

Lord Provost running two marathons this year



The Lord Provost is in training for two marathons this year, first the Virgin Money London Marathon in April and secondly the Edinburgh Marathon in May.

He is raising funds for his charity, the OneCity Trust and also for St John and the City which aims to raise funds for defibrillators to be installed across the capital.

The Edinburgh Reporter was invited along to see how his training is coming along as he has upped his running to 50k per week.

[The Lord Provost is training for two marathons](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

You can support the Lord Provost's fundraising [here](#).

Where to eat out in Edinburgh – Reekie's Smokehouse



Looking for high quality barbecued food? Then get down to

Holyrood Road where the capital's first smokehouse is open longer to 'meat' demand.

Craig and Felicity Cameron are behind the meat-eaters' paradise which aims to offer Scotland's best meat in a relaxed setting.

They use American BBQ techniques to smoke the locally sourced meat with a Scottish twist.

✖ Now open between 11.30am and 9pm with a carefully selected menu including a variety of tasty pork shoulder and ribs, all accompanied by Scottish-themed sauces with names like Buckie Broon, Whisky Jerk, Craft Beer Mustard and Irn Bru BBQ.

Craig said: "We're delighted to be extending our opening hours. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing happy customers enjoying our food, so to be in a position to welcome even more people through the door is extremely exciting for us.

"The whole concept started when we arrived back in Edinburgh from a few years overseas eating in very informal settings. We'd always enjoyed hosting BBQs so set about developing a menu we felt used Scotland's delicious beef and pork to its full potential. The key to a great BBQ is using top quality meat."

✖ Reekie's Smokehouse prides itself on using only 100% Scottish meats and local produce where possible with uniquely specified quality meats from East Lothian butcher [J Gilmour](#), locally supplied vegetables, honey, and small-hold free range eggs.

All drinks from beer to soft drinks are Scottish with a great range of craft beers and local sodas and juices. Even the coffee roast was designed by Craig and Felicity and is produced by Home Ground Coffee in Cardross.

Craig continued: "We see ourselves as being a classic,

neighbourhood eatery – a place you know and go to for one type of food but know that it will always be reliably excellent, honest and relaxed.

“Our aim was to create somewhere that is sociable and casual with delicious quality food to tuck into. You can pop in for a quick bite or sit and relax with a group of friends for as long as you want.

“Our meats are smoked overnight for 22 hours and served up in a sandwich, tub or as a “Meatfest” to share, meaning we have something to suit everyone.”

Reekie’s Smokehouse is now open Tuesday – Saturday 11:30am to 9pm. More information can be found [on the website here.](#)

If You Really Want to Give Up Smoking...



The Edinburgh Reporter’s Mike Smith is a qualified hypnotherapist. In the latest of a series of articles on the benefits of hypnotherapy, Mike looks at what it can do to help people stop smoking.

‘What is it you do?’ asked the woman in the barber’s shop.

‘I’m a hypnotherapist’ I replied nervously as she took an extremely sharp blade to the back of my neck. ‘I can help you get rid of unwanted habits’

‘Aye? Can ye get me to stop smoking?’

‘I can certainly try’ I replied, more confident now. ‘Most of the clients who have come to see me have stopped smoking – so it does work’

I have been asked this question many times by people who are looking to stop smoking. My most recent client had been smoking for twenty years and had tried all kinds of methods in an attempt to stop. Nicotine patches, gum, even acupuncture – none of them worked. He came to me in desperation (not the first person to do so but that’s another story!)

After just one session of hypnotherapy my delighted client had stopped smoking. Six weeks on he is still proud to call himself a non-smoker – something his young daughter is delighted about.

When considering stop smoking hypnosis, the first thing one must do is make sure they are choosing to quit for themselves. Hypnosis for smoking has been found to be most effective when the person *really* wants to quit.

Hypnotherapy works by putting someone into a deep, relaxed state. You are not ‘put to sleep’. You are awake but it’s like being in a daydream. How many times has someone said to you ‘hey, you’re away in a dream!’ This process is done by the hypnotherapist devising a script tailored to your thoughts and is aimed at relaxing you. Thus, at the initial consultation session, you are asked what helps you to relax, what’s your favourite holiday, what would be your ideal day if you had a day to yourself. Your replies are then added to a script which the hypnotherapist will use for you and no one else.

When you are at your most relaxed this is when your subconscious mind is most receptive to suggestion. At this point, the hypnotherapist will look to change the thought patterns of the smoker. They will make suggestions such as, “I do not want a cigarette” or “the smell of cigarette smoke makes me nauseous”. The hypnotherapist may ask the individual

to imagine unpleasant smells and feelings that they can associate with smoking. The person may also be taught various stop smoking hypnosis techniques so they can practice at home.

A great number of people find hypnotherapy for smoking an effective treatment. The method works to break the negative behaviours and thinking patterns associated with smoking. The thoughts and behaviours the smoker holds are often what prevents them from successfully giving up.

When a person makes the decision to stop smoking, the key aspect is to let go of the routine and change their perspective of cigarettes. Breaking an addiction like this is a challenge. Many people find changing how they think about something difficult. As hypnotherapy focuses on this change, it is fast becoming one of the most popular forms of treatment.

Benefits of quitting

It is never too late to quit smoking. Whatever age the smoker is, if they make the decision to stop, their health will benefit. However, the sooner a person quits, the faster the body can recover and the risk of developing serious health conditions will decrease. There are many benefits to stopping smoking, including:

More energy

As carbon monoxide affects how much oxygen the blood can carry, the body can find it difficult to function properly. When a person stops smoking, the carbon monoxide in the blood lowers. This allows the lungs and muscles to work the way they should. It also means more oxygen reaches the brain, boosting alertness and energy.

Improved immune system

Smoking causes the immune system to drop. This makes the body

more susceptible to colds and flu. Quitting allows the immune system to remain healthy.

Longer life expectancy

If a person quits smoking by the age of 30, their life expectancy can increase by 10 years. Even if a smoker is 60 years old, quitting can still add three years to their life.

Better breathing

Within nine months of giving up, lung capacity is said to increase by as much as 10 per cent. This allows the body to carry out daily tasks without the loss of breath. The “smoker’s cough” should also disappear and any breathing conditions, such as asthma should be reduced.

Less stress

Many smokers reach for a cigarette when in a stressful situation. The immediate hit of nicotine after withdrawal may make them feel relaxed but in the long-term, smoking increases stress levels.

Younger looking skin

Smoking prematurely ages the skin. Regular smoking can leave the skin dull, dry, and prone to wrinkles. When a person decides to stop smoking, the effect is reversed as the skin begins to receive the nutrients it needs. Over time, the appearance of the skin should dramatically improve.

More money

The average cost of a 20-pack of cigarettes is £8.00. If a person is smoking 20 cigarettes a day for 10 years, they will have spent nearly £30,000. Quitting smoking could mean a person is £250.00 richer per month. Think about what you could do with that extra money – as well as improving your health. And think, too, about the following:

- Nearly 50 per cent of all smokers die prematurely due to smoking-related diseases.
- The life expectancy of a smoker is about 10 years less than that of a non-smoker.
- In the UK it is estimated only half of long-term smokers live past the age of 70.
- Up to 17,000 children under the age of five are admitted to hospital each year as a result of passive smoking-related illnesses.

Common fears and misconceptions

When making the decision to stop smoking, many people have some initial worries. Common fears include:

Weight gain – Nicotine is an appetite suppressant, so it is possible for a person to feel hungrier after quitting. This is not the case for everyone but it is worth preparing for. If a person is ready to stop, they could stock up on healthy foods to nibble on when feeling hungry. They can also increase their levels of physical activity.

Not having a social tool – For some people, smoking is considered a social tool that brings people together. However, the smoking ban in public in Scotland was introduced in 2006. Since then, smoking outside has become a more isolated experience. It is important for people to remember that they are able to stay inside with those who do not smoke. Quitting doesn't have to damage a social life.

Feeling it's not "the right time" – A common excuse and sadly it is unlikely there will ever be a "good time". Life will always have its ups and downs. The trick is to learn to cope with them without turning to a cigarette. This is where self-hypnosis can help.

As mentioned, a person is more successful in quitting if they make the decision themselves. If they have a goal in mind, they can work towards it and stay focused. Once the commitment

to change has started, a person should seek help. Stop smoking hypnosis is one approach that can help a person kick a habit. Contacting a local medical professional can let the smoker know their options.

Other ways to quit

Whether a person is considered a heavy smoker or a social smoker, the thought of quitting can be daunting. According to statistics, two in three smokers want to stop smoking. Yet many people feel they couldn't last a day without a cigarette.

Hypnotherapy for smoking is one treatment that many people turn to and find effective. Sometimes it can work on its own, though it may complement another treatment.

If you wish to stop smoking why don't you take the first step to overcoming this by natural methods – the strength and power of your mind – by contacting me to arrange a consultation.

Smoking cessation can be done over just one session. The cost of a session at Mind Generating Success is just £95. Set that against the cost of cigarettes over a year and it is a relative drop in the ocean. So, contact me today.

Mike Smith Hyp CS

[Mind Generating Success](#)

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Source: The Hypnotherapy Directory
www.hypnotherapy-directory.org.uk

Easter – Edinburgh Leisure have an egg-citing line up for your children



Keep the kids entertained this Easter at the biggest club in town

Looking for reliable and fun holiday childcare this Easter? Keep the family active and entertained with a range of adrenaline pumping and entertaining activities at Edinburgh Leisure's holiday clubs. Book for a day or a week and there's even the opportunity for an early drop off and late pick up at no extra cost.

From sports, games, arts and crafts and much more, Edinburgh Leisure's fantastic multi-activity holiday clubs are perfect for getting the kids active and giving you some peace of mind this holiday.

Aimed at P1-P7 aged children, the camps are running at seven of Edinburgh Leisure's venues including [Ainslie Park Leisure Centre](#),

[Craiglockhart Leisure and Tennis Centre](#),

[Drumrae Leisure Centre](#),

[Gracemount Leisure Centre](#),

[Meadowbank Sports Centre](#),
[the Royal Commonwealth Pool](#) and
[Tumbles at Portobello](#).

Each camp is different and is led by experienced leaders and coaches who will ensure the children are safe and happy throughout.

There's also [Aquatics and Gymnastics Camps](#) for older children aged 9-14 years who are confident swimming 25m in deep water being held at the Royal Commonwealth Pool.

Prices start from £35 per day/£140 per week or £175 per week for Aquatics and Gymnastics Camps. To book, contact the venue direct, either by email, telephone or in person.

Edinburgh Leisure Holiday Clubs will run from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm with early drop offs from 8am and late pick-ups until 6pm, at no extra cost.

For further information www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

Photographers do their best to Capture Edinburgh



David Tomlins

At the City Art Centre there will be a major exhibition of

photographs this summer following the recent Capture Edinburgh photography competition. From a field of almost 400 entries six have been chosen but the work of 12 runners up will also be on display alongside some favourite photos from the gallery's own collection.

If you would like to see all 372 entries then click on the [City Art Centre Facebook page](#).



Paul Henni

Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture Convener, said: "With hundreds of fantastic entries, the judging panel found it incredibly difficult to narrow the winners down. Edinburgh must be one of the most photogenic and photographed cities in the world – yet these images manage to capture the feel of the Capital in new and unique ways.

"The top six photographs will be enlarged and displayed alongside some of the masters of Scottish art. The resulting display will span Edinburgh's historic museum and art collections and celebrate some of the contemporary work taking place in the city today. A huge thank you to everybody who entered and the judging panel and finally well done to the winners."



Fiona Johnson

The chosen winners by category are:

EDINBURGH AFTER DARK

Winner – 'View Down Princes Street at Night' by David Tomlins

Runners up – 'Forth Road Bridge' by Neil McDade and 'Escaping'

by Colin Lindsay

CHANGING CITY

Winner – ‘Canal Dreams’ by Sue Williamson

Runners up – ‘Old Meets New in Portobello’ by Drummond Fyall
and ‘Wavy Blue’ by Adam Robertson

ON THE INSIDE

Winner – ‘Vaseline Hair Tonic’ by Paul Henni

Runners up – ‘A quiet Chat’ by Scott Liddell and ‘Art and
Religion’ by Areesha Khan

A FESTIVALS AND EVENTS CITY

Winner – ‘Hogmanay’ by Mengqi Du

Runners up – ‘Festival Nights’ by Callum Ollason and
‘Surprise’ by Ken Steven

IN ALL WEATHERS

Winner – ‘Snow on the Way’ by Fiona Johnson

Runners up – ‘Engulfed by Fog’ by Edinburgh Spotlight and ‘Man
in Black’ by Mike Avern

FASHION AND RETAIL

Winner – ‘New Wave Coffee Shop to a Tea’ by MJose Fernandez

Runners up – ‘Deep Euphoria on Princes Street’ by Stephen
Bridger Photography and ‘Flying Clothes’ by Jonathan
Cruickshank



Sue Williamson

*The Capture Edinburgh judging panel consisted of Edinburgh
Museum and Gallery officers, Ben Harman, Director of the
Stills Centre for Photography and Kayt Turner, Picture Editor
of the Scotsman.*

Details of the City Art Centre's summer exhibition, *Edinburgh Alphabet: An A-Z of the City's Collections*, will be revealed later this month.



Mengqi Du

Ben Glover appearing at the Voodoo Rooms



On one of only two Scottish dates Ben Glover will play at the Voodoo Rooms on 6 April 2017. Support will be up and coming musician Roseanne Reid – recent BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Musician of the Year nominee

He is Irish, but now based in Nashville, and his rich powerful voice mixes Americana and his native Irish soul.

His most recent album *The Emigrant* released just last year, folds his two worlds into one.

Co-produced by Glover and Neilson Hubbard (who also produced Scot Dean Owens' acclaimed *Into the Sea* CD) the album features a mix of traditional folk songs and original compositions (including co-writes with Gretchen Peters (with whom he also co-wrote the award winning song *Blackbirds*), Mary Gauthier and Tony Kerr) as Glover addresses the universal theme and personal challenge that is immigration. When an ocean separates the two halves of your whole, it's worthy of contemplation.

Glover says: "Over the past couple of years, I have been going

through the process of getting my U.S. Green Card, so the reality of immigration was very present in my world”

Not only did he have to slice through web of bureaucratic issues, he also found himself face-to-face with the bigger questions posed by the process. “Contemplations like ‘What and where is home?’ were never far from my thoughts,” he adds. To work through it all, Glover turned to music. “Around the same time, my interest in Irish roots music and folk ballads was rekindled. My head and heart were back in that musical world. Having to deal with the issues of immigration while going back to the music I grew up playing is how *The Emigrant* was born. The project is my story – it’s who I am at this time in my life”

Glover’s childhood in the sleepy seaside village of Glenarm in the north of Ireland had a soundtrack from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. When he started playing gigs in the local pub at the age of 13, he played Irish music, of course, but he also slipped in songs from Hank Williams and Johnny Cash. In the summers of his university years. Glover paid his way across the pond by performing Irish folk ballads along with the songs of Christy Moore and the Pogues in the bars in Boston, while back home in the pubs of Ireland he was singing Dylan and Springsteen.

In 2009, Glover relocated to Nashville and immersed himself in Southern culture. He began exploring the locations that were closely associated with the music he grew up listening to – Hank Williams’ tombstone in Montgomery, Alabama; Johnny Cash’s childhood home in Dyess, Arkansas; Robert Johnson’s grave in Greenwood, Mississippi. Those experiences informed and infused the soul of his acclaimed 2014 solo album, *Atlantic*. With *The Emigrant*, Glover continues to search for his place in the world.

Have a taste of this:

Neil Lennon hoping Cummings' suspension will not be too big a loss



Hibs' Head Coach Neil Lennon is hoping that the loss of top scorer Jason Cummings will not have an adverse affect on the result of today's game against Dumbarton at Easter Road.

Cummings was sent off after receiving two yellow cards against Dundee United last Friday night but Lennon insists that his team contains plenty other players who are more than capable of scoring.

He also revealed that other first team squad players are returning to fitness ahead of two important home games against Falkirk and Morton.

Speaking to Hibernian TV, Lennon said: "Jason's (Cummings) goals have been unbelievable. It was a silly sending off but he did win the game for us and he is a difficult player for us to replace but we have Keatings, Graham, Holt, Boyle, Shinnie and McGinn who all have goals in them so hopefully it won't be too big a loss.

"Paul Hanlon is coming on well and hopefully he will be able to train with us on Monday Dylan (McGeouch) has been training with us for a week but he hasn't played a great deal of football in that time but he may come into contention for a place in the squad.

"Chris Humphrey is not a million miles away as well but we

have the suspensions of Jason and Fraser (Fyvie) so to have players coming back is very timely.”

Miles likes Body Boosting Bingo!



Miles Briggs Conservative MSP for Lothian has developed a love of bingo. But fear not, this game has a real benefit other than winning cash prizes!

Miles is backing a new Age Scotland initiative to encourage older people to stay active and healthy, and have fun, by taking part in “Body Boosting Bingo.” Miles took part in a game of the Bingo at Holyrood with a group of older people as the charity highlighted how they can benefit from taking part.

Age Scotland’s “Body Boosting Bingo” allows older people to take part in evidence-based strength and balance exercises. The resource has been piloted with the charity’s member groups and will be made available to day centres and older people’s groups across the country. Research shows that we gradually lose strength and power in our muscles and bones as we get older, however this can be reversed. A regular ten minutes twice per week of strength and balance exercises will help to maintain bone density and muscle power.

Evidence also suggests that without regular exercise our muscles will deteriorate gradually from age 35, and we’ll have lost a third of the bone density in our hips by age 80. Body

Boosting Bingo promotes light to moderate physical activity in a social context, allowing older people to socialise and keep fit at the same time.

Keith Robson, Chief Executive of Age Scotland said: "Age Scotland created Body Boosting Bingo as a fun and practical way to convey public health guidance regarding the preventative benefits of carrying out regular strength and balance exercises.

"Our research has shown that many older peoples' groups focus on seated activities. Body Boosting Bingo has been developed to counter this and we plan to promote it among our 1,000 member groups and right across Scotland."

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative MSP for Lothian said: "I congratulate Age Scotland on this positive initiative. It's not always easy persuading people to take up exercise, but Body Boosting Bingo shows that keeping fit and healthy can be fun and sociable and doesn't need to involve strenuous activity.

"Strength and Balance exercise is really important for preservation of bone density and muscle power which otherwise decreases rapidly as we age. In many cases both conditions are preventable and reversible. Increased strength and balance can contribute to successful ageing and a healthier, active later life with improved confidence and wellbeing."

Council claims recycling rates are on the rise

The City of Edinburgh Council says that recycling rates are climbing after new policies which they have introduced. Recycling has been made simpler in the last two years, by allowing all recycling to go into one container.



The latest [Landfill and Recycling report](#) to [Transport and Environment Committee](#) on Tuesday (21 March) shows an increase of 1239 tonnes – more than 1% – in recycling citywide on 2015/16 for the year to date, while the amount of unrecycled waste has dropped by 2.6%.

Rising recycling rates have in part been attributed to improvements to the service, including the introduction of [new kerbside dry mixed and glass recycling collections](#) to more than 140,000 households.

This continues to see levels increase – 9% more waste was recycled in this collection stream in the year to date than 2015/16 – while enhanced food recycling collections have resulted in an 8% rise.

Waste recycled in communal packaging bins serving flats and tenements has also risen significantly for the year to date, and is up 39% from 2015/16 following the introduction of additional facilities.

A separate report to next week's Transport and Environment Committee – [Redesign of Recycling Services in Tenements and Flats](#) – outlines a proposed way forward for the further expansion of recycling services for such properties.

Transport and Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: "As a Council we are 100% committed to increasing the amount of waste recycled in Edinburgh. Over recent years we have implemented several changes to make recycling easier for residents, and these are clearly having a positive impact.

"While maintaining this focus on recycling, we recognise that improvements need to be made across the service, and I'm pleased to see that our ongoing efforts are making a

difference. That said, there is no room for complacency, and we will continue to direct resources into completing the outstanding actions in our Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan to achieve a better service for everyone.”

The Landfill and Recycling update reports a 20% drop in average weekly complaints from the previous quarter, with just 0.17% of collections resulting in a customer complaint (1042 a week).

This follows the introduction of the 65-point Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan, first agreed by councillors in November 2016, which aims to address perceived poor quality in the waste collection and street cleansing services.

An [update on the plan](#), reports good progress, with 46 of the actions already achieved. Amongst improvements made so far are a reduction in the number of reported missed collections and an increase in the percentage of street cleansing enquiries dealt with within timescale – 96% as of February 2017 – while solutions have been identified for households experiencing repeated missed collections.

Additional actions include the ongoing recruitment of permanent staff to the service, the successful roll-out of the [award-winning](#) ‘Our Edinburgh’ campaign to discourage anti-social behaviour like fly-tipping and littering and the introduction of new, lower charges for special uplifts – £5 per item as opposed to £26 for up to six.

Find out more about [rubbish and recycling](#) on the Council website.

Rugby – 2017 Women’s RBS Six Nations

Scotland beat Italy to make it two from five in Six Nations



Scotland beat Italy at Broadwood on Friday night to make it two wins from five – the first time since 2006 the women have won two matches in the Championship and their first win over Italy since 2009.

Despite their massive defeat by England last time out, the Scots were confident going into this match after their recent win over Wales, but, just as in the Wales match, the weather turned foul and made handling a bit of a lottery at times.

However, it was the visiting side who mastered the bar of soap masquerading as a ball first and, with a pack which was to prove dominant the whole match, they scored the first two tries.

The first came from a rolling maul set up of the top of a penalty line out which drove over the Scots' line in the left corner to score, hooker Melissa Betoni coming up with the ball. Stand off, Michela Sillari, then converted for 7-0 after 11 minutes.



The second Italian try was almost a carbon copy in the right hand corner, Betoni scoring that one also. However, Sillari missed, what was to be, the crucial conversion for 12-0 after 17 minutes.

Up to this time Scotland had been pressurised by the opposition into making errors and giving away too many penalties, but, as the second quarter opened, the Scots started to come into their own.

The first Scottish try started from a powerful carry up the centre of the pitch by centre, Lisa Thomson, who, breaking tackles on her way, penetrated deep into the opposition half, then kicked over the top for full back Chloe Rollie to run onto and carry through to score in the right corner. Hooker, Lana Skeldon, then stepped up to attempt the touch line

conversion, and stuck the ball neatly between the posts for 7-0, putting to bed the 'women can't kick' myth for the present, at least.



Eight minutes later, as the 40 minute mark approached, Scotland were encamped on the Italian five-metre line following a string of penalties. As the clock carried on into over time, the ball was whipped across the pitch, outgunning the defence, to Rollie on the opposite wing and the No. 15 launched over the line for her, and Scotland's, second try. However, she had left Skeldon with another touch line conversion to have a go at, but nothing daunted, the crowd saw the ball bisect the uprights for 14-12, a lead that the home side were to retain and a myth, well and truly, put to bed.

The second half was a far different affair from the first with play getting bogged down for long periods on one area of the pitch or another, but, with around 15 minutes to play, Scotland started to gain dominance in field position and, despite the odd handling error or penalty, pretty much kept the visitors pinned into their half.

With two minutes to go, Scotland were awarded a vital penalty scrum for an infringement by Italy. With the ball won, all the home side had to do was retain possession for a minute, or so, before Lisa Martin launched the ball into the stands to bring about that second, welcome victory and, once again, Rollie was awarded with the Player-of-the-Match award – no doubt her two tries making it an easier decision.



It meant a lot.

Images from the match will [appear here](#) over the next few days.

Hearts Trio Sign New Deals



Ahead of their trip to Aberdeen on Saturday on Ladbrokes Premiership business. Hearts have announced that three of their young Scots players have signed new contracts keeping them in Gorgie until 2020.

Goalkeeper Jack Hamilton – who has established himself as Hearts number one goalie this season – defender John Souttar and striker Rory Currie have put pen to paper on new deals committing themselves to at least another three years at Tynecastle.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro was naturally delighted at the news. He told the official Hearts website:

“We’re all delighted that Jack, John and Rory have decided to pledge their futures to this club.

“This is positive news for the club and shows that this club continues doing what it has always done, in committing to and excelling in the development of young Scottish players.

“These are three players who are at different stages of their development but have all had a positive impact at first-team level.

“Our priority is to always work to improve the squad, we will work collectively across all number of markets to try and do this, however as this club has shown many times before – it’s commitment to and focus on the development of its own players – and of young Scottish players – will always be of the greatest importance.”

However, The Edinburgh Reporter understands that defender Callum Paterson is keen to move from Hearts when his contract expires in the summer, despite the Scotland player still recovering from long-term injury. Paterson is not expected back in action until the autumn – and

it's unlikely his return from injury will be in a maroon shirt.

Jason Cummings wins Ladbrokes Championship Player of the Month for February.



Jason Cummings has won the Ladbrokes Championship Player of the Month for February.

The striker scored the equaliser in games against Ayr United and Raith Rovers, and also netted against Hearts and Dunfermline Athletic.

The award is the second of the season for the Scotland Under 21 internationalist, after winning the Player of the Month in August.

The 21-year-old won't be in action tomorrow against Dumbarton as he is suspended after being shown two yellow cards in Hibs' 1-0 victory over Dundee United last Friday.

Field hockey – Grange keen to keep pressure on Kelburne



David Knipe, one of the coaching team at Grange, looking to close the gap on leaders Bromac Kelburne. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

GRANGE could close the gap between them and Division One pace-setters Bromac Kelburne with victory at lowly PSL Team Sport Clydesdale on Saturday (14.30).

Second-placed Grange have 31 points from 12 games and trail Kelburne by five points with a game in hand.

PSL are second-bottom of the ten-strong league with 11 points from the same number of games.

Grange have lost once in their last five league games while PSL have improved with no defeats in their last five.

They have drawn three and won two and last weekend held sixth-placed Hillhead 2-2.

Grange disposed of bottom side AAM Gordonians 5-1 in the North-East and co-coach David Knipe will insist on an action replay on Saturday.

Meanwhile, seventh-placed Watsonians, who led the league after the first three games, have drawn two of their last five games.

They entertain out-of-form Hillhead (14.30) who have lost four and drawn one of their last five.

Edinburgh University host vastly improved Uddingston Deans Eng at Peffermill (16.00).

The Lanarkshire side, who just avoided the drop last season, are fourth in the table with 17 points from 12 games, three ahead of the students who covet a top four slot and have played the same number of games.

Uddingston have won four of their last five outings while Edinburgh have lost three of their last five, winning only once in that period.

The only other game sees Gordonians travel to eighth-placed Western Wildcats (15.00).

Darren McGregor insists Dumbarton match is biggest game of season



Hibs' defender Darren McGregor insists that tomorrow's game against Dumbarton is the biggest game of the season so far.

Victory would extend Hibs' lead against at least one of their closest rivals as Falkirk take on Morton at the Falkirk Stadium

McGregor insists that Hibs' fortunes remain in their own hands and it is important that they go into each game with the correct mindset as they did against Dundee United last Friday.

McGregor told Hibernian TV: "The Dumbarton game is now the biggest game of the season as we don't want to undo any of the hard work that we have done.

"We are aware that Dumbarton want to avoid relegation and potentially get into the play offs so we know they will be coming with that mindset and it's up to us to counter that and get the three points.

"We are well aware of the next three games and who they are against and the potential, if we win these games to be in a healthy position but it starts with Dumbarton on Saturday.

"Last weeks result against Dundee United was massive. We all know what would have happened if we had lost or even drawn the game as it would have given the teams around us a massive incentive.

"To revenge the defeat from the last time was satisfying.

"We are well aware that Falkirk and Morton are on good runs at the minute but it's in our hands. It's been a long hard season but we are now six points clear of Falkirk with a game in hand so it's up to ourselves to keep the consistency going.

"We have to go into every game with that mindset and tomorrow's game is really important because it could undo Friday's good work if we go into it with the wrong mindset."

McGregor also paid tribute to defensive partner Efe Ambrose who joined the club on loan from Celtic following injuries to Paul Hanlon, Liam Fontaine and Jordon Forster.

"You could see Efe's (Ambrose) class against Dundee United and his composure having played at a high level including Champions League and it's always good to play alongside someone whom you could give the ball and he could do a 'mazy' run and cut through midfield.

"He is definitely an asset to the team and we will keep him as long as we can.

"We are lucky that we have a really good and strong group of guys that just want to go and win for the team and for

themselves as well.”

Scotrail Alliance back MND Scotland



(L-R): Nicola Clements (MND Technician), Rob Shorthouse (ScotRail Alliance Communications Director), Craig Stockton (CEO of MND Scotland), Rebekah Droog (Conductor at Edinburgh Waverley) and Euan MacDonald are pictured at the official announcement of MND Scotland as the ScotRail Alliance’s new charity partner for the next three years.

The Scotrail Alliance have announced that they will back MND Scotland as their nominated charity for the next three years. All fundraising efforts by their employees will be put towards the charitable effort and could raise as much as £150,000.

Speaking at the Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research, Rob Shorthouse, the ScotRail Alliance’s communications director, said: “I am absolutely delighted that we will be working with MND Scotland over the course of the next three years. I know that our 7500 staff will be doing everything they can to raise as much money as possible to help find a cure for this most terrible of diseases.

“However, it is not just about the money that we will raise while we are working together. We will also work hard to raise

awareness of MND and to help support the people who are living with it.

“MND Scotland is an extraordinary charity doing extraordinary work right across our country. We are really proud that our staff and customers will have the opportunity over the next three years to help support them.”

Craig Stockton, CEO of MND Scotland, said: “We are thrilled to be named as the ScotRail Alliance’s charity partner.

“Knowing that so many ScotRail and Network Rail employees voted for MND Scotland and want to help us in the fight against Motor Neurone Disease is inspiring.

“Staff, customers and partners will now play a vital role in taking us closer to a cure for MND and help us support those affected in their local areas.

“This is also a fantastic opportunity for us all to raise greater awareness and help more people understand the impact of this devastating disease.

“This is a journey to find a cure and improve the lives of those affected by MND across Scotland. Through this partnership we can make a real difference.”

The ScotRail Alliance, and its 7500 employees, will be supporting the charity with a wide range of activities across the country, including dress-down days, and an RSN0 concert in a ScotRail station.

Awareness of the charity has been raised greatly by the courageous fight of Gordon Aikman, who was diagnosed at the age of just 29. His campaign, [‘Gordon’s Fightback’](#), raised over £500,000 in just two years and helped improve care for patients in Scotland. Gordon sadly passed away in February this year.

Joe Pike who was married to Gordon expressed his delight about

the new Scotrail initiative yesterday on Twitter.

This is great news! Gordon made a heartfelt video for the pitch a few days before he died: <https://t.co/Bp50Sw1pES>

– Joe Pike (@joepike) [15 March 2017](#)

Speedway – stars vroom into action at Berwick birthday bash



Local hero Kevin Doolan in the field for Saturday's 50th anniversary spectacular at Berwick

POLISH superstar Adam Skornicki headlines the Grant Henderson Tankers 50th season anniversary bash at Berwick tonight (SAT, 7pm).

Glasgow and Edinburgh riders also see this star-studded individual meeting as a chance to practice ahead of the new season.

The Olympus Marquees Berwick Bandits (Powered by Mike Hope, Wooler) have 16 top racers seeking individual glory.

Bandits' septet, Lewis Bridger, Kevin Doolan, Claus Vissing, Dany Gappmaier, Liam Carr, Dimitri Berge and Ryan Blacklock are all desperate to prove their worth after a successful press and practice session last Saturday.

Glasgow's top men, Aaron Summers and Richie Worrall, who finished third in last Sunday's Ben Fund Bonanza at Ashfield, are in the field along with former Edinburgh star Steve Worrall of Newcastle Diamonds.

Edinburgh's new signing Ricky Wells and Ulrich Ostergaard of Peterborough, who won the League's Riders' Championship in 2015, is also listed along with Josh Grajczonek, a former Glasgow rider and now a key member of Team Australia and SGB Premiership side, Somerset.

Unattached former Glasgow rider James Sarjeant is desperate to showcase his talent after Coventry Bees decided not to run this season.

Scott Courtney, one of the club's new promoters, said: "This last few months have given us an amazing amount of work to plough through, and it never gives up.

"When we get Saturday's 50th Season Spectacular in the can we will all breathe a big sigh of relief, before we get on the build up to our first team match against Newcastle on the 25 March."

Scottish Tourism Week – how do others see us?



It's Scottish Tourism Week until 22 March 2017. It's no secret that tourism is a vital part of Scotland's economy, reportedly employing over 200,000 people across more than 14,000 tourism related businesses.

Only last night The Edinburgh Reporter was at the Scottish Thistle Awards National Final which showcased a wide range of hospitality ventures across the country.

Many employed in the industry are from overseas. For example, 57% (97) of the 168 staff within Radisson Blu Edinburgh, a leading 4-star hotel in the heart of Scotland's capital come from mainland Europe.

To coincide with Scottish Tourism Week, three members of staff (a Portuguese, Lithuanian and a Pole) in Radisson Blu Edinburgh were each quizzed about their opinion, from a European visitor's perspective, on the appeal of Edinburgh and Scotland as a tourist destination.

Thirty-nine year-old Pedro Duarte is a trained environmental engineer. However, he left Portugal with his wife and two kids to pursue a new life in Scotland's hospitality sector. Currently employed as a bar assistant within the hotel's Itchycoo bar, he refers to "the politeness of the people, the culture, surrounding countryside and the architecture" as key factors in the appeal of Scotland's capital city.

Duarte explained : "Edinburgh is very multicultural and as a Portuguese, we feel very welcome here – and call Scotland 'home.' I love nature and my wife loves animals so we've plenty of choice and opportunities to explore around Edinburgh. I don't know what Scotland could improve (in its tourism offering). Scotland is a huge brand with its whisky, (bag)pipes, haggis and kilts."

Anna Malinowska is a 36-year-old Assistant Head Housekeeper and has worked at Radisson Blu Edinburgh for over 12 years. The Pole is passionate about her career choice, as she explained: "You need to have both stamina and passion for the work, cleaning the (bed)room with the same pride you would clean your own home to impress your family."

Like Duarte, she's impressed by Edinburgh, a city where she lives with her husband and 8 year-old daughter. "It's the beauty and atmosphere of Edinburgh that appeals. It's like Krakow (Poland) or Prague (Czech Republic) but with a great history. I love how a rainy day gives the (Edinburgh) city a dark atmosphere and that in the sunshine it suddenly comes to life. The city is transformed depending on the weather. The people too make Edinburgh. You always meet nice positive, open people."

Welcoming is how Malinowska describes the country but it's the castles that she believes are one of Scotland's greatest draws for overseas visitors. "We like to visit Scottish castles. There are so many across the country and they are all so different."

Yet Malinowska also believes cost may be a barrier for some Polish visitors to consider visiting Scotland. "The Highlands are beautiful and a big draw for Polish people, that's for sure. However, Scotland is quite expensive to visit. It can be pricey to book experiences and in the summer, even the cafes seem to put their prices up. Maybe that's one area that can be looked at if the country is to be more affordable for the ordinary Polish family to visit."

Ieva Mikoliunaite is another hospitality professional who for the past decade has called Scotland home. For the past two years, the 30 year-old Lithuanian has worked as a group sales executive in meetings and events at Radisson Blu Edinburgh. It's a role she relishes: "I like the organizational aspect but most of all I like the chance to meet and speak to clients", she explained.

Prior to joining Radisson Blu Edinburgh, Ieva was employed at one of Scotland's top tourist attractions – Edinburgh Castle. She describes the allure of her adopted city as one "with a lot of historic appeal. I love history and personally, Edinburgh is a romantic and scenic city that is unlike any

other in Europe. It's a very friendly, cultural and cosmopolitan place. But to be honest, my favourite place is Portobello Beach! It's maybe too cold to swim but it's charming and the perfect place for me to relax and unwind by the sea!"

In Ieva's opinion, Lithuanian people are well aware of Scotland's reputation for tartan, whisky and scenery. Yet she believes there could be greater promotion of its adventure offering for younger people – and emphasis on the attraction of the Scottish highlands beyond Loch Ness. "Nessie, the monster is very interesting to people back home, but I'm sure we would also like to learn more about other parts of the Scottish highlands. For Scotland has wonderful mountainous country – and Lithuania is very flat!"

Scottish Thistle Awards recognises excellence in Edinburgh



(l-r) Host Dougie Vipond; Penny Dougherty, Director of Unique Events; presenter Martin Dorchester, Managing Director at Caledonian MacBrayne; Al Thomson, Director of Unique Events; host Jennifer Reoch.

At the Scottish tourism Oscars last night there was much to celebrate in the capital. The EICC was full of tourism business movers and shakers from all over Scotland, but two of our own Edinburgh attractions won in their categories.

Unique Events organisers of Edinburgh's Hogmanay won the Caledonian MacBrayne Best Cultural Event or Festival against stiff competition from other areas of the country, including Celebrate Aberdeen, Solas Festival in Perthshire, Oban Winter Festival and NVA's Hinterland at St Peter's Seminary. Judges mentioned in particular the 'impressive impact' of Edinburgh's Hogmanay on the hotels in the city with 99% occupancy on 31 December.

Penny Dougherty Director of Unique Events said: "Unique Events are thrilled that Edinburgh's Hogmanay has been awarded Best Festival at the Thistle Awards National Finals and would like to thank everyone who helps deliver this world-class event for Scotland.

"Edinburgh's Hogmanay puts Scotland on the world stage for New Year celebrations and we're proud to welcome visitors from over 80 countries to celebrate here at the 'Home of Hogmanay'."



(l-r) Host Dougie Vipond; presenter Cathy Craig, Commercial Director at Scotrail; Julie Matthews, Head of Visitor Experience at National Museums Scotland; host Jennifer Reoch.

The National Museum of Scotland was described by judges as one of the world's greatest museums and picked up the Scotrail Best Visitor Attraction award.

Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums of Scotland said: "2016/17 was an important year in which we celebrated the National Museum of Scotland's 150th anniversary with the opening of 10 innovative new galleries. They've been a huge hit with our visitors and we're delighted to be recognised and receive the Scottish Thistle Award for Best Visitor Attraction."

Rebecca Brooks, Chair of the Scottish Thistle Awards Industry Panel and VisitScotland Board member, said: "Congratulations to all of the winners at the 2016/17 Scottish Thistle Awards National Final. They represent the best of the best in Scotland and epitomise the strength and depth of the tourism and hospitality experience across the country.

"The Scottish tourism industry and hospitality sector prides itself on delivering a rewarding experience for visitors and all of our finalists should be proud of their achievements in reaching the final – which, in itself, is both a recognition of excellence and innovation, and a sign of quality.

"Tourism is the heartbeat of the Scottish economy – supporting communities and creating jobs throughout the year in every corner of the country. We look forward to the 2017/18 Scottish Thistle Awards when we will celebrate the achievements of our industry colleagues during our 25th anniversary year."

Manuela Calchini, Regional Director at VisitScotland, said: "Huge congratulations to Unique Events and the National Museum of Scotland for being crowned the best in Scottish tourism.

"Tourism is more than a holiday experience – it creates jobs and sustains communities across Edinburgh and the Lothians and all finalists should be proud of their achievements in reaching this stage.

"These awards recognise the drive and passion the industry has for creating an unforgettable experience for visitors and I'm delighted that some of Scotland's top visitor attractions are found right here on our doorstep."

The event was sponsored by Fishers and recognises innovation, excellence and success in the hospitality and tourism industries.

Neil Lennon insists it's important to stay fully focussed and not get complacent



Hibs' Head Coach Neil Lennon insists that it's important for his players to stay fully focussed and not get complacent with nine games remaining.

Hibs currently sit six points clear of Falkirk with a game in hand and nine points in front of Morton having played a game more.

The pair meet at the Falkirk Stadium on Saturday so at least one of them will drop points so it is vitally important that Hibs take all three points against Dumbarton.

Hibs then face both at home over the next ten days and Lennon believes that victory over both would take an almighty collapse to prevent automatic promotion.

"With the other fixtures that are on today we have a chance to extend our lead but there are nine games to go and six are at home so it's really important that we find our best home form after a fantastic win against Dundee United last Friday.

"It's a great position to be in. The players have earned the right to be there. Not only are we top of the league, we are in the semi-final of the Scottish Cup so what's not to like?

"Everyone talks about pressure but the pressure is on the

other teams to catch us.

“We just have to keep piling the pressure on and keep ticking off the games.

“Dumbarton have been a tough nut to crack for us this season although we have won the games but there hasn’t been much between the teams. Defensively they are very good and they are a fit team. they don’t score many goals but they had a great win last weekend.

“There is no pressure on them going into this game so they can play with a bit of freedom and that is always a dangerous animal to play against.

“Our agenda is more of the same and it’s important that we stay fully focussed and not get complacent.

“Hopefully we will adopt the same approach that we went into the Dundee United game with and if we can do that it will take a good team to stop us.

“After Dumbarton we have Falkirk and Morton who are two of our nearest rivals so if we can win these games it would take an almighty collapse to lose the league but we are relishing the challenge.”

“

Judo – Ferguson back on mat after serious knee injury



Judo player David Ferguson returns to top level competition this weekend in the Casablanca African Open (18-19 March) after a six-month injury lay-off.

It has been a frustrating six months for the 21-year-old Edinburgh College student who snapped a knee ligament preparing for the European open in his home town of Glasgow.

The injury blow came only days after experiencing the highs of winning bronze at last September's Asian Open in Taipei,

Ferguson is nervous about his return to the circuit and he recalled the moment when his world turned upside down.

He said: "Four days before the Glasgow tournament I was doing squad training and turned in for a throw but my leg got caught on the mat and my knee twisted the wrong way and I snapped my MCL (Medial Collateral Ligament).

"I only got back on the mat about a month ago and I'm really looking forward to competing again."

Ferguson, who is studying Developing Sport and Performance, is one of 150 students supported by Winning Students, Scotland's national sports scholarships programme for student athletes.

He said: "The course I'm doing links in well with being an athlete. The College is supportive, particularly around being away for training camps.

"When you are going to places like Japan and competing maybe six times a year abroad it's expensive so the extra funding from Winning Students definitely helps."

Ferguson is working towards his ultimate goals of World Championships and Olympic Games and said: "After Morocco I've got domestic events, the English and Irish Open in April and May, followed by World Cups in June, Belarus and Romania, then Japan again for a two month training block.

“I want to win everything and, if you are looking for anything less than that, I don’t really see the point in being involved in the sport. You have to give 100 percent and try and achieve everything.”

Letter from Scotland



First Minister Nicola
Sturgeon drops a bombshell

Nicola Sturgeon has fired the starting gun on a second Scottish independence referendum. It’s a huge gamble on her part but she will be cheered to the rafters for it at the SNP’s spring conference in Aberdeen this weekend. The gunshot in Edinburgh, roaring out like the Mons Meg canon at the castle, made the Westminster establishment jump.

MPs were just voting down the Lords amendments to the Brexit bill. The Prime Minister was about to announce the official start of exit negotiations. And suddenly, all eyes looked north. What was the Queen of Scots up to now ? Theresa May had to turn her attention from Brussels to Scotland. She hesitated, made angry remarks about the SNP’s “tunnel vision” and then finally on Thursday said: “Now is not the time.”

Ms Sturgeon wasn’t suggesting the referendum should be held “now” but in 18 months’ time, when the terms of Britain’s exit from the European Union become clear. And her plans will be given the support of the Scottish Parliament next week when SNP and Green members vote to demand that Westminster grant Scotland a second referendum.

The SNP are banking on the Brexit terms being pretty horrendous and on building a momentum for independence which in 2016 very nearly carried them over the 50 per cent line. Right now, the opinion polls are showing little change from the 45 per cent achieved for independence last time and there's growing anger that a second referendum is being contemplated so soon after the last one.

But the Brexit vote has undoubtedly changed the political landscape and there could be many more disturbances in the next 18 months. Westminster budgets could fall apart – as they have done this week over National Insurance contributions. The economy could go either up or down, probably down. As could the oil price. There could be a UK general election. The EU itself might change, as it did during David Cameron's "renegotiation".

Whatever happens, Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP have decided to cast themselves upon the waves, saying there may never be a better time to go for a second referendum. And they are probably right.

At the other end of the absurdity scale, there's been a second referendum among the gentlemen of the oldest golf club in the world. They have finally decided to admit women as members. The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers was founded in 1744 and now owns Muirfield in East Lothian which has hosted the British Open Championship no fewer than 16 times.

It was the threat of losing the right to bid for the Championship in future which changed the gentlemen's minds. But just to show how cautious they are about coming to terms with the modern world, it could be at least two years – and possibly 12 – before the first lady member is accepted because of the long waiting list. It would be more gentlemanly if some of those on the list would give up their place to a woman immediately.....and much better PR.

Scotland's much disgraced banking and finance industry is in the news again. Lloyds, owners of the Bank of Scotland, are reported to be moving 500 IT jobs from Edinburgh to India or the Philippines. The Royal Bank of Scotland, still 70 per cent owned by the government, is in trouble over the closure of 40 branches in Scotland. The Green Investment Bank, based in Edinburgh, is being sold to an Australian investment company. And there are fears of job losses, not to mention a loss of competition, as Standard Life take over Aberdeen Asset Management.

So, although the latest unemployment rate fell this week, to 4.7 per cent, the future for the Scottish economy is not all daffodils and roses. The uncertainty over Brexit, and now the Scottish referendum, plus the fall in the value of the pound and the slump in the oil industry, all make scary reading for the economic soothsayers. The latest, from Scottish Trends, suggests that a Scottish government would have to cut spending by £1,700 per person or increase taxes, to avoid a huge budget deficit (6.4 per cent of GDP) by 2020.

We were facing blustery conditions on the weather front too this week. Squally showers were the order of each day. On Tuesday, a lorry was blown over on the Forth Bridge. The driver was taking a chance by defying a warning of 55mph winds. No one was hurt but the bridge had to be closed for three hours. A very similar accident happened earlier this year. On that occasion the driver was charged and convicted with dangerous driving but there have been calls for the high wind warnings to be made more than just advisory.



Finally, the shape of this year's Edinburgh International Festival, the 70th, is becoming clearer. The theme will be the provocative one of "Europe." There will be orchestras from Turin, Bergen, Budapest and St Petersburg and dance troupes from Belgium and the Netherlands. The cultural re-awakening of

Europe after the Second World War will be celebrated with a light and sound spectacular in the streets of the New Town.

This reminder of our European heritage will be a strange contrast to the Brexit negotiations in Brussels going on at the same time. And hopefully it will illustrate that whatever the configuration of our trade and political relationships across Europe, we share some important principles – like peace, democracy, equality, freedom of the individual, and a human sense of fun and festival.

Scotrail advises Scotland fans to get to Hampden early next Sunday



The ScotRail Alliance has advised customers heading to the Scottish football team's world cup qualifier against Slovenia on 26 March to leave plenty of time for their journey and get to the ground early.

A normal Sunday service will be in place on all routes, however, there will be several extra services between Glasgow Central and Mount Florida before and after the match. These trains are expected to be very busy, and fans are being encouraged not to leave it to the last minute to head the stadium.

In addition, many services between Glasgow, Newton, Neilston, Ayr, Ardrossan Harbour and Gourock will run with extra carriages to help cope with the number of fans heading to and

from the game.

After the final whistle, a queuing system will be in place at Mount Florida station for safety reasons. Customers are asked to take this into account when planning journeys home from the match.

A ScotRail Alliance spokesperson said: “Trains heading towards Glasgow and Mount Florida will be extremely busy, so make sure you buy your travel tickets before you board.

“Please plan your journeys in advance – keeping in mind any connections – at scotrail.co.uk or on the ScotRail app.

“The last trains of the night are likely to be very busy, so please aim to catch an earlier service where possible.”

The ScotRail Alliance will have extra staff on the ground to assist customers and, as with most major events, alcohol bans will be in place.

The Monarch of the Glen to stay in Scotland



The high profile fundraising campaign #loveitdeerly begun only a month ago has been successful in securing the Monarch of the Glen by Sir Edwin Landseer for the nation. The iconic painting will now remain in Scotland, as The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) has raised the £4 million required to pay for it.



There has been funding support from members of the public, private trusts, The National Lottery, Art Fund, Scottish Government grant funding as well as a gift of part of the value of the painting by Diageo Scotland Ltd who have owned the magnificent work till now.

It was only last month on a cold night that we met with Sir John Leighton outside the gallery when he told us he was confident that the funding would be found.

We had a word with Sir John Leighton about the fundraising for The Monarch of the Glen [#loveitdeerly](https://twitter.com/yhjmSoGOWv) [pic.twitter.com/yhjmSoGOWv](https://twitter.com/yhjmSoGOWv)

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [16 February 2017](#)

The painting will now tour the country with funding from The National Lottery and The Scottish Government, ensuring that as many Scots as possible get the chance to see it on their own doorstep.

Sir John Leighton, Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland said: “We are thrilled that we have been able to secure this iconic work for the national collection. The enormous support from the public has been incredible with donations coming from all over the world and from the length and breadth of Scotland and the rest of the UK. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated. Your gift has helped to ensure that this magnificent work will be enjoyed by millions of people for generations to come.”

Dame Seona Reid, Heritage Lottery Fund Trustee and Chair of HLF’s Scotland Committee, said: “Landseer’s Monarch of the Glen portrays a quintessentially Scottish scene but has a global reach. With the help of National Lottery players from

across the UK, we are pleased to play a major role in securing it a permanent home at the National Galleries of Scotland.

“The public’s affection for Monarch of the Glen has been reflected in the success of the recent fundraising campaign. Everyone involved should feel proud of the role they are playing in safeguarding and sharing this fine and popular painting.”

Dr Stephen Deuchar, Art Fund director, said: “Many congratulations to the National Galleries Scotland for successfully securing this truly iconic painting. The success of the public appeal is proof of its contemporary appeal, and its acquisition by the Galleries will open up many new opportunities for its display, interpretation and enjoyment by a wide public. We’re very pleased to have played a part in securing this important work for Scotland. Many thanks to our members across the U.K. for their magnificent, ongoing support.”

David Cutter, Diageo’s senior director in Scotland and President of Global Supply & Procurement, said: “We are very happy to have partnered with the National Galleries of Scotland and to see the positive outcome of that with the Monarch of the Glen passing into permanent public ownership in Scotland for the first time in its history.”

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, said: “I am delighted that National Galleries Scotland has secured the funding required to ensure the iconic Monarch of the Glen can remain on permanent public display in Scotland.

“The overwhelmingly positive response to the public fundraising campaign underlines the importance of the painting to people in Scotland and around the world. I am pleased the Scottish Government was able to provide £100,000 towards its acquisition and a further £75,000 for a tour that will enable

communities across Scotland to see it. I look forward to seeing the Monarch of the Glen continue to attract visitors from far and wide in the years to come.”

It was only in November 2016 that the imminent sale of the painting by Diageo came to public notice. They offered NGS the chance to acquire the work for £4 million and since then a worldwide fundraising campaign was successful in raising the necessary funding.

Donations have come from far and wide from Anchorage to Thurso and Bath.

The painting will be hung in the Scottish National Gallery and details of the tour will be announced later in the year.

This iconic work has been reproduced many times since it was produced in the mid 19th century, and the gallery is sure that it will now become one of the key attractions at the Scottish National Gallery.

You can see the painting from today in the gallery. Turn right when you enter the front door and you really cannot miss it at the end of that space – it is huge!

Field hockey – Moodie hails gutsy squad after shootout



Scotland coach Graham Moodie praises young lions who stepped-up during tense penalty shootout. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

GRAHAM Moodie thinks anything is possible after Scotland claimed a semi-final slot in the World League 2 in Belfast.

They beat Austria 4-2 in a shootout following a 5-5 draw and now face France in Saturday's semi-final.

Scotland's Willie Marshall celebrated 150 caps for his country in the win which showed real character.

David Forrester (Edinburgh University) took over in goal for the shootout and stepped up to save two Austrian penalties.

Alan Forsyth (Surbiton), Jamie Wong (Edinburgh University), Lee Morton (Bromac Kelburne) and Gavin Byers (Grove Menzueshill) all converted to give Scotland the win.

Moodie, Scotland's assistant head coach, said: "The players showed unbelievable fight and character in this game, they were incredible.

"We probably should have had the game won in normal time but the character of guys like Lee Morton and Jamie Wong, both just turned 21 years old, stepping up and taking responsibility in the shootout was fantastic."

He added: "We'll take a couple of days to prepare for France in the semi-finals now, anything is possible."

Edinburgh's Festival of Ireland begins today



Happy St Patrick's Day to all of you Irish people who live

here with us in Edinburgh!

From today Edinburgh turns green for the whole week with a range of events across the city.

Tonight the Irish will celebrate St Patrick's Day at Assembly Rooms in the city centre.

But other events include these:

[12.30 St Patrick's Mass, St Patrick's RC Church, Cowgate](#)

[7.30 Taster session with the Edinburgh Irish Set Dancers](#)

[8.00 Irish Language: Celebrate St Patrick's Day \(Boda Bar, Leith Walk\)](#)

[8.30 Comedy: Stuart Mitchell at the Dalriada Bar, Portobello](#)

[9.00 Traditional Irish Music Session with Tim O'Leary \(Captain's Bar\)](#)

[9.00 Traditional Music Session with The Sessioneers \(Sandy Bell's\)](#)

Saturday 18th March

[12.00 Irish Language: Pop-up Brunch \(Dalriada Bar, Portobello\)](#)

[3.00 Irish Ceili & Storytelling for Children with Fallon Academy of Irish Dance](#)

[3.00 Irish Music Session with Sean Paul Newman, Portobello](#)

[7.00 St Patrick's Day Charity Ball with live music, food and drink!](#)

[7.00 Comedy: The Stand Saturday Show hosted by Martin Mor.](#)

9.00 Irish Dance & Music: Unplugged at Dalriada, Portobello

Sunday 19th March

3.00 Music Session: Joanna & Jed at the Dalriada Bar, Portobello

8.30 Irish/Scottish Folk Music: Wee Folk Club with Leo McCann & friends

Monday 20th March

7.00 Film: Waking Ned Devine (1998) Irish Lottery winner dies of shock!

Tuesday 21st March

7.00 Talk: James Connolly, Jim Larkin & the 1907 Belfast Dockers Strike

Wednesday 22nd March

5.30 Talk: Ireland's Political Economy by Robert McDowell at Summerhall

8.00 Edinburgh Folk Club: Support spot with Cathal McConnell & friends

Thursday 23rd March

5.30 Talk: with Dan Mulhall, Irish Ambassador to the UK

Organised with the Academy of Government, University of Edinburgh

The Irish Ambassador to the UK will give a talk on Scottish-Irish Relations past present and post-Brexit. Free but ticketed.

Friday 24th March

[7.30 Taster session with the Edinburgh Irish Set Dancers](#)

[5.30 Talk: Owen Dudley Edwards "The Uses of Irish History in Scotland"](#)

Saturday 25th March

[6.00 Siamsoir Irish & Scottish Dance Show – A Celtic Faery Tale](#)

If you would like to receive a monthly newsletter from Edinburgh's Festival of Ireland then email office@efoi.org.uk

Two new judges appointed



The Scottish Government has announced this morning that two new judges will be appointed to the two highest Scottish courts, the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary.

Her Majesty the Queen has appointed the two new Senators to the College of Justice on the recommendation of the First Minister.

Sheriff Paul Arthurson QC and Alan Summers QC will take up their appointments on a date to be agreed by the Lord President.

The judges will deal with Scotland's most important criminal and civil cases.

Scottish SPCA appeal after cat found abandoned in a pet carrier



The Scottish SPCA is appealing for information after a cat was found abandoned in a pet carrier in Edinburgh on Monday.

Scotland's animal welfare charity was alerted after the male cat was found abandoned in a pet carrier outside Christ Church Edinburgh on Britwell Crescent in Edinburgh.

Senior Inspector John Toule said, "The feline is in good condition but he doesn't have a tag or microchip to identify his owners.

"He's now safely at our centre in Edinburgh where he has been named Lazareth.

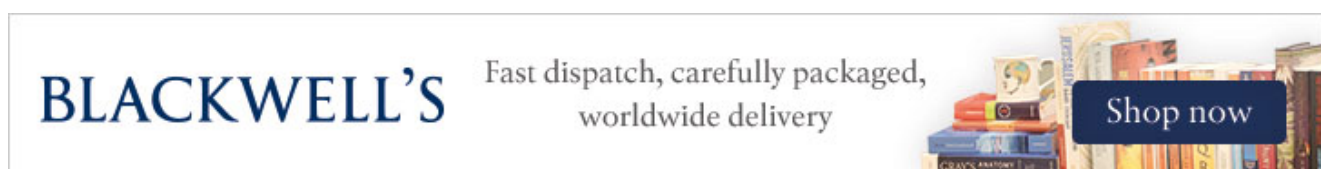
"He's an unneutered male and has such a soft, silky coat so if no one comes forward we're sure we'll easily be able to rehome him."

Abandoning an animal is an offence under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. Anyone found guilty of doing so can expect to be banned from keeping animals for a fixed period or life.

Anyone with information is being urged to contact the Scottish SPCA Animal Helpline on 03000 999 999.

Blackwell's book recommendations for gardeners

Blackwell's on South Bridge has a massive collection of books on all imaginable subjects. This month they have chosen three of their favourites from the gardening section to help you get off on the right foot in your garden or your highly prized allotment.



It's lovely to finally wake up in the daylight again, and if you're lucky enough to have access to even a wee green space, there are some wonderful books available to get you out and growing things.



Emily Chappell has kept an allotment in Glasgow for eight years and in her gorgeous new title, *A Hut of One's Own*, she showcases dozens of examples of how to put your allotment shed (or garden shed) to good use. Chappell is a graduate of Glasgow School of Art and this handy hardback is full of her own bright and beautiful illustrations, making it a wonderful, practical gift. Blackwell's on South Bridge currently has a limited number of signed editions too!

[Click here](#) for more details of Emily Chappell's book



Hollie Newton's *How to Grow* describes itself as 'A guide for gardeners who can't garden yet', but seasoned growers may still be able to pick up some tips from this handsome manual which is separated into chapters on vegetables, fruit and flowers with an extensive introduction. A guide at the top of each page tells you clearly what you should be planting (bulbs, seedlings, young trees...), when to plant, how much sunshine it will need, how much space it will take up and when to pick. It also outlines potential disasters and how they can be rectified! *How to Grow* is sumptuously-designed and full of tempting photographs of your hand-grown fruit and veg in salads and desserts!

[Click here](#) for more details of Hollie Newton's book




Kay Maguire has produced books for the Royal Horticultural Society and has regularly contributed to *Gardener's World*, as well as being their horticulture editor for six years. In her new book for RHS, *Big Ideas, Small Spaces*, she teams up with gardening wunderkind, former RHS Young Designer of the Year Tony Woods. This title includes 30 step-by-step gardening and DIY projects along with various other ideas for 'greening' your space, whether you're working with a windowsill, a rooftop or the smallest of yards.

[Click here](#) for more details of Kay Maguire and Tony Wood's book

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Film Review: Kong: Skull Island***

Kong: Skull Island

Direction: Jordan Vogt-Roberts

Screenplay: Dan Gilroy, Derek Connolly, Max Borenstein

Cast: Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson, Samuel L Jackson, John Goodman

Length: 118 minutes

Rating: 12A



Opening in dramatic fashion, two fighter jets crash onto an undisclosed island located somewhere in the Pacific Ocean after an aerial battle during the Second World War. Emerging from parachutes, the American and Japanese pilots continue to fight to the death in single combat through desert and jungle before being interrupted by a monster.

With that, the stage is set for a title sequence embellished with striking graphics that dance across the screen. An extensive archive footage portfolio follows, rapidly documenting American foreign policy and armed forces operations over the years, featuring both the Vietnam War and nuclear testing, in a summarising documentation that adeptly positions the background story in anticipation of events to come.

Moving to Washington at the start of the 1970s, William Randa (Goodman) is one of the high ranking officials of a government expedition organisation requesting funds for a discovery team to explore the uncharted Skull Island in the Pacific Ocean. Financial backing is only guaranteed, however, when the point is made that rejecting support for an American discovery would mean Russian satellites acquiring superior photography of the

area. Once more, a symbolic proxy war starts a race between the United States and the then Soviet Union to claim Skull Island.

A task force is assembled comprising James Conrad (Hiddleston), a former captain of the British Special Air Service employed as a hunter tracker, Mason Weaver (Larson), an anti-war activist and photojournalist, who joins hoping to expose the truth about this top secret military mission, and Preston Packard (Jackson), a Lieutenant Colonel with the United States Army and helicopter squadron leader who provides soldiers and air transport for the operation.

Skull Island is completely enclosed in an extreme weather system of electrical storm cycles which protect it from the world, or rather, protect the world from it. On the inside of the hazardous barrier, all communication with the outside is impossible leaving the team in the isolation. Kong: Skull Island is reminiscent of Apocalypse Now, with its majestic sequences of the helicopter squadron progressing in formation across the hot sky to an unknown country, as well as Platoon, upon landfall when the group of characters must break through the endless green of the formidable forestry.

Skull Island appears to all to be a magical paradise untouched by man, saved by its quarantine allowing for its flourishing natural state. But appearances can be deceiving and the team discover more than they bargained for. Once machines are removed from the equation, man must fight to survive amongst the harsh environment in this thrashing action adventure.

Filmed in the natural landscapes of Australia, Hawaii and Vietnam, Kong: Skull Island benefits from the luscious scenery of muddy coast and opaque jungle where bolder mountains rise and fall from the dark waters and swirling mist and mystery. Both beautiful and dangerous.

Hiddleston and Larson produce assertive leading performances,

allowing Jackson and Goodman to deliver brilliantly bombastic supporting characters that walk away with all the best dialogue, while Henry Jackman's original score is also a stand out feature. Ultimately, the star of this film is King Kong and the computer-generated imagery of the MonsterVerse on Skull Island highlighted to full effect during the huge monster battles.

Kong: Skull Island marks the second part of the Legendary Entertainment MonsterVerse succeeding Godzilla in 2014 and preceding Godzilla: King of the Monsters and Godzilla vs. Kong due in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

With a three quarter century history, the King Kong franchise is rebooted with aplomb after a ten year absence by this eighth official edition. All hail the King.

Our rating *** Kong: Skull Island is in cinemas now.

Police warn residents of West Lothian following bogus workmen incidents



Police in West Lothian are warning residents to be on their guard against bogus workmen after incidents in Fauldhouse and Torphichen on Wednesday 15th March.

On both occasions three males have claimed to be from a building company.

However they then attempted to obtain large quantities of cash for work that had not been carried out.

Fortunately a vigilant bank teller prevented one elderly homeowner from withdrawing the four-figure sum of money they demanded and a concerned neighbour intervened in the other incident.

On one of the occasions an older white transit van was observed.

Officers are now warning residents in West Lothian not to engage with bogus callers and are appealing for any information that can assist them with their inquiries.

The workmen are described as three males, one being around 14-years-old, slim built with short black hair. He was wearing jeans with a red hooded top with the hood up and white writing on it with the name of their business.

One of the other men was in his 20's, had stubble, was wearing jeans and a red hooded-top with the same white writing on it.

Police Sergeant Stuart Miller of Whitburn police station said: "If anyone turns up at your home, please always ask for identification and check it. Genuine companies will have no objection this.

"Do not let people into your house if you are not 100% comfortable with them being there. If you have any concerns at all, please contact us by calling 101.

"Anyone with concerns that friends, family or neighbours are being targeted please contact the police.

"Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call police on 101 or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

Further advice about protecting yourself from bogus tradesmen

can be found on the Police Scotland website via the [link](#)
[below](#):