

Five things you need to know today



- Robert Burns
- Government raising awareness of child sexual exploitation
- Online art auction
- Hume Lecture
- ***BUILD IT!***



Today is the day that our national Bard, Robert Burns is celebrated across the world. Burns was born on 25 January 1759, and although he was an Ayrshire farmer, he spent some time in the capital selling his poetry and meeting with the aristocracy of the day.

As well as being lauded inside and outside the Writers' Museum on Lady Stair's Close, there is a statue of Robert Burns on Bernard Street in Leith which was adorned with a tartan scarf when we visited it at the weekend.





The Burns Monument on Calton Hill was designed by Thomas Hamilton who also designed the former Royal High School building at the foot of the hill. But the John Flaxman statue inside the monument was moved to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on Queen Street as it was being affected by smoke from the gasworks below the monument.



There is a lovely piece of audio on the Scottish National Portrait Gallery [website](#) where Gallery attendant Christopher Wakeling and Duty Manager Willie Dickson talk about their favourite portraits – one of which is the painting of Burns by Nasmyth which hangs in the gallery.



Mr Dickson said: “My favourite painting in the gallery is by Alexander Nasmyth of Robert Burns. The reason it’s one of my favourites is because I’m a Burns person myself and I’ve used it in the past when running Burns’ Suppers for invitations and of the initial programme. I always found it very striking and when it was put onto cardboard the actual invitations were very impressive.”



The Scottish Government will launch a new multi media campaign to raise awareness of and prevent child sexual exploitation on Thursday of this week.

The first of its kind in the UK, it will provide information for parents and young people about the risks of child sexual exploitation and action they can take to reduce the chances of it happening.

Education Secretary Angela Constance will visit Police Scotland’s Public Protection Unit at the Scottish Crime Campus later today to see how they tackle the problem.

The unit leads the force’s approach in tackling and preventing all aspects of child abuse including child sexual exploitation. It is responsible for developing policy and investigations into sensitive and complex areas, including rape and human trafficking.

The Scottish Government pledged to develop an awareness

raising campaign in the National Action Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation, published in November 2014.

The former Commander of Police in Edinburgh Malcolm Graham, who is now Assistant Chief Constable, Major Crime and Public Protection, said:

“Tackling and preventing crimes such as human trafficking, rape and child abuse including Child Sexual Exploitation requires a multi-agency approach, working in partnership to identify people who may be vulnerable, gathering intelligence to support investigations and ensuring victims have access to appropriate support.

“The Scottish Crime Campus co-locates Police Scotland with key partners and supports this multi-agency approach.

“Young people increasingly live their lives using new technologies, and we are constantly improving our collective ability to keep young people safe whilst online, whilst targeting those who wish to abuse through the internet.

“This visit gives the Cabinet Secretary a timely opportunity to meet the officers responsible for investigating these difficult and complex crimes, in advance of the launch of the Government’s CSE campaign which Police Scotland will be fully supporting.”

Ms Constance said: “Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse and some young people may not be aware that they are at risk of harm. It is happening to girls and boys in Scotland and can take many forms online and offline – through social media, chat rooms or mobile phones and in everyday life through inappropriate relationships or friendships.

“We want parents and young people to be aware of the risks and how they can get help or advice if they have concerns. It can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and sexuality and those from secure loving homes as well as those

more vulnerable.



An online art auction with a real life purpose just began yesterday evening . The artist hopes the funds raised from the auction will enable her to sell some of her art before she and her son move home in March 2016. Carol Le Lievre has an amazing array of paintings at very reasonable prices in the auction which you will find [here](#).

From Sunday 24th January, you can bid on original pieces of art from the talented Edinburgh based artist Carol Le...

Posted by [Colony Life](#) on [Saturday, 23 January 2016](#)



Scottish Greens Co-Convener Patrick Harvie MSP will deliver the Hume Lecture tomorrow evening.

Harvie will use the opportunity to seek a bolder parliament in Edinburgh giving Scotland a real chance of having a sustainable economy to tackle inequality.

The speech will be part of the David Hume Institute's *The Politicians and the Professionals* series featuring all five political leaders from Holyrood. [Ticket details here.](#)

Speaking ahead of the talk, Patrick said: "The two fundamental challenges Scotland faces are closely linked – the task of building a new, sustainable economy which can generate the jobs of the future and close the gap between the rich and the rest of us, is directly linked to the ecological challenge of limiting our carbon emissions and preparing for a post-carbon society. Scotland can meet these challenges and indeed Scottish Greens see huge opportunities for creating jobs and reducing inequality if we are bold in our choices. But those

opportunities could be missed if government continues to pretend that business as usual will simply continue.

“We’ve heard recently from the Scottish Government’s independent advisor on poverty and inequality that we need to improve housing affordability, reform local taxation and tackle fuel poverty. Greens will continue to push the Scottish Government to be bolder on rent controls, build more social housing, and properly funding energy efficiency measures, so we can address the scandal of fuel poverty and the housing crisis.

“On local tax, the Scottish Government’s centralising agenda has put local authorities in an impossible position, resulting in job cuts and loss of services affecting the least well off in our communities. The Green agenda is a decentralising agenda. By unlocking the power in our communities we can generate revenue for warm, affordable homes and high quality public services.

“And we urgently need to pursue the agenda of Green Industrialisation. If we begin to plan the transition towards sustainable industries, Scotland can have a jobs-rich economy which respects the environment.

“We cannot be distracted by those who advocate extracting yet more fossil fuel that we simply cannot afford to burn. Instead we must invest in oil and gas decommissioning, renewables, quality food production, clean chemical sciences and the digital and creative sectors. It’s where the jobs of the future are and it’s a direction I strongly urge Scotland to take.”



Every Wednesday and Friday from 3 February onwards there will be a huge LEGO building exercise taking place in the National Museum of Scotland from 11:00 till 16:00. The plan is that a team led by Warren Elmore will create a large model of the


museum.

Elsmore has an enviable job as he gets to play with LEGO all the time. He writes books about it and speaks at major conferences.

This is part of the *BUILD IT!* programme at the Museum from now till April to celebrate Scotland's year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, and there are other activities where you can get your hands on the bricks rather than just watching.

More information [here](#).



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