

Five things you need to know today



- **Today at Edinburgh International Book Festival**
- **The Stage Special Award for Mark Thomas**
- **Gorgie City Farm – Farm Fest 2016**
- **Some of the best restaurants in Scotland are in Edinburgh**
- **Friends of Seven Acre Park**

Given the amount of sport we have had on offer recently it may have sparked your interest in what makes an Olympian tick. If that is the case then you can listen to an hour with cyclist Chris Boardman at 10.00am this morning. Boardman has a new memoir called Triumphs and Turbulence and may even claim to have inspired Sir Bradley Wiggins!

At 12.30 there is a World Premiere Performance by Stellar Quines with The View from Castle Rock. This is a vibrant production of Alice Munro's stories taken from the Nobel prize-winning author's collection. Tickets are still available for both of these [here](#).



Mark Thomas will be presented with the prestigious The Stage Special Award at Edinburgh Festival Fringe this afternoon. The prize, part of The Stage Edinburgh Awards, celebrates sustained excellence at the Fringe. Previous winners of the Special Award include Chris Goode and Pip Utton.

Thomas is a comedian, theatremaker and activist. His Special Award win will be added to multiple prizes for his work at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, including three Fringe Firsts. He will be presented with the award by The Stage's reviews

editor, Natasha Tripney, and interviewed by Thom Dibdin, Scotland correspondent for The Stage, critic and member of The Stage's Edinburgh review team.

Tripney said: "Mark Thomas is a deserving winner of The Stage Special Award. His work has always straddled comedy, theatre and activism. His presence at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has often made a significant impact and his current show, The Red Shed, is one of his strongest to date, revisiting his political awakening while also exploring the stories we tell ourselves and the ways in which we tell them."

Thomas' 2016 show, The Red Shed, is inspired by the Wakefield Labour Club of the same name. In his review for The Stage, Thom Dibdin called it "a wide-eyed tale that has truth at its heart and the need to find the stories which will help shape a better future in its head." The Red Shed has also been awarded a Fringe First award, his third after Bravo Figaro! (2012), about his opera-loving father, and Cuckooed (2014), about corporate espionage.

The Stage Special Award will be presented at a Q&A with Thomas at the Traverse Theatre in a public event at 2pm on August 26, 2016.



If ever there was a year to support Gorgie City Farm it is this year. Go along to the farm on 10 September to have a great time and while you're there make a donation to keep the farm open.



The 2017 Good Food Guide has decided that Restaurant Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles is the top Scottish restaurant but new entry Aizle in Edinburgh has been praised for sustainability

and use of seasonal and local ingredients. Castle Terrace is in at number 22m Tom Kitchin's restaurant bearing his name is number 23 and Restaurant Martin Wishart is ranked 39 making them another three Edinburgh entries in the Top 50.

The Top 50 recognises the very best talent in the UK and a place on the list recognises a huge achievement with each position earned by its score in The Good Food Guide, editor appraisal, anonymous expert inspections and strength of reader feedback.

Where is your favourite restaurant in town?



Friends of Edinburgh's newest Green Flag park have been commended for their efforts to improve the space for their community.

Voluntary work on [Seven Acre Park](#) in Liberton – which was awarded Edinburgh's 30th Green Flag in July – was deemed 'Outstanding' by [Keep Scotland Beautiful's](#) '[It's Your Neighbourhood](#)' assessors, scoring a total of 86 points out of a potential 100 for Community Participation, Environmental Responsibility and Gardening Achievement.

The environmental improvement campaign, run in conjunction with the [Royal Horticultural Society](#), acknowledges the achievements of volunteer-led groups to clean and beautify their neighbourhoods.

Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: "Seven Acre Park was quite rightly described by assessors as a 'hidden gem', and this is in no small part thanks to the invaluable work carried out by its committed Friends group.

"Our own parks team have worked closely with members to create a space that both welcomes the public and encourages wildlife to flourish, so I want to acknowledge their efforts too.

“Edinburgh is lucky enough to boast more than 130 beautiful parks and gardens, 30 of which hold Green Flags, and there is no doubt the Friends groups across the city make a real difference to the popularity and amenity of these spaces.”

Graham Beal, Chairperson of Friends of Seven Acre Park, added: “Having received a Green Flag award for the park earlier in 2016, we are delighted to additionally receive an ‘Outstanding’ award from It’s Your Neighbourhood.

“The group takes great pride in the park, working through a number of initiatives to help improve the open space. We have further plans to maintain and enhance the beauty of this wonderful area, and would welcome new members.”


Through work with the City of Edinburgh Council, Friends of Seven Acre Park are engaged in a variety of activities benefiting the local community and wildlife, including the implementation of wildflower beds, ‘food for free orchards’, nature interpretation boards and a woodland trail.

They also carry out regular litter picks and have been successful in securing several Woodland Trust grants, planting native trees around the park.

The group, which has more than 20 members, holds regular meetings and AGMs, and has been cited by Keep Scotland Beautiful as a ‘great example’ of how successful partnership working between a council and a Friends group can be.

Friends of Parks groups operate on a voluntary basis and play a key role in enhancing and protecting local parks alongside the Council. Find out more about [existing groups, and how to set up a new one](#), on the Council website.



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