

Five things you need to know today



- **New cabinet at Holyrood**
- **Pearl Izumi Cycle Race comes to Edinburgh today**
- **More action on Duart Crescent Post Office**
- **New MSP's surgeries**
- **New gin from Edinburgh released today!**

First Minister announced her new cabinet in Edinburgh yesterday. Some of the changes such as the appointment of the Deputy First Minister as Education Secretary have been welcomed by education bodies.

EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan said: "The appointment of the Deputy First Minister to the post of Education Secretary is a clear indicator that the First Minister continues to view support for education as perhaps the top priority for the Scottish Government.

"This is very welcome, and the EIS will work constructively to ensure a positive future for Scottish education, its learners and its teaching staff."

Universities Scotland said: "Giving education to the Deputy First Minister John Swinney reiterates the importance placed on education by Nicola Sturgeon and her Scottish Government."

Vonnie Sandlan, NUS Scotland President, said: "Education has become the defining political priority for the Scottish Government, and Parliament – something clearly exemplified by putting the education brief in the hands of Scotland's Deputy First Minister, a hopeful sign of intent and ambition.

"We were delighted to see the SNP's manifesto include some

welcome and encouraging commitments for students, young people, and apprentices, and set out policies that begin to address the support and opportunities they need to access education, stay there, and reach their full potential. We were really encouraged by the support that campaign received, and look forward to working with John Swinney, and across the Scottish Parliament, to deliver on those ambitions.”

FSB head of external affairs for Scotland, Colin Borland, said:

“We have long argued that Scotland’s businesses, especially the smallest ones, need a voice at the top table.

“It is therefore absolutely right that someone as experienced and effective as Keith Brown has been given the task of putting the economy at the heart of government decision making. There isn’t a single portfolio around that Cabinet table to which business and the economy doesn’t matter – and Mr Brown’s job is to make sure his colleagues’ initiatives dovetail with efforts to create jobs and boost growth.”

Lang Banks, Director of WWF Scotland, said: “Really great to see importance of climate change recognised with a dedicated Cabinet Secretary for the first time.”

Chair of medical union BMA Scotland Dr Peter Bennie welcomed the “continuity and experience” offered by Shona Robison in her continuing role as Health Secretary.

Watch the cabinet appearing on the doorstep at Bute House:

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS – new Scottish Cabinet](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).



The Pearl Izumi Tour Series comes to Edinburgh’s Grassmarket today for an evening of fast, furious and tactical closed circuit road racing.

Thousands of enthusiastic cycling fans will line the iconic streets of Edinburgh's old town when round three of The Pearl Izumi Tour Series, the UK's leading city centre team cycle race series.

The main race will start at 19.30 with support races and an open hill climb time trial starting at 16.00. All races are free to spectate.

Spectators will be looking to get the best vantage points as six of the UK's top professional cycling teams (of five riders each) race around a challenging closed-road circuit in the heart of the capital.

The teams, who include defending Champions Madison Genesis, JLT Condor presented by Mavic, NFTO, Pedal Heaven, Team Raleigh GAC and Team WIGGINS, will travel to Edinburgh fresh from racing in Motherwell. It is the first time the unique team-based televised event has held a pair of rounds in Scotland.

JLT Condor presented by Mavic extended their lead in the Pearl Izumi Tour Series to make it three victories from three races (two rounds) in 2016, with Jon Mould's individual win in Motherwell helping secure the maximum 10-points.

Edinburgh's Festival and Events Champion, Councillor Richard Lewis, said: "Winding through the hilly, cobbled streets of the Grassmarket in full view of Edinburgh Castle, this has to be one of the most visually stunning legs of the Pearl Izumi series. Make sure you get there early to secure the best view and to cheer on the riders as they go head to head.

"Cycling really is on the rise in the Capital with more than 16.5 million cycle trips now being made annually. As a compact, densely populated and beautiful city, Edinburgh is suited perfectly to travel by bike and high profile events like the Pearl Izumi help to promote cycling and sport in the city."

Jon Mould, the Motherwell race winner and member of the leading team JLT Condor presented by Mavic, said: "I'm really looking forward to Edinburgh, it's the best round of the series with the best crowds, so it's my favourite one. It's looking really good for the team so I think it should be a good round for us. We've got another strong team so we'll go into the race quite hard and get stuck in."

Evan Oliphant from Team Raleigh GAC, who are lying third in the overall team classification after round two in Motherwell, who is from Tranent in East Lothian, said: "It's fantastic to have the opportunity to have a top race on my doorstep and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in in front of friends and family."

Edinburgh's fast, furious and tactical race will be staged on a new and extremely challenging 1.6-kilometre circuit that includes cobbles, a gruelling hill climb and hairpin bends. The 500 metre cobbled climb up Victoria Street, which was used when the series last came to the city in 2014, will again form the centre piece of the race. In 2016 the riders will turn left at the top of the street to take in the Lawnmarket and a fast downhill section on Johnston Terrace below Edinburgh Castle, before returning to the Grassmarket via West Port.

Mick Bennett, The Pearl Izumi Tour Series Race Director, said: "The new Edinburgh circuit is going to make the racing even better, for the riders and for spectators. We've retained the spectacular Victoria Street climb, which for me is one of the most iconic locations in the Tour Series, and now will also be racing in the shadow of the famous Castle. It's a hard circuit and will make for a great race."

The teams will tear round the circuit for a lung busting and energy sapping 60 minutes and five laps, offering some close, tactical and very spectator friendly racing. The overall winner and the team with the lowest cumulative times will be crowned the Edinburgh Champions at a podium ceremony

immediately following the end of the race. Series leaders, both team and individual will also be announced.

Jack Pullar from the Pedal Heaven team, a former British National Hill Climb Champion who represented Scotland at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, said: "Edinburgh is my favourite city in the whole of the UK. I've had a lot of good memories there, so it's going to be a special race for me. I think with the new course it's going to be even better than last time, because you take in even more of the sights, like the Castle. We were third team In Motherwell and we're moving back-up, so I think it's upwards from here. As a team we should suit Edinburgh, so we're targeting a good result."

The free to attend, action packed event, centred around the Grassmarket, Edinburgh Castle and West Bow, is brought to Edinburgh by SweetSpot, EventScotland and the City of Edinburgh Council.



Evan Oliphant from team Raleigh looks out over Edinburgh before the start of The Pearl Izumi Tour Series race around the city, 19 May 2016. The UK's top professional cycling teams (of five riders each) race around the a challenging closed road circuit in the heart of the capital. Photo David Cheskin. 18. May 2016.

Paul Bush OBE, VisitScotland's Director of Events, said: "We are delighted to support Tour Series in 2016 and are excited about the prospect of seeing some of the UK's finest talent battling it out through the streets of Edinburgh following a highly successful Motherwell stage yesterday.

"The number of cyclists in the capital and across the country is on the rise and events, such as Tour Series, have an important part to play in this, encouraging people to

participate in a sport that is not only terrific fun but also provides a great means of transport.”

In addition to the main race Edinburgh will also host a corporate Pro-Am relay, sponsored by Brother UK, and other support events including an open hill climb up Victoria Street and an amateur club race that will give aspiring local club riders the chance to race on the same course as the pro-teams.

The support events begin with the The Grassmarket Scramble at 16.00 with the main event of the evening being staged at 19.30.

There will be a small promo event village in the Grassmarket with leading cycle brands, cycling organisations and cycling events exhibiting.

Highlights of the Edinburgh event will be shown on ITV4 on the evening of Friday 20 May and will be available via catch-up services with the ITV Player.



Edinburgh West MP Michelle Thomson has kept up her efforts to preserve postal services in Drum Brae following the recent closure of the Duart Crescent branch.

Following a meeting with the Postmaster, Mr Asif Kirwani, last week, Mrs Thomson has been in dialogue with both the Post Office and Mr Kirwani regarding operational issues which have meant that services have had to be suspended.

In addition, Mrs Thomson has been in touch with the Post Office after further concerns were raised about another Post Office branch in her constituency, the Kirkliston branch.

Commenting, Mrs Thomson said, *“My primary concern has been to ensure that the residents of Drum Brae are not left without Post Office services for any longer than is absolutely necessary.*

“Clearly, there are some on-going issues which need to be resolved between the Post Office and the Postmaster and I have been actively engaging with both parties to encourage a swift conclusion to these matters. I will continue to do what I can to ensure that services are restored as soon as possible.

"I have also been contacted with regards to services at Kirkliston due to a resident expressing concern after hearing that the Post Office there is to close. The Post Office have reassured me that they are committed to providing a service in the village and are taking action to ensure that Post Office facilities continue to be available in Kirkliston."

Edinburgh Western MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton has also lodged a motion in Holyrood about the matter.

We met the postmaster and his supporters recently:

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS – Post office closure](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP has set up his first surgeries in Edinburgh Western beginning tomorrow 20 May at Tesco South Queensferry at 11am and followed at 3pm at Tesco Corstorphine.

On 27 May at 11am he will be at Tesco Davidson's Mains and at Tesco Corstorphine at 3pm, and on 3 June he will be at Tesco South Queensferry at 11am and the Corstorphine store at 3pm.



Craft gin distiller Pickering's has launched a unique collection of oak aged gins today matured in single malt whisky casks, hand-picked from distilleries in five of Scotland's distinct whisky regions.

Based at Summerhall Distillery in Edinburgh, Pickering's Gin has created a special marriage between two of Scotland's best loved spirits, by ageing its award-winning gin in five Scotch malt whisky casks from Islay, Speyside, the Lowlands, Islands and the Highlands.

This is the first time a gin distillery has launched a collection of five oak aged gins.

The gin is aged in one cask from each of the five regions at a time. Each cask yields just 200 bottles of never-to-be-

repeated 47% ABV oak aged gin.

After travelling the length and breadth of Scotland to select the casks, founders Marcus Pickering and Matt Gammell brought the barrels back to Summerhall Distillery in Edinburgh to be filled with batches of cask strength Pickering's Gin. The oak ageing process lasted between three and six months for each expression.

Each rare, collectable gin can be drunk like a whisky using water or ice, or savoured in cocktails to bring out the gin's subtle whisky notes left behind by the five distinctive casks. The flavour profile ranges from the light and citric aromas of Speyside to the sweeter, peatier notes of the Islay region.

Pickering's Oak Aged Gin goes on sale from 8.30am Thursday 19 May 2016, retailing at £36 for a 35cl bottle.

It is available to buy either online at www.pickeringsgin.com or directly from the Summerhall Distillery in Edinburgh.



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