

Five things you need to know today

Tourist Tax – bill passes Stage 1

Following our note about the proposed bill to establish a visitor levy in Scotland yesterday, it has passed the first voting stage at The Scottish Parliament.

This is the broad framework for all 32 local authorities to enact in their area in their own way. Each council may or may not charge a tourist tax and can decide how the revenue from it will be spent.

In Edinburgh the council has calculated that around £37 million could be raised from charging either a percentage or a flat rate fee on those staying in hotels and other accommodation. [The local authority is running a consultation on the way the money should be spent until Friday at this link here.](#)

[There is also more information about the proposed tax here.](#)

[Read more here.](#)

Cinema in Craigmillar

Craigmillar Now is screening three films from Thursday.

Made up of three short black and white films, The Bill Douglas Trilogy follows the experiences of a young boy named Jamie growing up during and after the Second World War in an impoverished Scottish mining town and his eventual departure to start a new life

Free but booking is essential. [Book here](#)

The Bill Douglas Trilogy comprises:

My Childhood Thursday 18th January 3pm

My Ain Folk Thursday 25th January 3pm

My Way Home Thursday 1st February 3pm

**The Bill Douglas Trilogy: My Childhood
(PG)**


Thursday 18 January at 3pm

46 minutes with English subtitles

Black & White

In My Childhood (1972), eight-year old Jamie lives with his granny and elder brother in a Scottish mining village in 1945. With his mother in a mental health institution and his father absent, he is subject to the hardships of poverty.

The cinema film programme is funded by The City of Edinburgh Council.



Craigmillar Now
• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

BILL DOUGLAS
MY
CHILDHOOD

Local cinema screening at
Craigmillar Now.
Thursday 18th January
3pm. Book tickets via:
www.craigmillarnow.com/opportunitites

Post Office scandal

The Lord Advocate, Dorothy Bain, KC, appeared at Holyrood on Tuesday afternoon to make a statement to MSPs.

[The content of the statement can be read here.](#)

Following the statement MSPs were invited to question the Lord Advocate. Edinburgh Southern MSP, Daniel Johnson asked: “The scandal hinges on the fact that the Post Office continued to investigate and prosecute people after it knew that evidence

from Horizon was flawed. I push the Lord Advocate on her timeline. She is saying that it was not until 2019 that the Crown Office was told that the evidence was unsound or that it had reason to doubt it. However, that is simply the point at which it was proved in a court of law, which is different from knowing and having reasons to doubt it. Indeed, the Crown Office's timeline suggests that.

“In 2013, the Crown Office said that it needed to carefully consider evidence. In 2015, it stopped the prosecutions. There were public questions published in *Computer Weekly* as long ago as 2009, and there were questions in many national newspapers. When did questions regarding the safety of the evidence first arise in the Crown Office? What steps to investigate that did the Crown Office take, because that was clearly before 2019? When did the Crown Office know that the evidence was not safe? Was that before or after the decision to stop the prosecutions?”

The Lord Advocate responded that the prosecutions stopped in 2015 but it is important to distinguish between what the Crown Office and the Procurator Fiscal Service knew and the work of the reporting agency (the Post Office).

She said: “In the period from 2013 to 2015, the agency indicated—through its experienced staff, through witness statements and demonstrations of the operation of Horizon and in meetings with Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service representatives—that there was no problem with the Horizon system and that, in previous cases that had been prosecuted by Scottish prosecutors, there were no concerns about the accuracy of the evidence that had been submitted by the Post Office.

“Following 2013, when the issue was raised in meetings because of public concern, Scottish prosecutors were assured that the Horizon system was robust and that it would have no impact on the evidence that was available to Scottish prosecutors and

the safety of that evidence.

In relation to what Scottish prosecutors knew, they did not know through that period of time—from 2013 to 2015—that there was any difficulty whatsoever with the Horizon system. That continued to be the position of the Post Office thereafter. It said that there was no problem with the Horizon system, and it was only after the adjudication of the courts in England and Wales in 2019 that that was asserted as being positively wrong.

“It is quite clear from the reported decisions of the court of criminal appeal in England and Wales that, until 2019, the Post Office refused to accept that there were problems with Horizon. It is clear from the reported decisions that that is the case.”

Alex Cole-Hamilton, MSP for Edinburgh Western asked: “It is clear from the Lord Advocate’s statement that the Crown Office—like members of the public, the press and Government officials—was repeatedly lied to as part of an industrial-scale deception. The Lord Advocate confirmed to Anas Sarwar that any criminality by the Post Office will be considered after the public inquiry concludes, if complaints are made to Police Scotland. Will that consideration apply solely to the Post Office as an agency as a whole? Could it apply to specific individuals in the agency? Can Police Scotland act directly on the inquiry’s findings or would a third-party complaint be needed to begin legal proceedings?”

The Lord Advocate responded: “A complaint of criminality on the part of Post Office officials or the corporate entity of the Post Office would be considered by the Scottish police and investigated and reported in the normal fashion. In addition, when there is a complaint of individuals’ criminality, a report should be made to the police, and the normal processes of police investigation and reporting to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service should be carried out.”



Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, KC, after leaving the chamber at Holyrood. Photo The Edinburgh Reporter

Ceilidh on

The White Heather Ceilidh at Bonnie & Wild in St James Quarter falls on Burns night, so on Thursday 25 January B&W will be ramping things up to celebrate Scotland's National Bard.

The Charlie Kirkpatrick Trio will be joined by a bagpiper for the evening, while many of their kitchens will be putting on Haggis specials, including Kochchi, Stack & Still, Creel Caught, El Perro Negro and east PIZZAS.

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the Edinburgh Reporter

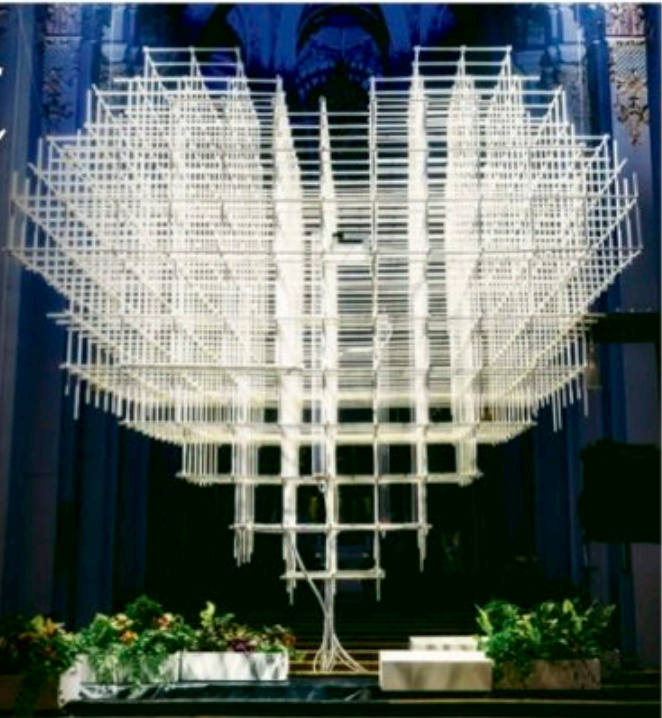
January 2024

EDINBURGH'S FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER...A CAPITAL READ FROM START TO FINISH

Heart and soul



Gifted German artist Michael Pendry to once again transform St Giles' with his newest masterpiece



By **PHYLLIS STEPHEN**

A NEW PUBLIC sculpture created by German artist Michael Pendry, will be sited in St Giles' Cathedral later this month. 'HEART' makes its UK premiere in the

capital in a collaboration between the Burns&Beyond Festival and the St Giles' 900th.

The anniversary marks the founding of the cathedral, to be celebrated with events throughout 2024. This year HEART will light up the

cathedral with the very symbol of life itself, a new three-dimensional work measuring five metres tall, will transform the space with a ticketed evening illumination and soundscape for visitors. The installation will take ten days to build and will be a central part of

the Burns&Beyond Festival which takes place in the city from 25 January to 11 February. What better symbol for the festival which takes its inspiration from Robbie Burns and promotes 'Luv, hope and Kindness', than a heart?

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