

Five things you need to know today



Read, Write Count

DanceFest 2016

College Open Days

Burns events at Edinburgh Castle

Drag Queens at the Scottish Poetry Library

The Scottish Government has begun a TV and supermarket advertising campaign to encourage reading, writing and counting outside the classroom.

The campaign was devised in consultation with parents in Glasgow, Dundee and Fife and the advert will run for 5 weeks. There will be adverts on outdoor poster sites and on trolleys in ASDA.

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning Angela Constance said:

“We are determined to help parents and carers to give their child the best start in life. That’s why we are expanding early learning and childcare, funding a range of local family support projects and delivering the PlayTalkRead campaign to help new parents and carers during their child’s early years.

“Read, Write, Count aims to support families at the next stage, as their children start primary school, because we know that learning doesn’t stop at the school gates. I want to make it easier for parents to be involved in their child’s learning – not only in their school education but through a range of

experiences.

“The new TV adverts offer tips and advice about fun and interesting ways to boost counting and reading skills in a variety of every-day scenarios. By doing so, we can help our children to be happy, more confident and to get every chance to achieve their own ambitions for life and learning.”



Edinburgh College students are ready for their one-night dance festival this evening. They are launching their annual dance tour, Taking Flight, which they will perform at schools and colleges across Scotland but including Edinburgh, along with hands-on workshops.

Jo Turbitt, dance tutor at the college's Performing Arts Studio Scotland (PASS), said: “DanceFest is a celebration of youth dance across Scotland, so there will be young dancers in the audience who we hope will be inspired to follow in the footsteps of our students, and audition to train with us for a professional dance career.”

Cerin Richardson, head of Creativity and Diversity at Edinburgh Festival Theatre, said: “This is a tremendous opportunity for young people to perform in Scotland's premier dance venue and for us to provide a platform for their extraordinary dance talent.”

DanceFest takes place at the Festival Theatre tonight at 7pm and if you wish to buy a ticket then click [here](#).



Edinburgh College are also holding open days this week, so if you are in the market for studying then you might be inspired by going along to one of their campuses.

The College invites anyone wanting to learn about study options to meet course advisors who will provide guidance about 2016/17 courses and remaining last-minute places on programmes starting this month.

The information days are today at Granton Campus and Thursday (21 January) at Sighthill Campus, from 2-6pm on each day.

Full-time courses beginning in August are open for application now. Part-time courses will open in April. And there are still a few places available on courses beginning this month.

Courses suit all levels and provide qualifications, boost skills, and increase job prospects and opportunities for further studies. They cover business; construction and building crafts; creative industries; engineering; English as a second language; health, wellbeing and social sciences; tourism and hospitality; and community and outreach, as well as access courses.

As well as course information at the events, college advisors will advise on applications, student support and funding available to new students.

For those who cannot make it to Sighthill and Granton, the college has a stall at the St James Shopping Centre all week until 24 January, offering a chance to pick up a prospectus and information on how to apply.

For more information on courses available at Edinburgh College, the information days and how to get to the campuses, visit www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk



There will be events on Saturday and Sunday this weekend to celebrate the birthday of Robert Burns. Visitors will be able to learn about the poet with the Burns for Beginners events at four times daily in the Great Hall. A performer dressed up as

Burns will lead the audience through some of his best-known poems including Tam O'Shanter.

Edinburgh Castle's Executive Manager, Nick Finnigan, said: "The castle's Great Hall will once again welcome back this popular event as part of the annual celebrations for Scotland's favourite son. *Burns for Beginners* is a great introduction to the bard and some of his most iconic written works, which still captivate people across the world more than 200 years on."

Burns for Beginners at Edinburgh Castle takes place on both Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th January at 11.15am, 12.15pm, 2pm and 3pm. This event is included in the cost of admission to the castle.




On 28 January the Scottish Poetry Library is holding an event with poetry and crossdressing called **The Library is Open**.

The poetry to be recited or read will be all about drag queens, hostilities, fun, wit and intends to be an honest way of learning about a subject not often aired in public.

Poet Iain Morrison has written a sequence of poems about drag queens that he will perform at the SPL alongside Wanda Isadora de Fourrure (also known as the poet and artist Jean-François Krebs). The poems, which are insightful, funny and erotic, dramatize the pleasures and pitfalls of wearing drag.

More details on the Scottish Poetry Library [website](#).

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