

Join the Edinburgh Sketcher on a workshop



Sketch behind the scenes at Assembly Rooms this spring.

Calling all budding artists and those who don't think they can draw for toffee! Mark Kirkham is the Edinburgh Sketcher and he is running two special workshops at Assembly Rooms on 22 April 2017.

This will be a rare opportunity to capture the timeless elegance and beauty of the unique and iconic George Street venue on paper in its 230th year.

With Mark's helpful instruction and tuition during the three hour tour, visitors will be able to do their best to capture the building on paper. They can take inspiration from the dazzling crystal chandeliers, gleaming gold leaf and opulent gilt mirrors which sit inside the Georgian building.



Shona Clelland, cultural venues development manager for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "We're giving artists the unique opportunity to capture the splendour of our historic venue as part of this exclusive one day experience.

"With Mark on hand to give guidance to those complete beginners, and even the more experienced inkers, we're hoping to see visitors experiment with colourful techniques to truly bring our treasured building to life. What's more, all the art supplies will be provided on the day.

"This is just the first in a series of spectacular public

events we're hosting throughout 2017 to celebrate our 230th anniversary."

The Edinburgh Sketcher Drawing Tours of Assembly Rooms will start at 9am and 1:30pm, each ending with tea or coffee, and time to add watercolour to your sketches. Tickets cost £27.50 (including arts materials, tea and coffee).

For those who prefer to simply enjoy the surroundings, the venue will be open to the public with free tours operating at 11am, 12pm, 2pm and 3pm.

For more information visit www.AssemblyRoomsEdinburgh.co.uk.

Photo by JANE BARLOW

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Gosford House death – police update



Police and scientific experts are continuing their work near to Gosford House in East Lothian following the discovery of human remains at the weekend.

The remains were found off the A198 near Longniddry on Sunday evening 2nd April by a cyclist. Police and other specialist forensic services have been in attendance since this time, and work is ongoing to recover the remains, identify the deceased and inform their family, and establish the circumstances of

the death.

Detective Superintendent Pat Campbell said: “We are consulting with a number of experts to ensure that the remains are recovered in a sensitive and careful manner and no evidence that helps us to establish what happened is damaged or missed. I understand the anxiety of those who may be waiting for news of a missing loved one, but whilst the identity of the remains is unknown we cannot speculate.

“I want to again reassure the public that when we have new information we will act upon it and inform the next of kin of any person who is relevant to the investigation; this has been taking place and updates have been given. The death is being treated as unexplained and once the remains are recovered, there will be significant, detailed forensic analysis required to establish the cause of death and whether any crime has been committed.”

Local Area Commander, Chief Inspector Matt Paden, added: “The discovery at the weekend has caused both curiosity and concern and my officers are available to speak to in the area, carrying out additional patrols. We are supporting the specialist teams involved in the recovery and the investigation, and we are committed to returning the area to normal as soon as our inquiries have finished.

“Local diversions are currently in place and we have been liaising with transport partners to ensure people can go about their daily business. I’m very grateful for the support we have received from the local community and from the Gosford Estate.”

What's on at the Botanics?

This April, Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens are hosting a number of exciting events for all the family. Full information can be found at their website by [clicking here](#) but here are a few suggestions.



LtR Sugar Uwanda, Zoe Viale & Iga Ruzga

Sat 1- Mon 7 April, 10am-4pm, £3: **Easter Trail**. The Botanics Bunny has invented a scrumptious chocolate bar with a secret recipe. Complete the trail and earn your festive chocolate reward from Mackie's of Scotland, along with a £2 voucher to see the chocolate tree at the Glasshouses.

Tue 4 to Fri 14 on April, 11am to 4pm, Free: **Science Festival at the Botanics**. The importance of healthy soil, the science of farming for a healthier future, designer diets and disease detectives are just some of the themes for events at the Botanics during Edinburgh International Science Festival 2017.

Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 April 2017 12-5pm, £3: **Caley Spring Flower Show**: This year's Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society's show will feature many beautiful blooms, including exhibits of daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, alpine, woodland and other bulbs.



Tuesday 11 April, 10.15am- 11.45am, Age 12 and over: Come and enjoy a guided walk in the Garden and see how many species of bird you can spot. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. There is limited availability, so please prebook by ringing 0131 248 2909.

Tuesday 18 April, 7.30-9pm, £18 for students and members, £20 for others: Joint lecture by Friends of the Royal Botanic

Edinburgh and the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society. Fergus Garrett, creator of the late Christopher Lloyd's famous garden at Great Dixter, will show participants how to create a long season border.



Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 April, 1pm-4pm, Free: Come to the Botanic Cottage and Demonstration Garden as the Edible Gardening team get started in the vegetable patch for another year. Be inspired by nature and learn about environmentally friendly gardening. Sponsored by People's Postcode Lottery.

South High School Jazz Band coming to Church Hill Theatre



On 14 April 2017 there will be a concert at the Church Hill Theatre with a Californian jazz band.

Entrance is free but there is a collection for Drake Music Scotland an organisation which does so much good for adults and children with disabilities so that they can play music independently .



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Fishing – Pellow wins first Summer Series match

Edinburgh and Lothians Course Angling Club recently held the first of their Summer Series at Orchill Fishery, Perthshire.



Anglers faced a bright, still day that started cold but slowly warmed up. Not the best conditions for angling but OK for anglers, writes Geoffrey Lowe.

Most members caught early on but it soon became clear the the winner on the day would come from a battle between David Pellow and Douglas Philips.

They proved to be the only two catching consistently enough to put a good weight together.

Eventually, at the weigh in, David proved to be the winner with over 26lbs, beating Douglas by 6lbs.

The gap could have been closer but Douglas' keep net had a hole in the bottom allowing fish to escape. Not surprisingly, Douglas has since invested in a new one.

Summer League 2 will be held at the same venue at the end of this month.

COMPETITION – Win rugby tickets for Edinburgh Rugby this Friday – courtesy of Specsavers



The lovely people at Specsavers have again given us four tickets for an Edinburgh Rugby match this Friday 7 April 2017 at Myreside.

You will be able to go with three friends to the Edinburgh Rugby v Connacht match on 7 April 2017 at 19:35pm at Myreside.

[tweet_box design="default"]All you have to do to enter our Specsavers competition is answer this question...by 6 April **2017 at 12 noon** <http://preview.tinyurl.com/gquju7r>
[/tweet_box]

Error: Contact form not found.

Specsavers has stores across Edinburgh and the surrounding areas – Shandwick Place, Cameron Toll, Fort Kinnaird, Morningside, Musselburgh, North Bridge, The Gyle and Leith. The newest store at Corstorphine is now open at 70 St John's Road and Edinburgh Rugby stars were on hand to perform the opening ceremony.



Terms and conditions:

The winning entry will be selected by the Editor. There is no

cash or prize alternative. The winner will collect their tickets from the Box office at the venue.

Visit www.specsavers.co.uk



ScotRail Alliance Announces 100 New Electric Car Charging Spaces



Photograph: rail.co.uk

The ScotRail Alliance is leading a drive to improve the availability of electric car charging points in stations.

A total of 50 stations across their 359-station network from Aberdeen to Wick will benefit from a new, free to use charging point which can charge two cars at once. With the use of low-emission vehicles on the rise, the ScotRail Alliance is keen to encourage their use, which will reduce carbon emissions by customers on their journeys to and from the station.

Construction work to install the first charger will begin in September, with all 100 spaces available from November this year.

The ScotRail Alliance's programmes and transformation director, Ian McConnell, said: "As a low-carbon transport provider, we are always

looking for new ways to encourage more environmentally-friendly travel. Through the installation of these 100 electric car parking spaces, we hope to reduce our customers' carbon footprint from door-to-door.

"We have big plans to improve our car parks, and this is just one of the many improvements we have planned for the next 12 months."

The charging points are free to use; however, electric vehicles must still pay the relevant fee to park (where applicable).

Think Global Recruitment Shortlisted for Best Recruitment Website

The Edinburgh Company Making a Digital Impact



Think Global Recruitment, an international accounting specialist based in Edinburgh, has been shortlisted for the S1 Job Awards 'Best Recruitment Website'. The prestigious recruitment awards, hosted by the comedian Kevin Bridges, recognises the best of the recruitment industry in Scotland.

The award, which will judge the website from the jobseeker's perspective, will consider it's design, functionality and unique features. Think Global Recruitment officially launched their new website in January and since then has experienced a dramatic rise in traffic that hasn't slowed down. Abigail Stevens, Managing Director of Think Global Recruitment, puts

this down to the continuous new and relevant content they have been adding to the website, giving them an edge over their competitors.

“We regularly post interesting and dynamic content on the website including many case studies featuring accountants that we have assisted to move around the globe since 2000. People like to read about real-life experiences and the types of opportunities exist in diverse locations such as chilly Mongolia or the sunny island lifestyles in the Caribbean.” – (Abigail Stevens, Managing Director of Think Global Recruitment)



It is the second year-in-a-row that Think Global Recruitment has been shortlisted for the S1 Job awards, having just missed out on the Training & Development Award last year. In December, Think Global Recruitment won Best Company to Work For at the UK's Recruitment Employment Confederation's IRP Awards and has been riding on a high ever since.

The company is firing on all cylinders with plans to expand and triple its revenues this year. The company that assists others to make a move aboard seems to be leading by example and making some big moves itself.

The S1 Job Awards night will take place on Thursday 13th April at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Glasgow.

Team Scotland Mark 1 Year to

Gold Coast

Team Scotland celebrate 1 Year to Commonwealth Games with Volleyball Challenge



Today (Tuesday 4 April) marks one year to go until the next Commonwealth Games get underway in Gold Coast, Australia, where Team Scotland will be aiming for its most successful ever overseas Games. In the region of 220 athletes will be proudly flying the flag for Scotland down under, with qualifying events continuing throughout 2017 and early 2018.

Amongst the 18 sports to be contested will be the new sport of Beach Volleyball (men's and women's Pairs) designed to show off the Gold Coast's 'trademark' beaches and Scotland is aiming to be represented in both events.

Despite us having some of the finest white sandy beaches in the world, unlike Australia, Scotland is not often viewed as the 'natural home' of Beach Volleyball. However, Scottish Volleyball is thrilled to see the sport included on the programme for the very first time and is making great strides with preparations.



Two new permanent courts have recently been installed at the iconic Portobello Beach near Edinburgh by Edinburgh Beach Volleyball Club with support from the local community and City of Edinburgh Council. And leading the charge for Scotland is the London 2012 women's volleyball captain of the indoor game, Lynne Beattie (Edinburgh) and partner and former British champion, Melissa Courts (Edinburgh), who have re-focused their training on the pairs, beach version of this exciting sport.

The duo have recently returned from a strong show of form in Sydney, Australia where they recorded Scotland's first-ever win in the first round of the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour against strong opposition from Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan and Germany.

Excited about the new challenge in her life, Beattie, who also works as

the sport's regional development officer, said: "I think it's every sports person's dream to compete at an Olympics, and to do it at home and to be captain was an unbelievable experience," she said, "But I would also love the opportunity to represent Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games, something I never thought would happen.

"Last year when the news came out that Beach Volleyball was being included in Gold Coast 2018, is when we really started to work hard. Mel and I both work, so we have to fit in training sessions in the cold and dark or whatever the weather, but it is great to have this permanent facility here at Portobello.

"We've set Gold Coast as our goal and we hope the win in Sydney last month is just the start of it. We're going to play in as many events as we can this summer and try and qualify for the Games."

Also aiming for selection for the men are the top Scottish pair of Robin Miedzybrodzki (Edinburgh) and Seain Cooke (Perth).

Amongst the other firsts for Gold Coast is the parity between men's and women's participation, with the same number of medal events for both sexes. Likewise the Para-Sport programme has been given a further boost from the enhanced programme offered by Glasgow, to a total of 35 events across six sports (Swimming, Athletics, Cycling, Lawn Bowls, Triathlon, Powerlifting).



Team Scotland Chef de Mission, Jon Doig QBE, who will lead the team at the Games, said: "It is really exciting to celebrate one year to go until the next Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast and to think that this time next year our team of around 220 athletes will be marching into the Carrara Stadium for the Opening Ceremony.

"Scottish athletes from all the different sports love the opportunity to come together as Team Scotland for the Commonwealth Games and we believe our strong team ethos plays a big part in the team's overall success.

"We are aiming to have our most successful ever overseas Games, winning

more than the 29 medals achieved at Melbourne 2006. We believe this is a realistic and ambitious target, given that there are largely the same sports as on the 2006 programme and at the same time of year. We believe our plans are well on track and already we are seeing some exciting Scottish performances as athletes bid to meet the rigorous selection standards set at top six in the Commonwealth.

“Overall we are confident we will have a strong and highly motivated team and we are looking forward to what we are sure will be a fantastic Games in Gold Coast next year.”

Tartan Week 2017 – Gordon J Millar of ScotStreetStyle



Photo by Stephen Gunn

Gordon J Millar is the **founder and director of [Scot Street Style](#)**. He toured Scotland with the Dalai Lama, took the World Peace Tartan to New York where he had a chance encounter on 5th Avenue with legendary photographer Bill Cunningham.

He then used his social media expertise and ability to connect people, and launched the transatlantic grassroots movement, [Scot Street Style](#), which “grew organically into the award-winning go-to destination for creative visionaries around the world, #Onward!”

He explained to us : “As a young man, I was driven by creativity and compassion. My lack of confidence held me back when I left art school in 1992, so I focused on a career in nursing.

"The creative flame inside was never extinguished and, as I grew in confidence with age, I was able to channel this energy into a new form of self expression – social media.

"My peace and environmental groups grew quickly, and I was invited in 2012 to tour Scotland with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which was life changing.

"After many years looking after people with heart conditions, I am now able to nurture, support and build confidence in a whole new generation of creatives.

"I measure the success of Scot Street Style in smiles, and the chain reaction from the heart of Scotland is spreading organically around the world. I love the fact that when you bring a few creatives together, something entirely new and unpredictable is born.

"These are Universal values which is why the growth of our grassroots community is limitless."

What is the purpose of ScotStreetStyle? **To reinvigorate perceptions of Scotland, smash negative stereotypes, and to redefine what it means to be Scottish in the 21st Century.**

Who is it for, what are its aims, and what have been your big successes? **Our community is an inclusive, diverse and progressive level playing field, for like-minded creatives and we aim to connect, collaborate, and curate. Our big successes include hosting back to back Gatherings in L.A and New York, crowd funding to self-publish our first book and launching a drink for Heineken.**

Who is involved apart from you? **I lead the community and have been fortunate to work with some of the finest creatives across the UK and North America.**

What will you be up to during Tartan Week in New York? **Tartan Week is very special to the Scot Street Style story; it's where the movement was born.**



Tristan Cameron Harper supported by Finlay
Wilson

It's incredibly exciting to return with the current Mr Scotland Tristan Cameron-Harper from the BBC's Kilted Yoga video, and to have been invited by Barbour to partner in the go to event of the week at their Manhattan showroom.

Well we can't let the opportunity to share the video with you pass us by...

What will you be wearing in New York this year? I will be wearing my vintage military jacket and I am immensely proud to reveal my bespoke 21st Century kilt.

When is the next Gathering and how can people get involved? The next Gathering is in Berlin on Saturday 13th May and we would love to see you there!

Join our Facebook event <https://www.facebook.com/events/791483801015771/> or drop me an email g@scotstreetstyle.com

Redwood Mountain at Tradfest 2017



27 April 2017 – Summerhall, 8pm

Redwood Mountain (aka Dean Owens & Amy Geddes): Transatlantic Crossings

Redwood Mountain is a brand new duo featuring acclaimed troubadour **Dean Owens** and traditional fiddle player **Amy Geddes**. Redwood Mountain perform transatlantic folk songs. Most of them are built around the lyrics of the classic folk songs featured in ***The Book Of American Folk Songs*** by archivist **Alan Lomax**. Reimagined with new melodies, Redwood Mountain breathe new life into these wonderful old songs.

Add in a few Owens originals and some other transatlantic classics, stripped back to just vocals, guitar and fiddle and you'll find a heady brew – a pure and organic blend of the old with the new.

Expect a brand new CD to surface at the end of April.

Tickets from Tradfest Box Office at the Scottish Storytelling Centre

T +44 (0)131 556 9579

<http://www.tracscotland.org>

Council elections 2017 – Callum Laidlaw – Portobello

and Craigmillar



Callum Laidlaw is the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party candidate for Portobello and Craigmillar Ward. We met him on Portobello Beach to find out what he wants to do if he is elected as a councillor.

Biography:

- Born and raised Edinburgh.
- Son of a teacher and small business owner.
- Studied International Relations at the University of St Andrews.
- Worked in Corporate Communications in London for approx. 10 years working for a multi-national client base including financial services, technology and consumer goods.
- Returned to Edinburgh in 2014 to campaign for a No vote in the Independence referendum
- Scottish Conservative and Unionist candidate for Falkirk East in 2016 Scottish Parliament, achieving an 11% swing
- Scotland Chair, Tory Reform Group

Main political ambitions for the Ward

Portobello Craigmillar is a microcosm of the city with a many different challenges from regeneration and preservation of a historic high street and mitigating the pressure of new development, to serious road and infrastructure challenges and areas of high social deprivation. I want the ward to have a strong voice at The City Chambers and not have only its issues tackled but also be a key part of overall planning for a strong successful Edinburgh.

Specifically however I want to tackle the following:

- Addressing local residents concerns and minimising disruption from current or proposed large scale

development in the ward, such as Baileyfield South and Duddingston Park South.

- Safeguarding and improving pedestrian and cycle safety in crossing Sir Harry Lauder road and railway line.
- Improving access to the city centre, airport and West through the bus and local rail network and safe cycle ways
- Better waste and recycling collection to reflect specific needs and reduce landfill further, especially looking at the needs of smaller households, older people and those living in flats
- Delivering decent, timely road repairs with minimal impact
- Supporting local businesses; encouraging the ongoing regeneration of Portobello High Street, supporting independent stores and entrepreneurs, as well as encouraging new retailers to local shopping precincts in Niddrie and Craigmillar
- Encouraging the redevelopment and reuse of industrial sites for start-up businesses
- Addressing safety and cleanliness concerns in public parks and the beachfront; including dog waste, littering, aggressive dog control and intimidating behaviour
- Improved street lighting and supporting and encouraging the development of neighbourhood watch and resident associations in helping to address the high crime rate

Online – showcasing

Scotland's world-famous seafood larder



Skye langoustine accompanied by the wonderful wild garlic mayonnaise. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

We commented on the distinctive smell of wild garlic as we strolled along the Water of Leith in the Spring sunshine earlier this month. Hopefully, winter is at an end.

Hours later, wild garlic appeared in a subtle mayonnaise alongside Skye langoustine as Ondine showcased dishes from their Spring menu.

The mayonnaise proved a perfect foil to the shellfish and so did the Muscadet from the Loire.

People once sold oysters in cellars and on street corners on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh for two centuries.

Ondine is yards from the world-famous street and it was, therefore, no surprise to find that Chef Patron Roy Brett included them on our menu as Scotland's prolific larder provides the inspiration. The delicacies we sampled were from Morecambe Bay in Cumbria.

Shellfish from the East Coast of Scotland and beyond are savoured at Ondine by diners from around the world. When I visited it was like the United Nations.

The mouth-watering new choices include grilled Wye Valley asparagus – cooked to just leave a bite – with crispy quails' eggs and Hollandaise sauce.

Roast North Sea cod with crispy asparagus and Romanesco

followed. The colours were stunning and so was the taste, the flaky fish falling away at the touch of the fork.

The sauce worked beautifully with the fish as did the impressive, crisp Albarino, a native of Galicia on the north Atlantic coast of Spain.

My sorbet with meringue was a feast of colour and a wonderfully refreshing end to lunch.

I'm not normally a lover of sweet white wine but the Monbazillac from Dordogne was a delight to the palate.

The restaurant's modern decor and picture windows overlooking Edinburgh's atmospheric Old Town allows you to relax. This is high dining without being stuffy.

The slick and helpful staff – who catered for my dietary requirements – helped make this a thoroughly enjoyable dining experience.

Engaging Libraries has money for innovation in libraries



Public libraries across Scotland urged to apply to £150k programme

- *Programme will support health & wellbeing projects*
- *Up to 10 public libraries across UK set to benefit*

A new £150k programme, Engaging Libraries, has been launched to support innovative public library projects across the UK and Ireland, including Scotland, which place creative and

imaginative public engagement ideas and health and wellbeing at their heart.

The programme is led by Carnegie UK Trust working in partnership with Wellcome, the world's largest medical research charity. It will help public libraries bring people together with the aim of inspiring curiosity, sparking debate and creating conversations on health and wellbeing.

Libraries are encouraged to think broadly about potential themes and activities which may be suitable for funding – projects might seek to engage people on issues like understanding how the brain works, exploring how to cope with a long term illness, or sharing experiences of IVF treatment through engaging. Activities might include exhibitions, film screenings, performances or the development of digital tools.

The one-year Engaging Libraries project will run from October 2017 and the £150k programme will support up to ten projects.

Applications will be open from 2 May until 23 August 2017. Library staff interested in applying are invited to a workshop where they can receive further information and support to develop ideas. These will be held in [London](#) on 9 and 10 May and in [Dunfermline](#) on 18 May 2017. More information can be found on the Carnegie UK Trust [website](#).

Carnegie UK Trust's founder, Andrew Carnegie, built over 600 libraries across the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Trust continues to deliver a wide range of programmes to support public libraries.

Martyn Evans, Chief Executive, Carnegie UK Trust, said: "Public libraries provide a safe, trusted space at the hearts of communities. They are well placed for engaging the public in health and wellbeing and already make a significant positive contribution to the cultural and physical health of

communities. We are excited to be working with Wellcome to develop and deliver a new programme that builds on the existing assets of public libraries.”

Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture and Society, Wellcome said: “We are delighted to be working with Carnegie UK Trust to support libraries to try new ways of engaging the public with health and wellbeing topics. Libraries are a much loved and important part of every community, providing a unique space for people to learn, explore and discuss the world around them. We’re excited to see what creative ideas emerge.”

Pamela Tulloch, Chief Executive, Scottish Library and Information Council, and a member of the project Advisory Group said: “The Engaging Libraries initiative is a great opportunity for libraries to be creative and experimental in designing a health and wellbeing engagement activity that they have not have tried before. Libraries are becoming increasingly innovative in how they engage with users and assist them with the challenges they face. We look forward to receiving an inspiring range of ideas from applicants across Scotland.”

For more information about the programme please visit www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk The application pack will be available on the website from 2 May 2017.

Fishing – Linlithgow Loch – a spectacular setting with

worldwide appeal



Catch returns so far this season from this stunning water have been exceptional so far this season. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

In the shadow of stunning Linlithgow Palace, the loch is a spectacular place to fish and the water attracts anglers from around the world.

Although once famous for large brown trout, now most of the sport tends to be provided by stocked rainbows, released regularly throughout the season.

The fish rapidly gain in both weight and condition, providing excellent sport for 19 boats. Bank fishing is also available.

Fishing is from 9am to dusk and a full day boat is £57 Monday to Thursday and £59 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for two anglers.

Half-day and evening boats are available. Concession rates apply.

It is fly fishing only (excluding bubble float and trolling) and fish of less than ten inches should be returned to the water.

Regular reports are posted on their website and the water is administered by The Forth Area Federation of Anglers.

They are a group of volunteers who have a passion for angling and they first became responsible for the fishing in Linlithgow Loch in 1962.

The Bank of Scotland, as part of their Tercentenary

celebrations, presented a disabled anglers boat to the Federation and in 1996, after receiving Lottery Grant funding through the Scottish Sports Council, and some financial assistance from Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd and West Lothian District Council, the Fishing Lodge was built.

Councillor James McGinley, who officially opened the lodge in March 1996, gave the then committee tremendous support in the project.

There is free parking adjacent to the lodge and there are barrows for bringing gear to the pontoon for loading onto the boats.

The address is Forth Area Federation of Anglers, Linlithgow Loch Lodge, Linlithgow, EH49 7ES and the season ends on 31 October.

Canal boat trust seek more helpers for summer series



Seagull Trust barges docked at Ratho ahead of the summer series of canal cruising. Picture Nigel Duncan Media

Seagull Trust Cruises have operated for nearly 40 years from the base in Ratho, providing trips in specially built canal boats, for those with special needs.

Now they are looking for volunteers to continue their good work as they start a new season of summer cruising on The Union Canal.

From now until October thousands of people of all ages and disabilities will enjoy the calm of a journey into the countryside.

Sailings take place seven days a week and sometimes the three boats may be out three times a day.

Chairman David Mieras said: "We're heavily used and we rely on donations.

"We carry out our own maintenance but, if things need replacing, then we have to find the necessary funds."

He is looking for helpers and said: "Volunteers need to enjoy working with people and mastering the joys of canaling.

"With so many trips, we need a lot of people who are keen to learn new skills and reap the rewards."

Contact David on 0131 445 2022 for further details.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017 – Labour candidates

There are 23 Edinburgh Labour candidates standing at the 2017 council elections on 4 May, 12 of whom are women.



MAUREEN CHILD – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 17 –
PORTOBELLO/CRAIGMILLAR

Maureen started as a community activist and volunteer in Portobello in the 1980s and was first elected in 1995 for Milton Ward (Ward 40) representing Joppa, Brunstane and Magdalene. Maureen has been Councillor for Portobello/Craigmillar (Ward 17) for the last 10 years helping to develop these diverse neighbourhoods and communities from the grass roots.

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DAVID WALKER – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD
17 –PORTOBELLO/CRAIGMILLAR

David Walker has 20 years' experience of voluntary work, community regeneration and the functions of local government. He was one of the founder members of Craigmillar Credit Union and helped develop it into the Thistle Foundation, with over 1,000 members and over £250,000 in assets. First elected in 2012.



LEZLEY CAMERON – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 16 –
LIBERTON/GILMERTON

Lezley Cameron was born in Dufftown. She attended Banff Academy and studied English at Glasgow University, and then studied Business and Human Resources. She ran a consultancy providing strategy policy, public affairs, events, business liaison and fundraising services. She is a former Councillor for Alnwickhill and was the Council's Economic Development Leader.



TIM POGSON – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 16 –LIBERTON/GILMERTON

Tim is originally from Yorkshire, and has lived in Edinburgh since 1995. Almost all his career has been spent working in social housing. He currently works for a charitable organisation that supports council housing services and housing associations throughout Scotland. “I believe that I have the experience and knowledge necessary to make an excellent contribution to managing public services.”



IAN PERRY – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 15 – SOUTHSIDE/NEWINGTON

Ian Perry has been a councillor for over twenty years, and has represented Southside/Newington for ten years. He has been chair of the Environment Committee, Depute Leader of the Council and is Chair of the Planning Committee. In that role Ian has sought to promote Edinburgh’s economic development without damaging our unique heritage.



JOAN GRIFFITHS– LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 14 – CRAIGENTINNY/DUDDINGSTON

Joan Griffiths has lived in Craigentinny/Duddingston for over 37 years. I have been involved in the Action Group for over 30 years following the birth of my son who has a profound disability. In 2010 I received an MBE for my voluntary work

with people with a learning disability across Scotland. I care deeply about my local community and it is an honour to serve as your local Councillor.



LYNDSAY MARTIN – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 14 – CRAIGENTINNY/DUDDINGSTON

Lyndsay Martin has served as a community councillor, a member of a community centre management committee and is co-founder of a voluntary organisation. She has experience in the voluntary sector with communities from all over Edinburgh. “I believe I am an excellent choice as your local councillor and will commit to representing the community. I will always put people first!



GORDON MUNRO– LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 13 – LEITH

Gordon was first elected for the Harbour Ward in 2003, winning back the seat from the SNP. He was re-elected in 2007 for the new, 3 member Leith Ward. Gordon was Housing spokesperson from 2007-2010 and is currently the Economy Spokesperson for the Labour Group.



MARION DONALDSON – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 12 – LEITH WALK

Marion Donaldson entered politics as a foodbank team leader

driven to improve life chances for all. As a former pharmacist, health is a priority for her. “If elected I will continue working to improve access to local GPs and support our public services.”



NICK GARDNER– LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 12 – LEITH WALK

Nick Gardner has worked and lived in Leith Walk ward for 30 years. He has been a youth & children’s worker, and worked in mental health day services. As a local Labour Councillor, he has taken up schools, parks, planning, housing, and antisocial behaviour issues. Nick has joined many campaigns, from Climate Change, to anti privatisation, to support for refugees.



KAREN DORAN – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 11 – CITY CENTRE

Karen Doran was born and brought up in Edinburgh, and has lived here all her life. She was educated at Tollcross Primary School and James Gillespie’s High School. She lives with her husband and two children, and has worked as an office manager for Malcolm Chisholm and Mark Lazarowicz. She was elected as councillor in 2012.



MANDY WATT – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 10 – MORNINGSIDE

Mandy Watt is a qualified accountant who graduated from Napier

University. She held senior positions with listed international companies before taking on challenging roles with several local charities. Politics became her passion during the independence referendum, when she campaigned tirelessly with the Labour team for Scotland to remain in the UK.



ANNE WIMBERLEY – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 9 – FOUNTAINBRIDGE/CRAIGLOCKHART

Anne Wimberley was born and raised here in Edinburgh. Her daughter went to school at a time when she claims shortages in schools were unknown, and was able to take art, music and PE lessons for granted. “My elderly parents got incredible healthcare when they needed it. I would like to see children and pensioners today getting the same opportunities and care my family had.”



SCOTT ARTHUR – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 8 – COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD

Scott Arthur is standing for election in Colinton-Fairmilehead because it’s my home and I want to make sure it stays the best place in Edinburgh to live and work. If elected, I’ll work with the community to protect the greenbelt, tidy up our streets and bring good quality jobs to the area.



CARMEL SMITH – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 7 – SIGHTHILL/GORGIE

Carmel Smith is married and her husband is currently a serving military officer. She has 3 children, two serve in our local police and one works in finance. Carmel has worked for a charity in Edinburgh for the past 5 years. Carmel said: "As your local councillor, I will work hard to look after local people's interests."



DONALD WILSON – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 7 – SIGHTHILL/GORGIE

Donald Wilson has been a Councillor in Edinburgh since 1999, previously representing the Shandon Ward and then the Sighthill/Gorgie Ward since 2007. He has served as a Bailie and as Lord Provost since 2012. Donald has led many successful campaigns such as the one to save the Gorgie War Memorial Hall.



JUNE WHITELOW – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 6 – CORSTORPHINE/MURRAYFIELD

June Whitelaw is a widow, a mother, a sister and a retired shop worker still active as a retired member in her union, USDAW. "My life experience will inform my work on your behalf. You elect three councillors to represent this area, and I would relish being one of them."



JAMES DALGLEISH – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 5 – INVERLEITH

James Dalglish was educated locally at Broughton High School and lives in North Edinburgh. He has worked for MPs as a case-worker, one of Scotland's leading elderly-care charities and currently works in finance. "I have gained invaluable experience in helping others. I believe I have the skills, background and determination to serve Inverleith Ward."



CAMMY DAY – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 4 – FORTH

Cammy was born and raised in Edinburgh. He spent most of his career working with young people in many of the city's areas of deprivation. Cammy was key in supporting the first youth forum in the north of the city. Elected in November 2008, Cammy is currently Convener of Education.



HEATHER PUGH – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 4 – FORTH

Heather Pugh grew up in West Pilton and went to school at Royston and Ainslie Park. Four generations of family have lived here and she brought her daughter up here. "I was a civil servant and actively campaigned on green, health & safety and disability issues within my union. I am a grafter."



KAREN KEIL – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 3 – DRUM BRAE/GYLE

Karen Keil was born and raised in Edinburgh, and worked for the Church of Scotland Counselling Service at Simpson House as an administrator and counsellor. Then Karen worked for the development charity, Christian Aid, for nearly 20 years. She was first elected in 2012.



RICKY HENDERSON – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 2 – PENTLAND HILLS

Ricky Henderson says it has been a privilege to have been Councillor for the Pentland Hills ward since 2007. “I have 18 years experience of representing local people and working with community groups and have been fortunate to carry out numerous different roles on the Council. I feel passionately about our city.”



BRUCE WHITEHEAD – LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1 – ALMOND

Bruce Whitehead’s family has lived in Almond since 1978, and his father Jim Whitehead helped establish Queensferry’s Community Council in 1983. “I have worked in shipping & oil, and then as a journalist at the BBC and ITN. I live in South Queensferry with my partner and son.”

Council Elections 2017 – Scottish Liberal Democrats begin their election campaign



Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie MSP will begin the Scottish Liberal Democrat 2017 local election campaign later today as he visits Musselburgh on the first stop of his Scottish tour from the Borders to the Highlands.

Mr Rennie will join local candidate, Claire Graham who is standing in the Musselburgh ward and will then head to Peebles in the Scottish Borders. Mr Rennie says he will set out a positive message as he travels from the south of Scotland to the Highlands and will champion Liberal Democrat candidates across Scotland who choose to stand up for local issues rather than be cheerleaders for independence.

Commenting Mr Rennie said: “Scottish Liberal Democrats are on the rise and we’re intent on winning. Liberal Democrat Councillors and campaigners across Scotland make a difference in local communities and are in tune with local people.

“We want to see an end to the council tax and have something progressive in its place. We want to transform local services to make sure they work for the people they serve.

“Liberal Democrat candidates offer something unique. We believe in people and their potential. Community politics and community power – local decision making and support for local people. Candidates like Claire Graham in Musselburgh are a fantastic example of the people who are a part of the Lib Dem

fight back and want to see a more open, tolerant and united country.

“This year people across Scotland will face a simple choice. Do they want to see another cheerleader for independence or do they want a true local champion who will put their community first? ”

Council Elections 2017 – SNP candidates

There are 26 SNP candidates standing at the 2017 council elections on 4 May, 9 of whom are women.



NORMAN WORK – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1 – ALMOND

For ten years Norman has had the pleasure of representing the Almond Ward. He is standing again as he wishes to continue with his strong record of achievements and also by making himself as accessible as possible. He trusts you will give him your 1st preference vote on May 4th.



PAMELA MITCHELL – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1 – ALMOND

Pamela Mitchell is a Political Education Officer and passionate activist for the SNP, addressing delegates at Conference, debating issues of Welfare, Disability and

Domestic Abuse. With a BSc Hons, her work at NUS Scotland marked the start of her political journey, culminating in her becoming an SNP Council candidate.



NEIL GARDINER – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 2 – PENTLAND HILLS

Neil Gardiner will work hard as Pentland Hills local councillor, representing Water of Leith Villages, Wester Hailes, Calders and Ratho. Neil works for the NHS, serves on a local Housing Association Board and supports local community initiatives. He will champion all areas including planning, housing, education, health and social care.

ERNESTA NOREIKIENE – SNP CANDIDATE FOR PENTLAND HILLS WARD



Ernesta moved to Scotland five years ago with her young family from Lithuania where she worked a civil servant. Raised by a hardworking single mum, Ernesta graduated from the prestigious Vilnius University with a Master's Degree in Political Sciences. She entered politics to work for a more inclusive society.



CLAIRE BRIDGMAN – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 3 – DRUM BRAE/GYLE

Claire was born and brought in the ward having attended Craigmount High School. She has lived in Clemiston for 20 years and owns a local business that helps people improve their career prospects. Claire has a particularly interest in protecting the area's amenities and ensuring her community's

voice is heard.



GEORGE GORDON – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 4 – FORTH

As a fifth generation Grantonian and a committed community activist George has worked closely with local groups and organisations to provide much needed services and facilities. If elected he is determined to push forward the interests of all the Residents of the ward as a strong, approachable and listening Councillor.



ELEANOR BIRD – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 4 – FORTH

Ellie currently works part time for Tommy Sheppard MP as well as finishing her degree in Social Policy. Her studies have given her great insight into the importance of Council level policy making and the tangible effects it has on local lives.



GAVIN BARRIE – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 5 – INVERLEITH

Retired Firefighter having completed 34 years' active service. Senior member of the Fire Brigades Union on retirement. Held Convenership of Regulatory then Economy Committees over the past five years. Gavin is seeking a

second term to further address the inequalities and fairness that most Edinburgh citizens recognise in our City.



FRANK ROSS – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 6 –
CORSTORPHINE/MURRAYFIELD

Frank is the Councillor for Corstorphine/Murrayfield. Married to Hannelore with two children. Frank has lived in West Edinburgh for nearly all his life and is well known locally in both Corstorphine and Murrayfield.

He served for 4 years as the Convenor of Economy and is now the SNP Group Leader and Depute Council Leader.



CATHERINE FULLERTON – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 7 –
SIGHTHILL/GORGIE

Catherine is presently the Councillor for Sighthill/Gorgie. She lives in her ward and is passionate about improving the lives of the people she represents. She has served as Vice Convener on the Education Committee for the past 4 years. Catherine is seeking a second term to further address the inequalities and poverty within the ward.



DENIS DIXON – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 7 – SIGHTHILL/GORGIE

Denis was elected SNP Councillor for ward 7 – Sighthill/Gorgie in 2012. Since then he has sat on the following committees: Health and Social Care; Education Children and Families; Planning/ Development Management sub-committee; Finance and Resources, Governance, Risk and Best Value and Petitions. He chairs the SW Community Safety Action Group.



SIMON HAYTER – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 7 – SIGHTHILL/GORGIE

Simon is an experienced campaigner on a range of issues ranging from social justice, community engagement and supporting small businesses to name a few. He is a small business owner himself, employing local people in the Edinburgh. He attended and graduated from Edinburgh Napier University.



RICHARD LEWIS – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 8 – COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD

Richard B.A. (Hons) in Music has worked as a freelance musician and conductor in Austria, Hungary, Australia, Denmark, Belgium and Ireland. Has been an SNP member for 18 years, joining soon after finishing university. He has represented Colinton/Fairmilehead since 2012 during which time he has served as Convener of Culture and Sport and Festivals and Events champion.



DAVID KEY – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 9 –
FOUNTAINBRIDGE/CRAIGLOCKHART

David joined the Royal Navy straight from school and saw service and action around the globe as a Naval Officer for 25 years. Retiring from the Navy in the rank of Commander he is now employed as an Emergency Services helicopter pilot. He is married with two young sons.



SANDY HOWAT – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 10 –MORNINGSIDE

Sandy has been active in reviewing the planning of the city, in the education of our citizens and focused on the integration of our health and social care services.

Before becoming a Councillor Sandy worked predominantly in financial services and personnel development.

Sandy is married with a son and lives in South Edinburgh.



ALASDAIR RANKIN – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 11 – CITY CENTRE

Alasdair's working life has been in public service. He was a civil servant, then a parliamentary official and has been a City Centre Councillor since 2011. Since 2012 he has been Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, ensuring that Council resources are used efficiently and focused on service delivery.



LEWIS RITCHIE – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 12 – LEITH WALK

Lewis has a diverse background having lived across Europe and worked in the Scottish Parliament, with the Citizens Advice Bureau and with Children in Scotland prior to his election in 2015 .

He is a law graduate, holds a post graduate degree in education and currently completing a doctorate at Stirling.



AMY McNEESE-MECHAN – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 12 – LEITH WALK

PhD. & MSc [Distinction] University of Edinburgh School of Political & Social Sciences; B.A. East Asian Languages University of Oregon. Worked for Japanese Foreign Ministry in Chicago and Ministry of Education in Osaka, Japan. Worked for Scottish Natural Heritage, National Library of Scotland, PCS Vice Convenor & Unison International Relations Officer.



ADAM McVEY – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 13 – LEITH

Adam has a background in economics and law, elected an Edinburgh Councillor in 2012 having previously worked at a human rights charity and an investment charity. Adam is Vice-Convenor of Edinburgh's Transport and Environment Committee and is a director of Transport for Edinburgh, changeworks and

chairs the Council's energy company.



ALEX LUNN – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 14 –
CRAIGENTINNY/DUDDINGSTON

Alex is the incumbent SNP Councillor for Craigentinny & Duddingston.

Born in Geelong but raised and lived his whole life in South-East Edinburgh attending St John Vianney Primary School and Liberton High School. Alex is currently the SNP Group Whip and the Vice Convener of the Planning Committee.

MRIDUL WADHWA – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 14 –
CRAIGENTINNY/DUDDINGSTON

Mridul works on legislation for domestic abuses, forced marriage and BME women. She works for Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre and is a community worker. She trains police officers on equalities issues and charities on the benefits of devolution.



ALISON DICKIE – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 15 –
SOUTHSIDE/NEWINGTON

Alison is a local Edinburgh teacher. She is also a former

civil servant in the Scottish Parliament, a volunteer in youth work and now homeless services, and a mother of two grown up sons. Last year, Alison was the SNP MSP candidate for Edinburgh Central in the Holyrood elections.



LESLEY MacINNES – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 16 –
LIBERTON/GILMERTON

Living in Gilmerton, Lesley is ready to bring energy and some fresh ideas to the Liberton/Gilmerton ward. As a former manager of an international organisation she will apply her skills and experiences to her community's challenges and to bring maximum benefits to this part of the city.



DEREK HOWIE – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 16 – LIBERTON/GILMERTON

Having been an Edinburgh council social worker for 31 years Derek is well placed to address the issues and champion the causes of individuals, families and communities in Liberton/Gilmerton for the next five years. He is ready to take on this responsibility and, indeed, looking forward to it.'



MICHAEL BRIDGMAN – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 17 – PORTOBELLO/CRAIGMILLAR

Mike was raised in Bingham and educated at Portobello High School. He has been a Councillor since May 2007 and was formerly an Insurance Broker.

Since being elected he has sat on many Committees and was the Convener of Lothian & Borders Fire & Rescue Service and Chaired the SNP Group for 7 yrs. He currently is Convener of the Regulatory Committee.



KATE CAMPBELL – SNP CANDIDATE FOR WARD 17 – PORTOBELLO/CRAIGMILLAR

Kate is a first-time candidate, standing for Portobello/Craigmillar. Now working for Tommy Sheppard MP, she spent her twenties in insecure employment. Her priority is social justice. That means tackling poverty by supporting an economy that creates decent jobs, building quality affordable homes and putting power in the hands of ordinary people.

Investigation underway after human remains found near Gosford House



An investigation is underway after human remains were found near Longniddry.

Officers were alerted to the discovery by a member of the public yesterday evening, Sunday 2nd April, near to the entrance to Gosford House.

Experts have now positively identified the remains as human, and their recovery and detailed examination of the area will now take place.

The death is being treated as unexplained.

Detective Superintendent Pat Campbell said: "We are in the very early stages of this investigation, to recover the remains, identify the deceased and inform their family, and establish the circumstances of the death. The recovery will be a painstaking process and officers and scientific experts will be in the area doing this work over the coming days.

"I would not wish to cause any unnecessary distress to families or anyone who is waiting for news of a missing loved one, and my officers will be in contact with the next of kin of any person who becomes relevant to the investigation.

"The area where the remains have been found, including the A198, will remain cordoned off whilst we conduct our inquiries and I would like to thank the public for their patience during this time."

Borders Railway – your

gateway to Easter Days Out



A new travel pass offering unlimited two-day rail travel for Edinburgh families is being launched just in time for Easter. The Edinburgh Days Out travel pass, introduced by ScotRail, will let families discover top tourist attractions across Midlothian and the Scottish Borders and save money while doing so.

The travel passes offer unlimited, off-peak travel rail travel to all stations on the Borders Railway from Edinburgh Waverley.

Perfect for weekend breaks or family adventures, the 2-day passes are available for £18 per adult, or a family pass (2 adults & 2 children) is available for just £34, with the offer continuing beyond the Easter holidays.

Popular attractions and events along the line include the stunning Abbotsford House, the historic Melrose Abbey, and Midlothian's five star visitor attraction, the National Mining Museum Scotland. The world-famous Melrose Sevens competition will also return to the Scottish Borders on 8 April.

For more information on the travel pass, [click here](#)



In addition to the new travel pass, the Border Weaver bus service will also re-launch in time for the Easter break, helping travelling couples and families explore all that the Scottish Borders has to offer.

Running regularly throughout the day from both Tweedbank Station and the Galashiels Transport Interchange, the bus service provides direct access to attractions across the area.

Lindley Kirkpatrick Borders Railway Programme Executive from ScotRail said: “The launch of our new travel pass couldn’t come at a better time. With thousands of families looking for fun activities to do during time off from work and school, our flexible, money saving travel pass allows visitors from Edinburgh to discover hidden gems in Midlothian and Scottish Borders dotted right along the Borders Railway line.”

Jemma Reid Project Manager from Midlothian and Borders Tourism Action Group said: “Midlothian and the Scottish Borders are brimming with high quality tourist attractions, and some of Scotland’s finest artisanal food and drink. Coupled with the impressive vistas and rolling hills on offer from the comfort of the Borders Railway, now is the perfect time to explore the region.”

Photos Phil Wilkinson
info@philwilkinson.net
07740 444373

Edinburgh Airport firefighters train South American colleagues



Edinburgh Airport’s Fire and Rescue service has been assisting the training of fire fighters from Mexico and South America. Twenty fire fighters form Paraguay, Argentina and Mexico are

in Scotland for a four week course which is being led by International Fire and Rescue Association (IFRA).

IFRA are Scotland's biggest International fire service charity, having sent 50 containers of vital lifesaving equipment, nearly 100 appliances including ambulances and have sent 59 training missions with over 200 staff members to the 19 countries since formation in 2001.

The course consists of a two week basic firefighting course, a one week Breathing apparatus course and a one week specialist course (Water Rescue, Hazardous Material, Rope Rescue).

Edinburgh Airport (both Fire Service and organisation in general) have supported IFRA since 2004 and have donated 5 Fire Appliances and 2 4x4's – with another soon to follow.

David Kay OBE, Chairman/Director of International Fire and Rescue, said: "The Firefighters we are training do not have access to the same the level of equipment and training that we receive in this country – that was one of the reasons I decided to run this school here in Scotland.

"The training they receive from my other instructors will undoubtedly save lives in Latin America and Edinburgh Airport should be justifiably proud of its role in enabling this great project.

"Without the support of organisations like Edinburgh Airport – IFRA would not be able to work as effectively as we do and I am proud to say our partnership has had a positive impact on so many people's lives worldwide."

Gordon Dewar, Edinburgh Airport's Chief Executive, said: "It is a real privilege to work with Davie Kay, the International Fire and Rescue Association and all fire fighters from overseas – we are very proud of our close association with them."

OPINION – Scotland's dazzling

visitor attraction numbers are not quite what they seem



The 2016 Edinburgh International Festival opened with a spectacular light show

[Anna Leask](#), [Edinburgh Napier University](#)

Scotland's visitor attractions are outstripping those in the rest of the UK, [according to](#) a new report. They [recorded](#) a whopping 15.6% increase in visitor numbers between 2015 and 2016 compared to an overall UK increase of 7.2% – growing faster [for the third year in a row](#).

Led by big increases from Scotland's two top visitor attractions, Edinburgh Castle (+13%) and the city's National Museum (+16%), the Scottish government hailed the 2016 figures as outstanding news. Fiona Hyslop, the tourism secretary, said:

The success of our leading visitor attractions will continue to play a vital role in making Scotland a destination of first choice for visitors from the UK and across the world.

Unquestionably Scotland has a great range of visitor attractions. "Must-sees" include the [Glenfinnan Viaduct](#) on the West Highland railway line, made world famous by the Harry Potter films. Then there are battlefields such as nearby [Culloden](#), where the Jacobites met their [most famous defeat](#) to British troops in 1745. Not to mention the scores of whisky distilleries in some of the most beautiful settings in the country.

Yet the new figures, published by the [Association of Leading Visitor Attractions \(ALVA\)](#), look remarkably high to me –

especially compared to other key sources. On closer examination, they are exaggerating the reality for Scottish visitor attractions as a whole.

Who counts what

ALVA [only counts](#) 51 Scottish visitor attractions as members out of a total of more than 1,280. Membership criteria require 1m visitors per year and for each site to be considered among the “most popular, iconic and important attractions”. Of the six Scottish attractions that receive 1m annual visitors on their own, only five are ALVA members: the National Museum, Edinburgh Castle, the city’s Scottish National Gallery and Glasgow’s Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Riverside Museum. The sixth, St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, is not included.

The remaining Scottish ALVA sites make the count by collectively attracting more than 1m as part of organisations such as the National Trust for Scotland, which includes the likes of Cullooden and Ayrshire attractions Culzean Castle and Robert Burns’ Birthplace – or the Royal Collection Trust, which includes the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen’s official residence in Edinburgh.

Look down the ALVA list and you find most attractions located in Scottish cities, with some significant omissions. These include [the Falkirk Wheel](#), which attracts more than half a million visitors per year, and the [Royal Yacht Britannia](#) in Edinburgh, which attracts more than 300,000.



Burns’ cottage in Alloway, Ayrshire.

[Amanda Slater](#), [CC BY-SA](#)

The other key source of annual visitor numbers is the [Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions \(ASVA\)](#). With less limiting membership criteria, it currently has 450 members. Its survey includes 249 sites and also monitors visitor spending and associated activities.

The ASVA 2016 report, which is not publicly available, recorded an overall increase in Scottish visitor numbers of 6%. It still shows increases across all regions, particularly in sectors such as heritage and distilleries – though these inevitably mask a more complex picture. Some non-ALVA members are up more than 10% a year, while others experienced small drops – Edinburgh Zoo, for example.

The underlying story

So why the big difference in overall growth between the two sets of figures? Many of Scotland's smaller attractions have not been performing as well as the big-ticket draws, even if they have still been growing. Having said that, the ASVA numbers are a more reliable and representative guide to the overall performance.

All attractions are vulnerable to vagaries such as new exhibitions, temporary closures, improvements in visitor counting tools – and weather and road developments. Because ALVA focuses on a smaller number of sites, such one-offs are more likely to distort the figures. To give one example, the National Museum's 2016 numbers have been flattered because, after a [7% drop in 2014](#) and [4% drop in 2015](#) owing to ten galleries being closed for redevelopment, they reopened in 2016, bringing in more visitors.



Inside the National Museum of Scotland.

[Ben Mason](#), [CC BY-SA](#)

Ignoring the smaller attractions also misses an economic contribution that is more important than it may first appear. Cumulatively these sites help to differentiate a destination, in some cases by offering [special interest experiences](#). They help bring socioeconomic benefits to community hotels, shops and other businesses, [particularly](#) out of season.

If we go by the ASVA numbers, Scotland's visitor attractions

still compare well to other parts of the UK. VisitBritain's 2015 survey of 1,459 English sites, the most recent available, [showed 2% growth](#) compared to [3.4% growth](#) for Scottish attractions the same year – a modest but noticeable difference, albeit that most of the [UK's biggest attractions](#) are still south of the border. The number one ranked British Museum's 6.4m annual visits far outdoes the National Museum of Scotland's 1.8m, predominantly due to the volume of visitors and residents in the London area.

All UK tourism has benefited from [more inbound visitors](#), but Scottish visitor attractions have also seen substantial [capital investment programmes](#) and collaborate well on training and sharing best practice via member organisations such as ASVA. Scotland has also seen national campaigns like VisitScotland's [Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology 2017](#); plus [film/TV tourism](#) from the likes of Harry Potter and [Outlander](#). Extra air routes and [cheaper ferry prices](#) have also helped.

Tourism businesses have also been getting more customer friendly, introducing longer opening hours, better pricing packages and sharper attempts to target millennials – [music nights](#) at the National Museum for example. Scotland is also seen as safer for tourists than the UK – [Edinburgh was voted](#) the country's safest destination in 2014, for example.

So while the growth of Scotland's visitor attractions may not be quite as frothy as the ALVA figures suggest, it's far from disappointing. Indeed, ASVA records a very respectable 16% increase overall since 2013. However welcome the surge at the biggest attractions, this looks like a steady and gradual increase that can be sustained into the future. That is a story well worth telling in its own right.

[Anna Leask](#), Professor of Tourism Management, [Edinburgh Napier University](#)

This article was originally published on [The Conversation](#).
Read the [original article](#).

Fishing – Glencorse, a stunning venue for quality trout



Glencorse Reservoir in the Pentland Hills where anglers come from all over Scotland and North East England to test their skill.
Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Background: Glencorse RSV is one of the most stunning locations for trout fishing in the Lothians and it is only 15 minutes from Edinburgh. It is situated at the foot of the Pentland Hills near Flotterston and the proprietor is Bill Taylor who also has two other well-known fisheries, Tweeddale and Gladhouse.

Contact: Bill Taylor

Address: Glencorse Reservoir, Penicuik EH26 0PP

Telephone: 01968 678709 or 0131 440 2572 or 07762 038 407

Email: glencorse1@outlook.com

Booking rules: pre-booking only

Rules: no bank fishing or bait fishing or spinning allowed

Times: 9am to 4.45pm Tuesday to Sunday during May, June, July and August for one boat or more. During the other months we

require at least three goats in order to open.

Species: brown trout, rainbow trout

Basic prices: full day session of eight hours for two anglers with an eight fish boat limit plus catch and release from Monday to Friday £54, Saturday and Sunday £58

Full day session of eight hours for one angler and a four fish boat limit plus catch and release from Monday to Friday £28, Saturday and Sunday £30. See the website for other prices.

Car park: Anglers cannot park beyond the entrance gate and must park right to the wall

Stocking: weekly with quality fish from one of the top fish suppliers from 2lb upwards

Catching method: fly only

Boats: several available and we also have three outboard engines and batteries for hire. The rate is £5 per outboard and £5 per battery and must be booked at least one week in advance of the outing

Group bookings: telephone on 01968 678709 or 0131 451 5324 or 07762 038 407 or email glencorse1@outlook.com

**Edinburgh
Sponsorship**

**Gin
Deal**

**sign
with**

Musselburgh Racecourse

Musselburgh Racecourse and acclaimed drinks brand, Edinburgh Gin, sign £20,000 Headline Sponsorship Deal



Musselburgh Racecourse has joined forces with one of Scotland's leading gin brands, Edinburgh Gin, and signed a new headline deal for one of the most prestigious annual racedays, The Edinburgh Cup.

The £20,000 headline sponsorship deal of Musselburgh's richest flat race marries the two iconic capital brands once again, following the success of last year's Edinburgh Cup Raceday which saw Edinburgh Gin quench the thirst of over 6,500 racegoers who enjoyed more than 6,000 serves of its acclaimed and varied portfolio of unique, premium gins and liqueurs with Edinburgh Gin and Seaside Edinburgh Gin being the popular choices of the day.

Bringing both colours and flavours to the capital, The Edinburgh Cup Raceday sponsored by Edinburgh Gin, which will be held on Saturday 3 June 2017, has a total prize fund of £180,000 and will feature the UK's leading horses, trainers and jockeys. As one of the biggest dates in the Scottish racing calendar, and a social highlight for thousands from across Edinburgh and the Lothians, the Edinburgh Cup is expecting to attract visitor numbers of up to 7,000 this year, including a number of sporting personalities.

The official sponsorship deal will see Edinburgh Gin takeover the lawn selling a range of gins and gin fizzes, from classic G&Ts to innovative and themed cocktails created by the Edinburgh Gin team.

Sarah Montgomery Senior Operations and Commercial Manager at Musselburgh Racecourse, commented on the partnership: "We're

delighted to have Edinburgh's iconic drinks brand partner up with the capital's famed and biggest race day of the year. Edinburgh Gin has been immensely popular with our Edinburgh Cup racegoers who have an appetite for the finer things and we're excited to see what the 2017 raceday brings."

Neil Boyd, Commercial Director for Ian Macleod Distillers, owners of Edinburgh Gin, said:

"Following on from the success of last year's Edinburgh Cup at Musselburgh Racecourse we are excited to sponsor one of Scotland's leading days in the racing calendar again this year.

The sponsorship is a natural fit for Edinburgh Gin and Musselburgh Racecourse, combining two iconic Edinburgh brands and providing spectators with a wide choice of popular gin drinks while people enjoy a great day out at the races."

Advanced Tickets are on sale for £30 with full price Adult tickets priced at £35 from 15 May onwards. Children 17 years and under are admitted Free when accompanied by an adult.

For more information on available packages and to book Advance Tickets for £30 visit: www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk

Fishing – Bangour Fishery a fine early-season venue

Bangour Fishery has been restored and claims to provide anglers with everything they need for a great day on the water.

The well-maintained venue is 700 feet above sea level and lies in the south-east part of Bathgate Hills near Livingston. It is surrounded by woods.

Originally, Bangour Reservoir was built as a water supply for Bangour Hospital, and was stocked with brown trout to keep the water pure.

When the hospital closed, the reservoir was syndicated until the syndicate broke up, but the new owners have it in mint condition.

Rainbows, browns, blues, tigers are available in the 7.5 acres of water but there are also a number of carp, originally introduced in the 60's, that can reach the 20lbs-plus range.

Contact: Pauline Wright

Address: Bangour Trout Fishery, Bangour Reservoir near Dechmont, West Lothian EH52 6GU

Telephone: 01506 811335 or mobile 07799 626345

Web: www.bangourtroutfishery.com

E: info@bangourtroutfishery.com

Open: seven days

Times: 9am to 5pm

Car park: for around 20 cars

Directions: take Junction 3 from the M8 motorway, head for Broxburn then Dechmont and at the east end of Dechmont you will find a signpost for the fishery. From Linlithgow follow the signs for The Beecraigs Restaurant, head past Beecraigs Loch and out of the Country Park and at South Mains Farm

follow the signs for Dechmont. This will take you right past the fishery.

Species: brown, rainbow, blue and tiger trout (stocked weekly)

Basic prices: eight hours, four fish kill then C&R £26; six hours, three fish kill then C&R £22; four hours, two fish kill then C&R £19

Concessions: £2 discount for over 65

Age limit: under-16 must be accompanied by an adult

Rod hire: no

Catching method: fly only

Pegs: maximum 28

Boats: none

Outings: call Pauline on 01506 811335

On-site food: pot noodles, chocolate and cans of juice

On-site fishing equipment: hooks, line, flies and tippet material

Bothy: with microwave for heating up snacks plus tea and coffee making facilities and sink

Toilets: yes

Coaching: available on request

Best Scottish Poems 2016 announced today

The Scottish Poetry Library has published a list of the Best Scottish Poems and the online anthology is now available.

Catherine Lockerbie, the former director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, has chosen the poems which feature some old favourites like Liz Lochhead, William Letford, Jenni Fagan and Michel Faber.

The library publishes its list every spring with 20 poems chosen to provide an 'idiosyncratic snapshot of Scotland over one year'.

Ms Lockerbie has read every poems which qualified – a mammoth task! She said : “This was a vast undertaking, and an enthralling one: so much superb poetry pouring out in the course of just one year.

“Resonant themes emerged: moving reflections on illness and mortality, intense encounters with the natural world, science-filled forays of the imagination, fierce political wake-up calls, funny and wonder-filled musings on poetry itself, and so much more.

“I hope this list stands as a sample of the exhilarating vibrancy of contemporary poetry in Scotland – and encourages people to make their own poetic discoveries.”

The list is below – of course you may feel free to disagree and to suggest your own from last year!

- Katie Ailes, 'Outwith', from *Glasgow Women Poets: A collection* (Glasgow: Four-em Press, 2016), ed Mairi Murphy

- James Aitchison, 'Anthem', from *The Gates of Light* (Colchester: Mica Press, 2016)
- Claire Askew, 'Catalogue of my grandmother's sayings', from *This Changes Things* (Hexham: Bloodaxe Books, 2016)
- Angus Peter Campbell, 'Aig Cladh Hallain' / 'At Hallan Cemetery', in *Northwords Now*, Issue 31 (Spring 2016)
- Michel Faber, 'Don't Hesitate To Ask', from *Undying: A love story* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2016)
- Jenni Fagan, 'The Narcissist and The Light Stasher', from *The Dead Queen of Bohemia: New and collected poems* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2016)
- Pippa Goldschmidt, 'Physics For The Unwary Student', from *House of Three: Logie Fielding, Pippa Goldschmidt, Nalini Paul* (Edinburgh: House of Three, 2016)
- Andy Jackson, 'Enquiry Desk', from *Umbrellas of Edinburgh: Poetry and prose inspired by Scotland's capital city*, eds Russell Jones and Claire Askew (Glasgow: Freight Books, 2016)
- William Letford, 'This is it', from *Dirt* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2016)
- Pippa Little, 'For Refuge', from *Aiblins: New Scottish Political Poetry*, eds Katie Ailes and Sarah Paterson (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2016)
- Liz Lochhead, 'In the Mid-Midwinter', from *Fugitive Colours* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2016)
- Hugh McMillan, 'The Conversion of Sheep', in *The Dark Horse*, Late Spring & Summer 2016, Issue 36
- J.O Morgan, 'We used to think the universe was made...', from *Interference Pattern* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016)
- Helena Nelson, 'What Not to Write on the Back Jacket of your Debut Collection', from *Down With Poetry!* (Glenrothes: Happenstance, 2016)
- Stuart A. Paterson, 'Breenge', from *Aye* (Tarland: Tapsalteerie Press, 2016)
- Tom Pow, 'Full Stretch' from *At The Well of Love* (Edinburgh: Mariscat Press, 2016)
- Alison Prince, 'Reprieve' from *Waking At Five Happens*

Again (Edinburgh & Glenrothes: Mariscat Press / Happenstance, 2016)

- Em Strang, 'A Poem Before Breakfast', from *Bird-Woman* (Bristol: Shearsman Books)
 - Samuel Tongue, 'What Is It Like To Be A Herring Gull?' from *Hauling-Out* (London: Eyewear Publishing, 2016)
 - Kate Tough, 'People Made Glasgow' from *tilt-shift* (Tarland: Tapsalteerie, 2016)
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More American investment in Scotland announced



44 jobs created or safeguarded with inward investment

The First Minister has welcomed an announcement today from three American firms who have promised investment of £6.3 million in Scotland, creating or safeguarding 44 jobs in the data analytics and life sciences sectors.



The announcements from Spiritus Partners Limited, ION Geophysical Corporation and PPS UK came as the First Minister arrived in the US on the first day of her week there.

All three companies have been supported by Scottish Enterprise through grants totalling more than £1.5 million.

The First Minister said: "The United States is Scotland's

biggest source of inward investment and, in the wake of Article 50 being triggered and the risk of a hard Brexit, it is vital we continue to build on the success of our current business relationship with the US.

“Scotland remains open for business and I’m delighted these companies have chosen to expand here and it further demonstrates our position as a prime location for inward investment.”

Lena Wilson, Chief Executive of Scottish Enterprise, said: “Spiritus Partners Limited, ION Geophysical Corporation and PPS UK are all fantastic examples of US companies recognising the benefits of Scotland’s top talent and effective business environment. We are very pleased to have been able to support all three growth companies to get to this stage and wish them every success in achieving their future ambitions.”

Filming begins in Edinburgh on crowdfunded movie



Filming has begun in Edinburgh, Scotland for new psychic thriller *First and Only*.

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name by author Peter Flannery, and directed by award-winning director Magnus Wake, the film marks a welcome return to the big screen for James Robinson. He first made his acting debut as young William Wallace in *Braveheart*.

In *First and Only* James will play the ominous figure of serial killer Mal whose religious killing spree can only be stopped by Simon, a mysteriously gifted young man who has been haunted by Mal since witnessing his first murder as a boy.

Simon is played by Waterloo Road star Shane O'Meara who seeks assistance in his mission from hardened ex-SAS man Steve Brennus, played by well-known Scottish actor Jim Sturgeon.

In addition the cast will include; Maggie Bain, Graeme McKnight, Sandy Welch, Ian Hanmore, Shonagh Price, Kim Allan, Kenny Blyth, Kern Falconer, Pauline Turner, Sharon Young, Alisdair Hankinson, Mya Green and Corin Edgar Robert.

Speaking on set Director Magnus Wake said: "Edinburgh is the perfect location for a tense atmospheric thriller and we're delighted to have secured such a strong cast to bring Peter Flannery's best selling novel to life. The weeks ahead will be action packed as strange psychic events play out on the streets of the city."

Filming takes place across the city in everything from abandoned churches to former factory spaces ahead of an expected Autumn 2017 release. The script is jointly adapted by Geoff Holder and Alistair Rutherford from the Amazon best-selling novel *First and Only* by Peter Flannery.

First and Only first came to prominence as a feature film that became Scotland's most crowdfunded movie in pounds raising over £50,000 (\$75,000) in November 2014.

A short film made from the crowdfunding included cast from *Outlander* and *Game of Thrones* and was accepted into the Cannes Film Festival- Short Film Corner. It has proved very successful internationally, selected for festivals in LA, London, Amsterdam and Berlin.

Follow the film on [Instagram](#).

Ice hockey – Dundee march into the final four with stunning win

❌ Elite League: play-off, quarter-final: Dundee Stars 3, Braehead Clan 1; Braehead Clan 0, Dundee Stars 3 (agg: 1-6); Belfast Giants 4, Fife Flyers 2; Fife Flyers 1, Belfast Giants 4 (agg: 3-8)

Dundee Stars, written off by many in January, marched into the semi-finals of the Elite League play-offs.

They won both legs of the quarter-final against Scottish rivals Braehead Clan after digging deep.

Last night, in Glasgow, the Tayside team silenced the Purple Army.

A packed house saw a blanked first session but Justin Faryna broke the deadlock after good work from Kevin Bruijsten and Joey Sides after 31 minutes.

Sides turned from provider to scorer with a second after 43 minutes with Craig Cescon and Cale Tanaka assisting.

And Kevin Hart fired No 3 just over three minutes later with Tanaka again involved, this time with Sides.

Fife Flyers could not match their stunning 9-5 victory over Belfast Giants at Kirkcaldy in February and bowed out of the competition with a 4-1 scoreline at Kirkcaldy.

Former player Matt Nickerson scored Giants' opener after 11 minutes but Ryan Dingle levelled in the 24th minute.

Blair Riley after 35 minutes and Chris Higgins four minutes later plus a second from Riley after 44 minutes made sure.

Elsewhere, Sheffield Steelers advance thanks to a 7-6 aggregate win over arch rivals Nottingham Panthers and Cardiff Devils, the league champions, won 6-3 aggregate victory over Manchester Storm.