

# Hibs appeal against McGinn red card to be heard of Thursday



Hibs have lodged an appeal against the red card shown to midfield star John McGinn during Saturday's Championship match against Falkirk at Easter Road.

Referee Kevin Clancy had already waved away two penalty claims in a first half totally dominated by Hibs before he sent the Scotland Under 21 captain off following a challenge on Mark Kerr.

McGinn had picked up the ball outside the area and looked to be impeded by two Falkirk defenders before he lost possession and lunged at Kerr in an effort to win back the ball.

Clancy immediately produced the red card and Kerr continued without treatment.

The decision earned him a chorus of boos from three sides of the stadium as he left the field at both half time and full time.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs said after the game: "He's just overstretched for it, you've seen him do that and win the ball and I've got to say when you look back, it is malicious? Not at all.

"Has he caught him? Yes he has. but you could easily have seen a yellow card given."

The appeal will be heard on Thursday.

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# Purslane Restaurant has a new look



*Sam Smith sings “the writing’s on the wall..” but at Purslane restaurant in St Stephen Street, Stockbridge, a stunning wall of reclaimed wood is currently taking centre stage.*

Purslane, which was voted Scotland’s Best Fine Dining Restaurant 2015 in the Scottish Entertainment & Hospitality Awards, has just celebrated its fourth anniversary by unveiling its new look, which consists of a new warm and inviting colour scheme of rich browns, creams and caramels, set off by the “talking point” feature wall of reclaimed wood, a mixture of old railway sleepers and other weathered timbers.



The wall opposite the feature wall is now bedecked with two pieces of original Billy Connolly artwork, “The Glaswegian Icarus” and “The Man on the Grass”, chosen by chef /proprietor of Purslane, Paul Gunning himself, to provide additional conversation pieces.

Paul brought his wealth of experience to bear when setting up Purslane four years ago. He has worked at a number of five star hotels and Michelin starred restaurants such as Riverroom MPW with Marco Pierre-White, Number One, at the Balmoral under Jeff Bland, and Auberge Du Lac , under Phil Thompson.





He takes up the story on his quest for a new look for his restaurant which is now one of the Capital's finest fine dining establishments: "Four years down the line and I decided that the restaurant could do with a refresh, the old decor had become tired, " said Paul." It's a small and intimate space and we are known for offering fine dining by candlelight so I wanted to maintain Purslane's cosy and welcoming atmosphere but make a bit of a statement at the same time."

"As the fourth anniversary of the business first opening was approaching I thought what better way to celebrate and look to the future, than to invest back into the look of the restaurant."

Paul explained that, with the help of friends and family, he had raised some finance to spend on the refurbishment.

"When we first opened Purslane, the main emphasis was to make sure the kitchen was professionally equipped to produce the type of food I wanted to offer my clients. The interior design was secondary at that time, although I am still pleased with the look we created. Now that I have built up a successful customer base, I am able to turn my attention to a more indulgent design."

Paul enlisted the help of recent interior design graduate Rebecca McClement who completed her degree at Heriot-Watt University, and together they came up with new look for Purslane. "It was very much a collaboration between us," said Paul. "Rebecca brought some great ideas to the table as well

as bags of enthusiasm. The old look was far too fussy, we wanted something much cleaner. This design with the feature wall makes use of wood that we already had in the restaurant, so its eco friendly too.”

“Splintr, the local firm of joiners we selected to work on the project, were brilliant to deal with. They installed a new bar and cellar doors too. We all pulled together as I wanted the restaurant back open and trading within three days. We had customers booked in for the Saturday lunchtime so it all had to be finished on time,” said Paul. “I have already had very positive feedback on the new look.”

Said Rebecca: “As a recent graduate, this is just the type of project I was keen to get involved with. I have really enjoyed working with Paul and it will be a springboard onto other things for me. I hope that I have helped Purslane stand out in the competitive world of fine dining in Edinburgh, as the food is already top notch. I am pleased that after working so hard to build up the clientele over the past four years that Paul can now have the look and design he has always wanted in his restaurant.”

As regards the new Billy Connolly pictures, Paul revealed that he had been a fan of the comedy legend’s artwork for some time.

“These pictures are an investment for me, and I think they just finish off the look of restaurant, as well as getting conversation going between customers” said Paul. “They are the type of images that can mean different things to different people. “The Man on the Grass” for example has been called Connolly’s version of the Vitruvian Man, the famous Da Vinci painting highlighted in the Da Vinci Code. They are certainly quirky and amusing – I really like that about them.”

Purslane Restaurant is open Tuesday to Sunday, 12 noon til 2pm for lunch and from 6pm til 11.30pm for dinner. A variety of

dining options are available for lunch and dinner with five and seven course taster menus on offer. Call 0131 226 3500 to book or check out the web at [www.purslanerestaurant.co.uk](http://www.purslanerestaurant.co.uk).

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## Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Gavin Corbett



*There is light on the horizon for the tenants of Lorne Street according to GAVIN CORBETT*

I've met the tenants of Lorne Street, off Leith Walk in Edinburgh, a couple of times now. The first time was a few weeks back, with a small group, then again this week, when 50 or so came to a meeting in Lorne Primary School.

Their predicament is well-known and has been well-trailed in the press thanks to the sterling efforts of the tenants who have formed themselves into an association, Lorne Community Association. In short, their landlord, the Agnes Hunter Trust, has decided that its charitable aims – providing grants to good causes – are no longer best-served by retaining an extensive property portfolio and using rents as an income to fund the grants.

The Trust might well be right in that judgement. The flats are all well over a hundred years old and managing and maintaining a property portfolio of that size is not something that can be done as a sideline. However, the way the Trust has gone about that transition – selling off flats as they become empty and giving intention to serve notice on all the

remaining tenants has understandably caused huge anxiety and anger among 100 tenants, some of whom have lived there for decades and quite reasonably believed that their homes were secure as long as they continued to pay rent in good faith.



Cllr Gavin Corbett

So when I first was alerted to what was happening it struck me fairly quickly that the tenants were not being well-served by their current landlord and that the Trust is probably right to seek to surrender its landlord role. A social landlord – such as a housing association – could do a better job, could manage the properties better, could do repairs and improvements more comprehensively and could give tenants more confidence that their best interests are being looked after. Housing associations are also regulated quite closely by the Scottish Housing Regulator and that is not the case for private trusts.

In other words, there is a possible win-win here – with the Trust achieving its aim of getting out of its property holdings and the tenants getting a landlord who is more attuned to their needs.

The critical point, of course, is that transition from private to social landlord should be a managed one, with sporadic sales and threats of eviction taken out of the equation.

Social landlords can come in various guises – from tenant-led and controlled housing co-operatives, to housing associations, to councils themselves (and City of Edinburgh Council is the largest social landlord in the city). All three options have been on the table here. The housing co-operative model has been mooted given the city council's aim to be a co-operative council, although I detect some nervousness among the tenants about the scale of the undertaking. Meanwhile, at the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, my Green colleagues also asked that the council explore the possibility of the

properties becoming council-owned – again perfectly possible, within the different ownership models and prudential borrowing powers that the council has. Both options should continue to be kept under review. My own personal view is that the local housing association option is probably the best fit.

So it was a real pleasure to listen to Keith Anderson of Port of Leith Housing Association (PoLHA) last Monday night address tenants about the possibility of PoLHA taking on the tenancies. I've known Keith for about 20 years and can vouch for his unstinting commitment to social housing. And, of course, PoLHA is the locally-based association. So it is potentially the perfect solution.

The proposal is this: PoLHA, through its subsidiary, Persevere, would take on the tenancies as they stand, with people paying mid-market rents, much as they do at present. Tenants would retain the same statutory rights as they have at present (a mix of pre 1989 regulated tenancies and assured and short assured tenancies). The difference is that they would be tenants of a social landlord, through its subsidiary, which PoLHA has set up, as have many housing associations, to develop intermediate market housing.

As a proposal it was met with genuine enthusiasm by the tenants I chatted with. But Keith and PoLHA rightly cautioned that it was only a possibility at this stage.

If it is to happen two things need to take place.

First of all, PoLHA is planning a detailed survey, with surveyors F3, between now and March, accessing as many of the properties as it can, so it can assess the conditions and so allow an assessment of catch-up repairs needed and what investment is required over the next 30 years.

Using that information plus calculating what rents are and are likely to be in the future, allows PoLHA to calculate what the flats are worth in their current status – that is, with



sitting tenants who would remain there.

In the meantime, the Trust needs to suspend sales of individual properties and step back from any action to recover tenancies (it has already extended the date to 1 July 2016).

Secondly, the Trust has to be willing to sell at that price. Early on, the Trust appeared to be saying that it was seeking maximum price for the flats – that is, selling on the open market with vacant possession. To do so would be to pass the costs of eviction and homelessness onto the public sector in a way that sits ill with the Trust as a charitable body. It is hard to see how a charitable trust could continue to operate with integrity if that were to happen: gaining the whole world but losing its soul.

It is a point I raised directly with the charity regulator OSCR. Conservatively, it argued that since the Trust's charitable objectives were not directly related to housing or homelessness there was no inherent contradiction in grants for good causes being funded on the back of capital receipts the price of which is someone else's homelessness. That is an odd view to take in my view, but that notwithstanding, it is quite another leap to argue that, in order to maximise its grant-giving activities the Trust is *obliged* to extract the highest-possible price for the flats, irrespective of the consequences. That would be an absurd conclusion and would carry enormous credibility risk for both the Trust and OSCR.

Thankfully, the Trust now seems much more open to the middle way: where it will receive a receipt for the properties but that price will inevitably be lower to reflect the fact that tenants will remain in situ with rents below open market level and that PoLHA will need to fund a programme of catch up repairs and future improvements.

So from the ashes of anger and anxiety something very positive might emerge. All it needs now is a healthy dose of goodwill

and pragmatism which allows the tenants of Lorne Street to live in safe, warm and secure homes with a social landlord and the Trust to re-focus on its core purpose in future years.

The sooner that happens, the better.

*Gavin Corbett is a Green councillor in Edinburgh and has worked in housing for 28 years*

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## **First Minister agrees timetable for fiscal framework with David Cameron**



*Scotland Bill, Trade Union Bill and security all on the agenda today.*

A fair and final deal on the fiscal framework accompanying the Scotland Bill has to be in place by February, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon agreed with Prime Minister David Cameron at a meeting in Downing Street today.

The fiscal framework is crucial to determining Scotland's budget once new tax powers are devolved and both parties have now agreed that the arrangement should be a fair deal for both parties.

The First Minister also used the meeting to raise the issue of the strong opposition in Scotland to the Trade Union Bill with the Prime Minister, and their discussions also covered ongoing security matters.

Following the meeting, the First Minister said:

“I have made clear to the Prime Minister that I want to conclude a deal on the fiscal framework in time for the Scotland Bill to pass into law before the Scottish elections, however, I will not sign up to a deal that is unfair to Scotland.

“Getting this agreement right is vital to ensure that Scotland isn’t worse off by hundreds of millions of pounds a year simply as a result of the transfer of powers that have been promised.

“We were both able to agree that the financial deal that goes alongside the extra powers transferring to Scotland must be fair for everyone involved and that both governments want to secure a deal by February to allow the Scotland Bill to move forward.

“Following today’s discussion I hope the Prime Minister now understands the issues of key importance to the Scottish Government and that some real progress can be made towards an agreement.”

On the Trade Union Bill the First Minister said:

“There is widespread opposition from across Scottish society and the Scottish Parliament to the Trade Union Bill and it is essential that the Prime Minister understands that.

“Unfortunately the Prime Minister does not share my concerns. However, we will continue to work to find ways to prevent this damaging legislation coming into force north of the border.”

On security the First Minister said:

“I also received a security update from the Prime Minister and measures being taken to protect the UK. We are aware of the challenges we face and we have said consistently that we support law enforcement agencies and the security and

intelligence agencies in having the powers they require in order to keep our communities safe.

“However, we take people’s civil liberties extremely seriously too and we need to make sure that these powers should only be used when it is necessary and proportionate to do so.”

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## The newest café in town wins prestigious award

Right next to the City Chambers there is a tourist attraction which you may not have even thought of visiting if you live in the capital. But now they have a coffee shop....and not just any old coffee shop but one which has won an award.

The team at The Real Mary King’s Close is celebrating after becoming the 1000<sup>th</sup> business to receive the prestigious *Taste Our Best* accreditation for its new café, The Royal Exchange Coffee House.

The *Taste Our Best* accreditation from VisitScotland ensures that guests are eating quality ingredients of Scottish provenance and the freshest seasonal produce. Receiving the prestigious accolade within months of opening its new café highlights the standards the five-star attraction sets itself.



Craig Miller General Manager at The Real Mary King’s Close commented: “We are delighted to be the 1000th business to receive the *Taste Our Best* accreditation from VisitScotland. At The Real Mary King’s Close we pride ourselves in offering our guests an authentic experience of Scottish history and we

wanted to extend this authenticity to our recently opened café, The Royal Exchange Coffee House.”

The café offers the perfect place to escape the hustle and bustle of the Royal Mile to warm up with a luxury latte or to enjoy a bite to eat in the heart of Edinburgh’s Old Town.



The menu features locally sourced produce and Scottish favourites. With a range of delectable dishes from Haggis, Neeps and Tatties to Highland Cullen Skink, there’s plenty on the menu for guests to savour the real taste of Scotland.

The Royal Exchange Coffee House opened in summer 2015 as part of a £500,000 redevelopment project at The Real Mary King’s Close. The café’s name alludes to The Royal Exchange Coffee House which operated between the mid-18th and early 19th centuries and could be accessed via what is now the Quadrangle of the City Chambers.

The Real Mary King’s Close is a Continuum Heritage Attraction. Now celebrating its 31st year, Continuum Attractions boasts a nationwide portfolio of popular and commercially successful cultural visitor attractions. Continuum’s attractions collectively welcome over one million visitors a year.



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## **Christmas gift idea – a voucher from Health & Beauty**

# Juicery

This is probably going to be the most 'juice full' present you give this Christmas. This new Edinburgh based company has the freshest range of cold-pressed juices south of the North Pole to deliver straight to your front door.



These are not just any old juices. These are chock full of goodness (with 1kg of vegetables in a 500 ml bottle) and meant to be used in a variety of ways.

You may like a rest from the over-indulgences of the festive period and can use these juices to cleanse your system, or if you are playing sport then you might like to drink the Health & Beauty Juicery juice after exercising to enhance recovery. Whatever the reason the best thing about them is that they taste ho ho ho so good!



Buy a gift voucher from the company website which you will find [here](#) or email the team at [info@healthandbeautyjuicery.com](mailto:info@healthandbeautyjuicery.com) and they will send you the voucher to give to your friends or relatives.

Great idea for a Secret Santa too!





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**Practically Slim Scotland  
offers a one-stop shop for**

# weight loss

Practically Slim Scotland, Scotland's latest weight loss company and a one stop shop for a whole range of industry leading wellness products, has launched a new revolutionary express "weigh and go" service.

Named "Your weight, your way" by the Edinburgh businesswoman behind the firm in Scotland, Tracey Fiskien, the service will operate three nights a week from Practically Slim Scotland's base in John's Place.

Costing customers only £3.50 per session, the service is the cheapest of its kind in the Scottish weight loss sector at the moment. Clients can opt to be mentored and coached by Tracey if they choose, to aid their weight loss and help keep the weight off for good, and they can go onto one of Practically Slim's plans which include a complete meal replacement weight loss product range, but this is not essential."



Said Tracey:" Clients can be on any diet plan and still come in to me to be weighed and monitored, they don't have to be using one of my programmes. I am providing what is probably Scotland's most flexible service to suit people at various stages of weight loss. That is why I came up with this whole concept of Your Weight Your Way, it's very close to my heart that we don't want to instil a rigid programme on them."

"It's a new way of approaching weight loss," she said, "I am here to support everyone, men and women of any age, and they can mix and match from the products I supply if they want. As well as Practically Slim shakes, I supply brand new products from the States from a firm called Total Life Changes. This includes weight loss and health benefit tea and coffee which has been very popular."



“I have a great deal of experience in this industry and in the past clients perhaps felt they had to stick to one programme and it maybe did not work for them. It could end up costing them a great deal of money and in some cases they ended up putting the weight back on. Now, mentoring and getting to the causes of the weight gain has become a key issue, as we want to help people find a long term solution.”

Tracey finished by saying that she hoped John’s Place would become a supportive “hub” for those committed to losing weight. Clients can also make themselves feel better whilst they lost weight by accessing beauty treatments.

“It’s a definitive top to toe approach,” she said.

Practically Slim Scotland offers a range of nine calorie, gluten free, carb free pasta, rice and noodle dishes which are 100% RDA compliant. With a number of programmes available, the company can offer a personally designed weight loss programme for clients which is designed one to one with them.

To contact Tracey call 07810 316555.

Practically Slim Scotland is based at 3 Johns Place, Edinburgh EH6 7EN.

The weigh and go service is available on Mondays from 6-7pm, Thursday from 5-6pm and Friday from 6-7pm.

Submitted by [clare graham](#)

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## South Queensferry is open for

# business




***Queensferry BID reassures visitors it is business as usual as community refuses to become a ghost town***

“South Queensferry is open for business.”

That’s the message from Queensferry Ambition (QA), which is working with the council, media, businesses and community groups to lessen the impact of the Forth Road Bridge closure on the town.

According to the BID (Business Improvement District), there are now even more reasons to visit the historic burgh – especially since it’s one of the few Christmas shopping, dining and tourist destinations still easily accessible from Edinburgh.

QA is keen to spread the word that it is very much business as usual and that the town, which is home to a number of independent gift retailers, restaurants, cafes and artisan food producers, is only a 20-minute public transport ride from Edinburgh.

 Project Manager Maggie Mitchell said: “It’s unfortunate that the Forth Road Bridge closure has affected visitors coming across from Fife but, if anything, it’s become a much more attractive place to visit for those in and around Edinburgh.

“It’s one of the few places on the Fife side that’s still easily accessible and there are plenty of buses and trains to bring visitors directly to the heart of the town in less than half an hour.

“What’s more, for those who are driving, the roads are much quieter than they would be normally – taking the stress out of

any commute.

“Queensferry is a little bit of quiet away from the hustle and bustle of the city and, situated between the two iconic bridges, it’s a great place for festive dining. It has so much to offer – particularly in the run up to Christmas.

“If you’re into engineering, it’s also a great place to observe the work that’s being carried out!”

As well as liaising with the local Council and community groups, QA is working closely with Queensferry businesses, such as Maisie’s gift shop and The Boathouse restaurant, as well as Marketing Edinburgh, to reassure and attract visitors to the town while the bridge remains closed for essential repairs.

Responding to recent concerns that the community is becoming a ‘ghost town’, Maggie added: “Yes, it’s been challenging but we have to look at the positives and work that little bit harder to remind people we’re here and open for business.”

Find out more at [www.queensferryambition.co.uk](http://www.queensferryambition.co.uk)

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## **Indoor Hockey – Women’s Indoor League, Div. 1.**

### ***Mixed fortunes for Ladies at Stirling***



Scottish Hockey’s Women’s National Indoor League played their second round of matches at Stirling’s Forthbank Sports Complex at the weekend.

Both teams played two matches in the, not quite Round-robin,

set-up, with CALA winning one and losing and Inverleith losing both.

The first match involving the teams was against each other and, in the nature of indoor hockey, it was a fast and furious affair right from the start.

CALA took an early lead with an Amber McNeill penalty stroke on the five-minute mark, but despite dominating play, some goalkeeping heroics from Inverleith's, Vikki Hansen, kept the score to 1-0 at the break.

A second goal two minutes into the half from open play was scored by CALA's Lucy Lannigan, before Inverleith's Carly Bissett pulled one back for the North Edinburgh side with a well taken penalty corner.

However, a third goal 9 minutes from time, via a second penalty stroke – this one from Amy Costello – was enough to see CALA home to the tune of 3-0.



Inverleith's second match, just less than an hour later, was against Aberdeen's, Bon Accord, who, earlier in the day had gone down 8-0 to western Wildcats.

Once again, Inverleith were under the cosh from the opposition as Bon Accord's Milly Merry scored after five minutes from open play.

Inverleith managed to hold the fort for the rest of the half, Vikki Hansen once again being called on to keep the ball out of the net, and forced a fine save from Bon Accord's keeper late in the half from a penalty corner.

Five minutes into the half, however, Bon Accord went two goals up when Nik Davidson sent the ball behind the charging Hansen from a penalty corner.

A third goal less than five minutes later from another penalty corner, this time Ruth Cox 'nutmegging' Hansen on the edge of the 'D', sealed the match for the Aberdeen side.

CALA's second match was played later in the day and they went down 6-2 to Western Wildcats.

The weekend's games now leave CALA in fifth place in the Div.

1 table with three points and Inverleith at the foot, still to get off the mark.

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

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## Two teenagers arrested following theft of bikes



Two teenagers have been arrested and charged following the theft of £10,000 worth of bikes.

Between 20 September and 10 October, 15 bikes secured at a storage area in Bainfield Place and surrounding business premises in the Fountainbridge area were stolen.

Due to extensive enquiries carried out by local Community Ward Officers two males, aged 15 and 18, have been arrested and charged with a total of 18 offences.

PC Simon Wotton, a Council-funded Community Ward Officer for Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart, said: "So far, three bikes worth around £1,000 each have been recovered. We continue to work with officers in the Search & Recovery Team to trace the rest, and reunite these with their rightful owners.

"Tackling the theft of personal property is a priority within our ward, and if you have any information or concerns about theft in your area please speak to a local officer, contact Police Scotland on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."

A report had been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

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# Two Edinburgh teenagers selected for national writing project



Mikaela Carmichael who is 16, and Anni Cameron aged 17 have been chosen along with eight others to work on the national What's Your Story project.

This will mean that the two poets will draft up the programme for a creative writing conference in June 2016 along with a network of illustrators and young writers across Scotland.

The resources will be developed by the ten teenagers and in collaboration with Scottish Book Trust and their partners the material will be used for young writers across Scotland in an online format.

The ten teenagers will include a screenwriter, writers of travelogues and life stories, a novelist and two short story writers. Mikaela who is from Liberton is an aspiring Gaelic poet and Anni is also a poet and lives in Joppa.



Mikaela Carmichael

Speaking about the project, Mikaela said: "I'm really passionate about Gaelic writing and I thought this would be a good opportunity to learn from a mentor and also to organise an event that would help inspire other young people to take up Gaelic writing because there really aren't enough of us."

Anni commented: "This is a good opportunity and a good way to

explore myself on a deeper level.”

Nicole Brandon, Young Writers Co-ordinator at Scottish Book Trust said: “The enthusiasm for creative writing and illustration shown by our ten teens in the initial weeks of the programme has been both extraordinary and joyous. Their faith in the ability of literature to inspire adventure, empathy and imagination has given What’s Your Story? phenomenal momentum, and we cannot wait to showcase their contributions to Scotland’s literary and creative culture.

“Their passion and conviction only reaffirms that young people have always deserved to be a part of our literary culture as creators and critics – not resigned to a default role as consumers. As access points to that side of our creative culture, Scotland’s literary organisations have a responsibility to help them get involved. It’s our privilege to follow the lead of our teenage participants and create new and fruitful opportunities for them and their peers to connect with each other, grow in confidence and ability, and collaborate to create their own new facet to Scotland’s literary culture.”

**What’s Your Story?** is funded by **Time to Shine**, Creative Scotland’s arts strategy for young people, and is intended to celebrate and nurture the talent and ambition of young writers and illustrators of all backgrounds, connect them with others across the country who hold similar interests, and help them shape the future of literature in Scotland. The support of **The Gaelic Books Council** has aided this goal through specific provision for a teen participant working in Gaelic.

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# Commission on Land Tax Reform issues its recommendations



The Commission on Land Tax Reform has concluded that the present Council Tax system must end, with any replacement designed to be fairer, more progressive and locally empowering.

The cross-party commission established jointly by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) today published its final [report, Just Change: A New Approach to Local Taxation.](#)

The Commission highlights that its very membership – encompassing four political parties, local and central government, and experts in public finance, law, housing, welfare and equalities is a unique and bold statement of intent, creating “an opportunity not to be missed”.

The Commission does not advocate any single alternative to the present system, highlighting that “There is no one ideal local tax”. In making the case for change, the Commission’s report shows that local taxation can be fairer and more progressive.

They examined three alternative types of tax system that could be applied at the local level to replace the present Council Tax – taxes on property, taxes on land and taxes on income. Their analysis extends to the potential impact of each on different households and how the tax might be administered.

They also considered the impacts each would have on the financial accountability of Local Government, concluding that “A well-designed local tax system drawing revenue from multiple sources would provide more options for local democracy, delivering greater financial accountability and



autonomy to Local Government.”

They expect their report to inform the development of alternative local taxation policies which will be put to the electorate in the Scottish Parliamentary election in May 2016, recognising that political parties will attach different weights to the considerations for each alternative local tax.

The report does not set out tax rates or recommend levels of taxation.

Welcoming the report, Marco Biagi MSP, Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment and Co-Chair of the Commission said: “In publishing our report today, we put to the Scottish people the most comprehensive quantitative analysis ever undertaken to understand the links between different forms of local taxation, backed by an extensive programme of public engagement.

“From the outset – having agreed that the present system is unfair and in need of reform – we have worked together in a spirit of consensus to understand the alternatives available to us and to put to the people of Scotland a report that clearly sets out the steps that can be taken to deliver change.

“It is now up to politicians from across the political spectrum, to take today’s report and to use it to put to the Scottish people alternatives that are fair, workable and empowering for local communities.”

Andy Wightman, local government spokesperson for the Scottish Greens, and a member of the commission today welcomed the recommendations.

Reform of local tax and democracy has been a consistent priority for the Scottish Greens, with Andy Wightman, renowned for his expertise in these issues, writing a substantial report for the Green MSPs in 2014.

Council tax has been frozen by the Scottish Government since 2008, removing local flexibility and forcing councils to downgrade or cut services. Participation in local government elections in Scotland is amongst the worst in Europe.

Today's report by the Commission says council tax is "discredited", local government should have a greater choice of taxes, and that Land Value Tax – a longstanding policy of the Scottish Greens – is "promising" and "further work should be done". It recommends transitional relief to enable taxpayers to adjust to any new systems brought in.

Andy Wightman, Scottish Green MSP candidate for Lothian in 2016 and a member of the Commission on Local Tax Reform, said:

"It is vital that the next Parliament puts in place an enduring, stable and flexible fiscal framework for local government that provides fiscal autonomy and enhanced democracy.

"All political parties seek representation on local councils and all should have an interest in ensuring that they are able to offer genuine, costed choices to the electorate in 2017. The Scottish Green Party will consider the findings of the Commission carefully and bring forward proposals in our manifesto for the 2016 Holyrood election.

"For too long, local government has been neglected and marginalised in debate about the democratic future of Scotland. The council tax freeze has cost over £2.5 billion that could, instead, have been invested in public services.

"The freeze has, in addition, undermined local democracy by forcing councils between a rock and a hard place. This interference in local fiscal autonomy would be unconstitutional in countries such as Germany and must end.

"The recommendations of the Commission are welcome. The onus is now on all political parties to work together to agree a

programme of reform that puts local government taxation, funding and democratic freedoms on a new footing and allows local communities to have a far greater say in how local services are delivered and paid for.”

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## Christmas Gift idea – at the Botanics



The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has a shop full of things which might excite the gardeners or wildlife lovers on your Christmas list, but there is also something else which you might consider.

You could buy a gift of membership for the Botanics which will come in the form of a beautifully designed card which explains the benefits of membership and a temporary card to use right away.

Gift cards are also available for [purchase on the website](#) or by calling the Membership Office on [0131 552 5339](#).



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## Five things you need to know

# today Edinburgh



What do you call a gathering of ecologists?

Light a Light tonight

Doors of Advent – open the door at the Assembly Rooms

Star Wars opens this week

Old Town Chambers win again



Ecologists are gathering in Edinburgh today to call for more research on rewilding, warning that without greater clarity on the term's meaning and desired outcomes, the opportunities that rewilding offers could be jeopardised as the debate becomes increasingly polarised.

More than 1,000 ecologists gather in the capital this week for the British Ecological Society's annual meeting, where Dr Nathalie Pettorelli of the Zoological Society of London is organising a session on rewilding.

With some 16 rewilding projects underway in the UK, the meeting will hear from those involved in reintroducing beavers to Scotland, rewilding schemes in Wales, as well as lessons we can learn from mainland Europe.

Rewilding stirs strong emotions among the public, landowners, farmers and campaigners, and Pettorelli hopes the session will shed some light on what is becoming an increasingly hot topic.

According to Professor Henrique Pereira from the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research: "Rewilding is a fascinating topic for the public for two reasons. First, because it is a positive environmental story offering an

opportunity to have more nature around us in the near future.

“Second, because it arouses conflicting emotions. Some people worry about loss of cultural landscapes and others see an opportunity for having more space for wildlife.”

Pereira’s research focuses on grazers in Portugal’s Peneda-Gerês National Park and the bird life that has returned to the Oder Delta in Germany following restoration of natural flood plains.

Also speaking at the meeting is Dr Calum Brown of the University of Edinburgh, who thinks that while huge public interest represents a major opportunity for rewilding, competing interests must be acknowledged and accommodated.

“Since the last Ice Age, Scotland has gained and then lost a remarkable variety of species. There is now increasing interest in restoring some of this lost biodiversity and establishing ‘rewilded’ areas where natural processes can once again occur uninterrupted. However, there are many other interests at play in modern Scotland, and restoration projects must take account of their social, political, economic and environmental contexts if they are to be successful,” he says.



St Columba’s Hospice will be turning on the lights on the Tree of Remembrance in Charlotte Square Gardens. The large Christmas tree will be lit up following speeches from Sir Tom Farmer, sponsor of the event; and Hospice nurse Rona Thornton. There will also be carol singing before the tree is lit up to remember those who have passed away.

Charlotte Square Gardens at 6.30pm.



You are invited to discover the hidden heritage of Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms today as the historic George Street venue joins the capital's 24 Doors of Advent celebration.

Day 14 of Edinburgh's real-life advent calendar adventure will invite visitors into a world of captivating history, with highlights including the splendid sights of the 18<sup>th</sup> century ballroom and impressive acoustics of the A-listed building's Music Hall.

[Read more here.](#)



Will this be the earliest showing of the new Star Wars movie in Edinburgh? The Dominion on Newbattle Terrace are showing it on Wednesday 16 December at 23.40. Has anyone got any advance on that?

Tickets are [here](#).

Meanwhile here is the trailer:




Old Town Chambers, luxury five star serviced apartments found in the heart of old Edinburgh, has scooped two industry awards for best guest experience and best hospitality, at the annual Association of Serviced Apartment Providers (ASAP) Awards.

The annual convention, which is in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, took place in London on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, giving industry peers a chance to meet with key operators, suppliers and agents, before the glitzy dinner and awards were announced.

Read more [here](#)



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# Edinburgh Airport calls for rethink on London airports



In the light of the UK Government's decision to delay a decision on new London airports capacity, the chief executive of Edinburgh Airport has called for Scotland to rethink its relationship with London's airports.

Gordon Dewar, Edinburgh Airport's Chief Executive, said:

"Regardless of the merits of its case, we have long believed that a new runway at Heathrow is undeliverable and would in any case be a poor choice for Scotland. We are where we have been many times before and it is time for new thinking.

"At Edinburgh, we will launch 26 new routes between this winter and next summer and our unprecedented growth is being driven by direct international traffic, in turn fuelled by Edinburgh and Scotland's growing global reputation as a year round destination for international visitors.

"We now have some of the world's largest airlines serving Europe, the Middle East and North America from Edinburgh.

"We no longer need to think of ourselves as feeder airports for London airports, whether Heathrow or Gatwick, and the

Government's move to delay a final decision on London airports must be seen as an opportunity to rethink our relationship with those airports in the south.

"We might be owned by the same company that owns Gatwick, but we are run independently and I am happy to compete aggressively with Gatwick and other airports for Scotland's share of air traffic to and from this country. That competition can only exist if we move on from the age-old obsession with Heathrow, which has been supported many times in the past and which has been grounded every time.

"Our plans for further expansion go hand-in-hand with aspirations for Scotland to have greater leverage on global scale; Edinburgh Airport's growth directly leads to job creation and enhances connectivity and tourism spending here in Scotland.

"Scotland is punching above its weight in the world aviation industry; all of our airports – supported by the Scottish Government and others – are better connected than they have ever been.

"We should be confidently standing on our two feet and completely redefining our relationship with Gatwick and Heathrow, and I look forward to building support for that case over the next few months."

On Thursday last week the UK Government announced that they were delaying taking any decision on where the new London airport might be until next summer. While the government accepts that there is a case for airport expansion in the south east, it said in a statement that more work was needed.

Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin said:

"The case for aviation expansion is clear – but it's vitally important we get the decision right so that it will benefit generations to come. We will undertake more work on



environmental impacts, including air quality, noise and carbon.

“We must develop the best possible package of measures to mitigate the impacts on local people. We will continue work on all the shortlisted locations, so that the timetable for more capacity set out by Sir Howard is met.

“At the first opportunity I will make a statement to the House to make clear our plans.”

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## Government believes Forth Road Bridge travel plan is working



Road Transport Minister, Derek Mackay, has thanked travellers for their patience during the first week of disruption caused by the closure of the Forth Road Bridge.

The Scottish Government says that early indications show that the comprehensive travel plan, launched last Sunday, is helping to minimise the impact on journey times for people moving between Fife and Edinburgh.

At its peak, the Traffic Scotland website recorded over 3 million hits per day – three times more than normal – from people wishing to receive regular updates on the status of the network and plan their journeys. The plan has undergone several refinements throughout the week.

Over the course of the week journey times on the A907 diversion during peak morning hours fell by over 30 minutes, demonstrating the effectiveness of the ongoing refinements.

In addition, in response to concerns brought forward by local businesses and communities, the restrictions on the dedicated Bus/Goods Vehicle prioritisation corridor on the A985 from Kincardine Roundabout and Cairneyhill Roundabout have been lifted to accommodate all goods vehicles during weekdays, and all vehicles on weekday nights and at weekends.

ScotRail have introduced an extra early morning train on Tuesday to supplement the additional services already running, bringing the number of extra seats on offer across the Forth Rail Bridge up to 10,000 per day. This extra capacity represents an increase in 64% on usual passenger numbers.

Over the past week [Stagecoach](#) have provided an additional 33 vehicles per day, equating to an extra 11,000 seats, for services between Halbeath, Ferrytoll and Dunfermline to Edinburgh and Livingston, operating up to every 10 minutes at peak times. Journey times are relatively consistent at 1hr 30mins

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said: "I wish to thank the public for their patience and forbearance during this last week. I appreciate that many people have had to make significant changes to their travelling plans and, through their cooperation, we have succeeded in keeping the transport network in Fife operational and getting people to and from where they need to be.

"We have been constantly monitoring the situation and taking on board the advice and concerns of the local communities to ensure that we are doing the very best job that we can. At the centre of this co-ordination has been our comprehensive travel plan, which we have taken steps to refine over the last week

"Although certain services do remain busy, there does remain

some capacity on certain routes, especially on the bus network. I encourage people to keep checking the travel plan published on the Traffic Scotland website for the latest advice.

“The team responsible for fixing the bridge are working 24/7 to get it reopened as soon as possible and are making good progress. It is of course vital that until it’s repaired we continue to explore what further improvements can be made to the travel plan and take on board feedback.”

Phil Verster, Managing Director of the ScotRail Alliance, highlighted that further refinements to the timetable would deliver further improvements from Monday 14th December.

“We’ve listened to customers’ feedback this week and fine-tuned the timetable to add in extra stops at Rosyth and stations south of the Forth on selected services from today. The information is already on our website and in journey planners. We’re doing everything we can to keep people moving. I have to pay tribute to our customers for their understanding, and to our staff for what they have delivered – and continue to deliver – in such challenging timescales.”

Andrew Jarvis, Managing Director, [Stagecoach](#) East Scotland said:

“The implementation of the bus and good vehicle priority measures have meant journey times from Fife to Edinburgh are just 90 minutes and we’ve been able to increase the frequency of services as a result. With more people heading for the buses, traffic on the roads should be that bit quieter and we have a reduced fare of £3 return in place to help ease the cost of the commute. We’re pleased that so many non-bus users have tried the shuttle services and are getting to their destination in a relaxed and timely manner and we’ve had a significant amount of positive feedback from our customers.

“Our staff have been amazing, coping superbly and cheerfully

with changes to routes, timetables and shifts with very little notice in order to keep the travelling public moving. We have had drivers from all round Scotland, the north of England and Wales come to help out and I'm very grateful to them and their families for their hard work and adaptability."

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## **Hibs' foodbank collection ahead of Queen of the South game**



The latest Hibs' foodbank collection will take place at next Saturday's home match with Queen of the South.

The supporter led drive will take place between 12pm and 3pm outside the ground, with the goods donated given donated to local foodbanks.

Supporters are asked to donate non-perishable items if they are able to, such as:

- Tinned meat/fish
- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned fruit
- Tinned tomatoes
- Tea/coffee
- Sugar
- Soup
- Milk (UHT)
- Cereals
- Rice/Pasta

- Pasta Sauces
- Jam
- Biscuits/Breakfast bars

Toys and domestic items such as washing power/washing up liquid will also be accepted.

A spokesman for the club said: "Two successful foodbank collections were held at the stadium last season, and we were overwhelmed by the generosity of Hibernian supporters. We hope we can make a similar difference this time."

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# First Minister off to Downing Street today



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will take the fight to stop the Trade Union Bill coming into force in Scotland to Downing Street today.

In the meeting with Prime Minister David Cameron the First Minister will set out the clear opposition for the bill north of the border.

The First Minister will also make clear that Scotland must not lose out from changes to the way the Scottish budget is calculated after new tax and spend powers are devolved.

The discussion will also include security matters and how the two governments can work together to help combat the threat posed by international terrorism.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

said: "There is clear opposition across Scottish society and across the Scottish Parliament to this damaging piece of legislation.

"The number of days lost to strike action have been reduced in Scotland by 84 per cent through partnership working, not by slapping sanctions on workers.

"To impose this bill on Scotland would be an unacceptable step and I will make that clear to the Prime Minister."

Commenting on the fiscal framework for the Scotland Bill the First Minister said:

"We need a fair deal for both Governments – no more, no less.

"These considerations are critical – if the financial framework accompanying the new powers is wrong, Scotland could be worse off by hundreds of millions of pounds a year.

"The Smith Commission was clear that the Barnett Formula must continue unaltered, and that the Scottish or UK Governments should be no better or worse off simply as a result of the transfer of powers – before any policy decisions are taken.

"It is absolutely crucial that future Scottish Governments can use the new tax and spending powers, to create a fairer society and grow the economy, without losing out.

"Today is not about agreeing a final deal but I hope we can make significant progress in agreeing that the deal must be a fair one.

"The meeting will also be an important opportunity for the PM and I to discuss how our governments can work ever more closely together to help combat the threat posed by international terrorism"

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# #TurkishAirlinesBigWheel selfies to win big prizes



Turkish Airline General Manager Serhat Sari and Edinburgh Airport CEO Gordon Dewar ride on the Edinburgh's Christmas big wheel posing for some selfies to promote the competition that you could win by posting your selfie on social media.

Turkish Airlines transports its passengers to over 280 destinations from Edinburgh Airport via Istanbul, but this year is also welcoming tourists, shoppers and residents onto the Big Wheel to admire the famous Edinburgh skyline.

Visitors to the Big Wheel have the opportunity to enter the Turkish Airlines' selfie competition for the chance to win flights. Winners will be announced each week through to 4 January. All entrants need to do is share their best selfie from their pod, high above Edinburgh, on Twitter or Facebook using #TurkishAirlinesBigWheel. What better present could you wish for than a pair of tickets to exciting locations including Dubai, Bangkok and Antalya!



Over the past two weeks, competition entrants have been waiting with baited breath to hear if they have won flights to some of the world's most sought after locations. One visitor used the Big Wheel as the location to ask his girlfriend to marry him. Unsurprisingly, their selfie proved unbeatable and Turkish Airlines awarded them flights to Mauritius! Another lucky couple were chosen for their outstanding family selfie to win flights to Cape Town. The bar has been set high for the winning selfies but there is still a chance to get involved.

Four pairs of tickets are up for grabs over the coming weeks.



Mr Ahmet Sari, General Manager, Edinburgh Airport, Turkish Airlines says “The Big Wheel is a brilliant way for the Turkish Airlines team to give back to the Edinburgh community and welcome new visitors from around the world. We are excited to see everyone’s #TurkishAirlinesBigWheel selfies showing off the beautiful Edinburgh skyline. As an airline, we always encourage people to widen their world and experience different cultures. What better way to do this than give away pairs of tickets to far-flung destinations each week this festive season!

2016 is set to be an even busier year for Turkish Airlines at Edinburgh Airport. Just recently we introduced new routes to must-visit destinations including Durban, Mauritius and Madagascar via Istanbul. We are looking forward to transporting the people of Edinburgh to more and more of the world’s most memorable locations over the coming year.”



Edinburgh Airport is one of Turkish Airlines’ five hubs in the UK and is experiencing year-on-year growth in popularity and in the number of destinations offered. The Big Wheel is an opportunity for the airline to spread festive cheer.

Turkish Airlines is proud to fly from Edinburgh Airport and looks forward to welcoming visitors onto the Big Wheel in the run up to the New Year.

To buy tickets for the Big Wheel visit [www.edinburghschristmas.com](http://www.edinburghschristmas.com). Visitors with an EH postcode can claim a 20% discount upon proof of address.

**Photographer Ian Georgeson, 07921 567360**



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# Paul Hanlon praises Hibs' players 'character and the spirit'



Hibs' Paul Hanlon has praised his team mates attitude after coming from a goal behind to secure a share of the points against Falkirk at Easter Road yesterday.

It looked as if Hibs were going to lose ground to Rangers in the race for the Championship when Lee Miller gave the Bairs a 1-0 lead with only six minutes remaining but the Hibs' players rallied and scored a late equaliser through Martin Boyle.

Hibs now face Queen of the South on Saturday before heading along the M8 to Ibrox on the 28th December to face league leaders Rangers in a game that could prove vital to both clubs' chances of playing top flight football next season.

Speaking to Cliff Pike of Hibs TV immediately after the game Hanlon said: "We were disappointed to go a goal behind, but it just shows the character and the spirit that we managed to score when we probably only had nine players on the park with Lewis going off as well.

"It showed great character and it's a point gained in my eyes. We have a great belief and we go into every game thinking that we are going to win it.

"When we went a goal behind we could have thought it wasn't going to be our day, but we stuck in there and got a point.

Hanlon played as a defensive midfield player rather than his customary role in the centre of the defence which came as much a surprise to him as it did to the supporters and when questioned about this he responded: "You will have to ask the manager. He never gave me any clue before the game. He just said 'go and do your best.' I felt quite comfortable in that position although I think I tired a bit toward the end which is to be expected as I have not played in nearly a month.

"It's good to be able to play a different position but I'm sure I'll feel it tomorrow. I prefer playing at centre half, there is no doubt about that but given a run in that position I could get used to it and do well, it's just another string."

Photo by John Preece

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## Scotland's greatest ever team as chosen by fans



Only one former Hibs' player was selected for the greatest ever Scotland team as voted for by fans in a recent poll although a former manager and a supporter also made the team.

Andy Gormam was the player concerned whilst Alex McLeish and Gordon Strachan joined 'The Goalie' in the line-up.

Edinburgh was also represented with the inclusion of Graeme Souness.

Perhaps the passing of time has resulted in the great Gordon Smith and Lawrie Reilly being omitted and anyone who ever saw or played with Willie Hamilton would have included him, but when the Scotland National Team sponsor Vauxhall recently asked fans to choose their greatest ever Scotland team, here's what they went with:

3-5-2 formation

**GK: Andy Goram**

'The Goalie' made his most notable performances for Scotland during Euro 96 when the former Hibs and Rangers goalkeeper put in some truly world-class performances. Also represented Scotland at Cricket!

**DC: Alex McLeish**

Aberdeen legend 'Big Eck' played in three World Cups finals for Scotland – 1982, 1986 & 1990 – and is a member of the Scottish Football Hall of Fame. He went on to manage the National Team in 2007.

**DC: Alan Hansen**

Won eight league championships and three European Cups during a highly successful time at Liverpool in the 1980s. Played for Scotland in the 1982 World Cup and won the last of his caps in 1987.

**DC: Colin Hendry**

Nicknamed 'Braveheart', the big centre-half really embodied the battling spirit of Scotland during the 1990s. Won the FA Premier League with Blackburn Rovers in 1995 and lifted the domestic treble with Rangers towards the end of his career.

**MF: Jimmy Johnstone**

'Jinky' was a Celtic legend and enjoyed plenty of success in the dark blue too, with 4 goals in 23 appearances. One of only

a handful of Scottish players to make top 3 in the Ballon D'Or shortlist – he came third in 1967, above Franz Beckenbauer and Eusebio.

### **MF: Billy Bremner**

A combative and tenacious midfielder in his day, Bremner won pretty much all there is to win with Leeds United in the 1960s. Made over 50 appearances for Scotland and captained his country at the 1974 World Cup in Germany.

### **MF: Graeme Souness**

Much like his Scotland teammate Alan Hansen, Souness made his name in the red of Liverpool but consistently shone with the national team too. The midfielder played in three World Cups from 1978 to 1986 and captained the side on countless occasions.

### **MF: Gordon Strachan**

Our current National Coach was every bit the player as he is a manager. Between 1980 and 1992, Strachan made 50 appearances for Scotland and scored 5 goals, including one against West Germany at the 1986 World Cup sparking that famous 'over the hoardings' goal celebration.

### **MF: Davie Cooper**

The former Rangers and Motherwell winger was regarded as one of the best players of his generation. Made his international debut in 1979 and played his final game for Scotland at Pittodrie in 1990. Dutch legend Ruud Gullit once described 'Coop' as one of the best players he's ever played against.

### **FW: Denis Law**

'The Lawman' scored over 250 goals in the domestic game and was just as prolific in the dark blue of Scotland. Law found the net 30 times during his Scotland career and is the national team's joint-highest ever goalscorer.

### **FW: Kenny Dalglish**

Sharing first place in the Scotland scoring stakes with Denis

Law, 'King Kenny' was one of the finest players ever produced by Scotland. Won countless honours with Celtic and Liverpool and represented his country at three World Cup finals.

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## Police identify man found dead in Bruntsfield yesterday



Police have established the identity of a 37-year-old man who was found dead in the Bruntsfield area during the early hours of yesterday although the name has not been made public.

The next of kin have been informed and they request to be left alone to grieve at this difficult time.

Paramedics from the Scottish Ambulance Service alerted the police at around 5:35am after discovering the man lying on Leamington Terrace near to its junction with Bruntsfield Place.

The death is currently being treated as unexplained and inquiries are ongoing.

Detective Inspector Alan O'Brien of Edinburgh CID said: "I would like to thank the members of the public who have come forward and assisted with our inquiries.

"Following a public appeal we successfully traced a number of witnesses. At this stage of our investigation there are no suspicious circumstances although the exact cause of death is yet to be determined.

"We have been in contact with the next of kin and will

continue to offer them support at this extremely difficult time.

“Anyone who has any information relevant to this investigation is asked to contact police on 101 or the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”

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## **Teenage girl reported to the Children's Panel after a woman tripped on escalator**



A 14-year-old girl has been reported to the Children's Panel after a woman was deliberately tripped at a train station in Edinburgh.

The 45-year-old victim required hospital treatment for head injuries after the incident which happened at the top of the escalators at Waverley Station on Friday December 4.

The British Transport Police (BTP) launched an investigation into the incident and yesterday a spokesman for the BTP said: “A 14-year-old girl has been reported to the Children's Panel for allegedly tripping a 45-year-old woman at Waverley Station.

“The force thanked the public for their assistance during their inquiry.”

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# Edinburgh vigil for peace following last month's Paris attacks



The consulate general of France and the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association are holding a vigil dedicated to world peace, in memory of the victims of terrorism tonight at 7:00pm in St Patrick's RC Church at 40 High Street, Old Town, EH1 1TQ.

Representatives from a number number of cultural traditions will share reflections, meditations and music on how each and everyone is fully in charge of building peace across societies and among nations. A moment of silence will be observed and candles will be lit as a tribute to the victims of terrorism and a sign of our collective determination to uphold freedom and peace worldwide.

All are very welcome to attend and take part.





Emmanuel Cocher, consul general of France in Scotland said: "One month after the terrible events that took place in Paris and Saint-Denis in France on November 13th, violence is continuing to take its toll across the world. In regions already devastated by war where civilian populations suffer nearly daily terrorist attacks, like the Middle East and certain parts of Africa.

"But also here in various European countries where the threat of individuals or groups taking on violent action out of hatred, resentment, if not in a co-ordinated effort to destabilize at home those countries who take risks to tackle the global challenge of terrorism and organized crime, is ever



present. The best response is to uphold social cohesion, the respect for all, a caring and loving society that rejects hatred, discrimination and suspicion in its reaction to risks and tragedies.

“The gathering aims at showing this spirit of tolerance and respect across social and cultural lines. The positive values we adhere to as a human community, that are enshrined in law at the national, European and universal levels, guide us to converge and bind together in affirming our commitment to peace and respect.

“Human reason and spiritual traditions were always available to make human beings turn to the better rather than the worse. It is essential whenever human spirit and religious allegiances are exploited otherwise to reaffirm together how much we care for one another and need to learn about one another, and enact what civil laws are meant to guarantee : the possibility for everyone, wherever she or he comes from, in geographical, cultural or philosophical terms, to contribute freely and positively to the enhancement of individual and social life.

“Advancing towards common good is what social and world peace is about and it is appropriate here and everywhere that we should take the time to reflect on it and commit ourselves to it. There can hardly be a better way to pay tribute to the many innocent victims of terrorism.”



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# Alan Stubbs hails players' 'fantastic response' after losing late goal



Hibs' Head Coach Alan Stubbs has hailed his players response to going a goal down to Falkirk with six minutes remaining as 'fantastic.'

A mistake by goalkeeper Mark Oxley allowed former hearts' striker Lee Miller a 'tap in' and with Hibs down to ten men after John McGinn's first half red card, most fans believed that the unbeaten run had come to an end.

The players responded magnificently however and two of Stubbs' substitutions paid dividend in the last minute when Henri Anier flicked a Jason Cummings cross into the path of Martin Boyle who scored from two yards.

With the news that rangers had also dropped two points at home to Morton, the supporters left the ground in good fettle although many stayed behind to show their displeasure at referee Kevin Clancy who has had better days at the office.

Speaking after the game to Cliff Pike of to Hibs TV Stubbs said: " To be honest, the result felt like a win, the way it all unfolded.

"We showed a brilliant amount of character today when you know that the game is not going your way. It started with John

(McGinn) getting sent off and then we conceded from the mistake. The type of mistake is one of them that can have a real affect on the team when everyone can feel really sorry for themselves but we have come a long way.

“Our response after that was fantastic. The two player (John McGinn and Mark Oxley) were very apologetic, but they have no need to be.

“John’s performances have been outstanding this season and Ox’s performances have been outstanding. he has kept us in games before. It’s the loneliest position on the pitch. He has no-one around him. Everybody else makes mistakes on the pitch but more often than not the outfield players have people to help them so there will be no criticism from me, the players, the staff and I certainly wouldn’t expect any from the fans either. We are in this together.

I honestly do believe we’ve gained today – I do. It’s one of those games where we have gained because I think we have gained more than a result today. I think we’ve gained a lot mentally from it.

“There is going to be a few twists and turns as the season goes on. Maybe one or two people think I know what I’m talking about now, there’s a long way to go. A long, long way to go.

“I couldn’t have been any prouder of the players and I told them that. The way they kept going, the more the game went on they got stronger, even with nine men.”

Hibs face Queen of the South next week at Easter Road then travel to Ibrox on the 28th December.

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# Christmas Gift Idea : A night at the theatre



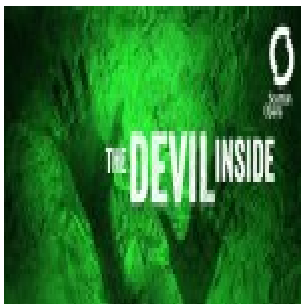
Are some people on your Christmas list proving a little tricky? Do they already have all the stuff they'll ever need – and nowhere left to put any more? Are they like the lady I overheard in a Morningside charity shop this week, who had to start decluttering 'or I think the house will actually fall down'?

If you've got someone like this to buy for, why not treat them to a night out – or even several nights out – instead? **The King's and Festival Theatres** have a great range of productions coming up, from this year's Christmas panto and ballet specials to murder mysteries, musicals, comedy nights, opera, film festivals and the **James Plays** – which sold out at the Edinburgh International Festival and the National Theatre.



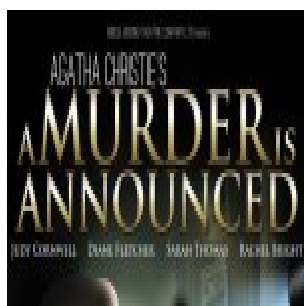


The King's Theatre always does a great pantomime, and this year it's Hi Ho, Hi Ho, Off To ***Snow White*** We Go, as **Allan Stewart, Andy Gray** and **Grant Stott** bring you the story of why you should never trust a red apple. Or maybe you should – a prince might come in handy to do the washing up. Meanwhile, over at the Festival Theatre, there's another story of a downtrodden maiden as **Scottish Ballet** performs the European premiere of **Christopher Hampson's *Cinderella***.

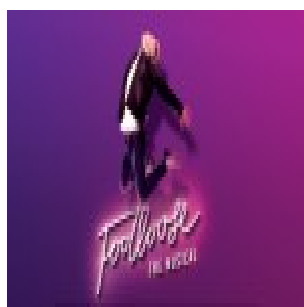


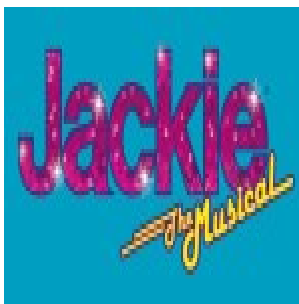
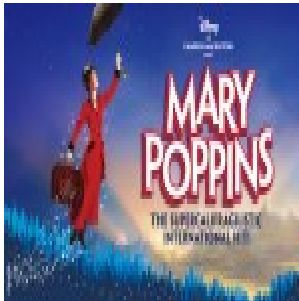
And if by January you've had enough fairy stories, King's can offer you **Scottish Opera's** new production of ***The Devil Inside*** (based on **Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Bottle Imp***, 'a tale of greed and compulsion', dramatised by Louise Welsh with music

by Stuart MacRae) while in February the company is at the Festival Theatre with **Harry Fehr** and **Yannis Thavoris's** production of **Handel's *Ariodante***.



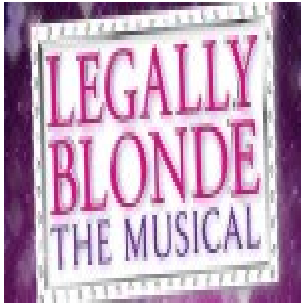
Earlier in February, King's turns to all things thrilling with productions of **Agatha Christie's *A Murder Is Announced*** and **Peter James's *The Perfect Murder***. And if musicals are as much your thing as they are mine, look no further than the Festival Theatre for ***Footloose***, ***Tom*** (Jones, that is – who else?), ***Thriller Live***, ***Mary Poppins*** and ***Chitty Chitty Bang Bang***.





Not to be outdone, the King's is staging ***Jackie, The Musical*** – for women of a certain age (ie me) this is surely a must-see; all those school lunch breaks poring over articles about grapefruit diets and David Cassidy's favourite yoghurt will come flooding back. (It was hazelnut, since you ask, I knew enough to make him happy...)

Both theatres have a strong tradition of hosting Edinburgh's excellent amateur dramatics and next spring is no exception, with **EDGAS** sailing along in ***The Gondoliers***, **The Bohemians** going ***Legally Blonde*** and **Southern Light Opera** taking us over that rainbow with Dorothy in ***The Wizard of Oz***.



Tickets for all of these shows are on sale now from the Box Offices at the **King's Theatre, 2 Leven Street** and the **Festival Theatre, 13/29 Nicolson Street** (or call 0131 529 6000 for either venue); you can also book online [here](#).

If you still can't decide what your challenging recipients would prefer, you can solve the problem by giving them **Festival & King's Theatre Gift Vouchers**, which are valid for 24 months and can be exchanged for tickets for any show at either venue (*except* Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe Festival events).

And if you know someone who's a 'frequent flyer', here's another idea – money may not be able to buy love, but theatrical friendship is more readily available – **Friends Memberships** start at just **£36 per year**, and entitle you to discounted (and sometimes free) tickets, 20% off in the theatre bars, discounts in certain local bars and cafes, and priority booking for most shows.





So if you don't want to be a party to *your* friend's house collapsing, get in touch with the **Festival and King's Theatres** now and get the gift that needs no wrapping paper – another bonus!



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# Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



**Christmas in the Grassmarket**

**Summerhall Christmas Market 2015**

**Award for Edinburgh businessman**

**Makers Christmas market at St Margaret's House**

**New group running Sunday afternoon Tea Parties!**



Edinburgh's Greater Grassmarket Business Improvement District (BID) has told us about its programme of family-friendly festive events which will take place this weekend.



The entertainment will include a live brass band, acoustic musicians and fire theatre shows in addition to its Christmas

market. The events take place today 13<sup>th</sup> December, 12pm – 6pm.

The Greater Grassmarket Christmas Community Stage will welcome family-friendly performances from Ashlee Elf, Brass Gumbo, Rug Tom Cat Show and an acoustic musician showcase from Totally Sound Youth Music Project.

[Read more here.](#)



✖ Today at Summerhall from 11:00-17:00 there will be a big Christmas event!

*“Summerhall Events are delighted to invite you to Summerhall for its sell out annual Christmas Market.*

*This year we will host EVEN MORE stalls than ever before to give you a huge range of gifts and treats for friends, family, and of course- you!*

*It wouldn't be the Summerhall Christmas Market without welcoming back Summerhall Singers to entertain us with festive carols- they are not to be missed. (Performance times 12:00-13:00 and 14:00-15:00)”*



George Nisbet, a recently retired partner who now acts as a consultant at chartered surveyors DM Hall's Edinburgh office, has been given an award at Action for Children's annual Stephenson awards held, this year, at the House of Lords.

Along with fellow businessmen Colin Taylor, Colin Mackenzie and Pete Lowrie, George was presented with a Stephenson Award in recognition for helping to raise over £1.5 million for Action for Children Scotland, a charity which supports the most vulnerable children and young people in Scotland.

Sir Tony Hawkhead, chief executive of Action for Children, handed over the award to thank the big-hearted fundraisers for setting up Never Mind the Business, a stellar quiz night which

brings together everyone who has a passion for music. A quiz which, as George is quick to point out, has been won three times by DM Hall.

George said: "Everyone at Never Mind the Business is "chuffed" to receive this prestigious award. Over 13 years, nearly 9000 guests have enjoyed the fun, and entertainment provided by what has become an iconic annual event – but the focus of all our efforts has always been in raising money for a very worthwhile causes."

Never Mind the Business was established in 2002 when a group of businessmen attending an Action for Children Scotland's golf day wanted to help do something different to raise money – something a bit more rock 'n' roll.

George and his friends who run the event have been dedicating their time ever since and strive each year to raise more money than the previous year and to hold the eagerly-anticipated event in even in more cities.



Back by popular demand, local artists and makers will be selling unique Christmas gifts in this special event the Makers Christmas Market at St Margaret's House 151 London Road TODAY! Expect to see cards, prints and handmade crafts, in this festive celebration for the whole family. This is taking place in Gallery 2 but at the same time elsewhere in the same building this event is on:



A charity which offers a lifeline of friendship to older people who live alone has launched its 12<sup>th</sup> group in the Edinburgh area.

Contact the Elderly runs free monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for those aged 75 and over who would otherwise have no-one to see and nowhere to go.

And it hopes to encourage more older people in north and north-east Edinburgh to register their interest in attending the parties so that it can create a 13<sup>th</sup> group with older guests from that area.

Anne Grindley, Volunteer Edinburgh Area Organiser at Contact the Elderly, said:

“There has been a fantastic response by volunteers recently in Edinburgh and I am absolutely delighted we have been able to launch our 12<sup>th</sup> group in the area and are already preparing for our 13<sup>th</sup> group.

“For a small amount of time, our volunteers are making the world of difference to the older people who attend our tea parties. Isolation among our older population is a serious, deep-rooted issue but there are very simple things, such as a nice natter over a cup of tea, that can be done which have a resounding impact.

“One lady told us she had not left the house for any social engagements for a number of years and getting out to the tea party felt very special, giving her a new lease of life.


“Our tea parties are equally enjoyed by the volunteers and older people. For any older people reading this thinking they would enjoy a relaxed afternoon out of the house with a lovely group of people, I would recommend they get in touch to find out more and see if it is for them. We are also always looking for more volunteers to get involved so would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to host or be a driver for one of our Edinburgh and East Lothian parties.”

The new Edinburgh 12 group has six older people as guests and five volunteer drivers, as well as a number of hosts. Drivers collect a guest or two from their homes and accompany them to the tea parties at a volunteer host's home. These take place one Sunday afternoon a month. Hosts welcome these small groups into their homes once or twice a year.

To find out more about becoming a volunteer or guest in Edinburgh, please contact Morna O'May on 01786 871264 or [morna.o'may@contact-the-elderly.org.uk](mailto:morna.o'may@contact-the-elderly.org.uk).



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# Hearts Hand out Early Christmas Gift to Aberdeen



**Aberdeen 1 Heart of Midlothian 0**

**Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Saturday 12 December 2015 – Pittodrie**

Hearts slipped seven points behind Aberdeen in the chase for second place in the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership after losing to a late penalty at Pittodrie on Saturday.

After a fairly tepid performance, Robbie Neilson's side looked to have escaped from the Granite City with a goalless draw and a scarcely deserved point. That was until three minutes from time when young defender Jordan McGhee inexplicably decided to push away a cross into the penalty box with his hand giving referee Craig Thomson no choice but to award a penalty kick. Rooney duly converted the spot kick leaving a distraught McGhee to reflect on his mistake.

Hearts made two changes to the team that drew 2-2 at Motherwell a fortnight ago with McGhee replacing Juwon

Oshaniwa and Prince Buaben taking the place of Danny Swanson.

Hearts began the game well enough and with only two minutes gone Osman Sow fired in a cross which was headed narrowly over by Sam Nicholson.

If the 2,000 strong travelling Maroon Army thought they could look forward to a decent display from their side thereafter they were sadly mistaken. As far as the visitors were concerned, that was about it for the first half as Aberdeen took control. The other incidents I noted from that opening forty-five minutes were the substitution of Miguel Pallardo shortly after he got booked, with Robbie Neilson clearly not believing the midfielder was not going to receive another yellow card imminently – Morgaro Gomis replaced him – and the constant fly-past of numerous seagulls eyeing up patrons of the Pittodrie pie. Aberdeen huffed and puffed and one wondered what the watching television audience were making of proceedings.

### **Half-time Aberdeen 0 Hearts 0**

Thankfully, the second half wasn't as bad as the first turgid period and Hearts thought they had opened the scoring five minutes after half-time when Sam Nicholson unleashed a fine effort from 25 yards which smacked off the crossbar with home keeper Ward beaten.

Hearts almost rued that moments later when Rooney was left completely unmarked in the penalty box but the Dons forward headed the ball over the bar to the chagrin of the home support.

Twenty minutes into the second half, Hearts should have gone in front. Morgaro Gomis found Juanma in the Aberdeen penalty box. The Spaniard turned the Dons defender but his rather weak effort on goal was saved by Ward. Some of the Hearts support in the rather dilapidated South Stand – many could only hazard a guess at what was going on down the left hand side the field

when Hearts went forward, given the restricted view – thought Juanma had scored but their celebrations were sadly premature.

From the corner that followed, Callum Paterson headed for goal but his effort was cleared off the line by Flood.

The game seemed to be petering out for a goalless affair until young McGhee's late error which handed the home side all three points.

It was an unfortunate end but, if truth be told, Aberdeen deserved their victory. Hearts looked lethargic and lacking in ideas and the regular lump up the park to Juanma was all-too predictable and easily dealt with by the home defence.

A miserable afternoon, then, with many of the Maroon Army no doubt wishing they had gone Christmas shopping instead of watching their favourites hand out presents of their own to their grateful opponents.

However, it must be said Jordan McGhee is a fine young defender who has served Hearts well and will continue to do so. The 19 year old knows better than anyone he made a mistake but he will learn from this and he remains a vital part of the Hearts squad – something many of those who have criticised the teenager on social media websites may wish to consider. Everyone makes mistakes in any walk of life – it's how one deals with them that matters.

**Aberdeen:** Ward, Logan, Shinnie, Considine, Taylor, Reynolds (Jack, 46'), McLean, Flood, Rooney, Hayes, Pawlett (Goodwillie, 72').

**Hearts:** Alexander, Paterson, Augustyn, Rossi, McGhee, Pallardo (Gomis, 30'), Djoum, Buaben, Nicholson (King, 84'), Juanma, Sow.

**Referee:** Craig Thomson

**Att:** 13,110

**Top people:** The huge Hearts support who backed their team from start to finish.

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# Rugby – Edinburgh Accies v Stewarts-Melville, BT National Leagues, Div. 1

*Five-try Accies sweep aside Stew-Mel challenge*



Edinburgh Accies scored five tries in Saturday's damp, dreich match at Raeburn Place to keep near neighbours, Stewarts-Melville, perilously close to the relegation play-off zone.

Despite sending the kick off straight into touch, Stew-Mel had the majority of the play in the first 10, or so , minutes, but their only reward was a penalty which No. 15, Ross McCann, sent wide of the uprights, but they were putting pressure on the home defence. Pressure which didn't last too long, however, as Accies gradually came into the game and were awarded a penalty of their own with around 15 minutes played. Some might say that Facundo Beltramino's kick also slid wide, but the officials awarded the points and, as their opinion is the one which matters, the score stood at 3-0.

Beltramino missed his second attempt a few minutes later, but a clearance kick straight into touch early in the second quarter gave Accies territorial advantage. They quickly moved



the ball across the field and won a penalty from the ensuing breakdown. A swiftly taken tap penalty then found No. 8, Laurie Seydak who steamed through to touch down under the posts for the first of his and Accies tries. Beltramino slotted home the conversion to put the home side 10-0 ahead with about 12 minutes of the half left.


Following a period of fairly even play, Stew-Mel, once again, got the bit between their teeth and surged up into Accies' 22. Ruck after ruck saw them close to and, at one point over the line – held up said the ref – but the defence couldn't hold out for ever and, off the back of the 'held-up' scrum, No. 4, Fraser Morrison barrelled his way over for the try. McCann made no mistake this time and the score now stood at 10-7.



It was, for the visitors, a depressingly short moment in the limelight as Accies scored a runaway try, almost immediately as Seydak ran in from a reasonable distance to score his, and Accies', second try of the half. Once again, Beltramino couldn't – and, as it was in front of the posts, daren't – miss and the 10 point lead was restored at 17-7.

The final couple of minutes of the half saw Accies once again on the push, this time with a fine rolling maul, which got within a few metres of the line. Unfortunately, for Stew-Mel, No. 3, Rhys Morgan, then prevented further progress by pulling the maul to the ground. As this was going on, a bit of 'afters' from some off the ball 'stuff' was spotted by the officials, thus earning Accies' No. 2, Callum Black, a yellow and seeing the penalty reversed.

With both sides down to 14 at the start of the second half, there was touch more space on the field, which Accies exploited to the full as the scored with a couple of minutes of the restart. Running back the ball from a early lineout, No. 5 Ronan Seydak, broke through the Stew-Mel defensive line

and carried play into the 22. Quick recycle had the ball over to the opposite wing and full back, Saul Melvin-Farr galloped up the right touch line to over in the corner for the third home try. Beltramino added the extras with a fine kick from near the line to stretch the score out to 24-7. 

The game then turned once again as Stew-Mel went on the offensive and looked as if they were going to add to their tally as they ran the ball deep into the home 22. However, the well worked passing and rucking play stopped working when the ball was lost forward a few metres out courtesy of a fine tackle back by an Accies player.

It was soon back to the script for Accies as they returned to the job in hand and spent the final 20 minutes hammering on the door of the visiting defence. Stew-Mel lost a second player to yellow for deliberate foul play, and this gave the home side all the encouragement they needed to carry on scoring.

10 minutes from time, another pitch-wide passing move put No. 10, Iain Chisolm through a gap for the bonus point try. Beltramino was, once again, accurate from the line and the score was 31-7.

With less than five minutes to go, Accies consolidated their encampment and, following on from two five-metre scrums, No. 7, Jamie Sole, powered over the line for the fifth home side try. With Beltramino's kick sailing through, the – final – score was now 38-7 and, with darkness descending, the referee blew up a short time later to bring to a close, what had turned out to be, a fairly one-sided affair in Stockbridge.

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

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# Hibernian 1-1 Falkirk



Ten man Hibs fought back from a goal down to grab a deserved share of the points in a hard-fought, ill-tempered game against Falkirk at Easter Road this afternoon, but the main talking point amongst fans leaving the stadium was the performance of referee Kevin Clancy who was booed off the field at both half time and full time.

Apart from denying Hibs two clear penalties, he then sent off midfielder John McGinn just before the break for a challenge on Mark Kerr which only deserved a yellow card.

Head coach Alan Stubbs made one change to the starting XI that beat Alloa three weeks ago with Paul Hanlon replacing Marvin Bartley after returning from injury.

There was a surprise on the substitutes bench with Sam Stanton returning to the squad after a long absence and striker Henri Anier finally making an appearance after joining the club in the summer. Liam Henderson returned after suffering a virus.

After a quiet opening period Hibs should have had a penalty when James Keating's powerful shot was blocked by Will Vauks' arm but the referee waved play on. Three minutes later Keatings was bundled over inside the area by Aaron Muirhead, but once again Clancy ignored the appeal.

In the 14th minute, the whole stadium stood and applauded in memory of youngster Brandon Walker who sadly passed away earlier this week.

Keatings then hit the side netting with a long range effort then Jason Cummings went close with a shot from the edge of

the area as Hibs totally dominated possession.

In the 30th minute Vaulks was rightly booked for persistent fouling and Hibs almost took the lead after a great move between Fraser Fyvie, Cummings and John McGinn which ended when the midfielder's strike flew narrowly past.

Just before half time Hibs were reduced to ten men when McGinn was sent off. The influential midfielder beat three men heading into the box and appeared to be impeded as he lost possession. He then lunged to win the ball back and caught Mark Kerr on the shins. To the surprise of most fans in the stadium, referee Clancy immediately produced a red card and he left the field to a chorus of boos minutes later.

Falkirk then dominated possession in the second half and in the 62nd minute Cummings was booked for diving then David Gray was booked for a foul on Craig Sibbald and Liam Fontaine booked for a trip on Kevin O'Hara as tempers flared.

With ten minutes remaining, the Hibs' fans let the players know that Rangers were behind at Ibrox, but the celebrations were cut short two minutes later when the 'Bairns' took the lead. A speculative shot from Blair Alston was fumbled by Mark Oxley and the ball fell to former Hearts' striker Lee Miller who prodded it home five yards.

At the same moment, 40 odd miles away in Glasgow, Rangers equalised.

Hibs fought back and grabbed a deserved equaliser in the last minute when Cummings fired a powerful cross into the penalty area. Substitute Anier produced a sublime flick into the path of Martin Boyle to slotted the ball into the net from two yards to the delight of the Hibs' faithful.

Moments later Lewis Stevenson suffered a bad head injury and had to leave the field, leaving Hibs with nine men for the remainder of the game.

Afterwards Stubbs revealed that the club doctor was refused permission to enter the field and treat Stevenson who appeared to be suffering from concussion.

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, Hanlon, Fontaine, Stevenson, McGregor, Fyvie, McGinn, Keatings, Malonga, Cummings: Subs Reguero, Henderson, Stanton, Boyle, Forster, Anier, Sinclair

Falkirk: Rogers, Leahy, Muirhead, McCracken, Vaulks, Alston, Baird, Sibbald, Kerr, Grant, O'Hara. Subs Tokarczyk, Smith, Miller, Cooper, Shepherd, Sinnamon, Watson.

Referee Kevin Clancy

Attendance 9459