Homes (East) is celebrating the success its newest development in Ratho by hosting an exclusive Incentive Weekend for homebuyers this weekend, 12th and 13th December.

The Craigpark development, which has seen over 50% of its first release of homes snapped up within weeks of opening and features a stunning show village comprising three varied showhomes, will offer a range of incentives on selected homes for those looking to purchase a house ready to move straight into.

[Read more here.](#)



✖ In a new exhibition at the National Library of Scotland you are reminded that Black death, cholera, typhus and smallpox, among other diseases, still conjure up terrible images. In Scotland, fear and helplessness were experienced by the afflicted and their families, but also by doctors and the authorities.

Using items from the National Library's collections encompassing the history of science and medicine, folklore, literature, religion and news print, Plague! highlights responses from writers and poets, government, newspapers, religious figures and ordinary people to the major contagious diseases that afflicted Scotland until the mid-20th century.

Objects loaned from major collections around the UK also offer fascinating insight for visitors as they reflect upon one of mankind's greatest fears – incurable disease – and seek empathy with those who struggled to contain it.

Free admission

Open until Sunday 29 May 2016

George IV Bridge, Edinburgh

[Find out more](#)



An Edinburgh Napier student will hear a love song he composed played live at a Christmas concert in New York after winning a prestigious music prize.

James Hind, 21, landed the trip to the Big Apple after impressing expert judges of the Alexander McCall Smith Prize For Composition with his Gaelic piece, written for voice, fiddle, cello, flute, clarsach and guitar.

He will now hear his work performed by professionals in both Manhattan and New Jersey at the annual Pipes of Christmas concert produced by the Clan Currie Society, and also hopes to use his first visit to the USA to check out the city's renowned jazz haunts.

Best-selling novelist and medical law expert Professor Alexander McCall Smith, author of The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency stories, awards the £500 prize annually for a composition by an undergraduate music student at Edinburgh Napier University.

James, who is in the fourth year of Edinburgh Napier's BA Popular Music course, said: "I'm thrilled to have won the prize and I'm very excited about travelling to New York to hear my music played.

"Hearing a piece of music that you've written being performed is such a unique pleasure as it is allowing others to share in something that is highly personal. It is always intriguing to hear how other musicians interpret your work."

James, from Edinburgh, added: "I very much enjoyed meeting Sandy, and found him to be kind and generous. We talked about various things including our shared passion for music."

The Alexander McCall Smith Prize For Composition is awarded to the student who, in the opinion of judges, composes the best Scottish-themed piece for The Pipes of Christmas. The Clan Currie Society-produced concert is a celebration of Scottish music and culture that has become one of New York's top Christmas events, and Edinburgh Napier University is a co-sponsor.

James's piece will be performed by the Pipes of Christmas Ensemble, professional musicians from Scotland and New York, at events in Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church on December 19 and Central Presbyterian Church in Summit, New Jersey, on December 20.

James, who attended Gaelic Medium Education at Edinburgh's Tollcross Primary before going on to James Gillespie's High, said his prize-winning song was inspired by traditional themes in Gaelic culture, literature, folklore and music.

He said: "The title is 'Mo ghaol aig cheann an t-saoghal' which roughly translates as 'My love at the end of the world'.

"It is about someone who is waiting desperately for their love to return from the high seas. I am fascinated by the relationship between those who live on the Western Isles and the sea. The theme is pervasive through Gaelic culture as the sea has the power to both sustain and destroy life for those living on the islands."

Winning the Alexander McCall Smith Prize For Composition caps a double success for James, who also won the University's inaugural Clan Currie Composition Scholarship Prize of £1000 towards the study of Scottish or Gaelic music. USA-based Clan Currie launched the scholarship earlier this year to promote Scottish music and composition, and James won it after submitting two pieces of traditional music.

James has also received a £500 Student Mobility Grant through the Student Grant Initiative funded by Edinburgh Napier


alumni.

Alexander McCall Smith said: “I am delighted that this prize has been awarded to James Hind, a very talented young composer, and I am particularly pleased that his composition is going to be heard in New York.”

Graham Weir, senior lecturer in music at Edinburgh Napier, said: “James’s visit is a superb opportunity; the Pipes of Christmas ensemble includes musicians from Broadway and New York’s symphony orchestras as well as the cream of Scotland’s traditional players. We are very grateful to Sandy McCall Smith for his tremendous support of our students.”

Concert producer Robert Currie said: “We are absolutely delighted to be showcasing this brilliant young Scots composer at The Pipes of Christmas. It fulfils our commitment to developing new talent while also demonstrating our pledge to promote Gaelic language and culture.”



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