

Five things you need to know today



- Official opening of Parliament
- Edinburgh's Local Heroes
- Edinburgh International Film Festival reports record audience numbers
- National Library now more accessible
- Opera in the city centre today!

Later today the fifth session of the Scottish Parliament will open with a speech by Her Majesty the Queen.

Midge Ure will sing, the National Youth Choir of Scotland will sing, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Ensemble will play a piano quintet, and the Scottish Parliament's piper, Stuart McMillan MSP, will play The Rowan Tree.



After Parliament is declared open there will be a Riding Procession down the Royal Mile making its way from East Market Street and The Royal Mile to Holyrood Park.

Each MSP was asked to nominate a local hero to accompany them on the Riding and MSPs and their guests will join the procession as it passes Holyrood by way of the Queensberry House exit. The Local Heroes have been chosen by each MSP to recognise important work they do to help others.

A dais will be set up at the front of the Scottish Parliament where The Presiding Officer and Party Leaders will greet the procession as it passes.

In the afternoon there is plenty to see and do at Holyrood. The Parliament is throwing open its doors to allow everyone

into the gardens and through the building to explore it. [More details of the Big Day Out here.](#)

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The Edinburgh and Lothians MSPs have invited the following guests:

Jeremy Balfour MSP has invited Pamela Neilson who lost her 3 year-old son to cancer in January this year. She helped set up a Campaign called Glow Gold to raise vital awareness of Childhood Cancer.

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP has invited Nicola Jones who is 35 and a resident of Kirkliston care home with profound learning difficulties. She is a worthy Local Hero nominee because she works tirelessly, with the support from her parents, to raise awareness and change legislation in regards to residential care home providers.

Kezia Dugdale MSP has invited Trishna Singh OBE. Trishna Singh OBE is the director of Sikh Sanjog and the Punjabi Junction Social Enterprise Project that operates in the Leith area of Edinburgh. The organisation promote community development, and support responsible citizenship. Advance the knowledge and understanding of service providers about the needs of ethnic minority women and their families. Provides Minority Ethnic women with training and employment opportunities, develops confidence and reduces social exclusion. Promotes and sustains the Sikh culture in Edinburgh whilst challenging all forms of oppression and discrimination.

Neil Findlay MSP has invited Steven Sharp. Steven suffers from Crohn's disease and has gone through a great deal of suffering. He has become a role model for young people with

the condition, leading a very full and active life. He is a relentless fundraiser and advocate for Crohn's and Colitis UK.

Gordon Lindhurst MSP has invited Judith Hill. Judy has contributed in a number of ways to the Juniper Green community in the Pentlands, Edinburgh. She organises prison visiting at Saughton Prison through Friends of Edinburgh Prison – this provides a tea bar in the visit room at Saughton and is a purely voluntary charity. She was also for at least thirty years the Girl Guide leader in Juniper Green and still lends a hand with groups of guiders when the leaders are short of experience.

Ben Macpherson MSP has invited Melanie Weigang. Melanie has played a significant role in leading the campaign by the Lorne Community Association (LCA) to resist proposed evictions from local properties by the Agnes Hunter Trust.

Andy Wightman MSP has invited Evie Murray. Evie Murray is the founder of Leith Community Crops in Pots, an environmental charity working in schools and elsewhere for a 'happy, healthy, leafy Leith'. LCCiP uses food-growing activities to connect children with nature, improve people's diets, carbon footprints and environmental knowledge, and build community, while also providing habitat for pollinating insects. To date LCCiP has planted approx. 40 fruit and nut trees, with a further 175 waiting in their tree nursery. In the pipeline is a programme of forest school education, a social enterprise café/farm shop, and much more.

Gordon MacDonald MSP tells us he has invited Margaret Wilson from Stenhouse.

There will be others of course, but these are all the ones we have details of at the time of publishing

The 70th Edinburgh International Film Festival with 22 World Premieres in its programme reports bigger numbers than ever.

160 feature films

130 short films

55 countries represented

22 world premieres

5 international premieres

17 European Premieres

85 UK Premieres

51,497 festival goers over 12 days

9,000 people enjoying outdoor films at Film Fest in the City

500 filmmakers

300 press delegates

600 industry delegates

Mark Adams, EIFF Artistic Director said: " It has been a wonderful Festival brimming with terrific films, amazing guests and memorable events. The fact that both press and public have been so enthusiastic and supportive means that our 70th edition has been a hit. We now look forward to another exciting year of planning for the 2017 Festival."

Ken Hay, CEO Edinburgh International Film Festival, added "EIFF is unashamedly international and outward-looking in its programming and its reach, with 55 countries represented in the programme, guests from almost 40 countries, and a truly multi-national team delivering the event. We're delighted that audiences and guests have responded so positively to the programme and the broader Festival experience, and are thrilled to see an increase in admissions."



We are delighted to announce that the National Library of Scotland has revised its evacuation arrangements and now offers full access to mobility impaired or wheelchair users in the General Reading Room. [We told you earlier this year](#) about the PhD student who was unable to access the library in his wheelchair.

They have undertaken a review of their evacuation strategy and some staff training, but further work in the next while will include automating doors at the Issue Hall area and General Reading Room. They do recommend that you contact them before you visit. But full access details are [here](#).



Benjamin Britten's ghostly masterpiece *The Turn of the Screw* is set to send a shiver down the spines of Edinburgh audiences when the University of St Andrews' opera company, Byre Opera, brings its production to St Andrew's and St George's West Church on George St later today.

Britten's 1954 chamber opera *The Turn of the Screw* is based on Henry James' 1898 chilling tale of the same name, whose storyline blurs the line between the natural and supernatural.

The cast includes current students and recent graduates from the University of St Andrews, many of whom are recipients of music scholarships at the University's Music Centre. The opera is the culmination of a year of musical study by the cast, who have enjoyed coaching from some of the UK's leading opera singers, including tenor John Graham Hall and soprano Marie McLaughlin who have performed with the likes of the Royal Opera and Opéra National de Paris. *The Turn of the Screw* will be accompanied by a hand-picked orchestra of some of Scotland's finest musicians.

Dr Michael Downes, Director of Music at the University of St

Andrews, said, "I'm very pleased to be bringing Byre Opera to Edinburgh's audiences. Spine-tingling ghost stories have an enduring appeal and *The Turn of the Screw* will be a truly chilling tale for a summer's evening.

"The cast of current students and recent graduates give a gripping performance and are testament to the talent and dedication of University students who participate in a wide range of opportunities at the University all year round."

Tania Holland Williams, a singer, opera director and arts producer who has previously worked with the Royal Opera House, Royal Academy and British Council, will direct *The Turn of the Screw*, after directing Byre Opera's successful 2014 production of Britten's *Albert Herring*.

Tania Williams, commented, "There are so many ways of interpreting *The Turn of the Screw* and it is a fabulous ghost story. I am absolutely delighted to be exploring the subtleties of the work with students from the University of St Andrews, who apply such a rigour of intellect and interrogation to their performance work."

Byre Opera will perform music and song from *The Turn of the Screw* at St Andrew's and St George's West Church (13 George Street, Edinburgh), on Saturday 2 July at 3pm. Admission is free.



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