

World Cup comes to Ratho.

World's top climbers descend on Edinburgh for Climbing World Cup and Paraclimbing Cup



The world's best climbers will descend on the Scottish capital this autumn as the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) World Cup and Paraclimbing Cup comes to the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena:Ratho from 23 -24 September.

Organised by EICA:Ratho, in conjunction with the British Mountaineering Council, this is the first time the IFSC World Cup has been held in Edinburgh since 2003 and the first time a Paraclimbing Cup has been held in Scotland, with over 1,200 spectators expected over the two days.

Paraclimber, Keith Lynch, a member of Climb Scotland and GB Development Squad, who will be competing in the Paraclimbing Cup AL2 (lower limb amputee) category, kicked off the launch at Ratho, as the tickets for the event went on sale today. He was joined by Natalie Berry, a member of the Senior GB Lead Climbing Team.

Keith Lynch (top) who climbs at Ratho explained. "The British climbing scene is very exciting at the moment and with its acceptance as an Olympic sport at Tokyo 2020, it's clear it's developing at a rapid rate.

"Having a paraclimbing element happening alongside the IFSC World Cup can only create more awareness for this lesser known element of the sport and hopefully encourage more people with disabilities to get involved. For many climbers, this aspect will almost be unknown and to non-climbers, the thought is baffling as climbing without a disability seems hard enough. Hopefully we will show that the impossible is possible, no matter what the disability is."




Up to 200 of the world's top climbers will compete in two disciplines – Lead and Speed climbing – in the World Cup while in the Paraclimbing Cup, up to 50 climbers will take part in one of 10

climbing categories.

Also present was Jamie Andrew and Senior GB Lead Climber, Natalie Berry. Jamie survived a quadruple amputation after severe frostbite sustained while climbing in the Alps. The seven days endured at altitude in 90mph winds and -30C temperatures also cost Jamie's climbing partner, Jamie Fisher, his life. Andrew is now a motivational speaker and works on a variety of leadership programmes throughout the year.

EICA:Ratho is one of only eight competition speed walls in the world and the only climbing centre in the UK suitable for hosting an IFSC World Cup Lead and Speed Climbing competition and Paraclimbing Cup.

The events are being funded by Edinburgh Leisure, City of Edinburgh Council and is being supported by EventScotland, part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate.

Neill Busby, senior climbing instructor at Edinburgh International Climbing Centre and one of the route-setters for the IFSC Climbing World Cup and Paraclimbing Cup said: "As Europe's biggest climbing centre, with more routes than any other walls in the UK, it'll be a great opportunity to showcase the wonderful facilities at Ratho and the sport of climbing, ahead of its debut at Tokyo 2020. 

"Ratho has some of the highest quality route-setters in Europe, a team of international standard setters who regularly set for international competitions."

Stuart Turner, Head of EventScotland, said: "Scotland is the perfect stage for events and we are delighted to be supporting the return of international climbing to Edinburgh. This is an exciting time for the sport and Ratho is the ideal platform for people to see climbing first-hand ahead of its debut at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

"The combination of both world-class facilities and climbers promises an adrenaline packed weekend of action so I recommend you get in early and secure your tickets for the event."

Edinburgh's Lord Provost, Frank Ross, said: "Edinburgh boasts some of the

very best climbing facilities and these Championships will see competitors and spectators travel from across the globe.

“Hosting these events is a major coup for the Capital and for Scotland. It will generate valuable profile for the city and the venue and we look forward to welcoming the world to EICA: Ratho.

“This is Europe’s largest indoor climbing arena and it is right on our doorstep. I hope this event encourages citizens from all age groups and abilities to try a visit to our very own climbers’ paradise.”





Junior and adult tickets, day and weekend passes are now available to buy from £6.50 to £25 from: <http://www.eica-ratho.co.uk/climbing-world-cup>

Parking at Ratho will be limited to 300 cars per day and there will be a £10 charge for parking on-site. Free parking will be available off-site with a shuttle bus transfer.

Image of Jamie Andrew (from above) courtesy of Euan Ryan (Finalcrux)

Further images from the press call can be [viewed here](#)

Man charged after heroin

seizure in Livingston



Police have charged a 49-year-old man following the recovery heroin from within a vehicle in Livingston.

Officers from the Pro-Active Unit searched the vehicle located in Hobart Street and recovered 10.5 grams of Heroin with an approximate street value of £1100.

Various drugs paraphernalia, a mobile phone and a three figure sum of cash were also removed from the vehicle.

The 49-year old is scheduled to appear at Livingston Sheriff Court on Thursday 25th May.

Sergeant Frank Travers from Livingston CID said: "Police Scotland continue to enforce a zero tolerance policy towards drug related offences and any offences reported will be dealt with as a top priority.

"We will also work closely with our partners at the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to stop drug dealers from benefiting from the proceeds of their criminal activity.

"Taking drugs of any nature can have a severe impact on a person's health and it's impossible to know the type or purity of the substance being consumed. With that in mind I would urge people to think carefully before taking anything that they are unsure about.

"The public can assist greatly in helping police tackle drug related offences and I would urge anyone with information on drug offences in their area to come forward to police or contact the charity Crimestoppers (anonymously if required) on 0800 555 111."

The Queen's Hall launch fundraising campaign

At The Queen's Hall on Nicolson Street last week a fundraising campaign called "Music To Your Ears" was launched ahead of a sparkling concert by Nicola Benedetti MBE. The funds raised will be used to refurbish the hall ahead of its 40th and 200th anniversaries.

The hall will have been used as one of the capital's best-loved music venues for 40 years in 2019 and the building will be 200 years old in 2023. For that reason alone, some renovation is required to ensure the building's future.



Earlier this year The Scottish Government made £650,000 available in a grant for external works, but now the board is embarking on an ambitious programme to introduce a more sophisticated feel to the venue.

The hall is popular with a wide range of musicians from all genres, evidenced by the programme for this month alone which includes Nicola Benedetti, KT Tunstall, Got Soul Choir and The Fureys. Now the surroundings and facilities need improvement to ensure they keep coming back, and to redress some neglect over the last couple of decades.

Along with a café, the Box Office and other public areas will be brought closer to the action, mainly due to the removal of an electricity sub-station which is inside the building and which Scottish Power are now going to move. This alone will open up more space and light, but coupled with major improvements to sound and lighting systems, the hall

will become much more modern and attractive.

Chair of The Queen's Hall Board, Nigel Griffiths, addressed an assembled group of patrons, trustees and supporters before Tuesday night's concert and showed off the proposed designs. He said : "Since its foundation in 1979 as the home of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, we have hosted over 8,000 concerts and become Scotland's favourite venue for all round music.

"We owe a great debt to our supporters which means we continue to attract international talent. We are delighted to have received a real vote of confidence from The Scottish Government in making funds available to upgrade and refurbish the exterior of the hall under the supervision of Historic Environment Scotland.

"Now we have appointed architects Mill Design to produce plans for the inside of the building with better facilities, a better cafe and a larger bar area along with a more comfortable experience in the auditorium itself.

"We need funds to the tune of £3million to enable us to embark on our plans, and that fundraising campaign is now formally launched."

Karen Wood the Interim Chief Executive at The Hall said : "The Queen's Hall is poised to enter an extremely exciting phase, the vision is inspired and we are about to see the past meet the future and music continue to come to life!"

Ms Benedetti was accompanied by Alexei Grynyuk on piano. She explained that the content of the concert was all Brahms, whom she loves deeply and began playing as a teenager. She also told the story of the relationship of Brahms and the Schumanns, and filled in the backdrop to the Sonatas which she then performed to a rapt audience.

Just yesterday Ms Benedetti became the youngest ever recipient of the Queen's Medal for Music, another great honour in her

already distinguished career.

I am humbled & grateful for this honour, & will continue to fight for people's access to the arts. The soul of this country needs nurturing pic.twitter.com/RNtKLqffmW

– Nicola Benedetti (@NickyBenedetti) [May 24, 2017](#)

Still no leadership at the City Chambers



View from the City Chambers

At this morning's council meeting some convenership posts and appointments to outside bodies were approved, but there is still no Council Leader or policies to follow.

Two motions were lodged at the reconvened City of Edinburgh Council meeting this morning, one by the Conservative group and one jointly by three of the political groups the Labour, LibDems and the Green Group. Only the SNP remained silent. It is obvious why, as they want to lead the council, even in a minority coalition.

Labour and the SNP have been talking about a coalition for most of the three weeks since the council election, but there is no resolution as yet. This is largely laid at the door of the Scottish Labour Executive who have not yet approved any deal put to them. Today's meeting was a continuation of that held last week which was adjourned for further discussions.

The Edinburgh Reporter had already had sight of today's cross-party motion, but at the last minute the Conservative group said they had lodged a motion too. In the confusion which followed the Lord Provost called a ten minute recess for that to be circulated.

Speaking about the Conservative proposal to run the city by Executive Committee Conservative Leader Councillor Iain Whyte said : "The people of this city expected better. They expect us to take the city forward in a way which is beneficial to all of our citizens, that has not happened and there is a need for it to happen.

"We must break the deadlock and we propose an innovative solution to allow all of us to take part in governing this city. In the background there seems to be a deal between the SNP and Labour groups. It is the deal that shall not speak its name. No-one knows its terms and the Labour Group are scared to make the deal.

"It smacks of something cobbled together in what would have been called 'smoke filled rooms' in days gone by. I am surprised by the weakness of the LibDems and the Greens.

"We won the popular vote and Labour who lost the most councillors and lost the popular vote should not be holding this council to ransom in this way.

"People voted for change in the recent election. Edinburgh needs governed and we have suggested an innovative solution to do that."

Taking up the matter after some debate he explained that although there were cross party talks with the Chief Executive yesterday it would have been 'inappropriate' for him to put forward this proposal then. He refuted the suggestion that the Tory group had somehow reneged on yesterdays discussions to find a way to form a council.

Councillor Whyte said : “There was a commitment to setting the membership of various committees in proportion to the number of the councillors elected for each political party. The General Election is governing everything here, not the councillors. Our motion does cover all the essential business.”

Councillor Mowat seconded the Conservative motion which suggested that any further delay would be damaging, particularly as a coalition is not forthcoming.

She said they proposed a system of an Executive Committee of 13 members of the council. The parties would be represented in the same proportion as the votes achieved by each party so this would mean 4 SNP members, 4 Tories, 2 Labour, 2 Green and 1 Liberal Democrat. This cabinet structure would replace the council’s Policy and Strategy Committee.

Clearly such an arrangement would be beneficial to the Conservatives whose last minute proposal was very much regarded as an attempt to get more power for themselves.

Labour Leader Councillor Cammy Day presented a motion to allow the businesses in the city to continue to operate.

He said : “It is disappointing that the Conservative group have proposed this at just a few minutes after 10am this morning when we had a meeting yesterday with the Chief Executive to discuss ways forward.

Councillor Steve Burgess seconded the motion and said : “This motion is intended to ensure that in the absence of a political coalition residents and businesses are not held up any more than they have been already. This will allow planning and licensing matters to be dealt with. Appointing councillors to some outside organisations will allow those bodies to get on with their business too.

“Importantly it sets the ball rolling to work with the new

locality model. And it will allow five Bailies to be appointed to help you, Lord Provost, to deal with your heavy workload.

“It is disappointing that the Conservatives have simply sprung this motion on the council this morning and we must question their motives in doing that.

“It seems it will take time for a set of arrangements to be agreed but in our view it is much better to have pragmatic arrangements in place to deal with that over the next few weeks.”

LibDem councillor Kevin Lang said that he was pleased with the cross party motion being proposed. He claimed : “The current lack of political leadership is not healthy and cannot be allowed to continue for long. There is a case for being flexible on the council meeting dates in June to get clarity and certainty as soon as possible.”

But he warned against one party having outright power in any joint arrangements to come.

He concluded : “If a two party coalition is formed then it would not have a majority and it be wrong for such a coalition to have a majority on any committees. But a cabinet structure would be wrong and would not reflect the votes cast in the recent election.”

SNP Councillor and group leader, Adam McVey railed against the last-minute proposal from the Conservative Group and said : “This is just a guddle! We are not prepared to entertain the silly antics of the Conservative party.”

Conservative Councillor Nick Cook observed that everyone has a duty to form a council and matters should not be put in abeyance to save the political skin of one of the members of the Labour Party. He was referring to Ian Murray MP who is standing for re-election in the Edinburgh South constituency. It is widely speculated that the Labour executive will put off

approval of any coalition with the SNP until after the General Election when they hope he will be returned to Westminster.

The Lord Provost had suspended Standing Order 1 at the beginning of the meeting to ensure that the council would be acting within its legal limits.

There are rules to deal with the way the council acts both just after an election and once it is constituted. These [standing orders](#) 'govern and guide the decisions made by the Council and its officers and ensures that robust, clear and accountable organisational frameworks are in place'.

The Labour Green and Scottish LibDem Groups lodged their motion this morning to ask the Chief Executive to consult with all political parties and propose some reform in the way the council committees operate.

The redesign is requested on a streamlined Executive Committee model all based on the political make up of the council, and which will reflect the new locality model adopted by the council.

Until a new council administration is formed the Chief Executive will have to take political guidance from all political group leaders.

Cllrs Work, Cameron, Staniforth, Aldridge and Rust were appointed as Bailies to help the Lord Provost with his workload.

Various other councillors were appointed as Conveners and to the boards of outside bodies and we will confirm these when we get the full list from the council. It became a bit of a tedious meeting towards the end and there were far too many names to write down!

This is not an auspicious start for the new council. The SNP have the largest group and [want to run the city](#) which they

believe they will be able to do with some help from the other smaller groups. It was clear from the way the votes fell today that the Tory group, who have only one councillor less, are very much out on their own. The plan proposed by the three smaller groups was approved by 43 votes to 17.



The SNP group lead by Cllr Adam McVey on the left

Edinburgh Food Festival bringing a whole lot MHOR this July!

Edinburgh Food Festival has announced that they are bringing Chef Tom Lewis and his Monachyle Mhor team to the festival this summer.



The festival in George Square Gardens will celebrate the finest of Scotland's food and drink with stalls with artisan food, talks and demonstrations. Monachyle Mhor's chef proprietor Tom Lewis says he is brining the Mhor charm to Edinburgh for two nights only. Eat Mhor will offer a 6 course tasting menu in the glamour of the Spiegel tent de Variety where guests will have a one of a kind dining experience.

A limited number of seats will be available with sittings between 7 and 9pm on 28 and 29 July 2017. Tickets go on sale on 26 July 2017 and will be available on the website.



Sharon Burgess, Managing Director of Assembly Festival and Edinburgh Food Festival said : “The food and drink offering here in Scotland is world-class, so when the masses descend upon Edinburgh ahead of the Fringe Festival we ensure a taste of Scotland all in one place.

“The effortless style and unbeatable quality of what Chef Tom Lewis and family produce is the perfect pairing for Edinburgh Food Festival so we are thrilled to bring them to the capital for the hottest ticket this side of the festival!”

More information and tickets [here](#).



Fly Norwegian to the US – snap up a £99 fare today

In exciting travel news, Norwegian's new transatlantic flights to three east coast destinations direct from Edinburgh Airport start in less than a month's time.



Today the low-cost airline has unveiled lower fares from Edinburgh to the USA which cost just about the same as a last-minute train ticket to London.

[tweet_box design="default"]More than 5,500 seats on Norwegian Airlines are now available to the US east coast from £99 one-way as part of a 10-day special offer from Thursday 25th May to 3 June[/tweet_box]

From 15 June, Norwegian begin flying three new transatlantic routes from Edinburgh to airports serving the New York, Boston and New England areas.

The 10-day offer is available on Norwegian's brand new low-cost routes from Edinburgh direct to Stewart International Airport (in New York state), Providence Airport (offering connections to Boston and New England) and direct to Bradley International Airport (New England) from **just £99 one-way***. Passengers can book now at www.norwegian.com/UK/FLYUSA99.

The offer is available on flights from Edinburgh between 15 June 2017 – March 2018. Flights are subject to availability and Terms and Conditions apply.

Norwegian Chief Commercial Officer Thomas Ramdahl said: *"The countdown is now underway to Norwegian's exciting new transatlantic routes, and consumers across Scotland now have another chance to bag a bargain flight to the USA. With more choice, never before seen routes and now a range of special fares on offer, there has never been a better time to plan an affordable American adventure."*

Norwegian's new Edinburgh routes to the USA are now available:

Edinburgh – 14 transatlantic flights per week from 15th June:

- o Stewart Intl (New York) – daily flights
- o Providence (greater Boston) – 4 weekly flights (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun)
- o Bradley Intl (New England/Connecticut) – 3 weekly flights (Tues, Thurs, Sat)

T&Cs apply

**Limited offer. Subject to availability. Book by 3rd June 22:59 BST. This offer is based on the lowest one-way fare incl. taxes and charges on selected flights. Restrictions & baggage charges may apply. For flights from EDI use promo code FLYUSA99.*

- *Fly from Edinburgh (EDI) to New York/Newburgh between Jun 2017 – Mar 2018*
- *Fly from Edinburgh (EDI) to Boston/Providence (PVD) between Jun 2017 – Mar 2018*
- *Fly from Edinburgh (EDI) to Connecticut/Hartford (BDL) between Jun 2017 – Mar 2018*

D. E. Stevenson: Prolific Edinburgh Author Finally Commemorated



Eglington Crescent, hidden in the leafy green streets of Edinburgh's West End, is a short walk from Haymarket train station; a place where thousands of travellers will enter into the city. Edinburgh attracts tourists in the millions, some of whom specifically arrive to visit the world's first UNESCO City of Literature.

Great minds like Burns, Conan-Doyle, Fergusson, Welsh and Banks, are all well commemorated here. But one thing is the same with these writers: They are all male.

Many claim there are "more statues of dogs in Edinburgh than there are to notable women from the city." And maybe they're right. Therefore, Rebecca Raeburn and her team from the City of Literature Trust have begun the unveiling of plaques around Edinburgh to finally give recognition to amazing and influential female writers.

We've all heard of R.L. Stevenson, but Dorothy Emily Stevenson was commemorated today. Robert Louis was her father's cousin, and the literary talent and imagination of the family clearly continued with her.

Her childhood home at no.14 Eglington Crescent was where she would write prolifically; all against the wishes of her family. D.E. Stevenson would have become a great seamstress had she listened to her father's tough house rules. But

quietly in the attic of number 14 she began writing her novels in long hand.



Wendy Simpson (left) and Penny Kent (right).
Granddaughters of D.E. Stevenson

In her lifetime she published 40 books, each one a mixture of romance, drama, satire, and science fiction. When her granddaughter, Penny Kent, discovered five more books in their attic in Hartfordshire, then even posthumously, D.E continued being published. Five hand-written manuscripts were discovered by her granddaughter who arrived at her Granny's old house to unveil the plaque this morning.

"She would have loved to see her name on the house she grew up in," explained Penny, "but Granny was always very quiet, she liked her words. When we visited her at her home she would have the decor still much like the old Victorian days, it was dark with one lump of coal on the fire. But her warm personality always shone through. She would sit on the couch in continue to write her novels in long hand, really living inside of her books."

D.E Stevenson always claimed, much as her great-uncle Robert, that her books would be like lighthouses for her readers, illuminating new worlds and characters in a world often torn apart by war. Born in 1892, two years before R.L Stevenson's death, she lived to 81, witnessing two major world wars and the conflicts that ensued. Her husband, a military man, gave her a great insight into that world, inspiring the works of *Mrs Tim of the Regiment* (1932).

Her other novels included *Miss Buncle's Book*, which has been re-imagined as a stage-play.

"There is talk of a movie coming out based on the book, but the stage play would have been fabulous to see, especially in Edinburgh where Granny once lived" Penny continued, joined by

her sister Wendy Simpson, curator of the Moffat Museum, where D.E Stevenson spent her last days.

“My main memories of Granny was that she loved Scrabble. She was a keen golfer as well, and very good at archery. She stopped very abruptly though, maybe because of the war. It transformed her life and her writing however, and we still have some hand-written letters between her and her fans across the world, especially in America,” said Wendy.



Descendants of the great Stevenson family, Penny and Wendy were elated to see their grandmother finally receive some well deserved acknowledgement. The house itself is now a B&B, owned by Aileen Reeves, the proud occupier of the gorgeous and historical number 14 Eglinton Crescent.

New council might be any colour but the SNP still want to lead



Since the council elections at the beginning of the month there has been a deal of negotiation among the various political groups.

But even today, with a council meeting looming tomorrow

morning, there does not seem to be any firm agreement.

The leader of the largest political group, SNP Councillor Adam McVey, is frustrated at the lack of progress.

He told us : "The SNP is ready to form an administration and we're disappointed other parties have effectively blocked our attempt.

"Our position has been consistent that the capital needs clear leadership which can get to work addressing issues like housing, social care and transport.

"It's unfortunate that at this stage any attempt by us to form an administration would be voted down in the chamber by the other parties.

"The SNP group will keep working hard for the communities we represent and will continue to put the best interests of the city first."

While the SNP group no longer intend to lodge any proposals for conveners' appointments tomorrow, we understand that three of the other political groups, the Labour, LibDem and Green Groups will lodge a motion to fill the membership of the quasi-judicial committees, although not any of the conveners' positions.

A council leader will not be appointed, although the Lord Provost was appointed last week well within the required time limit.

So it appears that the members of committees like Planning and Licensing might be appointed, but without any permanent conveners in place. In other words there will be a limited form of council governance by elected members, but only just.

In the last administration the conveners and vice-conveners were evenly chosen from among the SNP and Labour councillors as these two political groups had agreed a

coalition a few days after the elections. There is no such agreement this time, and many have told us it is simply a result of the General Election, and the need to reelect MPs for Westminster getting in the way.



Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale MSP

We spoke with Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale earlier this week about the lack of progress. This is what she said:

We asked the Scottish Labour Leader about the proposed council coalition and what was happening with it...
pic.twitter.com/qwhB8buFH7

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [May 22, 2017](#)

When we spoke to Labour Group leader Councillor Cammy Day today he was perhaps a little frustrated too that his applications to the Scottish Executive Committee of the Scottish Labour Party had so far not been approved.

Councillor Day told us : “We have not yet got an agreed coalition in place or committee structure or governance structure that is a streamlined way for the council to go forward.

“We now want to consult with all political groups and council officers to find a way to provide a modern efficient committee and governance model.

“The old committee structure is not fit for the future which takes into account the new locality model adopted by the council.

“We acknowledge the importance of planning and licensing and the impact on local residents and our motion will suggest that membership is appointed and then the members of the

committee will appoint a chair from the elected members.”

We asked why there is not yet a deal with the SNP and Councillor Day explained that the Scottish Executive Council have still to give feedback or an in principle direction. He said : “We are urging the SEC to look progressively at our request to form a coalition.”



The Green Group meanwhile have announced on their website that they are behind an interim proposal to break the political logjam and they propose some way to move forward until the General Election is over.

They also say that they would be happy with an SNP-Labour led council with Green backing on a policy by policy basis is the best arrangement for the capital.

Green Councillor Steve Burgess said: “The current logjam in the city is a result of the general election and political manoeuvring by other parties to gain advantage. It has nothing to do with the best interests of the city and the people who need council services.

“As Greens we are as frustrated by that as anyone else but we also recognise that it is there until 8 June. So we are making a proposal which gives the city the leadership it needs and allows decisions to be made, on a temporary basis, until the main council meeting at the end of June puts more robust arrangements in place.

“Firstly, we want to see the more legally focused committees set up this week: planning, licensing sub-committee and licensing board and the integrated joint board on health and social care. That will allow decisions in those areas to be made.

“Secondly, to plug the leadership gap, we propose an all party

leadership group, with one member from each of the 5 parties, to give a steer to senior officers on key decisions until the end of June.

“Thirdly, we propose some modest reforms to the way the council does business in the long term: that committee membership should reflect the diversity of the council as a whole; that the voting decisions of all councillors should be recorded and publicly available; and that the Education Committee should have two parents and one senior pupil sitting on it.

“Greens want Edinburgh to move forward and to do so in a way which strengthens decision-making and leadership.”

When the council election results were made known on 5 May there was no clear majority. The SNP have 19 councillors, the Conservatives 18, Labour 12, Greens 8 and the LibDem group is now 6.

An SNP-Labour coalition would not have an outright majority and it would depend on the Greens and the LibDems to back them on each matter as it came up for decision unless they are also party to any coalition when it is finally agreed.

The 63 councillors will meet at the City Chambers tomorrow and we will let you know if and when any deals are thrashed out.

Follow us on [Twitter](#) where we will be live tweeting from the floor of the Chamber.

New bus service to South Queensferry starts next month

Lothian Country the new subsidiary of Lothian Buses has announced timetable and fares information for its new service to South Queensferry which begins on Monday 5 June 2017.

With a real throwback to the days of Eastern Scottish which ran buses to the west of the city with their distinctive green and gold livery, the new buses have been unveiled.



Service 43 and the limited stop X43 will operate between St Andrew Square and South Queensferry with buses leaving every 20 minutes during the day from Monday to Saturday and every 30 minutes during the day on Sundays.

While the company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Lothian Buses it will operate as a standalone business with its own buses and products provided on an entirely commercial basis.

There will be two fare zones; city and cityWEST. Travel in one zone will be £1.60 for an adult single and 80p for a child single. Travel in two zones will be £2.60 for an adult single and £1.30 for a child single.

Lothian Country is introducing the cityWEST Day ticket which will offer customers unlimited travel on Lothian Country and Lothian day services across both cityWEST zone and city zone for £5 for an adult and £2.50 for a child. The Network Day ticket and Lothian Buses Ridacard will be valid in cityWEST zone and city zone.

Customers are also being offered an introductory m-ticket deal, where they can purchase ten cityWEST single journey

tickets for £25. These can be downloaded from tfeapp.com on Android and Apple devices.



Richard Hall, Managing Director of Lothian Buses, said: “This new commercial service will provide important transport links for work and leisure between Queensferry and Edinburgh. We are pleased to be in a position to provide these vital services, following extensive analysis of passenger journey patterns and commitments from The City of Edinburgh Council to retain and improve bus priority measures. However, the ongoing provision of these services is wholly dependent on customer usage levels. It’s important that the community embrace our new venture to ensure its future viability.”

Local councillor Norman Work said : “I am delighted that all the hard work has paid off with Lothian buses listening to the Queensferry residents and have stepped in to operate a replacement bus service. I hope the residents and those living along on the Queensferry Road corridor will support the new service.”


Councillor Work was also able to advise that the commencement date had changed from the original announced date of Sunday 4 June.

“I have had notification from Lothian Buses that the new service will launch on Monday 5 June 2017 and not Sunday 4 June as originally reported.

“I have spoken with the current operator, Stagecoach, seeking clarification that their Service 40 will be running on Sunday 4th as normal and they have confirmed that this is the case, so users of this route will experience no break in service.”



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Lothian Country will introduce the following services from 4 June 2017:

- **Service 43** – St Andrew Square (north side), George Street, Frederick Street, Queensferry Street, Queensferry Road, A90, B924, Dalmeny Main Street, Bankhead Road, Station Road, Burgess Road, The Loan, Hopetoun Road, Bo'ness Road, Builyeon Road, Ferrymuir Road, (*Mon-Sat daytime 43 calls at Ferrymuir Retail Park*), Kirkliston Road to Queensferry Scotstoun Avenue. Return via outward route reversed.
- **Service X43** – route as 43 but omits Ferrymuir Retail Park. Stopping pattern: all stops St Andrew Square to Queensferry St at Drumsheugh Place then Learmonth Terrace, Craigleith (at Holiday Inn), Blackhall, Clermiston Road North, Parkgrove Road, Barnton then all stops to Queensferry (Scotstoun).

Full details are available by following @lothiancountry on Twitter or via Facebook at facebook.com/lothiancountry

David Sole kicks off a new era for his coaching company

Former rugby star, David Sole is to merge his two business interests from 1 June 2017.



David Sole & Associates will become part of School for CEOs, the executive development specialists Sole co-founded with Patrick Macdonald, former CEO of John Menzies, in 2011.

David Sole & Associates was established ten years ago to meet a specific need in terms of coaching and leadership for senior executives and board/team facilitation. As that business grew alongside School for CEOs, it became apparent that the businesses complement each other offering clients wider support. It is for that reason that the decision was made to merge the firm with School for CEOs.

David said: 'As the School for CEOs continues to grow and there is obvious overlap with the work I do as David Sole & Associates it made great sense to bring these two growing businesses together.'

'Our programmes have proven increasingly popular and are resonating with senior leaders in the changing world within which we live. We have a number of new and exciting initiatives in the pipeline to add to our existing portfolio which will further strengthen our position in the market.'

From 1st June he will lead the experienced team at the new-look [School for CEOs](#) as Managing Partner continuing to deliver Executive Coaching and programme content to current and new clients. Patrick Macdonald will become non-Executive Chairman

of the combined businesses.

Edinburgh tours with beer

At Edinburgh's Tourism Showcase held at the Scottish capital last week one phenomenon was easily observed: Edinburgh's guided tours are becoming more diverse with new tours entering the market.

Marianne Bailey from [Highland Explorer Tours](#) reassured us that this competition is for the everyone's interest when she said: "There is a slice in the pie for everyone." She introduced their two new Highland trips specifically designed for Outlander fans.

The TV show is one of a growing number of programmes which feature largely untouched parts of the Highlands and this has proved to be a great selling point for tourists.



There are also the brand new [Scottish Beer Tours](#). I met their representative and Tour Guide, Sara Robertson, who remembers with amusement that they started the company 'by accident'.

She organised a networking event and had unexpected success in converting non-beer drinkers into craft-beer fans. The Scottish Beer Tour's brewery tour start from [Summerhall](#) and feature the [Barney Brewery](#). This is a family-run business which comes in handy for Sara in her well-informed demonstration of the beer-making process. The tour goes on to visit various Old Town pubs and bars in pursuit of traditional as well as quirky beers.

The [Edinburgh Beer Factory](#) showcased their very own tours which relaunched this year alongside their new brewery taproom. This is the home of their Paolozzi lager named after Leith's own Sir Eduardo Luigi Paolozzi.

Their marketing strategist, Andrew Duncan, explained to me that their focus is on reinventing overlooked beer styles and redefining the craft beer scene as a unisex interest.

Nora Macleod from [Access to Adventure](#) was at the showcase to promote their beautifully inclusive tours with specialised support and limitless outdoor activities for people with additional needs. Her hope is to see domestic demand for accessible tours match that of the international.

This is a vision widely shared. [VisitScotland](#), for example, support inclusive tourism with various events and a redeveloped Accessibility Guide on their website.

There are other tours as well – a new architecture tour, family quiz, gourmet, photography and running tours and a new, adult-only night tour at the [Edinburgh Zoo](#), and [City of Edinburgh Tour](#)'s Alternative Tour taking in unusual landmarks and hidden murals.

Most of these are listed on a new, growing platform at www.getguided.co.uk.

Tapestry stolen from St Giles Cathedral has been recovered.



A tapestry stolen from St Giles Cathedral has been recovered.

A police appeal was made after the theft of a panel of the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry on the afternoon of Sunday 7th May, and following an investigation, the section is now back with its owners.

Officers are continuing to investigate the theft and the circumstances of the panel's recovery.

Detective Constable Chris Harding of Gayfield CID said: "We are following a number of lines of inquiry and I am pleased with the progress of the investigation, but I would continue to ask anyone with information about the theft, including the person responsible for the panel's removal and its return, to contact us."

A spokesperson for the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust said: "The Scottish Diaspora Tapestry team are greatly relieved to hear of the missing panel's safe return, as are the volunteer stitchers in the Netherlands who so lovingly created it.

"We are grateful for all the messages of support we have received from around the world and look forward to reuniting the panel with its companion pieces in the near future."

Those with information should contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 2639 of the 7th May 2017.

North Berwick man sentenced for VAT fraud

A painter and decorator from North Berwick was sentenced at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today for VAT fraud.

✖ Kevin Wheatley (50) of Market Place North Berwick deregistered his business in September 2010, claiming that he no longer earned enough in his business and that income had

fallen below the VAT registration threshold.

He continued to trade but did not charge or pay VAT between 2011 and 2014 which he should have. During that time he cashed cheques of over £189,000 using a money service bureau, attempting to hide his business income. He was detained in 2015 by HMRC officers on suspicion of VAT fraud. Mr Wheatley has since repaid the tax he evaded of some £44,040.25.

The sentence handed down is a four month restriction of liberty order meaning that he will have to wear an electronic tag, obliging him to remain at home between 9.30pm and 6.00am.

Annie Lennox to sing for the President in Edinburgh

This Friday the 44th President of the United States is coming to Edinburgh, and some classy Scottish entertainment is being laid on for him.



Annie Lennox, Kevin Bridges and Texas will all perform at the event, and all will raise money for charities they have chosen.

President Barack Obama will give the keynote address to the sell-out crowd at the EICC event which is supported by The Royal Bank of Scotland.

Sir Tom said : “I’m proud, privileged and over the moon to announce Oscar winning musician, Annie Lennox, brilliant stand-up comedian, Kevin Bridges and world class rock band, Texas will all play at this amazing dinner. What’s even more amazing is that they are all doing this for the benefit of a charity of their choice.

“They are stand out talents of their generation and will provide a remarkable conclusion to what we all hope will be an incredible evening with all profits benefitting Scotland’s children’s charities.

“I’m delighted to announce Royal Bank of Scotland, our partner across a number of events including the Kiltwalk and the STV Appeal have again stepped up to support this event.

“Demand for this dinner has been unparalleled in our own experience and we can only apologise to those who we cannot accommodate at the dinner.”

The Hunter Foundation also announced that all profits raised from the event will go to Scottish children’s charities participating in the Kiltwalk in 2017, some 300 charities.

Sir Tom added : “We’d like as many young people in Scotland to benefit from this, hence offering a little support to a lot of charities across all of Scotland...”

Whisper it, wheely good news for Capital quiet zones

The City of Edinburgh Council has been awarded funding to continue the improvements of the Quiet Routes network.

The network, which is based on the Council's Active Travel Action Plan, will create a series of routes across the capital which can be used by walkers and cyclists.

Its focus is to make cycling a realistic choice for the many people who do not feel safe mixing with busy traffic by providing direct and convenient routes for everyday utility and leisure journeys.



Cycling campaigners including Alison Johnstone MSP took to the streets last August in support of a new cycle route.

Over the coming year, the council will continue to consult local residents on the designs for routes.

They include Castle Terrace to King's Building (Route 6), Roseburn to Edinburgh Park (Route 8), Leith to Portobello – Seafield to Leith Shore phase (Route 10), Lower Granton Road Shared Path (Route 13), Inverleith to Easter Road (Route 20), Holyrood Park to Ratcliffe Terrace (Route 30), Davidson's Mains Park path improvements (Route 60) and Niddrie to Gilmerton (Route 61).



Meanwhile, more than £15m in grant funding has been awarded by Sustrans Scotland for the creation of walking and cycling infrastructure in Scotland over the next year.

A total of 44 organisations including, local authorities, housing associations, National Parks and Community Trusts are set to benefit.

More details on all the routes [here](#) on the council website.

Tesco Bank drop off supplies at the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home

Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home took delivery of a bumper pack of hundreds of pet care products donated by Tesco Bank.

The much-needed donation followed the Home's participation in Tesco Bank's Pet Roadshow on 28 April as part of National Pet Month. It contained a variety of essential dog and cat care supplies including food bowls, litter bags, dog and cat food, and a variety of treats.



(L-R) Bernadette Mallon, Mark Airey, Rachel Parry, and Nicola Gunn as Tesco Bank donate cat and dog food from their Pet Insurance Roadshow tour.

Nicola Gunn, Director of Fundraising and Communications at Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home, described the importance of the support that businesses like Tesco Bank can offer to the city's stray and unwanted pets: "Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home provides an important service to Edinburgh and the Lothians by working with police and council services to rescue, reunite and rehome its lost and abandoned dogs and cats. In the absence of any government or lottery funding, we rely on the support of both local and national businesses like Tesco Bank to continue in this mission.

"With over 100 dogs and cats on site at any one time, and thousands coming through our door each year, the annual cost of this service has now reached nearly £1million. Corporate

support is vital in meeting these costs – and is welcomed through gifts in kind, monetary donations and corporate volunteering.”

Mark Airey, Commercial Director (Insurance) Tesco Bank, said : “At Tesco Bank we are committed to promoting responsible pet ownership and were delighted to recently work with the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home at our Pet Roadshow in Edinburgh. As a little thank you and to help support the compassionate and valuable work that they do, we are thrilled to present a donation of pet care products to the home. We hope that through this donation, we can help to positively impact on the lives of stray and unwanted animals.”

Extra trains for marathon runners and their supporters

ScotRail Alliance have confirmed that extra services will be provided for Edinburgh spectators and runners on Sunday 28 May 2017.



The extra trains are due to run between Edinburgh and Prestonpans from early afternoon onwards. All trains will serve Wallyford and Musselburgh stations, near to the finishing line.

ScotRail also advise that, due to platform extension works, a small number of services will start or terminate at Haymarket, rather than Edinburgh Waverley.

A ScotRail Alliance spokesperson said: “Please allow extra

time for travel, and buy your ticket in advance, not on the day. The last trains of the day are likely to be busy, so please aim for an earlier service to avoid disappointment.”

The following trains **start** at Haymarket instead of Waverley:

- 0934 Edinburgh to Dunblane (departs Haymarket at 0935)
- 1106 Edinburgh to Stirling (departs Haymarket at 1107)
- 1506 Edinburgh to Stirling (departs Haymarket at 1508)
- 1636 Edinburgh to Dunblane (departs Haymarket at 1640)
- 1735 Edinburgh to Dunblane (departs Haymarket at 1736)

Customers wishing to travel on these services may take any train from Edinburgh Waverley to connect with their service at Haymarket.

The following trains **terminate** at Haymarket instead of Waverley:

- 1346 Stirling to Edinburgh (arrives Haymarket at 1437)
- 1415 Glenrothes to Edinburgh (arrives Haymarket at 1513)
- 1601 Dunblane to Edinburgh (arrives Haymarket at 1704)

Connections are available every few minutes from Haymarket to Edinburgh Waverley.

Resilience Committee meets in

the early hours

Terror threat level raised to 'critical' but First Minister urges business as usual.



Scots must not allow terrorism to triumph and should go about their business as usual, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said.

Last night the UK's terror threat level was raised to 'critical', and the FM chaired a further Resilience Committee meeting in the early hours of this morning which was attended by the Deputy First Minister, the Justice Secretary, the Lord Advocate and senior officers from Police Scotland.

At the meeting, ministers were briefed by Police Scotland about the practical implications for Scotland of the heightened security status.

The First Minister said: "While raising the UK terror threat level to 'critical' has been judged a necessary response to the despicable attack in Manchester, we must not allow terrorism to triumph.

"I urge the people of Scotland to be vigilant but not alarmed and, as far as possible, to go about their business as usual.

"Police Scotland have already visibly increased their presence in locations such as transport hubs and city centres as a precaution. Security arrangements for upcoming public events, including this weekend's Scottish Cup Final, are being thoroughly reviewed and the public should anticipate additional safety measures such as full body and bag searches.

"Our emergency services prepare extensively for situations such as this, and those well-rehearsed plans are now being put into practice."

The First Minister added: "Anyone who was in Manchester and witnessed the terror attack or its immediate aftermath will undoubtedly be feeling stressed or upset. Anyone with concerns about themselves or their children should contact their GP for

support or NHS 24 if their GP surgery is closed.”

Women's basketball – Malaysian tournament for Scotland



Caledonia Pride in action earlier this season at Riccarton. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Scotland's senior women have landed a trip to Malaysia to take part in an International Test Tournament in Kuala Lumpur from 13 – 17 June 2017.

The team will go head-to-head with hosts Malaysia, two regional teams from China and another two regional teams from Taiwan.

The trip to Asia will play a pivotal part in their preparations for next year's Commonwealth Games which will take place on the Gold Coast, Australia.

Bart Sengers, women's national performance coach, Bart Sengers believes it will be a good test for his team:

He said: “This is a great opportunity for our team to compete internationally. Trips like this always help to bring a team together and it will be a great test for all of the players that are selected.

“We're excited to start camp later this week with all eyes on securing qualification for next year's Commonwealth Games on

the Gold Coast.”

Barry Lang, head of basketball at basketballscotland, said: “The team at basketballscotland have been working hard in the background to secure competitive games for both our men’s and women’s programmes and this will be a really exciting opportunity for those players involved.”

Security level increased in Scotland

Following the suicide bomb in Manchester on Monday night, The Scottish Government has advised that security measures will be stepped up as threat level raised to ‘critical’.

The Scottish Government’s Resilience Committee will hold a further meeting tonight following confirmation that the UK’s terror threat level has been raised to ‘critical’.



The First Minister will chair the meeting, which will discuss the implications for Scotland of the heightened security status and the decision to invoke Operation Temperer.

Attending the meeting will be the Deputy First Minister, the Justice Secretary, the Lord Advocate and senior officers from Police Scotland.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “I have been briefed this evening by the National Security Adviser regarding the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre’s decision to increase the threat level from severe to critical, and to invoke Operation Temperer.

“The Resilience Committee will convene tonight to allow me to discuss with ministerial colleagues and Police Scotland the

practical implications for Scotland and ensure that all appropriate actions are being taken.

“The public should not be unduly concerned but should remain vigilant.

“In the meantime, our thoughts remain with all those affected by this dreadful atrocity.”

Danny Mac to Star in Sunset Boulevard at the Edinburgh Playhouse



Strictly Come Dancing star Danny Mac is to take on the role of Joe Gillis in the Curve production of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Tony Award winning *Sunset Boulevard*, which comes to the Edinburgh Playhouse in a five-night-long run this October. Mac will star alongside acclaimed west end singer and actress Ria Jones.

Danny Mac received overwhelming support during his time on BBC1’s *Strictly Come Dancing* making it all the way to the final.

One of the all-time great musicals, Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Tony Award-winning (Best Musical, Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical) masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* is a compelling story of romance and obsession, based on Billy Wilder’s legendary film, with Don Black and Christopher Hampton’s wonderful book and lyrics. This much-loved score includes the title number *Sunset Boulevard*, *With One Look*, *As If We Never Said Goodbye*, *The Greatest Star Of All* and *The Perfect*

Year and will be performed by a full orchestra.

In her mansion on Sunset Boulevard, faded, silent-screen goddess, Norma Desmond, lives in a fantasy world. Impoverished screen writer, Joe Gillis, on the run from debt collectors, stumbles into her reclusive world. Persuaded to work on Norma's 'masterpiece', a film script that she believes will put her back in front of the cameras, he is seduced by her and her luxurious life-style. Joe becomes entrapped in a claustrophobic world until his love for another woman leads him to try and break free with dramatic consequences.

Sunset Boulevard is on at the Edinburgh Playhouse from Tuesday 3rd until Saturday 7th October 2017. Tickets are on sale [here](#)

Whisky creche planned for June Festival

Not everyone likes whisky, but sometimes it is about knowing what you might like from the wide array available.

The Edinburgh Whisky Festival is bringing more than 50 whisky producers, makers and bottlers together under one roof on Saturday 17 June, for a one-day celebration of all things liquid gold. As part of their quest to quash the misconceptions around whisky, festival organisers The Whisky Lounge, are including a special 'beginners' area, featuring talks and workshops from industry insiders.



Eddie Ludlow, Founder of The Whisky Lounge

Eddie Ludlow, Founder of The Whisky Lounge, said: “We are always trying to achieve our mission of turning everyone on to whisky. This year, we are upping the fun factor and interactivity levels by adding the whisky creche, which will be hosted by the HuffPost UK’s Matt Chambers, as well as cocktail workshops and a ‘Blending Lab’ – where festival-goers can have a go at making their own blended whisky.”

“We want to provide a laid back, informal environment where we can break down barriers, unlock myths, educate and excite those who haven’t ever tried whisky or are cautious about where to start.”

Over 150 whiskies will be on offer for tasting at the Festival, which is celebrating its fifth year in Edinburgh. Brands including Bowmore, Macallan, Jameson, Glenlivet and Talisker are amongst those exhibiting.

Eddie added: “We’re holding Whisky Festivals in eight UK cities this year and we’ll be inviting the top three ‘home’ blenders from our Blending Labs to compete in a ‘Best of the Fest’ competition in Birmingham. The overall winner will help create a special 10th Anniversary blend to celebrate The Whisky Lounge’s 10th birthday in 2018, with proceeds from the bottles’ sale donated to a charity of their choice.”

For more info about The Whisky Lounge’s Edinburgh Whisky Festival or for tickets, visit: www.thewhiskylounge.com

Christophe Berra Returns to Hearts



The rebuilding of Hearts – both on and off the field – continued today when the club announced the signing of Scotland international defender Christophe Berra. The 32-year-old – who made nearly 150 appearances in maroon during his first spell in Gorgie a decade ago – has signed a three-year deal.

Hearts fans will be delighted at the return of a player who was given his Hearts debut by the then Hearts manager Craig Levein in 2003. Berra was the mainstay of the Hearts team of a decade ago and indeed captained the club. He left for Wolverhampton Wanderers in 2009 for a fee believed to be in the region of £2.5m and most recently was at English championship side Ipswich Town. Berra was highly regarded not only at club level but at international level too and the Edinburgh born Hearts supporter has been capped 35 times for Scotland.

His return to Tynecastle comes as several players will be leaving Gorgie. As reported by The Edinburgh Reporter last night, Tasos Avlonitis and Alex Tziolis have already left the club. They were followed through the Tynecastle exit door today by Lennard Sowah, Andraz Struna, Moha Choulay and Dylan Bikey. These players signed short-term deals in January but their impact at Tynecastle has been minimal.

Berra will be seen as an important factor in the development of John Souttar with the pair expected to be at the heart of the Tynecastle club's defence next season.

Edinburgh sends a message of support to Manchester

Following what appears to have been a suicide bomb attack at the Manchester Arena last night campaigning in the General Election ceased for the day.

✖ Flags at the City Chambers were lowered to half mast and the Lord Provost the Rt Hon Frank Ross has written to the Mayor of Manchester with the city's condolences.

Edinburgh's Lord Provost, Frank Ross, said: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and loved ones of this horrific attack. It is particularly upsetting to learn that children are among the dead. Our hearts break for their families.

"In the wake of such terror, we have seen Manchester defy fear and hate and respond with courage and love. It has been truly moving to see citizens and the emergency services show such support for each other.

"The people of Edinburgh stand by their side. The flags flying above our City Chambers have been lowered to half-mast and we will observe a minute's silence at our council meeting on Thursday as a mark of respect and solidarity.

"I will today be writing to the Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, to express my condolences on behalf of the people of Edinburgh."

✖
Tuesday 23rd of May 2017: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rev Derek Browning, addresses the Assembly this morning following

the terrorist attack in Manchester. The General Assembly then stood for a minutes silence.

The annual General Assembly of the Kirk is taking place in Edinburgh this week where a minute's silence was observed for the victims of the atrocity before this morning's proceedings began.

Speaking after the morning session, Rt Rev Dr Derek Browning said: "The whole of the General Assembly is reaching out to the communities within Manchester. One of our commissioners from Dunfermline, who has connections with local mosques, has said we must remember at this time that many moderate Muslims will be very frightened and very nervous about any potential backlash.

"We, of course, hope this doesn't happen. We in the Church of Scotland know that these type of activities are not perpetrated by moderate Muslims, but by extremists.

"We stand as a Christian community alongside our Muslim sisters and brothers at this time as well as with the victims in Manchester and hope that we can move forward from what must be a hugely traumatic event."

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said: "This is devastating news and all my prayers go out today to the families of those who were killed and injured. I can only imagine the pain they are feeling and their heartbreak is shared across the country.

"It goes without saying that our political campaigning will cease today.

"Terrorism has once again struck our country and, once again, we are faced with a sense of disbelief that someone

could be capable of carrying out such an appalling act.

“We all stand with the people of Manchester.

“We also all know that this wonderful vibrant city will not be defeated by this terrorist act.

“The courageous work of our emergency services and the generosity and help offered by ordinary people after the attack are the values that define us.

“We have faced down terror before, and we will do so again.”

FINAL CALL! Theatre preview: War In America – Former Royal High School

✖ It is Final Call for – *War In America*.

The days are counting down to what must be one of Edinburgh's almost unique 'found space' theatrical events – at the ***former Royal High School***.

War in America is a searing insight into the political elite and the games they play in the pursuit of power. ***Jo Clifford's*** poignant and poetic play paints a vivid picture of a country in political turmoil. With changes in the party and a new female leader set on pursuing the truth, what evils will be deemed necessary, will each side stop at nothing to get what they want? How long can the nation stand when the political and the personal collide? When truth is a dishonourable business? A moment of certainty must come. This is a democracy after all.

Clifford's foresight is a damning critique on lessons not learnt and history repeating itself...

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Warning: *War in America* has an 18+ age recommendation. It contains strong language, gunshots, and scenes of a sexual nature that some people might find offensive

Please Note: As the Former Royal High School is 'found' space, and not a traditional theatre environment, it will be cold – so please wear warm clothing.

From 2 hours before each performance tickets will only be available in person at the Former Royal High School, cash sales only.

**** "The Attic Collective are lithesomely hunky, funky and decidedly spunky"

Edinburgh Reporter on *Lysistrata*.

[Theatre review – *Lysistrata*: King's Theatre ****](#)

Wed 24 to Sat 27 May 2017 (preview Wed 24 May)

[Former Royal High School, Regent Road at King's Theatre](#)

Evenings 7.30pm Matinee Sat 2pm

Duration: 2 hours (including interval)

Age: 18+ Contains very strong language and strong sexual violence.

Tickets – General from: £10 – £20*

[BUY](#)

Port of Leith Housing Association to build affordable homes on new plot

Port of Leith Housing Association has acquired a 2.1 hectare plot of land on West Harbour Road, Granton, which will pave the way for 302 affordable homes to be built within the next five years.

The purchase is being supported by over £6 million of Housing Association Grant (HAG) from The City of Edinburgh Council on behalf of The Scottish Government and will include a mix of social and mid-market rent homes.

It will form part of the Granton Harbour masterplan which will result in £0.5bn of investment to regenerate the area to build 2,000 new homes as well as parks, local shopping, a healthcare centre, a retirement living complex, a conference centre and hotel, restaurants, offices and Edinburgh's new Marina.

Keith Anderson, Chief Executive, Port of Leith Housing Association said: "This is an important step towards making Leith an even better place for people to live, visit and do business. We're excited to be working with the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government to meet demand for good quality, affordable homes in North Edinburgh and to play a part in the ambitious regeneration plans for Granton

Harbour.”



A spokesperson for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This significant new development at Granton Harbour is a great example of how the Council and our housing association partners are delivering on the joint commitment to build 16,000 new affordable homes in Edinburgh over the next 10 years.

“This latest announcement with Port of Leith Housing Association builds on our current success in accelerating house building to provide the increase in affordable homes that Edinburgh so desperately needs.

“I can’t think of a better use for the site than providing much needed affordable housing for local people.”

Kevin Fawcett, Granton Central Developments, said: “The provision of quality affordable homes for Edinburgh has never been more vital. Granton Central Developments is delighted to have been able to co-operate with the Port of Leith Housing Association to ensure this land provided these much needed new affordable homes.

“This proposed development will add further impetus to the regeneration of Granton Harbour which is soon to become Edinburgh’s new marina. The environment where homes are built is as important as the quality of the buildings and in both respects the Port of Leith Housing Association have the boxes ticked. This is very good news for Edinburgh.”

Edinburgh employees win half of SGN awards

Employees from the Edinburgh offices of gas distribution company SGN triumphed at the company's Outstanding People Awards last Thursday evening winning no fewer than four of the eight awards on offer.



The Edinburgh winners, (middle with glasses) Jonathan Wan, (middle, black dress) Kirsty Steel, and the Gas to the West/SGN Natural Gas teams, celebrate their success along with the other winners at SGN's Outstanding People Awards. Carol Glasier was unable to attend.

Network Support Officer Kirsty Steel was presented with the company's 'Emerging Talent' award. Kirsty was nominated for the award by her manager Stuart Forrest and Project Manager Billy Stewart. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Billy said: "Kirsty has demonstrated a level of ability beyond her years which, if developed and nurtured properly, could see her become a future leader within the company."

Kirsty said it came as a complete surprise to her that she had won. I've worked with the other finalists on projects in the past and they were both very talented and worthy nominees. The awards are a great idea – everyone here works really hard and it's good that the company recognises people for the effort they put in."

The Unsung Hero award went to Project Officer Jonathan Wan, who was described by judges as a “true unsung hero, going about his business without any fuss and always delivering a quality of work which is a credit to him.”

Industry Codes and Investigations Support Manager Carol Glasier was successful in winning the ‘Bringing out the Best’ award. Employee Development Manager Grant Taylor, who nominated her for the award, said: “Carol is a fantastic example of a manager who promotes a development culture in SGN. She gives people opportunities to shine, enhance their skills and fulfil their aspirations.”

The ‘Team Achievement’ award went to SGN’s Gas to the West/SGN Natural Gas teams for their work on a major infrastructure project to extend the gas network to the west of Northern Ireland. Stakeholder Engagement Support Manager, Margaret Hamilton, who nominated them, said: “Their carefully planned and effective approach, together with a ‘can do’ attitude from every member of the team, succeeded in delivering gas to the first customer in Northern Ireland in a safe, efficient and cost-effective manner.”

SGN’s Outstanding People Awards have been going for five years and they recognise exceptional performance and dedication among the gas distribution company’s 4,000 employees. Over 500 nominations were received from colleagues across Scotland and the south of England. These were whittled down to a shortlist of 24 finalists made up of both teams and individuals, from which judges chose eight winners.

Describing the awards as ‘the highlight of his year’, SGN CEO John Morea said: “They are a chance to recognise some of the amazing work that goes on in our depots and offices around the country every day. I would like to congratulate all the finalists, who really do demonstrate what SGN is all about.”

Princes Street Gardens among the best visitor attractions in the world

Edinburgh’s Princes Street Gardens has been ranked amongst the world’s best visitor attractions.

The gardens managed by the City of Edinburgh Council, has been selected as a winner of TripExpert’s 2017 Experts’ Choice Award.



Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Outdoors

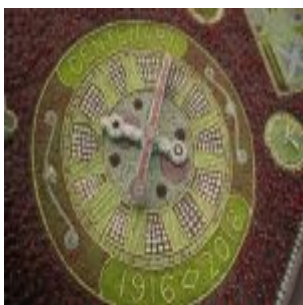
Based on professional reviews by travel guides, magazines and newspapers, the Experts’ Choice Award is given annually to well-reviewed and recommended attractions around the world.

This year, Princes Street Gardens also received travel review website TripExpert’s Best of Edinburgh award, which recognises the most worthwhile landmarks to visit in the capital.

David Jamieson, Parks and Green Space Manager at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This award demonstrates the value of Princes Street Gardens as a first-class attraction for both visitors and residents, hundreds of thousands of whom relax in its grounds or enjoy its events every year.

“Edinburgh, which was recently classed as the UK’s greenest city, boasts some 150 beautiful parks and green spaces, and it’s with thanks to the hard work of our parks staff that these can be enjoyed all year-round.”

Chris Blume, TripExpert’s Director of Content, said: “It’s great to see Princes Street Gardens on the Experts’ Choice Awards list this year. It exemplifies everything we admire in an attraction. Our expert sources agree saying Princes Street Gardens is a wonderful serene escape from the hustle of the city.”



Princes Street Gardens was first established in the early 19th

century, and is listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscape in Scotland, assessed as outstanding for its aesthetic, historical, architectural and scenic values.

Amongst key features, the Gardens house the world-famous floral clock, first planted in 1903, and several significant monuments and memorials, including the Scott Monument in East Princes Street Gardens.

Find out more about Edinburgh's parks [online](#).

Former Lothian and Borders police officer appointed assistant chief constable with Lincolnshire Police



A former Lothian and Borders Police officer has been appointed as assistant chief constable with Lincolnshire Police.

Chief Superintendent Craig Naylor will join the force later this month.

Mr Naylor is currently the head of Specialist Services at Police Scotland, and has previously led on organisational development and corporate governance.

Prior to the formation of Police Scotland in 2013, he spent a significant amount of his career in the Criminal Investigation Department of Lothian and Borders Police.

Mr Naylor was also responsible for Professional Standards and the Counter Corruption Department, before returning to uniform duties as deputy commander for the City of Edinburgh Policing Division.

Chief Constable Bill Skelly, also a former Lothian and Borders officer, who recently joined Lincolnshire Police from Devon and Cornwall, said: "I am pleased Craig is joining the team.

"He is an officer of a very high calibre and he will bring a huge amount of experience and expertise in developing a way forward for the force."

Police release CCTV image following racially aggravated assault in Gilmerton store



Police are continue to investigate a racially aggravated assault and have re-released an image of a male who may be able to assist them with their investigation.

The incident happened in the Aldi store on Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh around 5.30 pm on Sunday 5th March 2017.

Two members of staff and a member of the public were threatened in the incident.

The male is described as being in his mid-20's, around 5ft 4in tall, chubby build, brown hair and bright blue eyes, wearing a dark blue Adidas sweatshirt and dark trousers.

Police Constable Heather Storer of Howdenhall police station said: "This was a distressing and offensive incident for the employees of the store who were simply doing their job.

"As part of the ongoing investigation, we're still eager to trace a man who we believe may be able to help with our enquiries and would urge anyone who recognises him to get in touch with us as soon as possible."

Those with information can contact Police Scotland via 101, quoting incident number 2845 of 5 March, or contact Crimestoppers in complete anonymity on 0800 555 111.