

Police Scotland most friendly employers for LGBT workers.



Equality charity Stonewall Scotland has recognised Police Scotland as one of the country's most friendly employers for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) workers.

The force has been awarded "Most Improved Employer" in recognition of its leap into Stonewall's Top 100 UK Workplace Equality Index, moving to 83rd in the list of UK employers, up from 119th place in 2015 (the first year the force was entered in the list).

Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson, Director of People and Development John Gillies, and Chief Inspector Gill Boulton collected the award last night (Thursday 25 February 2016) in Edinburgh.

The 2016 list comprises of more than 400 organisations – the highest in the Index's 12 year history – and Police Scotland's improved ranking highlights its reputation as an employer of choice for the LGBT community.

In 2015, the Force held its first professional development events for LGBTI Allies, and has continued to promote the No Bystanders campaign throughout the Force. A named officer has been appointed to ensure maximum efforts are made to improve workplace equality as Police Scotland continues to work closely with its diversity staff associations, including the Scottish Police Transgender Network and the Gay Police Scotland Association.

Police Scotland Chief Constable Phil Gormley said: "Police Scotland places a high priority on our ongoing commitment to being a top employer for everyone. I am therefore absolutely

delighted with not only our improved rating but also the news that the Force is the most improved employer in Scotland. We value having a diverse workforce to represent the diverse communities we serve.

“Police Scotland first entered the Workplace Equality Index to continue to improve the workplace culture for employees. It is therefore extremely encouraging our efforts have yielded such improvements in just one year. However, we know there is still work to be done and we are committed to driving this agenda forward and making further progress in the wider context of staff wellbeing.”

Colin Macfarlane, Director of Stonewall Scotland said: “Police Scotland continues to demonstrate a real commitment to improving the workplace culture for LGBT people and recognise that there is much still to do. We look forward to continuing our partnership with them in coming years.

“Our award winners represent the organisations who are doing the most to further equality for their staff and who are making a difference to their workplaces every day. Our vision is of a Scotland where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can realise every ounce of their potential. We’re very proud of our award winners and employers featured in the Top 100: they are helping make that vision a reality.

At the Wee Red Bar – The Mantells

The Mantells play their first ever Edinburgh show at The Wee Red Bar on Saturday 19th March 2016.

The Mantells are a 3-Piece band from Manchester formed in January 2014 made up of Tom Barrow with brothers Dale and Lewis Moran.

They are out promoting their new EP 'Can't Stop, Won't Stop' which was released on the 29th of January 2016.

Tickets are £6 from [Ticketweb](#) or £10 on the door.

Submitted by [Julia Hall](#)



Letter from Scotland



Day of
fleeting
fortunes

It's unsettling, living in a leap year. And as we approach that extra day, February 29th, I feel a slight sea-sickness coming on. Is the world really leaping up and down, or is it

just me ? We have elections, referendums, budgets, fiscal frameworks, industries in crisis, parties falling apart, strange characters taking sides, all floating past on a full moon tide.

I've been looking up why we have this extra day. It transpires that the Earth goes round the Sun, not in 365 days, as I'd fondly imagined, but in 365 days and six hours. So every four years we have to add a day so we don't get ahead. But to be even more awkward, the scientists tell us that it's actually 365 days, five hours and 49 minutes and 16 seconds. This unhelpful shortfall adds up to, roughly, three days every 400 years. So every 400 years, the 29th of February has to be removed from our leap years, though that won't bother me since the next time that will happen is 2100.

I don't know anyone who was born on the 29th February but I can imagine it would be awkward. In law, such an unfortunate person has to wait till 1st March to become a year older – unless it's a “normal” leap year – and this could be frustrating if you are waiting to be married, get a driving licence, vote, sign a contract, end an apprenticeship etc. And if you have ever seen a production of “The Pirates of Penzance” you will know how awkward that can be. In New Zealand, they let you jump the gun on the 28th, one of the many advantages of living in a young country.

But back to this old country and our unsettling leap year. After months of haggling, we finally have an agreement between the Westminster government and the Scottish Government on that “fiscal framework”, the deal over Scotland's reduced block grant when income tax is devolved later this year. The SNP also got their £30.4bn budget through parliament. So the decks have been cleared for the general election on May 5th.

Or so we thought, till the Conservative Party got us into this

unholy mess over Europe. Now we have a referendum campaign on top of an election campaign. David Cameron must now regret having appeased his euro-sceptics two years ago by promising an “in-or-out” referendum.

He’s gone through a gruelling few months “re-negotiating” Britain’s membership of the EU, only to find that more than a hundred of his backbenchers and a quarter of his cabinet are still anti-Europe. His party is falling apart before our eyes.

It’s perhaps no surprise that the two leading wreckers are journalists. The shambolic wild beast that is Boris Johnson just can’t resist a bit of campaigning fun.

And Michael Gove has always been a fish out of water, gasping for air when he was sacked for introducing madcap reforms in English education – despite the fact he’s never been a teacher and he’s not English but Scottish. Now, as the splendidly robed Attorney General (though he’s never been a lawyer), he presumes to tell us that the Prime Minister’s agreement with EU leaders is not legally binding. Gilbert and Sullivan would have fun with these two “Pirates of Westminster.” Here in Scotland, Margaret Mitchell MSP has become the first Tory to break ranks and join the “Leave” campaign.

Political breakdown

It’s unsettling how so much of our political system is breaking down. The Labour Party is not exactly a united red army and the Liberal Democrats and the Greens just can’t break through the 10 per cent barrier in the opinion polls. Outsiders and anti-politics campaigners seem to flourish in the winter sun. Different issues overlap and obscure each other, like immigration and the EU, welfare and work, taxation and spending.

Much of what the main parties offer is gesture politics because the real thing is too shocking. The SNP say they are opposing Westminster “austerity” but they won’t put up taxes

to pay for more public spending. Labour and the Liberal Democrats say they would raise income tax by a penny in Scotland, but that only reduces “austerity” by a third.

Local councils, now setting their budgets, are complaining they have been short-changed by £350m and the result will be cuts to local services and between 8,000 and 15,000 jobs lost.

Oil and Gas

Other things fall apart. We had a report out this week from the leaders of the Scottish oil and gas industry warning that they are standing on the “edge of a chasm” of low investment, hardly any new exploration and further job losses. Already 65,000 jobs have gone as a result of the slump in oil prices from \$110 a barrel to just \$30. It’s been caused by a strange combination of a world-wide recession, and the Arabians, Iranians, Russians, Venezuelans and the US frackers are all pumping out oil and gas in a mad poker game for market share.

This week we got another sharp warning about our diet. Members of Obesity Action Scotland, say we’ve made virtually no progress on the 2010 master plan to improve the nation’s health. An embarrassing 65 per cent of us adults are overweight and, even more worrying, so are 30 per cent of children. OAS is calling for a sugar tax, better labelling of food products, and restrictions on marketing and promotions.

Ebola

And finally to a brave lady whose poor health is none of her own doing. Pauline Cafferkey, the nurse from Lanarkshire who went out to Sierra Leone in 2014 to help with the Ebola crisis, has been admitted to a specialist hospital in London for the third time.

At one point, shortly after she came home, she was said to be close to death with the initial infection. She apparently

made a full recovery but then in October last year she went down with meningitis. Now she is ill again with yet another complication. It seems the Ebola virus can linger in remote parts of the body even after patients recover from the main infection. Doctors say it's much more complex virus than at first thought.

What's true of Ebola seems to be true of so much in this awkward leap year. Let's hope that when things fall apart, they re-assemble themselves in a happier form in the future.

Police investigate domestic assault inside car in Uphall



Police are appealing for witnesses following a domestic assault in a car which happened in the area of Stankards Road, Uphall, at the junction with Maclardy Court between 12pm – 12.30pm on Tuesday 23 February.

The male suspect was in the passenger seat of the car and assaulted the female driver.

It's possible that two passers-by may have witnessed the incident, which occurred in a red Ford Ka with black racing stripes around the middle of the vehicle.

The first witness is described as a white woman, in her 50s, around 5ft 7in tall with a medium build and blonde/greyish shoulder length hair.

The second witness is described as a white man, around 15 to 16-years-old, 5ft 7in tall, skinny build with short dark brown

hair.

He was walking a small white dog.

Detective Constable Allan Herbert, of Livingston Police Station, said: "We're appealing for anyone who witnessed this incident to come forward, particularly the two witnesses mentioned above.

"The red Ford Ka with black racing stripes is very distinctive, and it's possible they may have heard a woman screaming from within the car."

Those with any information can contact Police Scotland on 101 or alternatively the charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Tuff Love & The Prettrots – Summerhall – 22nd February



Tuff Love, a band who hail from Glasgow, with Suse and Julie on guitars on vocals only created one disappointment on Monday night: the lack of captions and freeze framing which we would only associate with Edgar Wright's artistry. But hey, Tuff Love.

With support from New York's Lulu and Kay, The Prettrots (Rough Trade) the audience are nicely warmed up for a gig for the Juno and Scott Pilgrim generation. Covering the likes of bass-heavy *Last Night* by The Strokes whilst also incorporating a Vengaboys / AQUA mash up it is obvious that these two are versatile and not taking themselves entirely seriously.

Ukulele, guitar and drums make up this twee outfit, which hit the stage with hoodies and leggings, no disguise from their lounging attire. Setting the style, it did not take long to discover that these two are quite happy to expose themselves, singing personal songs about ex-boyfriends, and their coming of age, which at times took me back to reading Sylvia Plath and Jeffery Eugenides.

Lost Map Records' Tuff Love, beginning with tracks *Poncho* and *Sweet Discontent*, were an organic succession from The Prettiotics as they equally carried an air of appealing to the generation of Junos and Scott Pilgrims.

Consisting of two guitars and drums, as well as ruffled haircuts, striped t-shirts, baseball caps and socially awkward rapport, Julie and Suse could also be mistaken for East Coast Americans. (Until you hear them speak of course).

Despite the crowd only being about a hundred strong, the vibe and appreciation were there, head bopping coming from most and schizophrenic lighting hitting them from the venue.

If they want to begin my week again, they are more than welcome with this coming of age tone. The rest of you should make a point of starting your week with a bit of Tuff Love.

Photo Martin Barker

**#safepassage – Edinburgh
protest joins 40 cities and**

12 countries

✖ Edinburgh joins more than 40 cities in 12 countries to demand safe passage for refugees into Europe.

At 12 noon tomorrow Saturday 27 February, Newkirkgate in Leith will be the venue for a 'speak out' against racist immigration laws, calling for safe passage to Europe for all migrants.

Over 3,700 people died attempting to cross the Mediterranean in 2015, already over 410 have died in 2016. January 2016 was by far the deadliest month on record as at least 244 deaths were recorded.

A spokesperson for the event said: 'These deaths are directly due to the lack of legal safe migration routes into Europe. Immigration controls and Fortress Europe's militarised borders kill! We are calling out for all anti-racist groups and individuals to contact us and participate in this event. Join us on the streets, speak on our open mic, bring placards, banners, drums, ideas!'

Similar events will be taking place in Glasgow, Newcastle, London, Brighton, Bristol and Oxford. Photos will be available on the day on [Facebook](#) and Twitter pages 'Migrants' Solidarity Network'

The Migrants' Solidarity Network is a network of different groups and individuals in Edinburgh, working together to challenge racist immigration laws and discrimination.

A spokesperson for the network explained 'We are holding this event in Leith as we are trying to build links with existing communities and organisations in local areas. Racist immigration laws are attacking migrants' rights, restricting access to healthcare, housing, benefits and legal work. Many people live in fear of discrimination, detention and deportation, threatened by immigration raids and checks at

every bank, GP and jobcentre. Meanwhile international companies are profiting from the exploitation of migrant workers, who face precarious conditions, zero hours contracts, repressive agency practices. Whilst the media blames migrants, single mothers and unemployed people for this crisis- we refuse to accept this racism! We are inviting people to a local community meeting in Leith the next day, aiming to bring people together and discuss what issues are impacting on communities the most'

The meeting the following day will take place from 4pm-6pm at the Leith Community Education Centre, Newkirkgate, Leith EH6 6AD

Then on Tuesday 1 March the group will be taking part in a carnival of resistance protest on Princes Street at 6pm. The event links up with a European transnational social strike day of action. Entitled '24 hours without us' the initiative calls for a day of migrants' strikes and solidarity actions across the continent, highlighting the exploitation and precarisation of migrant workers and repression of refugees.

Submitted by [Sam McGill](#)

Liam Fontaine expects tough test at the Cheaper Insurance Direct Stadium



Hibs' defender Liam Fontaine expects a tough test when the team travel to the Cheaper Insurance Direct Stadium on

Saturday afternoon to face Dumbarton in the Ladbrokes Championship.

Hibs now sit eight points behind league leaders Rangers after suffering a setback against Morton on Wednesday, but the players and management team will not be giving up on automatic promotion just yet.

The 'Sons of the Rock' beat Hibs on the first game of the season, so the players will be taking nothing for granted.

Speaking to Hibs TV he said: "We were disappointed with the result against Morton but we can't afford to dwell on that too much with game coming up on Saturday so we have to quickly draw a line under it.

"We need every player to be 100%, not just a few and we need to take our chances because had we taken our chances earlier on it would have been a different game completely.

"We just have to get over it and move on.

"It'd done now and we can't change it we just have to focus on getting a 100% record until the end of the season and if we do we can be there at the end of the season if they (Rangers) slip up.

"We expect a tough test as always, but we will go there confident because we are a confident team.

"We have our own agenda that we need to try and achieve. It all starts on Saturday.

"The fans have been great this season so far and we need them to push us all the way to the end. We appreciate the support a lot."

Edinburgh International Book Festival Booked! – Irvine Welsh and ‘Begbie’



The hot ticket for April will almost certainly be the author Irvine Welsh along with actor Robert Carlyle (otherwise Francis Begbie in *Transporting*).

Welsh's novel was produced for the big screen by Danny Boyle and will be the role that is forever associated with Carlyle, even though it is 20 years since the film was released to wide acclaim.

The writer and the actor will talk about the character which has been central to both of their lives.

The 90 minute long event will take place on Sunday 10 April 2016 at 4.00pm in The Usher Hall. There will be a Q & A afterwards and a book signing by Welsh who is launching his new novel *The Blade Artist* which features a more recent version of Begbie.

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said : “Francis Begbie is already a formidable character in Irvine Welsh's novels. In the *Trainspotting* movie, Robert Carlyle elevates Begbie to an unforgettable screen icon: ultra-violent and alpha-male, while also quite complex with regard to friendships and sexuality.

“It's a real treat that Irvine's latest novel revisits this fascinating character, and even more exciting that Robert will

join Irvine in this special Edinburgh International Book Festival event to discuss a career-defining role.”

This is part of the Edinburgh International Book Festival’s Booked! programme supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

Clara Govier, Head of Charities, People’s Postcode Lottery, said “I’m delighted that players of People’s Postcode Lottery are supporting Booked! It is fantastic that through this support the Edinburgh International Book Festival is being taken on the road throughout Scotland allowing more people than ever to experience everything that the Festival has to offer.”

Tickets are available from The Usher Hall from 10am on Friday 26 February, priced £12 (£10 concessions) and seating is allocated.

The Usher Hall Box office is open 10.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday, Tel 0131 228 1155 or <https://tickets.usherhall.co.uk>.

Copies of *The Blade Artist* will be available to purchase at the event.

Five things you need to know today



- Missing People
- Fancy a free trip to China?
- Independent Coffee Guide
- Edinburgh Labour Women’s Forum

▪ Mother's Day

Edinburgh residents are asked to help save lives of missing children while shopping at St James Centre today.

From 10-5 there will be a team of Jobcentre Plus volunteers requesting that you sign up for free Child Rescue Alerts which is a partnership of the National Crime Agency, the charity Missing People and education technology company, Groupcall. These alerts activate when a child goes missing locally and when police believe their life may be in danger.

This is all part of a two week long national campaign which has the backing of Missing People charity patron, Stephen Fry.

Stephen Fry said: "I believe that Child Rescue Alert should be a national institution. It reminds me of a fire extinguisher – everyone should have one ready to use at a moment's notice but we all hope that we will never need it."

Josie Allan, Regional Manager at Missing People, said: "It's amazing to have the support of volunteers within their own community to raise awareness of this vital service. By signing up, anyone could save a child's life so we want to get the message out to as many people as possible across Edinburgh."

Denise Horsfall, Jobcentre Plus Work Services Director for Scotland, said "Working with Missing People to make the public aware of the Child Rescue Alert scheme has been a hugely fulfilling experience for our staff in Scotland, and is a valuable part of the work that the charity does. Feedback from those taking part has been very positive, and we plan to take ongoing advantage of opportunities with Missing People through our Community 10,000 volunteer programme in 2016."

So if you are shopping today take a moment to sign up or you can register your child online [here](#).



Edinburgh Zoo which looks after the two pandas on loan to Scotland from China is running a competition for those who would like a trip to China.

✖ You also have to want to work with pandas, so if those dreams are yours then all you have to do is enter the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ambassadors competition.

The prize is that you would go to the Chengdu Panda Base in China as an official Panda Ambassador. You would meet new-born panda cubs and tour the area from 28 May to 3 June 2016.

To take part what you have to do is:

- *Record a selfie or video of yourself in front of the Pambassadors panel (located on the left hand wall as visitors enter the giant panda exhibit at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo)*
- *The video should be no longer than 10 seconds and should ideally include:*
 - o Entrants name and where you are from*
 - o The fact that you love pandas and why!*
 - o Your support for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals*
- *Entrants should share their photo or video on Facebook at [facebook.com/ChengduPambassador/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/ChengduPambassador/?fref=ts) or Twitter on [@PambassadorWW](https://twitter.com/PambassadorWW)*
- *Visit www.sdgpanda.org, click "UNDP Panda Ambassador", choose "I'm participating in" then copy the video/photo URL into the space provided*
- *The closing date for entries is 1 April 2016*

✖

24 of our Edinburgh coffee houses are included in the newly published [Independent Coffee Guide](#)

Even The Edinburgh Reporter who is a frequent coffee shop worker (on the computer in the corner you understand!) has not been to all of these.

The purpose of the guide is to showcase “commitment to a high quality coffee experience, use of UK roasted speciality beans, two brew methods or two coffees available at any time and independent ownership”.


Edinburgh Labour Women’s Forum will be celebrating International Women’s Day in Castle Street on 8 March 2016.



Sign up here for a daily email from The Edinburgh Reporter

[mc4wp_form id=“169103”]

Just a timely reminder that Mother’s Day is on 6 March 2016. If you have nothing planned as yet then you might be interested in our helpful hints over [here.](#)

 If you are reading this article in print and would like to visit The Edinburgh Reporter website then simply scan the QR code here with a smartphone or tablet.

The Edinburgh Reporter guide for Mother’s Day



One Spa at the Sheraton Grand – grand for

Mother's Day!

Mother's Day on 6 March 2016 is either another opportunity for you to spoil your mother, or a day to **really** spoil her.

If you're going out, then where do you go? Well we have some suggestions for you here (in no particular order you understand!) :

✖ **Balmoral Number One** are offering a Michelin starred lunch prepared by their Head Chef Brian Grigor for £49 per person. Advance booking essential so telephone 0131 557 6727.



Afternoon tea at **Printing Press Bar & Kitchen** might just fit the bill. This costs £19.75 per person and includes the usual array of sweet and savoury with specially selected tea and coffee, or with champagne the price rises to £25.

Available between 12 noon and 5pm this would be a good way to while away the afternoon and enjoying the company.



One Square at the Sheraton Grand Hotel is offering a glass of fizz and a present for mothers.

More details of their lunch with live jazz [here](#).

There is a Mother and Daughter Spa Day on offer at the **Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian**. With a foot scrub, facial and massage included this sounds a lovely way to spend a day! More details [here](#).

Malmaison Edinburgh has a Sunday Lunch from £29.95 with unlimited hors d'oeuvres! Mothers get a glass of Mumm Champagne (nice touch!)

More details [here](#).

Also in Leith **The Granary** has a Special Menu for £17.95 per person.

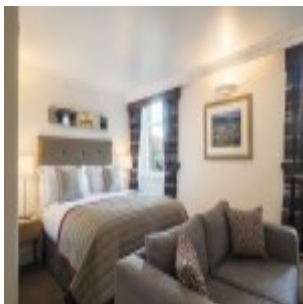


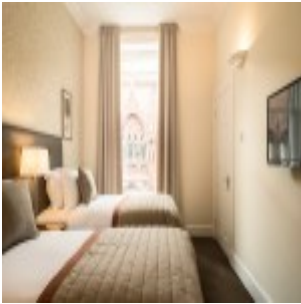
Apex Hotels have food and spa treatments for you and your mother. Afternoon Tea along with a spa day might give her the treat she needs.

[More details here.](#)

Fountain Apartments suggest whisking Mum off to the city for the weekend. Even if you live in Edinburgh there might be nothing better than a bit of time together in luxury surroundings like their Royal Garden Apartments on Queen Street.

They have some offers available [here](#) and you might get a good deal if you arrange an overnight stay in the middle of the week rather than the weekend.





easyJet have just started flying from Edinburgh Airport to Vienna and Venice at the beginning of February so if you care to take your Mum away for the day or the weekend, then you could take advantage of the new services. The Venice route flies on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and fares start from £31.49 one-way per person.

The Vienna route flies on Tuesdays and Saturdays but will increase to three times weekly in summer 2016. Fares start from £32.49 per person for a one way fare.

Skyscanner has flights for Mother's Day weekend for under £30 [here](#).

Out of Town in Dalkeith at **The Sun Inn** they have an extensive menu. Three courses will cost £27.50 and includes the Sun Inn ice cream selection in a brandy snap basket. More details [here](#).

John Lewis have loads of ideas for Mother's Day here



[Steak on Stones](#) has a special menu for the day:



Doubletree by Hilton has launched a novel sleep and pamper package for new mums. The Mummymoon overnight package will allow new parents to catch up on some sleep.

This will allow them to recharge their batteries away from crying babies, snoring partners and never ending household chores (although you are allowed to take someone with you if you like!)

Ronald Little, General Manager of [DoubleTree by Hilton Edinburgh City Centre](#), operated by the UK's largest independent hotel management company [Redefine|BDL Hotels](#), said: "At [DoubleTree by Hilton Edinburgh City Centre](#), we know exactly how to help mums unwind and recharge their batteries. It's hard for a new mother to find time to get a good night's sleep, let alone find some quality 'me time'.

"The Mummymoon is specially designed to meet these needs.

Launching in time for Mother's Day, we expect this will be popular offering throughout 2016 and beyond – both as a gift or even as a treat for mum to indulge in for herself. We can't wait to spoil mums across the country!"



New mum Vicki Finlayson (36), who is mum to 10 week old Ariana, said: "The Mummymoon is a great idea for new mothers as it will provide some much needed TLC and a chance to recharge after many sleepless nights. Getting a full night of uninterrupted sleep as well as some proper pampering is total bliss!"

Mother's Day at **Kyloe** will include food and flowers! Click the image below to read more.



Element Bar & Restaurant have unveiled their new menu for Mothering Sunday, on the 6th of March. The three course Mother's Day menu includes 'Roast of the Day,' plus a glass of prosecco – all for £20!



If your mother is an art buff then you could go to one of the three galleries which is taking part in **British Art Show 8**.

(If you go to the Botanics then there is a lovely café and of course the Modern Art Gallery has one too. Talbot Rice is not open on Mothering Sunday but is open other days in the week)

The British Art Show is showing across three galleries: Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern One) and Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh.

Curated by Anna Colin and Lydia Yee, British Art Show 8 features the work of 42 artists who have made a significant contribution to art in Britain over the past five years. The result is a wide-ranging exhibition that encompasses performance, film, sculpture, installation, painting and design. Twenty-six of the 42 artists have produced new works for the exhibition, making this the most ambitious British Art Show to date.

Inverleith House will be host to exhibits by Caroline Achaintre, Pablo Bronstein, Nicolas Deshayes, Simon Fujiwara, Martino Gamper, Anthea Hamilton, Charlotte Prodger, James Richards, Patrick Staff, Bedwyr Williams and Jesse Wine.

Jesse Wine has created a newly-commissioned work for the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. He will present new ceramic sculptures that will be suspended from the ceiling in its famous Victorian Palm House.

We had a preview of BAS8 just before it opened earlier this month:

[The Edinburgh Reporter News](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Finally The Scottish Government has given mothers an early present. It has promised to take action to ensure fairer workplaces for women and to tackle discrimination against new and expectant mothers, just ahead of a report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission expected later in the spring.

Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training Roseanna Cunningham presented the plan at a breakfast session this morning on the issue organised by the EHRC and Working Families and Family Friendly Working Scotland, hosted by MacLay, Murray and Spens LLP in Edinburgh. The meeting was also attended by Barclays Bank and the Scottish Parliament. She said:

“Sadly in 2016, negative consequences of being pregnant or a new mother while working remain frustratingly common. This is unacceptable in a modern Scotland and does not sit well in a fair and equitable society.

“A report from the EHRC on these issues will be published in the coming weeks and as part of the Scottish Government’s commitment to fairer workplaces, we want to tackle these issues head on. Discrimination during pregnancy or following birth has the potential to set patterns that persist for the rest of a woman’s working life and we need to ensure it is stopped.

“Recent female employment figures have been strong, particularly when compared to the rest of Europe, and we are making progress on the 5050 by 2020 pledge, with a number of organisations signing up. The latest figures also show a drop of 1.8 percentage points in the gender pay gap over the year, so progress is being made. However we must keep highlighting that motherhood does not detract from a worker’s productivity or value.

“We have set up the Fair Work Convention which will publish its framework for fairer workplaces in the coming weeks. In the meantime, however, if there are opportunities to improve the rights of employees we will take them.”

Whatever you get up to we hope you have a lovely day – and if you have any ideas for our readers then please add your ideas below in the comments section.

Hibs announce new shares innovation



Hibs today announced a new innovation for Scottish football that will allow supporters the hassle-free opportunity to buy shares in their Club online.

The Board is committed to offering fans the opportunity to own up to 51% of the shares in the Club – a controlling interest. An original share issue which ended in August last year – allied with the ongoing activity of the collective ownership vehicle Hibernian Supporters Limited – has already seen supporter ownership leap from around 2% to more than 20%.

And in another unique feature of Hibernian's widening of ownership all of the funds raised go directly to the Club to fund sporting ambition. The purchase of new shares has seen additional investment in football of more than £0.5 million over the past year.

The closure of the previous share issue allowed the Board to consult again with supporters. While fans gave overwhelming backing to the concept, the biggest message was that a simpler mechanism should be found to sell shares while still meeting the burden of regulation.

Thanks to the technology offered by local financial technology business ShareIn, the Club can now meet those demands. Through a newly available platform, The Club has enabled fans to apply for shares directly on the Club's own website at – www.hibernianfc.co.uk/shares

Chairman Rod Petrie said: “The Board has taken its time to learn from the share issue. There has been significant consultation, and the solution that we can now put forward is innovative, as supporters expect from Hibernian.

“We’ve listened, and we have tried to make the process of buying shares as straightforward as possible but still within the regulatory framework which is designed to protect investors. Barriers have been removed, and supporters can now have a real say in the future of their Club.”

Chief Executive Leeann Dempster said: “There is no doubt that there is a huge well of goodwill and desire out there from supporters to get more involved with their Club, to enjoy greater ownership, and to buy shares safe in the knowledge that the money they spend will be used to strengthen the Club they will own.

“Our original share issue meant supporters on our database had to go through a fairly complex process, including consulting an appropriately qualified Independent Financial Adviser, to get shares. That was to ensure we complied with the legislation and regulation and was the right thing to do.

“We now have the situation where a financial technology company has come up with a way that still meets all of the regulatory requirements, but allows supporters a very easy process to buy shares with a few clicks of a button. I expect this to be very popular.”

That said, it remains important that supporters fully understand all of the normal risks involved in the purchase of shares, and that the purchase of shares in the Club will not

be something that will pay dividends and is more of an emotional investment.”

The Board’s plan sees Easter Road Stadium and Hibernian Training Centre secure within the Club’s ownership. It’s a win-win situation that has won the overwhelming backing of the Hibernian support, demonstrated by several official and supporter led surveys.

Leeann added: “Supporters know that ownership of the Club brings a number of opportunities. They have told us clearly they want to feel they belong, they want to help protect their Club, they want a voice in big decisions, and they want the Club to win things.

“That is why our campaign will have those key strands – Belong; Protect; Guide; Succeed.”

Five teenagers arrested following housebreaking spree



Five teenagers have been arrested and charged following a spree of housebreakings and car thefts at three business premises in East Lothian and the Borders which took place between 1.50am and 2.20am on Wednesday morning.

The suspects used stolen cars to get to each area, which were later traced in Edinburgh.

Four boys, aged 16, 16, 17 and 18, will appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today and a 15-year-old boy has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

The arrests were part of a combined resources effort from uniformed and plain clothed officers in the Lothians and Borders and Edinburgh divisions.

The first incident happened on Wednesday around 1.50am when entry was forced to a post office in Stow.

A number of cigarettes were stolen and three previously stolen cars – a VW Golf, Fiat 500 and BMW X5 – were spotted outside the store at the time.

The second incident happened around 2.10am when thieves managed to gain entry to a sandwich store in Longniddry, but nothing was stolen.

The third incident happened around 2.20am at a petrol station in Tranent.

A two-figure sum of cash was stolen along with a quantity of alcohol.

Officers in Dalkeith later recovered the stolen Fiat 500, BMW X5, Vauxhall Astra and an Audi Q7.

Detective Inspector Steven Bertram, of Dalkeith Police Station, said: "Vehicle crime and housebreakings have a huge effect on victims and businesses, and this result shows our desire to tackle these crimes.

"We know this is important to our communities and we'll continue to work together to track those responsible.

"This is a good result for our officers across the three divisions."

Police identify body found in Gogar as Saima Ahmed from London.



Saima Ahmed



Saima Ahmed (2)

Police have confirmed that the body found in the Gogar area of Edinburgh last month is that of Saima Ahmed from London.

The 36-year-old was discovered on the afternoon of Saturday 9th January 2016 off Gogarstone Road prompting a major investigation involving a detailed forensic examination of the area.

After carrying out specialist forensic techniques, including DNA analysis, investigating officers have now ascertained that the remains are those of Saima who had been reported missing by her family to the Metropolitan Police Service on the 31st August 2015.

Her death is currently being treated as unexplained and specially trained officers are providing support to the Ahmed family as inquiries progress.

As part of the ongoing investigation, Police Scotland is today launching a UK-wide appeal for information as officers endeavour to establish the exact journey Saima took from London to Edinburgh, what took her to the Gogarstone area and the events leading to her death.

The investigation thus far has led detectives to believe she most likely travelled by rail on Sunday the 30th of August last

year.

Saima's movements on that day are as follows:

8:30am – Oakington Manor Drive, Wembley – Saima leaves home

9:57am – captured on CCTV alone in High Road, Wembley

10:00am – High Road, Wembley – ATM outside Natwest Bank – Saima is believed to have withdrawn money from her account.

10:08am – captured on CCTV alone entering Wembley Central Railway Station

10:18am – Wembley Central Railway Station – boards a London Overground service bound for Watford Junction. She appears to have been alone.

Saima thereafter is believed to have alighted at Watford Junction and at...

11:06am – believed, but not confirmed, to have boarded a train bound for Northampton.

Her exact route after this time is unknown however police believe she may have travelled to Hemel Hempstead, Birmingham and then onto Edinburgh.

Officers are keen to speak to anyone who remembers Saima or who may have spoken to her to come forward.

Saima is described as an Asian female, around 5ft 5ins tall, medium build, with shoulder length straight dark hair. She was last seen wearing a dark long v-neck top, black trousers, black shoes and a black jacket.

Detective Chief Inspector Martin MacLean, Head of Crime Operations for Edinburgh CID, said:

“I have met personally with Saima Ahmed's family and have passed my condolences to them at this tragic and extremely difficult time.

"I have given them a commitment that we are doing everything we can to establish why Saima travelled to Edinburgh and the exact circumstances that led to her death.

"At this stage of our inquiry we continue to treat Saima's death as unexplained however there is no evidence of criminality as matters currently stand. Clearly there are a number of matters and facts we have yet to establish and it remains a mystery to Saima's family why she travelled to Edinburgh.

"Today I am appealing to anyone who saw Saima on, or around, the 30th of August 2015 to please contact police immediately.

"As part of our ongoing investigation we continue to work closely with our colleagues in the various police forces across the UK where we believe Saima had travelled en route to Scotland and Edinburgh, including the Metropolitan Police Service and the British Transport Police.

"I urge any regular rail users who may have been on these services to please think carefully and to get in touch with Police Scotland on 101 if you remember or spoke with Saima.

"I also want to hear from anyone who saw her in Edinburgh, or who can help explain how she made her way to the Gogarstone Road area, whether by tram, train, taxi, private hire car or any other means."

In a statement issued through Police Scotland Saima's family said: "We, Saima's family are extremely saddened and shocked by the death of Saima.

"She was a very loving and caring person who was part of a very close family.

"We are hoping someone can provide some information as to Saima's journey on the 30th of August 2015 and help us to understand what happened to her.

“We would appreciate it if we are left alone at what is still a very difficult time for us. Thank you.”

To help jog memories, Sunday, August 30th, 2015, was the penultimate day of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and “Fight Song” by Rachel Platten was at the top of the charts. It was also around this time that “We Are Your Friends” opened in UK cinemas and X Factor had returned to our screens the day before.

Anyone with information should contact Edinburgh CID on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Big Hearts Community Trust – Making A Real Difference



This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Big Hearts Community Trust – the official charity of Heart of Midlothian Football Club. Since it began in 2006, Big Hearts has raised over £1.5m for community projects and working in allegiance with Heart of Midlothian FC as well as the Foundation of Hearts – the supporters group who aim to buy a controlling interest in the football club in just over three years – Big Hearts purpose is to make a real difference to the lives of those in the community who need help the most.

Big Hearts supports families by coordinating and facilitating meaningful activities where need is identified. The charity's recent new programme of activity has been to focus on Kinship Care Families, a priority group identified with key stakeholders including the City of Edinburgh Council.

If a looked after child cannot remain with their parents, they can be placed by a local authority in the care of family or friends, for either a short or long period of time. This is what is commonly known as Kinship Care.

Big Hearts launched their Kinship Care Programme in October 2015. One of the main strands of this is the Kinship Care After School Club, which is now in its second term and continues to grow.

In 2016, Big Hearts are carrying on their excellent work which includes the growth of their Football Memories group which helps those with dementia and which Big Hearts hope to expand in the year ahead.

This week, Big Hearts has announced the biggest supporter volunteering initiative ever seen in Scottish football. Those who support Big Hearts will have opportunities to serve their community in many different ways and help deliver a social and cultural change in society through the football club. Big Hearts say this can be in many ways such as sharing a link to the Big Hearts website on social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter or giving time to help the charity across a range of projects. Big Hearts are also looking at an ambitious project of supporting families in times of crisis with some members training as counsellors.

This really is an excellent organisation and a charity which provides invaluable work to the community. If you feel you can help Big Hearts in any way or wish to find out more about the wonderful work they do, you can log on to their website at www.bighearts.org.uk

You can also email Caryn Kerr at caryn.kerr@bighearts.org.uk

Man jailed for embezzling £55k from his employers



Scott Rennie was today sentenced to two-years in prison – reduced to 16-months – at Edinburgh Sheriff Court after pleading guilty to embezzling almost £55,000 from his employers.

In his position as Complaints Handler with Aegon UK, the 29 year-old embezzled £54,933.33 between December 2014 and April 2015.

Suspicious at the company were raised and an investigation by Police Scotland's Economic Crime Unit was carried out.

Rennie was subsequently detained and then charged before pleading guilty to embezzlement and money laundering on 11th February.

Detective Inspector Arron Clinkscales from the Economic Crime Unit said, "Rennie had betrayed the trust and confidence of his employers and their clients to secure funds for his own means.

"His sentence should serve as a warning to others that Police Scotland has specialist resources in place to investigate financial crime and will continue to work with our partners in the Financial Services to identify corrupt employees who prove a threat to their businesses.

“If anyone has information relating to ongoing offences of this nature then please contact us on 101 or make an anonymous report to the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”

Police want to trace dog walker following indecent act in Musselburgh



Police in East Lothian are appealing for witnesses following an indecent incident in Musselburgh which took place around 10.15 a.m. this morning within the Lagoons area of the town.

A man walking a golden Labrador was seen with no clothing on the lower half of his body before performing an indecent act.

The male then headed towards the Goose Green area, at which time it is believed he was fully clothed again.

Local officers are now conducting inquiries within Musselburgh to trace this individual and anyone who can assist with this investigation is asked to come forward.

The suspect is described as white, in his twenties or early thirties, around 5ft 10ins tall with a slim build. He was wearing a dark grey hooded top with the hood up and when fully clothed was also wearing light grey shorts.

Sergeant Laura White from Tranent Police Station said: “Various members of the public witnessed this indecency, which was unpleasant and unsettling for them.

“While we have spoken to several witnesses we are keen to hear from anyone else who was in the Lagoons or Goose Green area on Thursday morning and saw anything suspicious.

“Similarly, anyone who recognises the description of the suspect or who has any other information relevant to this investigation should also contact police immediately.”

Those with information can contact Police Scotland on 101 or alternatively, the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Lewis Stevenson makes 300th appearance for Hibs.



Hibs' versatile left back Lewis Stevenson joined an elite band of players last night when he made his 300th appearance for the Eater Road club.

The last player to achieve this feat was Pat McGinlay who made 374 appearances in two spells with the club between 1988 and 2000.

Other names include the great Gordon Smith, Lawrie Reilly, Willie Ormond, Eddie Turnbull, Pat Stanton, Jimmy O'Rourke, Arthur Duncan, Erich Schaedler, John Blackley, John Brownlie and Jackie MacNamara.

The popular Fifer was made captain for the night and next month could become the first Hibs' player to win two major cups with the club.

He made his competitive debut in a Scottish League Cup tie

against Ayr United in September 2005 but did not make his league debut until the opening game of the following season.

In 2007 as a 17 year-old, he was named man of the match when Hibs last won the CIS League Cup, beating Kilmarnock 5-1 in the final at Hampden Park.

He scored his first goal for the club in a 2-0 win over Inverness Caledonian Thistle in February 2011.

He has also won international honours with Scottish Schoolboys, Scotland Under 19s and Scotland Under 21s.

Photo by John Preece

Royal pigeon rescued in Haddington



The Scottish SPCA rescued a lost racing pigeon in East Lothian, only to discover it belongs to the Queen.

Scotland's animal welfare charity was alerted when the grounded bird was spotted at Traprain Terrace in Haddington on 2 February.

The bird has since been returned to the royal loft at Sandringham estate in Norfolk.

Animal Rescue Officer Connie O'Neill said, "I've rescued many pigeons during my career with the Scottish SPCA but this was certainly a first for me.

"I was really excited when I found out it was one of the

Queen's racing pigeons.

"We were able to identify where the pigeon had come from using the ring number on its leg and arrangements were made for it to be collected.

"The poor bird was exhausted and it was a cold, dark and windy night when it was found.

"Thankfully someone contacted us as it would have been very easy prey for a cat.

"It's quite common for racing pigeons to lose their way and become too tired to take off again. I'm really glad we were able to help in this instance."

Photo by Scottish SPCA

Five things you need to know today



- Royal Visit to Edinburgh
- New charity shop
- Stobo Castle Ladies Day at Musselburgh Racecourse
- Fort Kinnaird
- Fracking film at North Edinburgh Arts

The Countess of Strathearn visited three Edinburgh schools yesterday during her first solo visit to Scotland. The Edinburgh Reporter was at St Catherine's RC Primary School in Gracemount to meet those involved with a school based charity project.

Place2Be has been in Scotland for fifteen years and works in 28 schools across the country. It is the UK's leading mental health charity providing in-school support and expert training to improve the emotional wellbeing of pupils, families, teachers and school staff.

[Read more here](#)

Her Royal Highness then went on to visit The Art Room at Wester Hailes Education Centre and to have a tennis lesson with new grandmother Judy Murray at Craigmount High School.

Sign up here for a daily email from The Edinburgh Reporter

[mc4wp_form id="169103"]



There's a new charity shop on Dalry Road which just opened this week. The new shop will raise money for St Columba's Hospice and was opened on Tuesday by one of the charity's volunteers, Hazel Lannan.

This shop has a bright new look and is the sixth across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Lesley Christie, director of fundraising at the Hospice said: "We are delighted to officially open our sixth charity shop, which will raise funds for the Hospice to care for patients and their families. The Hospice's shops are an incredibly important source of fundraising for us, and we rely on the generosity of the public to fill our shops with donations, and of the volunteers to keep the shops open. This new shop will mean the people who shop locally around Haymarket, Dalry and Gorgie can pick up some gorgeous items at a bargain price and support the work of the Hospice."

The new shop is open Monday – Saturday from 10am – 4pm at 74 Dalry Road. Donations of good quality goods are welcome during the shop's opening hours.



Later this year one of the biggest events at Musselburgh Racecourse is the Stobo Castle Ladies Day on Saturday 11 June 2016.

But it is sure to be even more attractive now that the celebrity host Vernon Kay has agreed to be the VIP host for the day.

Vernon is on TV show All Star Families and it is expected that he will be the centre of the after racing party at the Stage Marquee on the racecourse.

Sarah Montgomery, Senior Operations and Commercial Manager at Musselburgh Racecourse, said: "As guests go, Vernon is a real

thoroughbred.

“Not only is he one of the best-known faces on British TV, but he has the perfect fashion credentials to fully appreciate the riot of style and colour that is Stobo Castle Ladies Day.

“He always has a smile on his face, which we’re sure will make him a hugely popular choice with the women who turn out in such large numbers to make the day such a huge success.

“We are delighted to officially confirm Vernon will be joining and very much look forward to welcoming him for a fantastic day of racing, fashion and socialising.

“Stobo Castle Ladies Day is a sell out success every year, and with tickets selling fast, we are already on track for the same result this year. We are encouraging those looking to attend to purchase their tickets now.”

For more information on the full list of fixtures, including a number of seasonal highlights, and to book tickets visit: www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk



The number of shoppers at Fort Kinnaird has grown by 12% in the last year.

The shopping centre has attracted thousands of new customers, mainly by adding new restaurants, shops and the first major cinema for the east of Edinburgh in many years.

Names like Fat Face, Simply Be, Primark, Chiquito, Ed’s Easy Diner, Five Guys, Frankie & Benny’s, Nando’s, Pizza Express and TGI Fridays all add up to attractions that Edinburgh shoppers seem to love.



Liam Smith, Centre Manager at Fort Kinnaird, said: “This has been an incredible, busy, exciting past 12 months here at Fort Kinnaird, with the arrival of fantastic popular

restaurants, more leading fashion brands and our very own cinema.

“We’ve also worked hard to listen to customer’s needs and, in response, extended our opening hours to provide more convenience and flexibility.

“The rise in footfall tells us we have got it right – by increasing the offering and making Fort Kinnaird more than just a shopping centre, but a great leisure experience where anyone can enjoy a day or evening out.

“We’re also thrilled that this success has created jobs and is really helping the local economy. We now look forward to continuing to welcome new customers in 2016.”

North Edinburgh Arts is to show the film Groundswell Rising on 4 March 2016 at 7:00pm.

The film, which is all about fracking in the USA, has witness accounts from those who have been affected by the method of oil and gas extraction.

Dr Richard Dixon, Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland will introduce the film. He will be joined by **Prof Andrew Watterson, Director of the Centre for Public Health and Population Health Research, and Head of the Occupational and Environmental Health Research Group, School of Health Sciences, University of Stirling** for discussion after the screening.

Dr Richard Dixon said: “Scotland has to learn from the communities that have already had to live with fracking. Seeing the reality of having this dirty industry as a neighbour should persuade anyone that it’s not something we want here. For the sake of the climate and local people, fracking and unconventional fossil fuels are the last thing Scotland needs.”

North Edinburgh Arts, 15a Pennywell Court, Edinburgh EH4 4TZ.

✖ If you are reading this article in print and would like to visit The Edinburgh Reporter website then simply scan the QR code here with a smartphone or tablet.



Concern for missing woman Anne McDonald



Police are appealing for information to help trace a woman reported missing from the Morningside area.

Anne McDonald was last seen in Morningside around 4.30pm on Monday 22 February.

Since then, the 47-year-old has not been in contact with friends or family and concern is now growing for her welfare.

Anne is described as 5ft 6in tall, slim build, blue eyes with long blonde hair.

She was last seen wearing a khaki coloured jacket with a fur trim, and dark coloured leggings.

Sergeant Scott Young, of Wester Hailes Police Station, said: "We're appealing for Anne to get in touch and let us know she is safe and well.

"It's possible Anne may have used public transport, such as the local bus service.

“Anyone who can assist with our enquiries is urged to come forward.”

Those with any information can contact Police Scotland on 101.

Hibs crash to three goal home defeat against Morton



Hibs hopes of overtaking Rangers to gain automatic promotion are hanging by a thread tonight after crashing to a 3-0 home defeat to Morton.

The game marked Lewis Stevenson's 300th game for the club joining such legends as Gordon Smith, Lawrie Reilly and Pat Stanton, and although he was made captain for the night, it's a game that he won't want to remember.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made seven changes to the starting XI that beat Alloa Athletic on Sunday. David Gray, Stevenson, John McGinn, Darren McGregor, Anthony Stokes, Kevin Thomson and Jason Cummings all returned to team but surprisingly there was no place on the bench for either of the goal-scorers, Martin Boyle or Dan Carmichael.

Long term injury victim Farid El Alagui was listed amongst the substitutes.

Two familiar faces were in the away dug out, former manager Jim Duffy and substitute goalkeeper Andy McNeil who was a team mate of Stevenson when Hibs won the CIS League Cup in 2007.

Hibs started brightly and Stokes went close with a long range

effort and a header which flew into the side netting.

Striking partner Cummings almost gave Hibs the lead in the 9th minute but his first time effort from a Liam Henderson corner took a deflection off a defender and ended up in the keeper's arms.

Derek Gaston then did well to save another Cummings header then Hibs' fans thought they had taken the lead in the 14th minute when McGinn fired home from close range but the linesman's flag was raised against Cummings in the build up.

It seemed only a matter of time before Hibs scored then in the 26th minute Henderson slotted a through ball into the path of Gray. the full back calmly chipped the ball to Cummings but somehow his header flew wide with the goal gaping.

A goal did arrive a few minutes later but it was for Morton against the run of play. Ross Forbes sent in a dangerous corner and Thomas O'Ware headed the ball into the net from close range.

Just after the break, Cummings struck the crossbar and the ball rebounded into the path of Stokes who was clearly bundled to the ground by Lee Kilday in a challenge that would be more appropriate in the six nations. Incredibly referee Greg Aitken ignored the appeal then infuriated the supporters even more when Morton scored a second.

Both Stevenson and McGeough were fouled during the build up but the referee waved play on both times. Declan McManus then sent in a cross from the right which Oxley spilled into the path of Denny Johnstone who tapped the ball into the net from three yards.

Hibs continued to attack but Morton defended well and hit on the break and a third goal ended the game as a contest. With Hibs attacking, the ball was cleared to Bobby Barr who ran 50 yards into the penalty area before cutting the ball back to

Ross Forbes who slotted the ball into the corner of the net leaving Oxley helpless.

Hibs had another penalty appeal ignored when substitute James Keatings was brought down by O'Ware although by that time the game was lost.

Morton almost added a fourth but McManus fired over from eight yards.

In the last few minutes Marvin Bartley forced a fine save from Gaston and Morton held on to secure the points.

The defeat is Hibs' first loss at home since last April and leaves them eight points behind Rangers in the race for the Championship.

After the game a disappointed Alan Stubbs said: "When you are on top you have to take your chances. We've given away two poor goals but all credit to Morton. When they had chances they took them and I've no complaints."

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, Fontaine, McGregor, Stevenson, Thomson, Henderson, McGeouch, McGinn, Stokes, Cummings. Subs: Virtanen, Hanlon, Bartley, El Alagui, Keatings, Gunnarsson, Dagnall

Morton: Gaston, Kilday, O'Ware, McKee, Forbes, Johnstone, Pepper, Barr, Russell, McManus, McMullan. Subs: McNeil, Lamie, McCluskey, Scullion, Quitongo, Tennant.

Referee Greg Aitken.

Attendance 8755

New playing surface to be laid at Hampden in time for League Cup Final



A new surface will be laid at Scotland's National Stadium in time for the Scottish League Cup Final, Presented by Utilita Energy, between Hibs and Ross County on Sunday 13th March.

Supporters of both teams had become concerned that the playing surface was in a poor condition and the news from Glasgow has been welcomed.

Peter Dallas, Managing Director of Hampden Park Ltd said: "In light of recent speculation regarding the condition of the playing surface at Scotland's National Stadium, Hampden Park Ltd can confirm that a new natural grass pitch will be laid ahead of the Scottish League Cup Final.

"Like many surfaces across Scotland, Hampden Park has suffered due to prolonged inclement weather and, in particular, heavy rainfall since the turn of the year. This has been exacerbated by the programme of fixtures for Queen's Park FC, who play their home matches at Hampden Park.

"While the best efforts of the ground staff have ensured Hampden's playability, nonetheless, with a series of showpiece matches due to take place this spring – the League Cup Final and Scotland Vauxhall International Challenge Match against Denmark next month, the Petrofac Training Cup and the William Hill Scottish Cup semi-finals in April and the Scottish Cup Final in May – the Board of HPL Ltd has taken the proactive decision to provide the best possible conditions for these matches.

“Work on relaying the pitch will commence immediately after the Queen’s Park match against Berwick Rangers on 5th March.

“The National Stadium also has a busy summer ahead with four spectacular concerts announced. The appearance of four globally renowned acts – Coldplay, Rihanna, Beyoncé and Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band – reaffirm Hampden Park as a world-class sports and entertainment venue.”

Hibernian Development Squad lose to Kilmarnock at Rugby Park



A young Hibernian Development Squad lost to Kilmarnock at Rugby Park in the SPFL Development League last night.

The only goal of the game was scored by Killie’s Greg Taylor in the second half although there was little to choose between the two teams.

After the game Hibernian U20 Development Coach, Joe McBride told the club website: “I’m left disappointed with the result, as I didn’t think there much at all between the sides. We created better chances in the first half than they did, not so much in the second but if you don’t take your opportunities, you’re always liable to lose one.

“I was upset that we couldn’t put them under more pressure in the second half. We let them dictate the play and they were probably more streetwise than us. We have to be more ruthless in all aspects of the game.”

Hibernian Development Squad: Brennan; Smith, Dunsmore, Waugh, Campbell; Watson, Breen (Murray, 62), Stirling (Scott, 55), Sinclair (O'Connor, 65); Shaw, Peters.

Sow Transfer Complete As Hearts Announce Fixture Dates

It's been more than three weeks since the transfer window closed (or slammed shut to use an oft-used media cliché) but the transfer of Hearts striker Osman Sow to Chinese Super League club Henan Jianye was finally concluded today.

The former Crystal Palace striker, who joined Hearts in the summer of 2014 and was a key element of the Maroons surge to promotion back to the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership last year, has now had his international clearance paperwork completed. The transfer of Sow, whose contract with Hearts was due to end this summer, is believed to have netted Hearts a fee in excess of £1m, a remarkable piece of business given the Gorgie club would have received nothing if he had left in the summer.

23 goals in 52 appearances marked Sow as a prolific goalscorer and the Swedish star was keen to thank Hearts for resurrecting his career.

He told the official Hearts website: "I really enjoyed my time at Hearts and I'm proud that I was able to help the club back up to the top of Scottish football.

"I'd like to thank Robbie, Craig and all the coaching staff for giving me the chance to come over and play regular football, and the boys for being great teammates.

“I’d also like to thank the fans who were tremendous with me and never stopped supporting us. I wish Hearts all the best and hope the club continues its rise to the top.”

Meanwhile, Hearts have announced re-arranged dates for their Ladbrokes Premiership fixtures against Partick Thistle and Inverness Caledonian Thistle – both of which were recently postponed because of waterlogged pitches.

Following their exit from the William Hill Scottish Cup, Hearts will now play Partick Thistle at Tynecastle on Saturday March 5th – Scottish Cup weekend – with a 3pm kick-off while their trip to Inverness Caledonian Thistle has been arranged for Tuesday March 15th with a 7.45pm kick-off.

The club have confirmed that original tickets for both fixtures are valid. Those supporters who can’t attend the re-arranged games should contact Hearts Ticket Centre in McLeod Street regarding a refund.

Information for fans attending Hibs v Morton game tonight



Hibs are in action at Easter Road for a third time in just over a week tonight with game against Greenock Morton which kicks off is at 7.45pm.

Tickets for tonight’s match are on sale online via the Hibernian Call Centre (0844 844 1875 option 1) or from the

Hibernian Ticket Office. Cash pods will be in operation outside the Famous Five and East Stands from 12.30pm, with cash gates 12 and 13 open in the West Stand. Fans need to buy directly from Hibernian through the Ticket Office, by phone or online to claim their loyalty points.

The Hibernian Ticket Office will be open from 10am until kick-off, and will re-open for a short period post-match. Tickets are currently on sale for upcoming matches against Dumbarton, Queen of the South, Inverness Caledonian Thistle and Ross County. Due to the volume of tickets being sold and the pressures on the Ticket Office on a matchday, they will be stopping ticket sales for both cup games at 5pm tonight. The club apologise for any inconvenience caused, but the decision has been made to manage the matchday ticket queues.

Supporters can still print at home to avoid the matchday queues – simply choose that option in the delivery section when purchasing online, and print off the e-mail PDF you receive.

Two collection windows will be in operation solely for League Cup Final ticket collections, with four windows selling tickets. Those looking to collect tickets for any match other than the League Cup Final, including tonight's match, should collect from the street entrance to the Ticket Office.

Behind the Goals will be open from 5.30pm tonight, with both suites open to season ticket holders and a guest. Please note Behind the Goals will not reopen after the match.

The Living It Up team, in partnership with GameChanger, will be in the West Stand Lower pre-match today to offer taking blood pressures and measuring body mass index for any fan who wishes it.

The match programme #GGTTH will be on sale outside the ground ahead of kick off, priced at £2. This week's programme includes an interview with Chris Dagnall, Scott Brown is In

That Number's #18 and the latest from Hibernian Ladies and the Academy.

Firefighters battling to save properties in Bathgate



Firefighters are battling to save properties after a burst water main caused severe flooding Bathgate.

They were alerted at 8.23am this morning to reports of flooding at a large number of properties at the town's Meikle Inch Lane.

Crews from Bathgate and Livingston fire stations rushed to the scene at 8.29am and quickly ensured residents were safe before dealing directly with the water.

Firefighters began diverting the flood water into a nearby river.

Specialist trained water rescue crews are involved and are using sand bags to protect the properties as well as using a high volume pump to help bring water levels down.

Seventeen properties have been affected and the incident is ongoing.

Group Manager Alan Horberry said: "We are working closely with Scottish Water, West Lothian Council and Police Scotland to ensure public safety throughout this incident."

A Police Scotland spokesman said: "Police in West Lothian

responded to Mossie Terrace in Bathgate at around 8.20 a.m. on Wednesday 24th February after a ruptured water main resulted in extensive flooding within the street.

“Several households have been affected and local officers continue to work alongside colleagues from West Lothian Council, The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Water to evacuate residents and stop the flooding.

“Members of the public are advised to avoid the area during this multi-agency operation.”

Police have closed both Leyland Road and Meikle Inch Lane.

Countess of Strathearn visits Edinburgh



On a lovely sunny morning the Duchess of Strathearn has put a smile on many people's faces here in Edinburgh.

Welcomed by The Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh the Rt Hon Donald Wilson, she stepped into the playground at Gracemount Primary School where one of the pupils presented her with a bouquet. There had been much practising of curtsies before then!

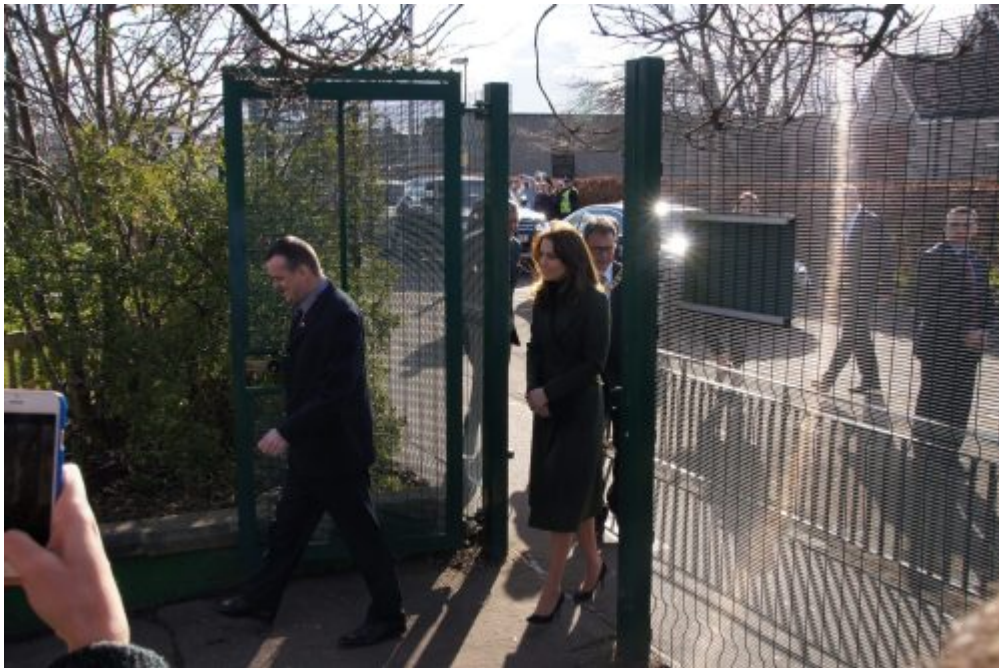














The Duchess of Cambridge, also known as The Countess of Strathearn in Scotland, will visit three school based charity projects in Edinburgh on Wednesday 24th February. The focus of the day is on the valuable partnerships that exist locally between charities, communities and schools to deliver a range of integrated programmes and sporting activities designed to nurture children and young people.

In the morning, Her Royal Highness will continue her work in support of the mental health of children with visits to two of her patronages who have a presence in Edinburgh – Place2Be and The Art Room.

Her Royal Highness was in the school for about an hour and then left to huge cheers from the assembled pupils.



The Countess stopped to speak to several children on her way out of the school



The Lord Provost accompanied Her Royal Highness during her visit to St Catherine's Primary School in Gracemount.

Hibs announce unveiling of East Terrace Stones this Saturday



Hibs have announced that the unveiling of East Terrace Stones purchased in the first phase of sales will be on the morning of Saturday 27 February.

Starting at 10am, supporters will be able to gain access to the area around the East Terrace Stones via the gates at Hawkhill Avenue, before a special set of interviews takes place with special guests at 10:15am.

The itinerary for the event is as follows:

Saturday 27 February 2016

10am – Arrive at the East Terrace – entrance via Hawkhill Avenue gates

10:15am – Welcome and interviews (we will have 4 guests appearing to unveil the stones)

10:30am – Panels revealed

Gates will remain open until 12pm to allow for photographs.

Due to the volume of stones installed over the first phase, invites will be limited to three per stone purchased and supporters are asked to confirm their attendance by emailing Brett McGoldrick at bmcgoldrick@hibernianfc.co.uk.

Fans unable to make this date should get in contact with Brett McGoldrick who can arrange another time for them to come into Easter Road Stadium to view their stone.

A Hibs' spokesman said: "The Club would like to thank all supporters who bought a stone and had it inscribed with their own special messages, those who done so, and supplied the Club with inscription details by 15 January, then your stone will be part of the unveiling this weekend."

Woman robbed of handbag in Nicolson Street common stair



Police are appealing for information following an assault and robbery in a common stair in Edinburgh which took place around 1.25am on Monday morning.

A 20 year old woman entered the stair on Nicolson Street and a man took hold of her from behind. There was a struggle and she fell to the ground. The man and a second man pulled her

handbag from her and ran off towards the bridges.

Detective Constable John McShane from Craigmillar CID said: "The woman was extremely shaken by this attack but fortunately not seriously hurt. I'm keen to speak to anyone who was in Nicolson Street at the time of the assault and robbery and may have seen the two men before or after."

The first man is described as white, in his 30s, of slim build, 5 foot 6 inches tall and was wearing a dark grey hooded top, a dark puffer body warmer and dark jogging bottoms. The second man was white and of slim build and was also wearing dark joggers.

The handbag contained items including a laptop and a rare coin. DC McShane continued: "We have since recovered the coin and a 44 year old woman has been arrested and charged for reset and will be appearing at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on 20 April. The laptop is still missing and so I want to hear from anyone who may be offered such an item in suspicious circumstances."

Anyone with information which may assist the enquiry should contact Police Scotland on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Alan Stubbs appreciates the efforts of the Hibs' supporters



Alan Stubbs is anticipating a difficult game against Greenock

Morton at Easter Road tonight as Hibs aim to move to within five points of Championship leaders Rangers in the race for automatic promotion.

Both previous games this season have ended in narrow wins for Hibs and everyone at Easter Road would happily settle for that.

Tonight's fixture represents Hibs' third home match in a row, in the space of eight days and Stubbs fully appreciates the support that has been given to the team, and he knows that the players' efforts will always be valued by everyone at the Club.

Speaking to Hibernian TV, Stubbs said: "It will be a difficult game for us, Morton are a threat to us, they've got players in their team that can hurt us and we need to make sure that we go about our job right, which we will.

"We are professional and the players who are selected for the game, make sure that they come out and perform and pick up maximum points."

"It's good that we are at home. This is our third game in a row at home now and I know that that can play a big burden on people's wallets and purses.

"Obviously we appreciated the efforts of our supporters all the time as they turn out in numbers, I'm sure we will have the support right behind us again on Wednesday – it will be fully appreciated as always."

The Head Coach also revealed that the side have no fresh injury concerns, with Martin Boyle, who scored a double against Alloa, staying at home on Tuesday due to him feeling ill.

He also gave an update on the progress of Danny Handling and Fraser Fyvie, who continue to work their way back to fitness

following injury.

"We are good from the weekend, as in no fresh injuries. Martin Boyle wasn't in today because he was feeling a little under the weather, but we're hopeful that he'll feel okay come kick-off time tomorrow.

"Fraser is obviously still injured, but he is doing really well and we are pleased with how he is coming on. The only other one would be Danny Handling, who is doing great, and he's back on the grass running and doing ball work and we are hoping to see him in the next seven to ten days, training with the first-team hopefully."