


Five things you need to know today



- St Mary's Music School pupil plays folk
- Holi the Festival of Colour
- Council leading the fight against mail fraudsters
- Edinburgh artist launches new book
- Funding for Edinburgh projects in disadvantaged communities

Pupils at the prestigious St Mary's Music School do not only get to play classical music, they sometimes play folk music too. One of their pupils is so good at it that she has got through to the final of the 2016 BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award.

 Brighde Chaimbeul is in S6 at the school and took part in the semi-finals in Kendal where ten musicians aged 16-21 all competed. Brighde played her Hamish Moore Smallpipes and was chosen as a nominee, along with three others, including the Causeway Trio (all recent pupils of St Mary's Music School – Padruig Morrison, Pete Thornton and David Swan).

The finals will take place at the Folk Awards ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 27 April and will be broadcast live.

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Stockbridge Primary School linked up with Forestry Commission Scotland and the Himalayan Centre for Arts & Culture to celebrate Holi, the Indian Festival of Colour.

Holi is the country's most energetic festival filled with fun and good humour welcoming the spring.

The Himalayan Centre for Arts & Culture visited the school to explain the story about Holi. They showcased the Hindu culture through art and performance with professional storyteller Thom Dibdin and puppeteers from Nepal, Japan and the UK. The school children were encouraged to play with colour and create a colourful piece of artwork, using twigs and leaves found in the woodland, which they will donate, to Stockbridge Library, Edinburgh on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland.



Sunil Sharma from the Himalayan Centre for Arts & Culture

said:

“It was a wonderful celebration of Indian and Nepalese culture. It was hugely beneficial to us to work with Forestry Commission Scotland and Stockbridge Primary School. We used the woodland to source materials for the celebration, which is something new for us; it really showed us how much our local woodland has to offer. ”

Romena Huq, Engagement Officer for Forestry Commission Scotland said:

“A key element of our work is about encouraging people of all abilities and backgrounds to experience woodlands and greenspace. The Himalayan Centre and Stockbridge Primary School did just that and the celebration was a great success.”



Councillor Cammy Day with mail marshal Lynda Simpson

The City of Edinburgh Council is taking on fraudsters who target the vulnerable in Edinburgh through sending them scams through the post, and to do so they have recruited some help.

The 36 mail marshals in the capital will play a key role in weeding out scams in their mail, and will pass it on to the council's Trading Standards team who will pass the mail on to the national team for more scrutiny.

Scams work by targeting individuals with official-looking documents and promises of lottery wins, psychic messages or health claims, asking for either a small order to be placed or an administration fee to be paid to release the money. Once someone has responded, their details are shared, resulting in them being bombarded with huge amounts of mail.

Lynda Simpson from Broomhall was targeted by scammers and was given assistance by the Trading Standards team, so she was an

ideal recruit as mail marshal.

She said: "I sent money because the person who had written the letter sounded so nice and kind. More and more letters then started to arrive, but alarm bells started ringing when I noticed that they were all asking for the same amount, and were all from the Netherlands.

"I used to get about 10 a day, and that's down to about one a day since signing up. I'm not stupid but they conned me. It's happening to people who are more vulnerable than me who don't have anyone, and that's really horrible."

Councillor Cammy Day, Community Safety Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Mail is usually being sent from abroad, so it's difficult to target its source. It's a heartless but very lucrative operation, taking advantage of people's good nature and conning them out of their hard-earned money. These scams can be very clever in their presentation, and can take a variety of forms.

"People should never feel embarrassed that it's happened to them, but be assured that it can happen to anyone, of any age or circumstance. Mail marshals are hugely valuable in helping to stop this, so please get in touch with us if you're worried about it happening to yourself or someone you know, and think you may be able to assist."



✘ Edinburgh artist Cheryl Morrice has a new book called *The Wee Coo Who Flew* which is now available on Amazon.

The Wee Coo Who Flew is a Scottish book based in Edinburgh and is a rhyme about a wee Highland Cow with big dreams. He chose not to listen to friends who said what he dreamed couldn't possibly be done and with persistence, he achieved his dream. This is a motivational book for young minds to believe they can think big and achieve their dreams. Children in

Scotland will enjoy this book with its vibrant colours and local places they can identify.

Morrice said: "I have always worked as a nurse and painted on the side. However, my true burning desire has been to paint and write full-time. I'm now pursuing that transition to making my lifelong dream a reality, and I want youngsters to realize that they too can achieve absolutely anything they want to. All it takes is sheer determination, grit and the ability to block out the negativity they'll naturally encounter from others."



Support to empower disadvantaged communities.

Community-led projects providing a range of support to people in Edinburgh will receive a share of £10.8 million funding.

Fourteen projects in Edinburgh that are addressing inequalities in disadvantaged communities will receive funding from the People and Communities Fund in 2016/17.



These projects include training and upskilling opportunities through Broomhouse Centre's Further Food for All, energy efficiency advice through Port of Leith Housing Association's Canny Budgeting scheme and volunteering through Re-Union Canal Boats.

The investment is aimed at giving communities the tools to deliver long-term solutions that tackle poverty.

Housing and Welfare Minister Margaret Burgess said:

"This £10.8 million investment reinforces our commitment to giving communities a stronger voice in the decisions that matter to them.

“The People and Communities Fund recognises that every community in Scotland has different needs and challenges and it is the people who live and work in Edinburgh that are best placed to come up with the solutions to address inequalities.

“By funding Edinburgh projects that are providing volunteering and training opportunities we are empowering communities and giving them the support they need to shape their own futures and tackle the deep-rooted causes of poverty.”

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