

Five things you need to know today



- **Edinburgh school closures**
- **Scotland the Best**
- **Dads Rock**
- **Skeleton from the 1600s discovered in Leith**
- **Edinburgh Art Festival 2016**

3,300 pupils will be going back to school from today. The council has now made alternative arrangements for almost half of the pupils who are without a school owing to closure of 17 schools in the city.

These 17 schools were built or refurbished in the PPP1 scheme undertaken in 2003. There are some defects in some of these buildings but the Chief Executive was keen to say that they do not yet have full details of what the defects are.

Watch our interview with the Chief Executive Andrew Kerr here:

Read more about the arrangements for some of the pupils [here](#) or on the Council website where they are updating the news as it unfolds.

Meantime one of the companies in the consortium has admitted liability in a statement:

“Galliford Try acquired Miller Construction in 2014. In March this year we were notified that Oxgangs Primary School, built by Miller Construction more than 10 years ago, lost part of one external wall which blew off in Storm Gertrude.

Oxgangs was built as part of Edinburgh’s PPP schools programme between 2002 and 2005. The programme, which

comprised 17 schools in two phases, was managed by an SPV, Edinburgh Schools Partnership. ESP subcontracted the construction of the schools to a number of contractors including Miller Construction.

Through its acquisition of Miller Construction, Galliford Try has contractual responsibility for four of the seventeen schools. Remedial work required to remedy defects in those four schools is nearing completion and the costs are not material to the Group.

Galliford Try takes its role as a responsible contractor very seriously and the safety of the pupils and staff is paramount.”



We know that Scotland is the best, mainly as Pete Irvine has been telling us so for many years. His book Scotland the Best is now in its 12th edition and will be on sale from tomorrow.

Published by Collins and last published in 2011, this essential guide returns with updates and revisions, some of which have been sent to Pete by his readers. He was happy to hand out a prize to the gentleman from Dundee who made the best suggestions at the book launch on Tuesday night in the elegant surroundings of Peacock Alley at the Waldorf Astoria – The Caledonian (which Mr Irvine reminded everyone that it will always be known to most of us as The Caley!)

There are references to hotels, bars and coffee shops across the country, most of which he has visited at least once.

Pete Irvine has written the 12th edition of Scotland the Best
□ pic.twitter.com/CpcVUlq6us

– *Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter)* [April 11, 2016](#)

Pete said: *"It's been a while and jings, it takes a while, but I have been up and down these lands again.*

"From my point of view, from the car, the restaurant table and the hilltop, Scotland is looking better than ever. I hope that this is evident from the 2000+ entries – the shortlist from a hugely expanding long-list – in a book which, try as I might to be concise, just gets bigger.

"'Scotland the Best' is intended to be useful: to all the creative and entrepreneurial and talented people whose work and vision are recognised in it its pages, for Scots rediscovering their country and all the folk who, in a world of ever growing expectation, come here to experience Scotland and us and what we do so very well."

Selling more than 300,000 copies since its initial release, Pete's journalistic writing style and honest opinions continue to prove popular with visitors and Scottish locals alike.

Scotland the Best is published by Collins and is priced at £15.99



We just love the work that the guys from Dads Rock do – and now they have risen to the challenge of offering something for schoolchildren affected by the schools closure to do on Friday afternoon.

Our response to the school closures, a free play event for impacted children! book a space now!
pic.twitter.com/qZTMUwyK98

– Dads Rock (@DadsRockEdin) [April 12, 2016](#)

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Human remains thought to date back to the 17th Century or earlier have been unearthed in Edinburgh school grounds.

They were found during an excavation over the Easter break as part of investigative works for a new classroom building at St Mary's RC Primary School in Leith.

✘ Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Edinburgh has such a rich history and the skeleton at St Mary's is yet another astonishing archaeological find. The Council will work with Morrison Construction to further investigate the site."

John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeologist, added: "The skeleton was uncovered as part of a carefully planned excavation. This seems to be the site of an unknown, unmarked grave dating to the 17th Century. It is thought the burial, outside the original Edinburgh town borders in Leith, may be a plague victim but further analysis needs to be undertaken."

✘ The area where the remains were discovered has been fenced off but the school remains open for pupils.

Mary Bainbridge, Acting Head Teacher at St Mary's Leith RC Primary School: "The school is very excited about the educational opportunities that the archaeological work on site may present and I have already been in discussion with the Council's archaeologist about the different ways the pupils will be able to engage and the experiences that can be offered."


✘

The Edinburgh Art Festival has just announced its partner programmes which you can read more about [here](#). (scroll down the page to see the exciting array of exhibitions which are coming to the capital this summer).

Although the festival itself runs from 28 July to 28 August 2016, the other exhibitions which run alongside start earlier and run for longer.

The exhibitions are staged all over the city from Jupiter Artland in the west to Inverleith House, the Open Eye Gallery and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in the middle.

The Portrait Gallery is showing self-portraits from Rembrandt to Ai Weiwei from 16 July which we think could be rather different!

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