

This year's must-have Christmas present!



Scones are always a hot topic in Edinburgh. Everyone has an opinion on them, everyone knows which cafés can make them – *and* which cafés most definitely *can't*.

Regular readers will know that **Bon Papillon's** superlative offerings topped our totally personal [Top Five Scones](#) list* last year – and now you can have a lasting reminder of all those lime and ginger, blueberry, savoury, banana and goodness-knows-what flavours. No, it's not a regular scone delivery (though there's an idea....) – it's a **scone calendar!**



Ingrid The Artist and Stuart The Sconemeister have put this masterpiece together to raise funds for local charity **It'sGood2Give**. The calendars cost a mere £5 each and have been selling like – well you know what like, as they say in Aberdeen.... There are still a few available, so make haste to **Howe Street** and snap up this year's must-have present. I've got mine, and I can honestly say it's much more fun than Tracy Island....

[Bon Papillon](#) is at 15 Howe Street. Opening hours are 9am-5pm Wednesday to Sunday, closed Mondays and Tuesdays.



[It's Good 2 Give](#) came into existence in 2010 and has already raised over £1.2m for local young people with cancer and their families through the hard work of founder, Lynne McNicoll OBE.



*The Top Five Scones in Edinburgh list will be revisited in early 2016: get your recommendations in now – I need plenty of time to try them all (it's a hard job but...)

Email rosemary@theedinburghreporter.co.uk

REVIEW – Lissie at Liquid Rooms



This tour shows folk rock star Lissie, formally known as Elizabeth Maurus, in a slightly different mood. She grew tired of touring with a band and is now going it alone, with an acoustic guitar and a bottle of wine on stage.

Lissie is certainly more comfortable on stage, engaging in conversation with the crowd and feeling more inclined to accompany each song with an anecdote about her experiences when writing songs.

When the musician arrived on stage, she instantly forgot her setlist, which was sitting in her purse in the dressing room backstage. While she got endless cheers from the audience, she exclaimed that it would be a mixture of old and new songs. The new songs, however, are met with lunch time conversation from the audience that Lissie is so desperately trying to ignore. Nevertheless, she smiled anyway.

The transformation between full band and solo acoustic is surely a daunting move for the singer-songwriter, but Lissie is as composed and energetic as ever. She was earnest during the storytelling, and threw her body and guitar around the

stage while really getting involved in the song.

She claims 'Shameless' is her "sassy song" to point out the depreciation of women in the music industry, reflected in her deeply personal lyrics. The mood changed with her new track 'Sun Keeps Rising', which is about her auntie Laura who died of ALS and how it took Lissie a while to put her emotions to paper. Lissie continued to disclose more details about her life and how much it has changed since the release of her previous album – confessing her new career as a beekeeper alongside being a musician, and moving to a farm in Iowa.

Even if it involves seeing Lissie alone on stage instead of her full band, we were lucky to still see her live. She mentioned her boredom of the music business and how she wants to be more of an independent artist. Lissie spilled out a lot about her life, as if it is 'An Evening With Lissie' – the only thing that is missing is a question and answer.

The crowd of new and old were treated to a very intimate evening with the folk star, who can only vaguely be compared to Neil Young. It's as if she had said to her backing band, 'it's too heavy, I need to tone it down'.

She has, and it has worked. The personal side to Lissie is welcoming and warm – a musician who has evolved hugely in a short duration.

Comely Bank Publishing – a

Lesson in cooperation

An Edinburgh man who set up his own publishing house three years ago is celebrating the acquisition of three more novelists to his stable of authors.

Gordon Lawrie set up Comely Bank Publishing, a writers' co-operative that helps authors self-publish their works, after writing his own book, *Four Old Geezers and a Valkyrie*, which was published in 2012. The book has gone on to be one of the top ten most-borrowed books in Midlothian Libraries, last year's 'Library Of The Year' in the Bookseller Industry Awards.

Gordon set up the publishing house to give Scottish writers additional options for self-publishing and for writers to share their experiences and help each other. Comely Bank Publishing is a publishing co-operative that creates opportunities for Scottish authors to publish works of interest using 21st century publishing options, including e-books and print on demand.

Currently, the co-operative concentrates on fiction, including short fiction, although it is open to other work as well. Comely Bank Publishing does not seek to make profits out of its authors, but looks to form a group of authors who help each other develop and, as a result, it can afford to be open-minded about what it publishes.

Gordon said: "I set up Comely Bank Publishing because I genuinely believe that too many authors are failing to have their works published. Publishers and publishing agents have become too cautious, grasping at poorer-quality work simply because it carries the name of an established author or a bankable name such as a celebrity.

"The future of literature can only be saved if bright new talent is nurtured as it used to be.

“Here at Comely Bank Publishing we want to share our experiences so that others who want to self-publish can benefit from what we have learned along the way.

“People shouldn’t mistake self-publishing for the old vanity publishing – books that are published through Comely Bank Publishing need to meet our standards. Just like any mainstream publisher, we look for good quality, readable books and we insist that books are properly edited and proof-read.”

Comely Bank Publishing has published three books so far – Gordon’s *Four Old Geezers* and *A Valkyrie*, a light-hearted comedic tale of what happens when four old blokes decide to try to crack the music business.

TD Burke’s *The Man from Outremer* is a swashbuckling tale, set largely in Scotland at the time of the early Scottish Wars of Independence around 1300 AD.

Katie and the Deelans by Emma Baird is the story of Katie, an ordinary teenager who goes to the worst school in the country. Life, however, takes a turn for the extraordinary when Katie and her friends take up magic lessons.

A fourth book, Jane Tulloch’s *Our Best Attention*, is set in a fictional Edinburgh department store and is due to be released in January 2016

In addition, three more books are in the 2016 pipeline – Roland Tye’s *Weekender* which blends together the experiences of multiple characters over one weekend in the capital, and two follow-up novels, TD Burke’s *Scourge of the Vikings*, set in 9th Century Europe and *Two Slices of Carrot Cake*, Emma Baird’s second young adult novel.

Gordon added: “We would welcome further submissions from local authors as we are keen to expand the Comely Bank Publishing offering. We want people to view Comely Bank Publishing as THE place to find good quality fiction from up and coming writers.

“In addition, we also offer a synopsis service. Many people feel they have a book in them, but getting started is really difficult. We offer a service where we will read and review your synopsis and a first chapter if you have one of up to 4,000 words and give you feedback. All we ask is that you buy one of our books in return.”

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Submitted by [Gordon Lawrie](#)

What's on in Edinburgh? Christmas events in the Grassmarket



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 on Saturday 12th December and Sunday 13th 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.





The Grassmarket will be lit up by show-stopping fire performances by Pyro Celtica(4.30pm) followed by rousing and 'gloriously loud' performances by the Harbingers Drum Crew as well as Winter Fire Group featuring 'flame-taming, glitter-soaked team fire monsters', part of the Beltane Fire

Society (5pm – 6pm) on Saturday 12th December.

The Greater Grassmarket's Christmas market will run Friday – Sunday from 10am – 6pm, selling Christmas trees, festive Scottish produce, gifts and locally-made arts and crafts. There will also be a 'foodie haven' where guests can enjoy street food.

Norrie Stewart, Grassmarket BID Project Manager, says: "Christmas in the Greater Grassmarket is a fun-filled day out for the whole family. It's the perfect place to do your Christmas shopping with the wide-range of independent boutique shops for that unique gift. As well as the fantastic events, families can enjoy delicious food from the market and various cafes and restaurants, and adults can even soak up the festive atmosphere with a glass of mulled wine."

Lucky in Lasswade! Three Postcode Lottery winners in one street

✖ Three neighbours in Lasswade, who play People's Postcode Lottery, will be celebrating today as their postcode **EH18 1DT** was drawn as a winner in the *Daily Prize*.

The lucky players from St. Annes Avenue have won £1,000 each and their winnings will be paid directly into their bank accounts.

Players play with their postcodes and they have a chance to win prizes every single day of the week. For the *Daily Prize*, five winning postcodes are announced each day from Monday to

Friday and every winning ticket is worth £1,000.

55p from every £2 ticket goes to good causes. So far players of the charity lottery have raised an amazing £95.3 Million for charities across Great Britain and internationally.

Was it you? Tell us your good news if it was!

COMPETITION – Win a family ticket for the Christmas Wheel!



It's not really Christmas till you've been on the Christmas Wheel.

This year the wheel is in Princes Street Gardens alongside the Scott Monument as usual.

Open from 10 a.m. each day in the heart of the city centre, the observational Big Wheel has thirty-six enclosed, weather-proof pods, each seating six people and showing unrivalled views of Edinburgh. As the pod door closes, you'll hear a short historical tour of the view and the City. One ride on the Big Wheel won't be enough! But we have a family ticket for this attraction (or the ice skating if that is more your thing) on offer in our competition.

Edinburgh's Christmas is organised by Underbelly who are well-known in Edinburgh for the purple upside down cow during the

Festival. This year they are putting on a huge variety of attractions for you and yours across St Andrew Square, Princes Street Gardens and on the Royal Mile. Enter our competition here to win a family ticket for the Christmas Wheel or for a family to go ice-skating.

Enter by 17 December 2015 at 12 noon to win!

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If you have to buy yourself a ticket then you should note that tickets are date specific – the wheel opens at 10 a.m. and the last admission is twenty minutes before closing time.

Admission is on a first come, first served basis, so please allow extra time if you wish to attend on busy days.

Edinburgh residents with proof of their EH postcode will receive a 20% discount. Family tickets are also available.

More details of tickets and other attractions at Edinburgh's Christmas [here](#).



New heritage hoardings at Dalry



the Haymarket development, an Interserve and Tiger Developments project, has joined forces with Dalry Colonies Residents' Association to create a visual depiction of life past and present in the Dalry Colonies.

Following an extensive creative collaboration process the Haymarket and Dalry Colonies have produced hoarding boards that not only reflect the rich heritage of the area but also show how the Haymarket is transforming the urban landscape to create an iconic office, leisure and civic space.

The hoardings feature a design that incorporates both the old and new of the area and includes historical and social history facts amongst direct quotes from residents and plant pots which will be used by residents to plant herbs and flowers.

A community notice board has also been included in the design, a suggestion made at the community workshop held between the Haymarket and Dalry Colonies Residents, to allow the local community and the Haymarket development team to share updates and news.

Commenting on the collaboration and the new site hoardings, David Westwater from the Haymarket said: "The newly installed hoardings represent the history of the colonies, from their inception due to the need of affordable housing to becoming part of the growing community of Haymarket.

"We have been hugely impressed with the proactive way in which the Dalry Colonies Residents' Association have engaged with the development team through this process and we are more than happy with the final outcome – both the support from the residents and the brilliantly designed hoardings."

Barbie Lyon, Dalry Colonies Residents' Association added: "The Dalry Colonies are nearly 150 years old and the area, including the old Haymarket Goods Yard, has a rich heritage. As residents, we enjoy keeping the social history of the area alive. It was very enjoyable to work with the Haymarket team to create something visually different and informative for the hoardings. We are keen to continue to work with the Haymarket team as the project continues to develop, creating a new era for the area."

Christmas gift idea – shop at The Georgian House



This house in Charlotte Square has a gift shop where you can “take Christmas by the antlers” and get ahead with your Christmas shopping. The shop at the Georgian House has an array of high quality, distinctive gifts available for purchase including silk scarves, cashmere scarves and gloves, natural skincare and soaps, Christmas decorations, confectionery, children’s toys and stocking fillers.

A little view into the past is offered to visitors to the National Trust for Scotland’s Georgian House in Edinburgh. There you will see how Christmas was celebrated in the past as the house opens its doors in December for the first time in many years.

Charlotte Square was designed by Robert Adam as the paradigm of the Georgian ideal in the centre of Edinburgh. With its sweeping crescents, broad boulevards and elegant squares, the New Town offered affluent citizens the opportunity to escape the overcrowding of the Old Town.

The conservation charity’s property at No. 7 Charlotte Square, was built in 1796 for John Lamont, 18th Chief of the Clan Lamont, and he lived there with his family until 1815. The house has been magnificently restored to illustrate a typical Edinburgh New Town House of the late 18th and early 19th century.

It will be dressed for Christmas with traditional greenery –

holly, and mistletoe – a Christmas tree, and poinsettias. It will also feature the less familiar Kissing Bough or Kissing Ring – a garland of greenery under which kisses were exchanged – which was usurped as the focus of family festivities by the Christmas tree by the late 1860s.

Dr Sheonagh Martin, Property Manager, said:

“For the first time in 13 years we are opening the house in December. We want to give our visitors a glimpse behind the facade of a typical Edinburgh townhouse to show how Christmas would have been celebrated in the late 18th and early 19th century by New Town families and their households.”

“We researched the kind of greenery and other items Georgian families might have used to decorate their home over the festive season. Visitors may find some of the results of this research surprising. For instance, the Christmas tree, is often thought to have been introduced to Britain from Germany by Prince Albert in the 1840s. However, this is not wholly correct. They were known in Britain from the late 18th century, particularly in the Royal Household. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge mentions a Christmas tree decorated with uplifting messages written on coloured paper,” she added.

The first precise record of a Christmas tree was one arranged by a German member of Queen Caroline’s household for a children’s party in 1821. This ‘tree’ was actually a branch of evergreen fixed on a board, decorated with gilt oranges and almonds. Three little trees in pots given by Princess Lieven in 1829 for another children’s party were more like Christmas trees with which we are now familiar.

In Britain, the Christmas tree was popularised by Victoria and Albert. In the 1840s, the custom became better known as pictures and accounts of the royal trees at Windsor circulated in newspapers and journals. Christmas trees became fashionable

and were familiar in most parts of the country by the late 1860s, and slowly replaced the older native Kissing Bough or Kissing Ring.

Dr Martin said: "The Kissing Bough was a garland of greenery that hung from the ceiling in the main living room. It may well have hung in the Parlour, but with a Christmas tree in the hall we have placed ours in the kitchen for the servants to use. Shaped like a double-hooped May garland, or a crown, and decorated with red apples, coloured paper, ornaments, candles, and – most importantly – mistletoe, the Kissing Bough was the centre of the family's festivities. Under it carols were sung, games played, and many a kiss exchanged! "

The Christmas decor also features some more familiar favourites including the poinsettia – named in 1828 after Mr Poinsett who came to Britain from North America, where the poinsettia was the traditional Christmas flower. The distinctive scarlet flower originated in Mexico where it is known as "Flower of the Holy Night".

The Georgian House can be seen dressed for Christmas until December 20 (Thursday to Sundays only from 11am to 3.30pm). Standard entry applies. No booking required.

For further information visit www.nts.org.uk or call 0131 226 3318.

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Council meeting – more trams

Government Minister gives blood

Interested in China? Then head to Edinburgh Castle

Choirs at the Museum

Free office space in Fife



Today from 10am there will be a full council meeting at the City Chambers.

It looks likely that the council will agree to take the next step in the tram extension programme. This is not yet the final decision to actually build the line, but rather a decision to spend more money to investigate the business case.

Last month the council heard about the outline of a business case and the decision on this was then continued till today to allow more time for consideration.

The council has also begun the procurement process for external support of all kinds, project management, legal, technical and commercial as well as beginning some site investigation.

The council has also sought legal advice on their options to acquire the remaining 67 plots of land for the extension to the part of the line known as 1B. The council has power to acquire plots of land on a compulsory purchase basis in terms of the Tram Acts, but has not exercised any of these powers in relation to the land between Roseburn Delta and Granton Square (1b) and Granton to Newhaven (1c). If the council does not take any action on this before 7 May then it might have to return to Holyrood to ask for these powers which could be a risky business given that the Scottish Government do not support the tram.

But the council does not believe it should buy up the land now as it might add to the compensation bill which it would face. It also admits that the council might look a bit silly buying up all the land when it may not need it for the tram extension if it does not get built.

The delay from last month has allowed the council time to investigate with Lothian Buses whether asking them for an extraordinary dividend of £20million would impact on their business including any modernisation plans.


The only real opposition appears to be the Conservative Group who yet again moved for no action on the proposals last month while the Edinburgh Tram Inquiry is ongoing. The group also said that the council is not in a good enough financial position to afford the tram extension at this time.

With regard to the amount being requested at present this is what the council reports: "The costs associated with the next phases of the project total £9.9m, comprising approximately £3.25m for Stage 1 and £6.65m for Stage 2.

"This can be contained within the overall capital funding requirement of £144.7m for the project. In the event that the Council decides not to proceed with the extension, the costs of stage 1 can be met from reserves set aside from previous Lothian Buses dividend payments."

You can watch the whole meeting online [here](#).



 Public Health Minister Maureen Watt visited the Edinburgh blood donor centre yesterday to thank them for their life-saving efforts this Christmas.

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion service requires 550 blood donations every day to meet the needs of patients in Scotland. Blood donations can drop off by up to 20% during the

busy Christmas period.

The Edinburgh donor centre is one of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Centre's five regional centres across Scotland. The centre expects to welcome 1,800 blood donors in the coming four weeks of the festive period, as well as 250 platelet donors.

Ms Watt said: "The festive period is a very busy time of year for us all, but especially for the health service in Scotland. I would urge people across the country to take some time out from their Christmas shopping to help others. The importance of making a regular commitment to donating blood has been highlighted for me today by meeting some of the dedicated donors in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas who have shared some of their experience of how blood can really help people in need."

Dr Moira Carter, Associate Director of Donor Services at the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, said: "Our donors are fantastic and we are delighted to welcome Ms Watt and NSS Chair Professor Elizabeth Ireland today to make their donation and lead by example.

"Just because it is Christmas, the need for blood doesn't stop. Patients still need blood during the festive season and one blood donation can help save the lives of three patients. This might be to treat cancer or trauma or in child birth, as well as for planned medical procedures.

"We have blood donor sessions taking place at our regional centres across the country, as well as within the community over the festive period. If you have never given blood before, make the effort this Christmas and we will write to you and let you know your blood group so you can continue to support us when these particular blood group stocks are low."

To register as a blood donor or to find out where your nearest donation session is visit www.scotblood.co.uk , call 0345 90

90 999.



Edinburgh Castle has told us about their latest exhibition: "Our exhibition exploring the links between Edinburgh and Nanjing is now on. An interactive journey shows how the cities developed over time, using a combination of archive material and innovative technology."

The exhibition is included in the admission charge for the castle.

[Read more here.](#)



Christmas at the National Museum of Scotland includes some carol singing.

Christmas Choirs will sing on 20 Dec 2015 between 15:00-16:00

The event is free (drop-in)

Get into the festive spirit with Christmas concerts from local choirs at the National Museum of Scotland. This year we've invited three Edinburgh-based choirs – Accord, Edinburgh Renaissance Singers and Edinburgh Contemporary Choir – to bring some festive cheer to your museum visit.



Evans EasySpace, the office space, warehouse and storage provider, is offering stranded commuters free usage of its Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy workspace while essential repairs are being made to the Forth Bridge.

The Forth Bridge is a vital road-link and with the bridge under repair, commuters might have to endure an additional 20+ mile journey each way as they are diverted via Kincardine. Tailbacks are already commonplace as workers begin adjusting

to this round-trip.


Evans' Dunfermline centre at Pitreavie Business Park and its Kirkcaldy centre at the John Smith Business Park will both operate their largest available office as a drop-in workspace. Workers will be able to use the space for free on a first-come, first-served basis, taking advantage of the professional set-up including complimentary wifi.

Richard Morris, CEO at Evans Easyspace , comments: "It's been well publicised that transport is much more congested than normal as thousands re-route to get to work. Enabling workers to operate from a professional location closer to home can provide a solution for businesses, helping their staff avoid difficult and lengthy commutes and ensuring they stay positive and productive.

"Employers in and around the Edinburgh area may find that letting their staff work from a more convenient location while the bridge is repaired could lead them to reassess their attitude towards the fixed workplace in the future. Just some of the reported benefits of flexible working include happier and more motivated staff, which in turn leads to productivity gains for employers."

Tel 0800 039 3900 for more information.



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RSNO bring the Snowman to the Usher Hall for Christmas



Georgie Glen, most recently known for portraying history teacher Audrey McFall in [BBC One](#) show [Waterloo Road](#), will make her Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) début this month, narrating the classic story of Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman*, as part of this year's RSNO Christmas Concerts.

The Helensburgh-born actor will be known to many, with Georgie's film credits including *Les Misérables*, *Mrs Brown*, *My Week With Marilyn* and *Calendar Girls*. On the small screen she has appeared regularly in *Heartbeat*, as well as in numerous comedy series, including *Alan Partridge*, *Little Britain* and *The Thick of It*.

The Orchestra takes its popular **RSNO Christmas Concerts** (sponsored by the RSNO's Transport Partner ScotRail) – now firmly embedded as one of Scotland's traditional seasonal events – to the Usher Hall on Sunday 20 December at 3.00pm.

Led by conductor Christopher Bell, the Orchestra will perform Howard Blake's iconic soundtrack synchronised with the screening of the animated film, with vocal soloists for the famous ballad *Walking in the Air* drawn from the RSNO's own Junior Chorus. The concerts also feature well-known festive musical favourites, audience participation, the RSNO Chorus or Junior Chorus, and a few surprises.

Georgie Glen: "It is my distinct pleasure to be performing with Scotland's national orchestra this Christmas. The Snowman is such a wonderful tale, and to narrate the story along with the animation and full symphonic support is something I'll treasure. "

Walker Signs Hearts Extension

After Igor Rossi and Arnaud Djoum signed extensions to their Hearts deals last week, the Maroon Army were handed another boost today when winger Jamie Walker committed his long-term future to Hearts by signing a deal which contracts him to Hearts until the summer of 2018.

The 22-year-old has made over one hundred first-team appearances for the Maroons, scoring 18 goals.

Meanwhile, Hearts have announced that tickets for their forthcoming William Hill Scottish Cup tie against Aberdeen at Tynecastle will cost £20 for adults and £10 for concessions.

Hearts have also had two of their Ladbrokes Premiership fixtures in January switched for live television coverage. Robbie Neilson's side will now go to New Douglas Park to face Hamilton Academical on Sunday 24th January at 12.45pm before heading to Inverness Caledonian Thistle six days later on Saturday 30th January for another lunch-time kick-off of 12.45pm.

Three Edinburgh charities celebrated at Holyrood

✖ Three exceptional Edinburgh based charitable projects were last week invited to the Scottish Parliament, as part of an

event marking the tenth anniversary of the ScottishPower Energy People Trust.

The charities – COMAS, Changeworks and Lister Housing Cooperative – were selected to attend the event, thanks to their exceptional work using Trust funding to help alleviate fuel poverty in Edinburgh.

- **Change works** put £90,615 of funding from the Trust towards its Cosy Kids project, which provided energy efficiency advice and income maximisation support for families with young children, helping over 800 people in the city.
- **COMAS used** £13,522 Trust funding to set up their Canny Living project. The project helps people in Edinburgh that are struggling with life due to financial hardship, recovery from addiction or social isolation and encourages them take control of their finances and make the most of their income.
- **Lister Housing Cooperative** invested £90,000 funding from the Trust in installing a range of solar thermal water heating systems to 49 poorly insulated tenement flats, helping tenants save money on their fuel bills for the long-term.



ScottishPower Energy People Trust – tenth anniversary parliamentary event
Held at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh.

Over the past decade the Trust has provided over £4million to projects across Scotland, helping over 114,000 people and resulting in a combined increase in household income of over £15million and a legacy of energy efficiency.

Ann Loughrey, Company Secretary and Trustee of the ScottishPower Energy People Trust, said: “We are proud to have been able to play our part in helping these worthwhile

projects make a huge difference to the lives of people throughout Edinburgh and the surrounding areas. It means a lot that the teams could attend our tenth anniversary event and inspire politicians, industry stakeholders and fellow charitable organisations with their stories.”

James Dornan MSP, said: “We were pleased to welcome the ScottishPower Energy People Trust to Holyrood on Tuesday, and acknowledge its tenth anniversary of helping charities across Scotland, and the UK. On the evening, we met with representatives from 25 inspirational organisations which are committed to helping vulnerable Scots improve their lives and it was a privilege to hear about their great work.”

Photos PHIL WILKINSON

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Christmas gift idea – ‘Taxi for Farrell : Football between the Lines’



Former Hibs’ player David Farrell’s extensive footballing career has taken him to 12 clubs and given him an insight into the realities of the game that few can match.

He never enjoyed the riches that many associate with modern football and was forced to fight back from the scrapheap several times. The pressure and desire to keep playing in

spite of serious injuries have left his legs ravaged and he has known the ignominy of unemployment on more than one occasion.

With coaching providing even less security than playing, David now works long, unsociable hours as a taxi driver in Glasgow.

Earlier today, David kindly took time out from his hectic schedule to chat to the Edinburgh Reporter about his book and his eight year spell at Easter Road. He said: " I wrote this book to dispel a couple of myths about footballers. They are not all millionaires and they are not all thick. The book tells lots of stories about what goes on in the background that most supporters don't know or realise, such as the sackings, the unemployment and the injuries. I have had lots of experience at different clubs and with different managers and this seems to have caught the imagination of fans of all teams.

"So far the sales have been going really well and the figures have been pretty good and we are hitting the publishers targets."

David joined Hibs from Oxford and spent almost eight years at the club under manager Alex Miller, finishing regularly in the top five of the Premier League and playing alongside top class players such as Andy Goram, Steve Archibald, Keith Wright, Darren Jackson, Murdo McLeod, Michael Weir, Michael O'Neil, Kevin McAllister, Pat McGinlay. Whilst he was only a squad member when Hibs won the Skol League Cup in 1991, he played in every tie including the final of the League Cup in 1993/4.

He continued: "Alex Miller signed me and I started in the reserves as a centre half. The team were going well and to be honest I wasn't ready for the first team so I was only a squad member when we won the League Cup in 1991, but two years later I played in every round including the final which we lost

narrowly 2-1 thanks to an Ally McCoist overhead kick. Even though we didn't win it was still a dream come true for me having grown up in the East End of Glasgow to play against Rangers in a national cup final at Celtic Park.

"By that time Alex Miller had seen something in me so he moved to into midfield where I became a ball winner. We had some great players and although I wouldn't say we were underrated I think that Hibs' supporters looking back realise that we were a decent team. We finished third once and were in the top five regularly. I should probably have stayed longer at Hibs as I had the offer of a two year contract on the table but I moved to Partick Thistle to get regular first team football.

Born and brought up in the East end of Glasgow, David's first love was Celtic but he still retains an affection for Hibs and keeps an eye on what's happening at Easter Road. When asked whether Hibs can win the Championship this year, he didn't hesitate: "Of course Hibs can win the league although whether they will is another matter. There is a good spirit about the team and they appear a lot tougher than they were last year. Alan Stubbs did a great piece of business in the summer with Scott Allan leaving the club and being replaced by John McGinn, Dylan McGeouch and Liam Henderson. He deserves a lot of credit. I have never hidden my love for Celtic, but I still hold Hibs in a high regard and wish them well in the future.

After hanging his boots up, David has been involved in coaching and actually had a successful spell as first team coach with Notts County under Manchester United, Liverpool and England legend Paul Ince when they defeated Premiership side Sunderland at the Stadium of Light and held the millionaires of Manchester City to a draw in the FA Cup. He is now out of the game and drives a taxi in Glasgow when he is not writing his blog, but would he like to return to the dugout? " Never say never. Football is like a drug so if the phone went and I was offered a coaching or management role then I would certainly consider it but it's not the be all and end all for

me at this time.”

Praise for Taxi For Farrell: Football Between The Lines:

“The clarity, candour and wit of Farrell’s superb writing gives the rest of us a feel for a footballer’s life.” MICHAEL GRANT (THE TIMES)

“Comes up with topics that even the real fans generally don’t think about.” IRVINE WELSH

“Mirrors the hugely successful ‘Secret Footballer’ Guardian columns and best-selling books.” GORDON WADDELL (DAILY RECORD)

“Entertaining, insightful, well-crafted and irreverent.” KENNY MACDONALD (THE SUN)

“Farrell’s honesty is what makes this book great.” THE LONG BALL

Cyclist struck by car at Eskbank roundabout



Police in Midlothian are appealing for witnesses following a road traffic collision which happened around 5.30pm yesterday on the A7 at Eskbank roundabout.

A 35-year-old female cyclist was on the roundabout travelling from east to west when she was struck by a northbound car.

The car is described as small and dark blue coloured, which failed to give way at the roundabout.

The vehicle then failed to stop and continued towards Sheriffhall.

PC Keith Smith, of Trunk Road Policing, Dalkeith Police Station, said: "The cyclist sustained minor injuries from this incident, and we're keen to trace the driver of the car.

"If anyone has any information, particularly anyone who witnessed the collision, please contact Police Scotland on 101."

Woman injured after being tripped up entering Waverley Station



Police are appealing for witnesses after a 45-year-old woman was deliberately tripped as she ran in to Edinburgh Waverley Station, leaving her with serious cuts to her head and face from the fall.

The injured woman was then taken by ambulance to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary where she was detained overnight.

CCTV shows the victim being tripped by a younger woman at the top of the escalators as she entered the station at Waverley Steps at 22.30 on Friday night.

Detective Constable Paul Farquhar, of the British Transport Police, said: "I understand that the young woman responsible laughed as she made off from the station entrance and a man, who is believed to have been in her company, apologised for

her actions to the injured woman.”

Two Hibs’ games changed for live television coverage.



Two of Hibs’ Ladbrokes Championship matches have been changed for live television coverage.

The away match against Falkirk at the Falkirk Stadium, has been moved to Sunday 17 January 2016 with a 3pm kick-off, and it will be screened live on BT Sport.

Following that the home fixture against Alloa Athletic has been rescheduled for Sunday 21 February with a 1:30pm kick-off and the game will be televised live on Sky Sports.

David Farrell to sign copies of his book at Easter Road on Saturday



Former Hibs’ defender David Farrell will be signing copies of his new book “Taxi for Farrell: Football Between the Lines” at the Clubstore ahead of Saturday’s game against Falkirk.

He will appear in the Clubstore from 12.30pm-1.30pm, with copies available to purchase from the Hibernian Clubstore, before visiting the Edinburgh Suite pre-match to talk to hospitality members.

The book, which has earned praise from a host of football pundits and media outlets.

Farrell joined Hibs from Oxford United and made his debut against Aberdeen at Pittodrie on 25th August 1990. He made 95 appearances for Hibs scoring two goals, with his most memorable game being the 1993 Scottish League Cup final against Rangers at Parkhead.

Farrell told the club website: "In truth I was only really a first-team player for four of the years I spent at Hibs. For the first three and a half I was a reserve, trudging all over the country. Windy nights in Arbroath where the seagulls got more touches of the ball than I did, and wet nights at Forfar where young wannabes would try and kick lumps out of me after a day in the tractor, were all the same to me. I was a full-time professional footballer, as long as I could still say that I was like a pig in the proverbial.

"In my time at Easter Road, Hibs finished third in the league once and were in the top five another five times. We won the League Cup and were beaten finalists a few years later as well as reaching a couple of Scottish Cup semi-finals. With excellent players like Goram, Leighton, Weir, McGinlay, Wright, MacLeod, McAllister, O'Neill, Archibald, Jackson, and Hamilton we were certainly no mugs.

"My job in that team was to stop the opposition's better players from performing, then get the ball to our own better players with the minimum of fuss. I wasn't to try anything fancy and I was delighted to be effective enough as a midfield spoiler to allow me to play in a very good Hibs side."

Taxi For Farrell: Football Between The Lines is available from

book stores, as an ebook or from www.tecklebooks.co.uk.

Police hunt driver who collided with pram and failed to stop



Police are appealing for witnesses following a hit and run collision in the west of the city which happened around 2pm on Tuesday at the roundabout on Riccarton Mains Road at the junction with Bryce Road.

A 28-year-old woman was pushing her 7-month-old son in his pram and whilst crossing the road they involved in a collision with an older style white Ford Fiesta.

As a result, the pram was knocked over.

The driver failed to stop and turned his vehicle around before travelling North along Riccarton Mains Road towards the A71 Calder Road.

The child was taken to the Sick Kids Hospital where it was established he had not sustained any injury.

Inquiries are ongoing to trace this driver and anyone who can assist police with their investigation is asked to come forward.

He is described only as being white, in his early to mid twenties with short dark hair.

Inspector Liz Duthie from Oxfangs Police Station said: "It is

extremely fortunate the young baby did not suffer injury as a result of this collision, but his mother was left extremely distraught.

“We are eager to trace the motorist who did not stop and anyone with information that can help identify him is asked to contact police immediately.”

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

Leith Fort now being built



An ambitious project to build a new community of affordable homes in Leith is now underway.

Port of Leith Housing Association (PoLHA) and the City of Edinburgh Council have started work on the Leith Fort housing development, with the first homes due to complete in 2017.

A total of 94 new homes will be built on the former 18th century Leith Fort site, 62 of which will be owned by PoLHA and available for mid market rent and 32 units will be owned by the Council for social rent.

The new properties have been modelled on the Edinburgh colonies concept and are a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom homes. A particular feature of this development is that all homes have access to private south west facing gardens. There is also parking provision within the site and a communal landscaped area.

Keith Anderson, Chief Executive of PoLHA, said: “Building

high-quality, affordable housing in Leith and North Edinburgh is at the heart of what we do and we are delighted to breathe new life into the former Leith Fort site which will complement our existing mix of developments in the city.

“Many people still have difficulties in accessing good quality homes which is why Leith Fort will help meet a wider range of needs.”

The main contractor is CCG (Scotland) Ltd and the development is being funded by PoLHA, the Council and the Scottish Government.

Councillor Cammy Day, Housing Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said:

“I am delighted that work has started on this development, which will offer much-needed, high quality and energy efficient homes at a price that people can afford. This is an historic site and the finished development, complete with gardens and landscaping, will be an attractive addition to the Leith community.

“We have trebled the number of affordable houses being delivered in Edinburgh to around 1,500 a year through programmes such as 21st Century Homes and will continue to work in partnership with organisations such as the Port of Leith Housing Association to deliver as many as possible.”

Christmas Gift Idea : A

Charity Photo Session – with your Dog!



If your dog is as important ...or maybe even just a tiny bit more important...to you as your mother, why not include him in the Christmas jollity by taking him along to **Ocean Terminal** for a fun photo shoot? **Paws and Claus** will be running special canine sessions every Tuesday and Thursday evening from now until 22 December 2015; for £8 your best friend will get a special souvenir photograph with Santa Claus!

The special canine sessions with Santa also have a more serious purpose, helping to raise funds for **Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home (EDCH)** at one of their busiest times of the year. EDCH has been a safe haven to stray animals since 1883, and still rescues over a thousand lost or abandoned dogs and cats every year. It provides a vital service to the community by trying, wherever possible, to reunite owners with their missing animals. But there are times when owners cannot be found or are unable to cope – that's when its re-homing programme comes in, finding new homes for unwanted dogs and cats.



The Paws and Claus visits will be on a **pre-booking only basis**, with 15 minute sessions available every Tuesday & Thursday evening. The cost of £8 includes a £2 donation to EDCH, and if you wish to donate any extra money to this valued cause there will be a donation bucket on site.

To find out more and to book, click [here](#). You will need to arrive 5 minutes before your chosen slot. Please note that your dog must be **well behaved** and **kept on a lead** at all times, and should be **exercised** prior to entering the Ocean Terminal

Shopping Centre.

EDCH is at 26 Seafield Road East, EH15 1EH, tel: 0131 669 5331. Its rehoming service is open without appointment 10am-3.30pm Monday to Saturday, closed Sundays. The EDCH website has lots of advice and information that you should consider before offering to rehome an animal.



What's On in Edinburgh? Christmas at the Palace



There are many sights to see in Edinburgh this Christmas.





You might like to walk up The Mound and marvel at the electric light show that is Princes Street Gardens. You might like to watch the skaters whizzing round the ice in St Andrew's Square. Or you might like to look out, as I did last week, from a royal gallery onto a colonaded piazza, above which Victorian lamps glow softly in the twilight. And if you did this, you might be forgiven for thinking you have been transported to Narnia, with Mr Tumnus about to arrive at any minute.





The Palace of Holyroodhouse is magical at any time of year, but this December it has been transformed into a festive wonderland. Over 20,000 lights are now twinkling throughout the royal residence and giant trees welcome visitors into opulent public rooms.



The piazza itself – which was designed by **Sir William Bruce** in the late 17th century – is swathed in subtle red and green garlands. From here one enters the **Great Stair** with its stunning Baroque ceiling; Two artists, whom Bruce brought to Edinburgh from London, worked for ten years on the immensely detailed mouldings, which feature the key motifs of the palace including angels holding the **Honours of Scotland** (Scottish

Crown Jewels, now housed at Edinburgh Castle). Frosted garlands and wreaths studded with berries and pines adorn the staircase itself and these, explains Senior Curator Deborah Clarke, have been designed specifically to reflect the plasterwork above.



What do you put on your table on 25 December? A few candles? Some flowers? That silver angel thing that your auntie gave you in 1993? Whatever you do, you're unlikely to achieve a setting as impressive as the one you can see in Holyroodhouse. Beautiful pieces from **Queen Mary's** silver banqueting service are interspersed with decorated trees – yes, trees! Maybe the Royal Ones didn't want to spend hours looking at each other,

or maybe they just needed somewhere to hide the Brussels sprouts – who knows?

The dinner service itself was made in Edinburgh in 1935 by **Henry Tatton & Co**; its simple design echoes that of 17th century Scottish silver, and each piece bears the Scottish coat of arms and the hallmarks of both the company and the **Edinburgh Assay Office** (which is still very much in the city – Broughton Street to be precise – and one of the few left in the UK). The table is laid for dessert, with *comports* – wide shallow dishes for the display of fruit – filled with grapes; the comports form part of a **Bloor Derby** porcelain set ordered by **Queen Victoria** – the first monarch to use the Dining Room – in 1842.



HRH George V and Queen Mary actually sat on the thrones in Holyroodhouse's **Throne Room**. Our own Queen doesn't sit on them any more, but she does use this apartment for the luncheons she holds for **Knights and Ladies of the Order of the Thistle** (the highest honour in Scotland). The Queen's not very likely to have time to pop in over Christmas, but if you do you can see the second largest Christmas tree in the Palace – this one decorated with gorgeous red and white lights. You can't sit on the thrones though – no, not even if you do bring your own crown, paper or otherwise.

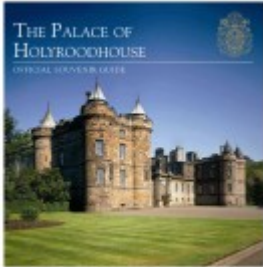




The spectacular Great Gallery at Holyroodhouse is hung with **Jacob de Wet's** portraits of the real and legendary kings of Scotland. It feels a bit like Hogwarts in here – as you walk across the deep red carpet, you wouldn't be too surprised if one of those Royal Personages started talking to you. It's a room deserving of an extra special tree – and it has one, decorated with sumptuous jewelled baubles, while the royal fireplace is draped with festive foliage.

If you'd like to sing **carols**, attend a Royal Christmas **party**, listen to Christmas **music** (performed live by **The Scottish Vocal Ensemble**) or learn about courtly conduct and Stuart **dances**, all of them will be happening in here at some point over the holiday period – see below for details.





The Palace is a member of **Edinburgh World Heritage's Food Heritage Trail**, which has been developed to help both visitors and residents to discover the city's food history, experience Edinburgh's culinary traditions and dine in some of its historic locations. This month the **Cafe at the Palace** is entering into the spirit of the season by serving mince pies, Christmas cake and mulled wine – or why not try **a special Christmas-themed afternoon tea**? The **Palace shop** also has lots of ideas for **gifts**, from jewellery to food and drink, books and toys, and if you're a visitor they can even arrange international home delivery for you.



And if all that Christmas excitement stirs the child within you, fear not – these days even grown-ups can have fun in Holyroodhouse's **Family Room**. The Palace's dressing up clothes – intended for the young rather than the young-at-heart – were getting damaged by all the adults who tried to squeeze into them, so now, explains Business Development and Communications Manager **Rebecca Hill**, they've brought in some larger sizes.

You too can take a turn as a medieval maiden or masquerade behind a mask – go on, you know you want to...

The Palace will be decorated until **Monday 4 January 2016**.

Events at Holyroodhouse include:

Exclusive Evening Tours – an after hours tour with an expert guide, which includes ‘behind the ropes’ access to some apartments not normally open to the public, and is followed by a glass of champagne, a mince pie, a guidebook and 20% discount in the Palace shop. Various dates are available.

Carols Around the Christmas Tree – on **Wednesday 9th December**, the **Scottish Vocal Ensemble** will provide an evening of Christmas carols and seasonal music in the splendour of the Great Gallery, followed by a walk through the decorated State apartments. A glass of wine, a mince pie and 20% discount in the Palace shop are all included.

A Royal Christmas Party – Family Event Day: Sunday 20th December will be a day of wonderful family events, including **Courtly Conduct & Dancing**, **Make & Take Craft**, **Face Painting** and ‘**Banqueting Table**’, plus classic Victorian games, activities and costumes to choose from in the Family Room, and the day’s finale, a **Family Carol Concert**, with local family choir **Sing in the City**.

Hogmanay at Holyroodhouse – Family Event Day: on Thursday 31st December you can enjoy a full day of family events to bring in the New Year. In addition to the activities offered on Sunday 20th December there will be **Secret Stairs & Corridors Tours** – take a family tour behind the ropes of the Palace and find out about royal festive traditions.

Full details of times and tickets (Family Event Days are included in the normal admission ticket price, other events are charged separately) may be found on the Palace’s website [here](#).

Many thanks to Deborah Clarke and Rebecca Hill, Palace of Holyroodhouse for allowing us to see the wonders of the Palace.



Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Edinburgh's budget challenge – have you had your say?

From Castles to Camels: Scottish Goldsmiths and their Marks

Choirs entertaining passengers at the airport

Barnardo's stamp appeal

Edinburgh College students design BBC History Magazine



You only have until 17 December 2015 to have your say about the Council's 2016-2020 budget proposals. This is your opportunity to tell them your views and ideas about how they will be able to save £126m, increase income and deliver services.

Find out more about the budget by [visiting our website](#) and [watching the recording](#) of the budget Question Time event where a panel of senior councillors were [quizzed](#) on the budget proposals in front of a live audience. They were asked questions on a range of topics from supporting unpaid carers, introducing a tourist tax, lobbying government to increase

council tax, charging cyclists, and the trams.

Have your say by 17 December using:

- [‘your city, your say’](#) dialogue page to tell the council how you think we should deliver services differently, save money, and increase income, and rate and comment on other people’s suggestions too
- [online planner](#) to tell the council how you think they should deliver services.

Your feedback will help the Council to make its final budget decisions on 21 January 2016. They will keep you posted about next steps and the findings.

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/budget





We all know that **George Heriot** founded one of Edinburgh's most famous schools – but did you know he was also a goldsmith? And not any old goldsmith – Heriot was **Court Goldsmith** to **King James VI and his wife Anne of Denmark**. At the **Museum of Edinburgh** this morning you can hear about Mr Heriot and some other well known individuals – and discover some important national treasures, such as the Scottish crown, Prince Charles Edward Stuart's travelling canteen and the gold prizes won at Leith races – in a talk by **George Dalglish, Keeper of Scottish History and Archaeology at the National Museum of Scotland**. George will discuss the work and craft organisation of goldsmiths and silversmiths in Scotland from the 16th to the 20th century.

George is a member of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh and a Trustee of Abbotsford Trust; his research interests include most aspects of Scottish decorative arts, particularly silver, ceramics, pewter and Jacobite relics. He graduated in Scottish History from Edinburgh University before joining the then National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland back in 1980, and was heavily involved with the creation of the 18th and 19th century Galleries of the Museum of Scotland, which opened in 1998.

The talk will take place at 10.30am at the [Museum of Edinburgh](#), Huntly House, 142 Canongate. Tickets cost £5/£3.50 and must be purchased in advance from the [Usher Hall Box Office](#), Lothian Road, in person, by calling 0131 228 1155 or online [here](#).



A variety of choirs will be singing to help you on your way when travelling in or out of Edinburgh Airport this month.

The choirs will sing from about 11:00am and will include:

Wednesday 9th – Kirkhill Primary School, Broxburn, West Lothian

Thursday 10th – Carmondean Primary School, Livingston, West Lothian

Friday 11th – Riverside Primary School, Livingstone, West Lothian

Monday 14th – Gracemount Primary School, Edinburgh

Tuesday 15th – Towerbank Primary School

Wednesday 16th – Corstorphine Primary School, Edinburgh

Thursday 17th – Royal High School, Edinburgh

Friday 18th – Gylemuir Primary School, Edinburgh (10:30 start)

Tuesday 22nd – Stirling (Dunblane) Boys Brigade



The run up to Christmas usually means an influx of lovely well-wishing cards from family and friends worldwide. And Scotland's leading children's charity are asking the people of Edinburgh and the Lothians to make this goodwill go a little further with a simple stamp appeal.


Barnardo's Scotland has teamed up with Citadel Stamps to raise money for the vulnerable children, young people and families the charity supports. They are appealing for members of the public to hold on to their used stamps – clipping around the stamps leaving 10-20mm of envelope paper – and freeposting them to Barnardo's Stamp Appeal, PO BOX 6107, Stromness, KW16 9AB.

Barnardo's Scotland will receive a financial contribution from partner Citadel Stamps for the load. All stamps are accepted, including foreign ones, limited editions and collections.



Illustration students at Edinburgh College are helping draw attention to the year's top history books through artwork featured in the Christmas issue of BBC History Magazine.

The students have collaborated with the magazine to design a new cover for its Books of the Year section, and several of the final illustrations have been chosen for the print and digital publication.

 The magazine asked the second-year HND Illustration students to come up with an idea and designs for the section, and finalised their designs with feedback from the BBC History team.

Students David Lymburn's illustration was chosen for the December print edition. His cover depicts famous figures reading history books in a library.

David said: "I was really thrilled to see my illustration chosen and published for such a renowned magazine.

"The feedback session was a great opportunity for me to develop. They asked me to make the library more visually appealing, as my rough idea was of a school library.


I changed the library and also the composition of the people to make the illustration stronger. This took time and effort to get right."

Rachel Dickins, deputy editor of the magazine said: "It was a really hard decision choosing which illustrations to use. Here at the BBC History Magazine we're always on the lookout for emerging talent and were very impressed with the quality of the students' work on this project."

Glen McBeth, HND Illustration lecturer at Edinburgh College

added: “I do freelance illustration work for BBC History magazine so I jumped at the chance to get my students involved too. In the second year of the course we are preparing the students for freelance work so real-life industry-led projects are great experience for them.”



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St Mary's Music School entertained guests at SQA Star Awards



Pupils from St Mary's Music School entertained guests at the SQA Star Awards, held last week at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh.

The School's Scottish Traditional Group: (from left to right) Ciorstaidh Sarah Chaimbeul (Accordion), Lachlan Kennedy (Violin), Eosaph Caimbeul (Guitar and Drums) and Brighde Chaimbeul (Pipes) played for guests and then Brighde piped the guests into dinner.

Jenna Doherty, SQA Events Co-ordinator, said: “The group were fantastic and all the guests, especially the foreign ones,

loved Brighde playing the bagpipes.”

Ciorstaidh Sarah, Brighde and Eosaph Caimbeul are siblings and come from Kyle of Lochalsh and are boarders at St Mary’s Music School while Lachlan is a day pupil who commutes from Glasgow.

Dr Ken Taylor, Headteacher at St Mary’s Music School, said:

“St Mary’s Music School offers a world class standard of music and academic education to musically gifted children aged 9-19 years. We are very proud of our pupils who come from many different backgrounds and from all parts of Scotland as well as elsewhere in the UK and abroad. Our Traditional Group is a fine example of the School’s talented young musicians.”

The Charlatans to play Edinburgh this December



The Charlatans will play one last home tour promoting their most recent album *Modern Nature* with two Scottish shows this month.

The British band, who have had three number one albums in the UK, will play Edinburgh’s Usher Hall on 14 December.


Modern Nature was received exceptionally well among fans, who proclaimed it was one of the best efforts in their illustrious 26-year career. Singles such as ‘So Oh’, ‘Come Home Baby’ and ‘Let the Good Times’ were placed on the A-list on BBC 6 Music.

The band performed a secret set at Glastonbury this year, and played slots at Isle of Wight, V Festival and Tramlines.

This will be the The Charlatans last UK tour before the band head off to tour Europe, America and Australia.

On their return they will be heading back into the studio to start work on their follow-up album.

Have yourself a Crafty Little Christmas

John Lewis are hosting free festive craft workshops from  12-2pm every day until Sunday 27 December – so if you want to go that extra mile and get crafty for Christmas now is your chance!

Nestled in the haberdashery department amidst swathes of silk and shelves of candy-coloured sewing machines, the workshop space is pleasantly cosy and informal.

The girls at John Lewis are on hand to help with all manner of ideas from oversized advent calendars to fuzzy felt faces – nothing is too great a challenge for even the most amateur crafter in their capable hands.

The haberdashery department is full of twinkling truckles – enough to inspire any budding creatives to get crafty... and the workshops are drop-in so there's no excuse not to! The more the merrier – why not bring a friend and get started on those hanging decorations? They make an ideal gift, if you can bear to part with your new creation!



SPFL Hit Back at Hearts

Hearts owner Ann Budge has yet again shown she isn't afraid to speak her mind by criticising the SPFL's latest idea to bolster Scottish football with its plans for revamping next season's League Cup competition.

SPFL chiefs announced on Monday night that the 2016/17 League Cup will revert to the old section format used in the 1970s. This will involve all 38 teams not involved in European competition, plus the winners of the Highland League and Lowland League.

There will be eight groups of five teams playing each other once in a round-robin format, to take place across five July date and will use the traditional three points for a win and one point for a draw model. However, all drawn matches will be decided by a penalty shoot-out – with the winner awarded a bonus point.

The eight group winners and the four best runners-up progress to the second round, when they are joined by the four clubs

competing in Europe, and revert to a traditional knockout format.

Mrs Budge gave a lukewarm response to the changes.

"I would have liked to have known a little bit more about them before they were publicly announced," said the Hearts owner. "I've had no longer to study them than the press have. They were all things that were mooted before, but in terms of a total package being put together it wasn't something most of us were aware of. But I haven't had a chance to examine whether I think it's the right way forward.

"I know it will influence clubs financially, potentially in contract terms with players, and the fact that we haven't had a chance to think these things through is a bit of a negative. In saying that, I'm all for change, we do need change. We've talked about a winter break, we've talked about summer football, this is the beginning of something.

"So I'm not saying it's wrong, just that I would have liked to have known more about it before it was announced."

However, the SPFL said all clubs were consulted before changes to the League Cup were made public. They said they sent details of the League Cup revamp and additional changes to all 42 member clubs, in addition to the Highland and Lowland League organisations on Monday afternoon, several hours before they were announced in the media.

Hearts weren't the only unhappy club. It's worth noting that Motherwell were also far from happy at the way the changes were announced.

In a somewhat childish retort, an SPFL spokesman said: "Following media reports regarding the announcement of the new League Cup format and broadcast partner, it is worth clarifying that all 42 SPFL clubs involved received full details of the final announcement in advance. Specifically,

three officials at Heart of Midlothian FC as well as two from Motherwell FC received emails at 2pm, and again at 4pm, on Monday 7 December 2015, seven and a half hours ahead of the announcement being made public.

“Furthermore it’s worth noting that both Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell approved the BT broadcasting deal by written resolution at a meeting of the Premiership clubs on 10 September 2015, which made specific reference to the Group Stage for the League Cup (with the exception of the bonus point, which was debated and approved by the Competitions Working Group and the SPFL Board). This subject was widely trailed at general meetings where both Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell were present, over the past year.

“Consultation with member clubs on a possible new format for the Scottish League Cup began as early as 21 October 2014 when, during a general meeting of all 42 clubs at Hampden, we announced that this topic would be explored by a competitions working group made up from representatives of member clubs, including Motherwell. Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell were both represented at this meeting.

“At subsequent general meetings held on both 19 January 2015 and 23 April 2015, each attended by Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell, all 42 clubs were again fully consulted on the considerations and recommendations of the working group, including a possible new July group stage format and potential broadcaster interest in this.

“Then, at our annual general meeting on 20 July 2015, attended by both Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell, all clubs were again reminded and consulted on the discussions taking place on a possible new format for the Scottish League Cup and broadcast interest.

“Finally, at our general meeting on 5 October 2015, at which both Heart of Midlothian and Motherwell were again present,

all clubs were given a detailed update on intentions for the Scottish League Cup for next season onwards.

“We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to yesterday’s announcement from the vast majority of clubs, as well as many supporters, partners and the media, and look forward to continuing to work together for the collective good of Scottish football.”

In this writer’s opinion, the SPFL’s response to criticism is fairly typical. It seems the SPFL just assume member clubs will jump to their tune without considering that football clubs are run like businesses these days and many factors have to be considered – not least the supporters, many of whom will be on holiday in July when next season’s competition kicks off.

Whether the new format for the League Cup will be successful remains to be seen. Sadly, only Scottish football can take what was meant to be a positive announcement and turn it into a spat.

SPFL Goal of the Month competition for November 2015



Hibs’ strikers Jason Cummings (pictured) and James Keatings have been nominated for November’s ‘Goal of the Month’ award along with Osman Sow of Hearts.

Cummings’ opener in Hibs 2-1 win over Rangers and Keatings’

strike in the 4-1 away win over St Mirren were selected along with Sow's long range effort against Motherwell.

The full list of nominees for November's #SPFL Goal of the Month competition are as follows...

GOAL A – Jason Cummings (HIBERNIAN v Rangers)

GOAL B – Iain Vigurs (Motherwell v INVERNESS CT)

GOAL C – James Tavernier (RANGERS v Alloa)

GOAL D – James Keatings (St Mirren v HIBERNIAN)

GOAL E – Tom Rogic (Ross County v CELTIC)

GOAL F – Josh Mullin (ALBION ROVERS v Dunfermline)

GOAL G – Robbie Muirhead (Kilmarnock v PARTICK THISTLE)

GOAL H – Osman Sow (Motherwell v HEARTS)

Watch the nominees here and vote for your favourite by commenting below the video.

The SPFL is the leading sporting competition in Scotland, covering the top 42 football teams in the country. Subscribe to the official SPFL YouTube channel to make sure you catch all the best bits from Scottish league football. Scottish football is famous for passionate and exciting matches featuring top teams like Celtic, Rangers, Aberdeen, Hearts, Hibs and Dundee United.

The top league is called the Ladbrokes Premiership. Below the top level, there are a further three leagues – the Ladbrokes Championship, Ladbrokes League 1 and Ladbrokes League 2.

Photo by John Preece

Stuart Young sentenced after carrying out a series of sexual abuse



Stuart Young

A 38-year-old man guilty of sexually assaulting three children including a baby has today been sentenced at Edinburgh High Court.

Stuart Young was handed an Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR) after carrying out a series of sexual abuse between November 2008 and December 2013, at various locations in the Capital.

He was arrested and charged in January 2014 after two of his victims disclosed what had happened to them.

A jury later found him guilty of various sexual offences on Thursday, April 30.

He won't be eligible for parole until 2023.

Detective Chief Inspector Alwyn Bell said: "Stuart Young carried out a catalogue of serious sexual offences against children over a number of years but thanks to the bravery of the two girls who came forward we have ensured he has been brought to justice.

"Young deliberately targeted his victims in order to satisfy his own depraved needs over a sustained period of time and I hope today's sentencing provides some sense of closure to the victims.

"We will continue to work alongside our colleagues from the NHS, the social work department and the voluntary sector to

ensure the victims receive all the specialist assistance and support at the earliest opportunity to aid longer-term recovery.

“Crimes of a sexual nature are among the most serious incidents reported to police and it goes without saying that we treat every complaint with the utmost professionalism.

“Sexual offences have a long term devastating affect and we do everything we can to support the victims regardless of when they happened.

“Although such incidents are rare we take a zero tolerance approach towards those responsible and do everything we can to ensure that they are swiftly brought to justice.

“Anyone who wants to report a crime to police can do so by calling the 101 non-emergency number or speak to any officer.”

No hiding place for perpetrators of domestic abuse



Police are today launching their annual campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse over the festive period.

Domestic abuse is the physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse of a man or a woman by a current or previous partner.

Edinburgh has resources dedicated to tackling these offences, such as the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU), and over

the past 3 years there has been a small decrease in reported incidents over the festive period.

DCI Alwyn Bell of Edinburgh's Public Protection Unit said: "Although reports of domestic abuse over the festive period have shown a small decline in the past three years, we know that victims report only a proportion of actual offences committed.

"One incident of domestic abuse is one too many. Victims are often made to feel frightened, isolated or ashamed by their abuser, and the impact on them and their family can be devastating.

"My message to anyone who is suffering domestic abuse is that you are not alone and you are not to blame. We want victims to know that help is available. We continue to work closely with partners from Social Work and Health in addition to voluntary support agencies such as Womens Aid, EDDACS, Shakti and Sahelyia.

"My message to perpetrators is that there is no hiding place. Be assured that we will take all possible measures and use all available resources to pursue you."

The DAIU, with assistance from the Divisional Violence Reduction Unit, will be carrying out proactive checks on people subject to bail conditions who have been arrested and charged for domestic abuse and are pending trial. Officers will also be proactively pursuing suspects and those subject to outstanding warrants.

Officers will be providing information to the public at Ocean Terminal today and Thursday 17, and the Gyle Shopping Centre tomorrow and Monday 21.

Officers will also be attending educational institutes to raise awareness among young people, beginning with the Main Library and Murray Library at the University of Edinburgh on

Friday, Gorgie Mills High School on Monday 14 and Liberton High School on Wednesday 16.

Police Scotland's national campaign runs from Christmas Eve to 5th January, with Edinburgh Division beginning a local campaign from today until Christmas Eve also.

For more information on domestic abuse, please visit www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/advice-for-victims-of-crime/domestic-abuse

Creative Edinburgh Awards 2015



Photo by Mihaela Bodlovic

Creative Edinburgh were once again the host to their fabulous event, which included leaders, shakers and movers from all creative backgrounds come together to celebrate their fourth Birthday.

Awarding those that shone amidst a variety of platforms for their efforts to the capital over the last year, the organisation not only congratulated and announced the award winners but provided a marketplace for start-ups, sponsors and creative individuals the opportunity to market their work and wares.

With sponsors Heverlee providing refreshments and a silent disco, as well as artist



Photo by Mihaela Bodlovic

installations there was much in the fairly young venue, The Biscuit Factory, to keep the attendees entertained. However, when it came to the awards announcement itself the natural acoustics and PA system provided made it almost inaudible.

As with most events in these modern times, we had to be thankful for the social media effort.

Aside from the sound, they were pretty much spot on with this wonderful night of celebration.

This is the full list of winners below:

The City Award – Neu! Reekie!

The Collaboration Award – Edinburgh Napier University – BA (Hons) Photography & St David's RC High 'High School Resilience Project'

The Commercial Award – Something Something 'Tennent's Lager Wellpark'

The Creativity Award – Alasdair Thomson

The Independent Award – Judy R Clark

The Leadership Award – Faith Liddell – Festivals Edinburgh

The Social Award – Conversations for Change

The Startup Award – Something Something

The Student Award – Jack Lennie 'Tinker'