

Oktoberfest comes a month too late



The spirit of Oktoberfest is now available in the capital as the opening of the city's first authentic German Bier Keller last month offered a brass Oompah band, table-dancing and Steins of German beer. Within Frankensteins the basement has gone through a complete refurbishment to recreate this Bavarian party.

With a band put entirely together for the purpose of the Keller and a menu which evokes an enjoyably Bavarian atmosphere, bar manager John McCausland said: "Our new Bier Keller will be the ultimate party destination for stag and hen parties as well as big group events. Our staff know what it takes to throw a great party!"



The new 165 square metre venue will show premier league football and rugby, as well as catering for birthday and stag celebrations. Aficionados of German beer will be able to enjoy a rare authentic draught beer, served in Steins and an extensive range of bottled beers; also on offer cocktails, schnapps and culinary favourites' including bratwurst, schnitzel and apple strudel.

Should the city feel deprived of any German vibe at the Christmas market this year there is clearly an alternative, and no doubt they will be on hand to pull out all the stops to polish the city's festive air.

Police link housebreakings in Livingston and Penicuik



Police are appealing for witnesses following a number of housebreakings in the Murieston area of Livingston.

The first incident happened between 8.30am and 8pm on 19 November at Murieston Gardens.

The second incident was between the 27 November and 4 December at Murieston Valley.

Jewellery and a small amount of cash was stolen at both addresses.

Detective Sergeant David Black, from Livingston Police Station, said: "A housebreaking is a horrible experience for those targeted, especially at this time of year.

"The two incidents in Livingston may be linked with six similar offences in Penicuik.

"We would urge people to be vigilant, and I would like to let people know we have both plain clothed and uniformed officers patrolling the affected areas.

"I'm appealing for people with any information to contact Police Scotland on 101."

Firefighters urge public to stay safe this winter



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is appealing to the public to stay safe this winter by taking the necessary steps to protect their families, homes, customers and communities.

Winter weather results in an increase in activity for the SFRS due to road traffic collisions on icy roads, flooding and fire. Winter weather also means people spend more time at home. Combined with increased use of heating and electrical appliances plus higher alcohol consumption during the festive season, there are more house fires in December and January than at any other time of year.

A major risk factor is the combination of alcohol and cooking. Most house fires start in the kitchen and when people have been drinking their guard goes down, meaning it's very easy for them to become distracted.

Cooking remains the number one cause of house fires. It's easy to be distracted when cooking, and people who are under the influence of alcohol are even more likely to leave cooking unattended. Smoking, often combined with alcohol, is the main cause of fatal fires.

Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay, Director of Prevention and Protection for SFRS, said:

"Every year across Scotland, SFRS sees a peak in emergency calls due to winter weather. We urge the public to take action now and be prepared for whatever hazards might come in the next few months.

"This winter SFRS will work closely with local communities and partner agencies to keep Scotland safe from fire and other

emergencies – but as always, we need the public's help to reduce the amount of preventable fires we might see in the coming months.

“During a cold winter we use central heating and gas fires more often so the time to fit and test Carbon Monoxide alarms is now. It's also important to ensure that any chimneys or flues have been swept and are in a good, clean, working order.

It is vital that your home has working smoke alarms, enough so that everyone in your home will be alerted in the event of fire. You should also consider fitting a heat alarm in your kitchen. Please also think about friends, relatives and neighbours. Particularly older people. Do you know someone who has no working smoke alarm in their home?

“Winter weather also brings unexpected and dangerous conditions to our roads. It's important to ensure that your vehicle is serviced, well maintained and that drivers take the necessary precautions when driving in bad weather.” Further information about staying safe on the roads is available from www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk.”

SFRS are also reminding the public that it's particularly important to look after the people in our communities who are vulnerable to the hazards winter weather brings, such as older people.

Around 1000 people are injured in fires every year in Scotland and every hour of every day there's a house fire in this country. 75% of preventable fire deaths in Scotland involve people aged 50 years or over and since 2009, 107 people over 60 have died in fires in Scotland.

ACO Lewis Ramsay, added: “It's about making everyone aware of what they can do to prevent a fire happening in their home. Our firefighters would much rather be visiting people's homes and providing this service than turning up when a fire has occurred and dealing with the trauma that causes.

“Do you know an older person and are worried about their safety this winter? It could be a friend, a relative or a neighbour. Why not knock their door, look in on them and make sure they get the support that’s available?

“We can all work together to help keep our communities safe this winter.”

SFRS would like you to have a very happy, safe Christmas and New Year. If you or someone you know is vulnerable or may be at risk from fire please get in touch and arrange a FREE home fire safety visit with local firefighters by calling 0800 0731 999 or visit www.firescotland.gov.uk

A wide range of tips on how to keep yourself and your home safe from fire are available on the SFRS website: www.firescotland.gov.uk/winter

New format announced for Scottish League Cup

✖ The SPFL has announced a new format for the Scottish League Cup, including competitive group football in July, a bonus point system, a new broadcast partner bringing more live TV games and increased revenues for clubs, and the re-introduction of a winter break.

Taking effect from summer 2016, the new format will see eight groups of five teams play each other once each in a round-robin format across five July dates (16th, 20th, 23th, 27th & 30th).

New broadcast partner BT Sport will show six group stage games

live, within a total of 13 matches to be broadcast from next season. This new 80-game group stage will involve all 38 teams not involved in UEFA qualifiers plus winners of this season's Highland League and Lowland League.

The group stage uses the traditional three points for a win and one point for a draw model however, in another innovation, all drawn matches will go straight to a penalty shoot-out whereby the winner of the shoot-out will be awarded a bonus point, believed to be a first in world football.

The bonus-point system is designed to create greater excitement around every match as well as providing more points variations to increase the number of meaningful games throughout the group stages. The eight group winners and four best runners-up progress to the second round, when they are joined by the four UEFA qualifying clubs and the competition reverts to traditional knock-out format.

The SPFL is delighted to announce that BT Sport will become the exclusive live TV broadcaster of the League Cup from summer 2016. BT Sport will screen six games from the group stage in July and a further seven games from the knock-out rounds for each of Seasons 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. BT Sport's new contract will increase the money available for all the clubs significantly.

Another benefit of the new format will be that it allows the re-introduction of a two-weekend winter break for Ladbrokes Premiership clubs during January 2017.

SPFL Chief Executive Neil Doncaster said: "The new format of the Scottish League Cup marks an exciting new chapter for the competition and sees Scottish football leading the way with a number of innovations.

"Fans, the media and clubs alike have expressed a desire for competitive summer football which will be delivered from next July while the ground-breaking bonus point system should add

incentive to teams and excitement for supporters.

“We are delighted to welcome BT Sport as our exclusive League Cup TV broadcast partner and to have their support for the new format. Our agreement with BT Sport delivers a huge increase in the number of games being shown live as well as providing increased competition prizemoney for clubs.

“The new format has also enabled the re-introduction of a winter break for Ladbrokes Premiership clubs. We are consulting with Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2 clubs to establish whether they also favour a winter break in their respective divisions.”

Simon Green, head of BT Sport, said: “BT Sport is thrilled to deepen its connection to Scottish football through this new long-term deal. Our team looks forward to bringing fans an exciting and innovative new competition from July 2016. Today’s agreement expands our summer programming line-up while also giving Scottish football fans an exciting new summer football competition.”

The current Scottish League Cup format involves six rounds; the new format, scheduled to kick off on Saturday 16 July, 2015, involves four rounds plus the new group stage.

Police name cyclist who died in collision on A68 as James Scott



Police in Midlothian have confirmed that the cyclist who died

in a road traffic collision on the A68 on Sunday (6th December 2015) was 50-year-old James William Scott of Pathhead, Midlothian.

James' family have released the following statement:

"James was a very loving husband and father.

"He would go out of his way to help anyone who needed it and had recently been nominated for employee of the month at work.


"He will be sorely missed."

Sgt Scott Sneddon of Trunk Road Policing said: "Our sincere condolences go to James' family and friends at this very sad time.

"We are still keen to speak to anyone who saw the collision on the A68 on Sunday or who has information that can help us with our inquiries into this incident."

Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101 or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

American Football – Edinburgh Napier Knights v Edinburgh University Predators

 *Image from 2015 Varsity Game – J.L.Preece*

A top of the table clash between the two Edinburgh teams lived up to its billing of Game of the Week. The favoured home team Predators were immediately put under pressure by the visiting

Knights who converted a fake Punt and drove the ball to the opponents' 6 yard line before a controversial fumble call gave the Predators a reprieve.

Whilst the Predators drove the ball well initially it was the Knights who opened the scoring after pounding the ball in from the 2yard line by Full Back Joe Walsh.

The Knights defence, who would pressure the opposition Quarterback Will Robertshaw all day, reaped the benefit of their attacking style as linebacker Ross Edwin and Defensive Tackle Zak Watson combined in a safety sack in the end zone to stretch the lead to 9-0 at the break.

A 3rd Quarter Field Goal by Meikle seemed to put the Knights in the comfort zone but a late Defensive score by the Predators Cassian Graham, who stripped the ball from Running Back Walsh and returned the ball 60 yards, put the Pred's within touching distance of an unlikely win.

The subsequent onside kickoff was recovered by the Knights, however it would seem they would have to kick the ball away and give the Predators one last shot at a victory. Facing heavy defensive pressure the Knights called a gutsy fake punt for the second time in the game and Punter Meikle ran the ball in from 44 yards and sealed a 19-6 win that sees the Knights top the table as they head for the Christmas break.

Game MVP honours were given to Joe Walsh (offense); Scott Murray/Ross Edwin (defence); Brandon Meikle (special teams) and Team MVP for the third time in a row linebacker Long Hoang.

The teams will face again in the much anticipated and highly popular Varsity Game scheduled for Superbowl Sunday, February the 7th, at Meggetland Stadium Edinburgh.

Scorers:

1st Quarter: Edinburgh Napier Knights, 2yd TD run Joe Walsh, XPt Kick Brandon Meikle (7-0)

2nd Quarter: Edinburgh Napier Knights, QB Safety sack in End zone Ross Edwin & Zak Watson (9-0)

3rd Quarter: Edinburgh Napier Knights, 32yd Field Goal Brandon Meikle, (12-0)

4th Quarter Edinburgh Predators, 60yd Fumble Recovery TD Cassian Graham, XPt No Good (12-6)

4th Quarter: Edinburgh Napier Knights 44yd Fake Punt TD run Brandon Meikle, XPt Kick Brandon Meikle (19-6)

Final Score – Knights 19, Predators 6.

Big Country to play Teviot Debating Hall on 19 December



Music legends 'Big Country' will play the Teviot Debating Hall Teviot Row House, 13 Bristo Square on Saturday 19th December.

Following the incredible success of their 30th Anniversary 'Steeltown' Tour, the band set off again on tour to celebrate their stunning catalogue of songs, taken from their multi-million selling and Number 1 hit albums. The band will perform classic hits and live favourites including Harvest Home – Fields of Fire – In A Big Country – Chance – Wonderland – Look Away – The Teacher – plus a surprise for longtime fans...

Steeped in a stunning catalogue of proud and stirring hit

songs, along with massive albums such 'The Seer', 'Steeltown', 'Peace In Our Time' and the triple Grammy –nominated, 'The Crossing', Big Country continue to look beyond the next horizon in 2015.

The band – Bruce Watson (guitars/vocals); Mark Brzezicki (drums, vocals); Jamie Watson (guitars/vocals) will be augmented on stage by Simon Hough, ex-front man for Denny Laine (WINGS), Eric Bell (THIN LIZZY) etc.

Christmas Gift Idea – The Treasure Trove has it all sewn up



Are you looking for something special this Christmas? Something hand-made by an expert knitter, baker, sewer or craftsperson? And would you like to know that your purchases are helping not just *someone*, but the very person who made the gift?





The Treasure Trove in Castle Street has a wonderful selection of **adults' and children's clothes** – including cardigans, Arran jumpers, gloves, hand-smocked baby dresses, baby knitwear, and beautiful tartan dresses. There are very well-priced **quilts, soft toys, padded coat hangars**, and lovely **hats** for all ages, **jewellery, some glass work and cards**.



Each maker is a member of **The Self Aid Society*** who, for various reasons including age, ill-health, disability or financial hardship, may be in need. The support that The Society is able to provide and the sale of their products through the Treasure Trove form an important part of many of their lives.

The Society is careful that only those whose produce is of the highest quality can become a member. In this way, its customers can be assured that their purchases will be uniquely handcrafted to the highest possible standards – and for a very

reasonable price! Tartan pinafores start at just **£16** – try finding one for that price anywhere else – and there are also tiny tartan waistcoats and trousers.



And look at these stunning wolves (and the piping teddies at the top of the page);

The Self Aid Society takes only 10% of the ticket price from each sale – that means the maker receives 90% (or, for £16 dress, £14.40).

The Treasure Trove also sells a wonderful selection of home-made jams and preserves – I tried their rhubarb and ginger jam and I can honestly say, as a jam addict, that it's one of the best I've tasted (£1.85 a jar). Home baking is available most days – shortbread, cakes, biscuits, and at the moment also some mouthwatering chocolates packaged in special boxes.

The Treasure Trove is at **23a Castle Street** (a few seconds walk from Princes Street) and it is open 9.30am-4.45pm Monday to Thursday, 9.30am-4.15pm Friday and Saturday.



*The Royal Edinburgh Repository and Self Aid Society is unique; it was formed by an amalgamation (made in 1977) of two

societies, the Repository for the Sale of Gentlewomen's Work (1882) and the Self Aid for Gentlewomen (1893) – these days, of course, its makers include men as well as women!



Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Royal High School – could it be a concert hall?

Lorne Street residents could be saved by Port of Leith Housing Association

Edinburgh Award for Sir Tom Farmer

Win £10,000 of business funding

Winter Lights

Plans now unveiled show how the Royal High School Preservation Trust (RHSPT) intends to create a spectacular concert hall within the old Royal High School buildings in Edinburgh.

The Trust, which hopes to move St Mary's Music School into the historic Thomas Hamilton building on Calton Hill, will submit its detailed planning application to the City of Edinburgh Council later this week.

Central to the proposals, fully funded by the philanthropic Dunard Fund, is the creation of three new public performance spaces, including a 300-seat concert hall in the former debating chamber – thus providing the music school the

opportunity to build its unique status nationally and internationally, while allowing many more people access to this unique piece of Scotland's heritage.

A new, grand, but highly contemporary foyer will be created beneath the concert hall for ticketing, bar and cloakrooms. When not in use by the public, this can also serve as a multi-function space for the school, avoiding the need to constantly re-configure the main hall.

Stairways or lifts on either side of the foyer will rise beneath original cupola to the fully restored main hall, which will feature flanking stairs as per Thomas Hamilton's original designs. The concert hall, itself, will be fitted with the very latest hydraulic seating to achieve a range of configurations for full orchestral performances through to more intimate recitals.

A new public entrance, grand terraces and the addition of new and near invisible school buildings to the east and north protect both the integrity and setting of the Hamilton masterpiece.

William Gray Muir, Chairman of The Royal High School Preservation Trust, said:

"The Trust believes that the former Royal High School should return to its rightful position at the cultural heart of Edinburgh and we are simply delighted with the designs prepared by Richard Murphy Architects. These not only give us three new public performance spaces and a state-of-the-art new home for St Mary's Music School but they also ensure that the building's dramatic setting is both protected and enhanced.

"Our plans are focused on both preserving this exceptional building while bringing forward progressive, innovative designs to give it a modern and sustainable use."

He added:

“We fully recognise that the City of Edinburgh Council is not currently in a position to accept our offer due to its existing commitment to a commercial development. However, we have consulted widely and believe that our plans satisfy the need for conservation, public access, a culturally suitable and economically sustainable use. Therefore, if the commercial application were refused, the Trust is poised and ready to enter any new competitive process to acquire the building for St Mary’s Music School. Such a process could be completed in a matter of months.”

Dr Kenneth Taylor, Headteacher of St Mary’s Music School, said:

“This is an exciting and wonderful opportunity to further develop St Mary’s Music School with its unique position as Scotland’s only independent specialist music school. Moving to the former Royal High School building would provide us with the performance and rehearsal space we aspire to and would enable us to broaden and extend the outreach activities we currently offer to the wider community.

“The new site will allow for future expansion and a high-profile location will make the school more visible in Scotland, the UK and internationally. It will provide a concert hall of historic importance for the school, external concerts and as a potential venue in the Edinburgh International Festival.

“We are conscious that this will only succeed if the local authority opts to reject planning approval for an alternative commercial proposal for the site. We are confident that the RHSP’s proposal provides a far closer match with the architectural and cultural significance of the unique site and are hopeful that councillors will agree.”



The Trustees of the Miss Agnes Hunter Trust have announced

that Port of Leith Housing Association (PoLHA) is to take the lead to negotiate the potential acquisition of its remaining property portfolio in Lorne Street, Leith.

PoLHA will be undertaking a detailed condition survey of the properties over the next two to three months ahead of negotiations over a potential sale of the remaining flats.

In November, the Trustees of the Miss Agnes Hunter Trust extended the moratorium of serving “no fault” notices to quit until 1st July 2016, to allow time to explore the various options that may allow the Trust to sell its properties without having to ask tenants to leave their homes. These include a purchase of the properties by a housing association or by a newly formed tenants’ co-operative.

Miss Agnes Hunter’s Trust is a grant-making Charitable Trust set up by her Will in 1954 with the sole purpose of financially assisting charitable organisations which support health and social welfare in Scotland.

The Trust’s charitable purposes are to make financial grants to registered charities which support people suffering from arthritis and cancer, physical disability and mental health problems or learning disabilities, or which provide youth education and training. Currently grants amount to around £350,000 each year.

The Trust has provided support to a number of charities in Edinburgh active in the fields of cancer, epilepsy, disability and deafness, including several in North Edinburgh and Leith.

The Board of Trustees took the unanimous decision in January 2015 to sell the property portfolio in a rolling programme over the next three to four years.

The decision was taken as for some time the costs of managing and maintaining the property portfolio have been rising as the property has aged and management costs have increased. This

has occurred at the same time as the number of applications for grants has been increasing particularly from charities whose statutory funding has been withdrawn or reduced.

In the financial period April 2013 – March 2014 the Trust approved 50 grants with a total value of £331,683. In the same financial period the expenses of managing and maintaining the property portfolio, which provides most of the Trust's income, rose to £424,450.

The Trustees considered that their primary obligation under charity law was to make as generous grants as possible and to ensure that the income of the Trust was maximised to this end, but adopting an approach which would seek to minimise the effect on tenants.

Commenting on the announcement, Walter Thomson, Chairman of the Trustees of the Miss Agnes Hunter Trust, said:

"The Trustees are acutely aware that it is real people and families that will be affected by any decision and look forward to working with PoLHA with a view to finding a possible solution that could satisfy all parties involved."

Keith Anderson, Chief Executive of PoLHA, commented:

"As the main provider of affordable housing in Leith, the Association is very pleased to be working with the Trust and with the Lorne Community Association to investigate a solution to retaining these homes for affordable rent in the long term."

Cllr Cammy Day, Vice-Convenor of City of Edinburgh Council's Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, said:

"I'm really pleased to see the Agnes Hunter Trust working with Port of Leith Housing Association to negotiate a potential buy out of the remaining properties, and allowing tenants to remain in their homes and in their community. The efforts of

the tenants in working with the Council, Trustees and Housing Associations is to be commended. In addition to this we will continue to support the option of a local co-operative with tenants.”



The Edinburgh entrepreneur and philanthropist Sir Tom Farmer has been named as the ninth person to receive the prestigious Edinburgh Award.



Sir Tom has been selected to receive the accolade from a shortlist of nominations cast by the Edinburgh public. He will receive an engraved Loving Cup from the city’s Lord Provost at a ceremony within the City Chambers in early 2016.

The Leith-born 75 year-old began his career at 15 at a local tyre firm before famously founding one of Europe’s largest and best known automotive repair businesses, Kwik Fit. He is the current major shareholder of Hibernian Football Club and is Chancellor of Queen Margaret University.

The [Edinburgh Award](#) will go some way towards recognising Sir Tom’s generous philanthropic contribution to the city. His handprints will be immortalised on a flagstone in the City Chambers quadrangle alongside those of previous recipients Ian Rankin, JK Rowling, George Kerr, Sir Chris Hoy, Professor Peter Higgs, Elizabeth Blackadder, Professor Richard Demarco and Tom Gilzean.

Edinburgh’s Lord Provost Donald Wilson, said: “Sir Tom is not only an inspiring businessman but a champion of education, a keen philanthropist and a real believer in community spirit. Most importantly for this award, he is a passionate ambassador for Scotland’s great capital city.

“Sir Tom kindly donated a nativity scene to the city 12 years

ago which, this Christmas, can be found nestled in St Andrew Square. He has constantly given back to this city and has made a significant difference to countless charities from the Salvation Army to Mary's Meals, which provides school meals for children in deprived areas around the world.

"It is a delight to announce Sir Tom as the ninth person to be presented with the Edinburgh Award. He really has made an outstanding contribution to the Capital, and this award is the city's way of recognising all that he has achieved."

Sir Tom Farmer added: "It is a great honour for me to receive the Edinburgh Award. Edinburgh is the city of my birth and I am overwhelmed that I have been chosen to receive this prestigious recognition.

"I wish to thank those who nominated me and the judging panel. I must also thank my wife Anne and my family and friends who have supported and encouraged me all throughout my life."



Business Gateway has £10,000 on offer if you have an idea about combining your business with another one. This is what they say about their Collaboration Prize:

What is the Collaboration Prize?

Have you ever considered collaborating with other businesses to help your business grow? Setting up a consortium co-operative could help you take advantage of bigger business opportunities allowing you to collaborate on activities such as marketing, tendering, innovating or exporting.

If you apply for the Collaboration Prize 2015 you could access the support you need to get started.

The Prize will be awarded to up to five winners, £5,000 in cash to implement their idea, as well as Co-operative Development Scotland support to set up as a consortium co-

operative and £5,000 consultancy support from Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Find out more today

Businesses can apply for the prize at www.scottish-enterprise.com/collaborationprize

Cyrenians Communities and Gardens would like to invite you to their Magical Winter Wonderland.

“Join us for a wander through the gardens, a glass of mulled apple juice, and the chance to buy some home-made festive crafts and produce. All are welcome.”

Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens, Growing Space, Royal Edinburgh Hospital Friday 18 December 2015 3:30 – 5:00pm

[Free tickets here.](#)



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

John McGinn wins Championship

Player of the Month award



Hibs midfielder John McGinn has won the Player of the Month award for November in the Ladbrokes Championship.

The influential midfielder, who is also Scotland under-21 captain, helped his side to five victories in November in all competitions.

McGinn has become a fans' favourite since his move to Easter Road in the summer after his contract with St Mirren ended.

He dedicated his award to his team mates and management staff.

There was more recognition for Hibs' impressive winning streak as Alan Stubbs won the Manager of the Month award.

Speaking to Hibs TV McGinn said: "It's always nice to be getting personal recognition, but I wouldn't be getting it if it wasn't for the help of my team-mates and the back room staff.

"For myself and the gaffer to get recognised personally, then we've got to dedicate it to the boys in the dressing room."

Police welcome public consultation on strategic policing priorities



Police Scotland has today welcomed the launch of a public consultation on strategic policing priorities.

The Scottish Government said the consultation was the broadest ever initiative to gather views on what the public would like from their police service.

Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson said: "We welcome the launch of the public consultation today to establish the strategic priorities for policing. Policing in Scotland has a strong and proud tradition of working closely with the communities we serve to ensure they are as safe as they can be and that offending is targeted in the most effective way possible. Policing has undergone significant change in recent years but our focus will continue to be on those priority issues the public tell us are of greatest concern."

Responses can be submitted until Friday 12th February 2016 and the results of this first stage will be used to draft revised Strategic Police Priorities which will then be the subject of a formal consultation. Further information, including a discussion paper and introductory letter can be found on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/policies/police-fire-rescue/police-scotland/StrategicPolicePriorities>

You can have your say by:

- emailing: ScotPolicePriorities@gov.scot
- via the Scottish Government Digital 'Dialogue' feedback platform <https://ideas.scotland.gov.uk/>
- via twitter using the hashtag #ScotPolicePriorities
- or you can post them to:

*Strategic Police Priorities Review
Police Division
Scottish Government
1WR St Andrews House
Regent Road*

Alan Stubbs wins Championship Manager of the Month for the second month running



Hibs' Head Coach Alan Stubbs has won the Championship Manager of the Month Award for the second month running but he insisted that the honour belongs, not just to him, but to everyone at the club.

The team won five games in all competitions during November, leaving the club just three points behind league leaders Rangers in the race for the Championship.

Hibs face Falkirk at Easter Road on Saturday having not played at the stadium in a competitive game since 17 November and Stubbs is looking forward to playing in front of the home support and is hoping they turn out in numbers to support the team.

Speaking to Hibs TV, Stubbs said: "When your team is winning games of football you've got a better chance of winning these types of award.

"My award is a reward for the team behind the team. They deserve a lot of credit, and that goes to all my staff including the coaches, the physios, everybody at Easter Road, kit men, the chefs and the cleaners.

“It’s a team, it’s an accolade and that they should share because they’ve played a big part in it as well.

“I’m hoping there is going to be a big crowd in there on Saturday to cheer us on. We haven’t been at home for a number of weeks now and the fans have been fantastic – home and away.

“We’re coming into a big month, we’ve got two home games against Falkirk and Queen of the South before we have another game on the 28th. It’s important we approach them in the right way and that the outcome is in our favour.

“The fans will play a big part in that and we’re hoping that they’ll be here in their numbers like they always are and cheering the team on.”

There was more good news for the Hibs’ fans with midfielder John McGinn winning the Player of the Month Award.

Diving – The Scottish National and Open Diving Championships 2015 – Day 3



The final day of The Scottish National and Open Diving Championships on Sunday rounded up a successful event for the organisers at The Royal Commonwealth Pool for the organisers, Scottish Swimming.

Once again, John Preece was there and in the absence of a typical match report, we have another gallery of images from the various categories.



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece





Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece





Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece

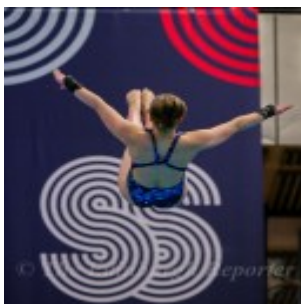


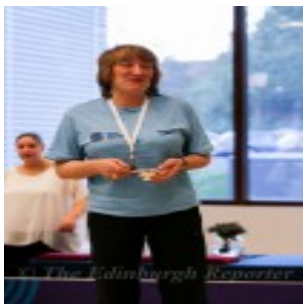


Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece







Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Results from all the events throughout the Championships can be found [here](#) .

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

Christmas gift idea – Greenshoots have Christmas covered

Greenshoots vows to take the stress out of your Christmas shopping this festive season with their personal gift buying service. Greenshoots is an innovative collection of homeware,

gifts and crafts housed alongside a beautiful artisan coffee house situated in the west end of Edinburgh.

❌ Customers will be able to take advantage of the free service both in store and online, with the promise that they will receive a unique, thoughtful gift tailored to even the pickiest recipient.

For those looking for the perfect gift for a family member, loved one, friend or even their office secret Santa, staff will be on hand to present a variety of options to choose from. These can then either be presented to the customer in store for their approval or photographed and sent via email.

❌ The team at Greenshoots will also arrange for delivery of the gift to the buyer, making it a completely hassle-free gift choosing experience. With prices ranging from £12 to £110 there's something to suit every budget.

With a wide array of exclusive, design-led products created by independent British artists, designers and crafters available to purchase in Greenshoots, alongside their bespoke Greenshoots Living range, the team are confident that they will be able to match people with their perfect gift.

So whether you're looking for a bespoke hand-decorated teddy for your little one, a pair of tweed and silver cufflinks for the man in your life, intricate handmade jewellery for that special someone, or the unique gift for the person who has everything, visit Greenshoots this festive season.

For more information on Greenshoots and their personal gift buying service, please visit www.greenshootsedinburgh.com or visit the store in Gorgie, Edinburgh.

❌

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Mamma Mia

Carol singing in Leith

Edinburgh Direct Aid

Loud & Proud Concert

Our Fabulous Christmas Competition!



The world's sunniest and most exhilarating smash-hit musical **MAMMA MIA!** comes to The Edinburgh Playhouse for a 6 week run from Tuesday 29th November 2016 to Saturday 7th January 2017 as part of its first ever UK tour.

Booking for tickets opens today.



Throughout December, local primary pupils will be helping Leithers get into the festive spirit by serenading them with a variety of Christmas carol performances at the Newkirkgate Shopping Centre.

Taking place from today until Friday 18th December, over 300 pupils from eight different primary schools from in and around Leith will put on eight performances to entertain shoppers as the Christmas rush continues.

The carol singing performances have been organised by The Leith Festival Association.

Performances will take place on:

Monday 7th December: 2.00pm: Lorne Primary

Monday 14th December: 11.00am: Prospect Bank Primary

Tuesday 15th December: 11.00am: Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce

2.00pm: Victoria Primary

Wednesday 16th December: 11.00am St Mary's (Leith) Primary

2.00pm: Craigentinny Primary

Thursday 17th December: 1.45pm: Leith Primary

Friday 18th December: 1.00pm: Hermitage Park Primary

Scott Darroch, centre manager for Newkirkgate Shopping Centre said: "Carol singing at the centre is a long standing tradition and we are very much looking forward to welcoming the pupils along to entertain our shoppers once again this year. They do an absolutely fantastic job at helping get everyone into the festive spirit and we invite the local community along to join in the fun!"

Rita Crombie, one of the organisers of the performances for the Leith Festival team, said: "The pupils practice all year long as a choir and Christmas provides them with a chance to show-off their fantastic skills! Shoppers always thoroughly enjoy hearing the children perform and we hope that the carols go some way towards spreading Christmas cheer throughout Leith!"



Later this morning 12 tonnes of winter clothing and other necessities will leave Granton for Edinburgh's twin city of Munich, the gateway to Germany, for hundreds of thousands of refugees who have travelled there from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan this year.

Local charity Edinburgh Direct Aid is helping Germany cope by sending donations from generous Scots in and around Edinburgh to Diakonia, a major charity tasked with providing for the enormous number of refugees settling in Munich this winter. The costs of this and other deliveries to refugees in Europe are being paid for from a grant of £10,000 made by the Department of External Affairs of the Scottish Government for this purpose.

The EDA truck will travel via the High Street and pause at the City Chambers for the Lord Provost the Rt Hon Donald Wilson to hand a message to the EDA volunteers manning the truck for delivery to his counterpart, Dieter Reiter, Lord Mayor of Munich (together with a bottle of single malt for seasonal good cheer).

The vehicles are scheduled to arrive in Munich next Wednesday and on Thursday 10th EDA chair Denis Rutovitz and vice-chair Jeanne Bell will join the drivers, David Reeks and Jaap Prins, in the city, where they will visit refugee accommodation centres, witness the unloading and initial distribution of the goods sent and be received by representatives of Diakonia and the City of Munich.



Loud & Proud, Scotland's LGBT Choir, celebrates its 10th birthday in 2015 – and it's rolling back the years to 2005 to offer tickets for its fizzing Festive Concert at just **£5 each!**

On Friday night at St Cuthbert's Church you can enjoy a selection of seasonal favourites, then join the choir for some post-concert festive fayre.

Tickets may be purchased from **The Hub, Castlehill** in person, by calling 0131 473 2000 or online [here](#) (transaction fee applies). The concert begins at **8pm on Friday 11th December at St Cuthbert's Church, 5 Lothian Road.**




We have the best competition on the go at the moment – but you need to get your skates on and enter today.

There will be a drive in movie set up at Royal Highland Showgrounds Ingliston in a couple of weeks time and we have tickets for three separate cars to give away! They are showing all manner of Christmas films.

We went to the drive in there on Valentine's Day to watch Top Gun and it was fabulous fun.

Don't delay – enter today!

 Sign up here for a daily email from The Edinburgh Reporter
! [mc4wp_form]

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

CCTV released following

attack outside Leith Walk bar



Police have released images of a man they wish to trace in connection with a serious assault outside a public house.

A 32-year-old man was assaulted outside the Central Bar on Leith Walk at around 10.30pm on Friday, September 25. He sustained an injury and was taken to hospital for treatment.

Detectives are keen to trace the man pictured within the CCTV footage as part of their ongoing investigation and anyone who recognises him is asked to come forward.

He is described as white, of medium build, 25-35 years old, with short dark hair and stubble. At the time of the incident he was wearing a beige hooded top and dark joggers.

Detective Constable Stevie Herd said: "The victim was on a night out at the Central Bar with friends when he was attacked. He suffered a painful facial injury as a result of this incident and police have been conducting enquiries including viewing CCTV footage from in and around the Leith Walk area.

"The man pictured is believed to be of significance to our investigation and anyone who can assist in tracing him is asked to come forward. Similarly, we would ask this person to get in touch with police themselves to help with the investigation."

Those with information can contact Police Scotland on 101, or Crimestoppers in complete anonymity on 0800 555 111.

Assault and robbery in Victoria Park



Police are appealing for witnesses following an assault and robbery on the walkway in Victoria Park which happened at around 9pm yesterday.

Three men aged 18, 19 and 20 were approaching the Steadfast Gate when a group of five youths walked passed them.

The 18-year-old was then struck to the head, and the trio were threatened.

They were all struck to the face, causing minor injuries, before one of the suspects stole a plastic bag and a rucksack from the 18-year-old.

The suspects were last seen heading towards Leith and are all described as white males, aged around 16 years old, with local accents.

The first is described as 5ft 7-8inches tall with a bulky build. He was wearing a black beanie hat, black tracksuit top with white strips, and black gloves.

The second suspect was 5ft 5inches tall with a skinny build, and was wearing all black.

The third suspect is described as 6ft tall with a skinny build. He was wearing grey trackie bottom shorts, and a black hooded top.

The fourth was 5ft tall and wearing a black tracksuit.

The fifth is 5ft 5inches with a slim-medium build.

DC Stevie Herd of Gayfield CID said: "This was a distressing

and cowardly attack on three people who were seemingly just going about their business.

“Officers carried out a thorough search of the local area and have recovered the bags and their contents, which will be reunited with their rightful owner.

“We’re conducting numerous enquiries as part of our efforts to trace the suspects and are asking for anyone who saw the group described, or recognises their description, to come forward.”

Anyone with information is asked to contact Police Scotland on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Christmas gift idea – Historic Environment Scotland membership

✖ Historic Environment Scotland is the new lead public body for the country’s historic environment. It brings together Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland. They run many old buildings across Scotland and organise events at castles and palaces. You can have a membership which allows you free entry to many of their properties and special invitations to some events.

You can get full information about memberships on their website:

We’re offering 2 extra months of membership when you buy a gift online by Credit/Debit card – that’s 14 months of membership for the price of 12!

Membership is the perfect gift for any occasion. We make the present extra special by putting together a gift pack that can be sent directly to you or to the recipient, complete with your own personal message.

If you are already a member of Historic Scotland, please [log in](#) to receive your 20% discount. If you have not already done so, you must [register before receiving your discount](#).

Diving – The Scottish National & Open Diving Championship – Day 2



The [Scottish National & Open Diving Championship](#) is currently underway at The Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh with participants ranging from the very inexperienced to European medallists. There were a few local divers on the podium, but Sheffield seemed to be the team to beat. The ER's John Preece went along to try something new – photography wise! – as well as avoiding sitting at the side of a rugby pitch in the howling wind and driving rain.



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL

Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece





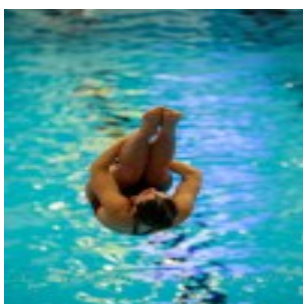
Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece

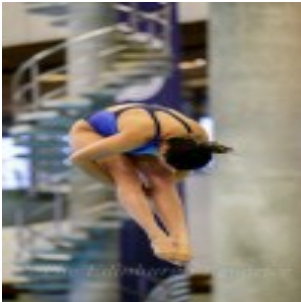


Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece





Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Scottish Open Diving in December 2015 at The Commie PHOTO JL Preece



Results from the Championships can be found [here](#) as they happen.

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

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Woman's body found in Bonnington flat

Forth Road Bridge

Mortonhall Memorial Garden

Christmas at Holyrood Palace

Weather warnings

Live Edinburgh News reports that a woman's body was found in a flat in Bonnington sparking a police investigation.

[Read more here](#)



Additional trains and buses are to be put in place alongside enhanced traffic management measures as part of an integrated travel plan to minimise disruption following the necessary closure of the Forth Road Bridge.

Following a further meeting of the Scottish Government's resilience committee chaired by the First Minister, ministers announced that an integrated travel plan for commuters and businesses would launch on Sunday, including a dedicated website to allow people time to plan their commute on Monday and throughout the closure period.

Additional rolling stock will see new train services put in place by Scotrail between Cowdenbeath and Haymarket that will, when combined with existing services, put an additional 6,500 seats per day into operation, increasing passenger capacity by 40 per cent over the period of the bridge's closure.

That will be supported by more than 30 additional buses from Stagecoach, which will provide thousands of extra seats per day as part of an enhanced park and ride priority service between Fife and Edinburgh, using the Ferrytoll and Halbeath sites.

It was also confirmed that, in partnership with Highways England, road management systems were being used to encourage traffic flowing north into Scotland to use routes on the west of the country where possible to ease congestion.

Transport Scotland also confirmed that mobile road signage units were being deployed on all diversion routes to provide journey time information and to keep traffic flowing on the diversion routes. Transport Scotland will also redeploy source from road operators to ensure that diversion routes remain clear and open for use.

Ahead of rush hour on Monday, ministers also announced that engagement with business groups and local authorities would be stepped up over the course of this week, with a round table to be convened via conference call on Tuesday at which businesses would be encouraged to feed back on the measures put in place in order that they could be refined in the coming days.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said:

"We know this will be a very difficult time for commuters, businesses and hauliers and we remain extremely grateful for people's patience while we work on strengthening alternative travel plans and minimise disruption during the closure period.

“Thanks to the hard work of our partners we are able to announce significant additional resources for public transport routes between Fife and Edinburgh. This will include additional rolling stock on the train service that will put an additional 6,500 seats a day into operation. Thanks to Stagecoach, we will also be able to rely on an additional 33 buses, bringing thousands of extra seats into operation.

“We are also grateful to the hard work of Police Scotland who have been working with Transport Scotland to ensure that traffic management systems on the diversion routes are robust and can cope with the additional traffic. To that end we have delivered ten additional portable information units to these routes that will aid traffic management.

“From tomorrow, commuters will be able to access a dedicated website offering detailed information on these updated travel options

“We will continue to monitor the situation closely and adapt our travel plan as required. While we are doing everything we can to ease the impact on travellers, we would urge people do their bit by considering their travel plans in advance and making any possible contingencies. This could include being more flexible about your work times and locations if possible.

“We also have made contact with the main business organisations in Scotland, local authorities and enterprise areas and are working together to examine the economic and business impact and identify any practical steps that can be taken to mitigate that as much as possible.”



Parents have visited the Mortonhall Memorial Garden which opened on Friday.

Specially designed plaques run along the inner walls of the garden inscribed with the names of 149 babies and short

messages. The name plaques have been sensitively designed to include a dragonfly and floral motif to complement feature dragonflies that are in the garden.

The walled circular water feature garden includes beech hedges, birch trees, a stone ball water feature, rocks, pathway, seating and is located off the existing memorial walkway within easy reach of the main chapel.

The memorial, created by Edinburgh company Green Edge, was chosen by affected parents following a series of consultation events held earlier in the year hosted by SANDS Lothian, SiMBA and the City of Edinburgh Council.



Dorothy Maitland, former SANDS Operation Manager, said: “I think it’s very important to have a memorial and I know some parents will find it very difficult to go back to Mortonhall but I’m hoping that they will change their mind when they see the garden.

“Some parents are still finding it so difficult to accept what happened that right now a memorial is not of any comfort. I really hope that in time when they heal a bit more that they will be able to visit the garden and have their baby’s name added and find comfort by doing this.

“It means so much to many parents to have somewhere where they can go that is nice and tranquil. It shows to everyone that each of these babies matters whether their names are on the memorial or not – it’s for all babies.

“Obviously there has been a lot of hurt but the Council have taken what has happened very seriously and made sure all of Dame Elish’s recommendations have been met. The memorial has been done in a very sensitive way which speaks volumes.”

Becky Govier, owner of Green Edge, said: “I wanted to create

something that would reflect what the parents wanted – most importantly a space and garden they would feel comfortable in. The circular shape feels like two large hands that are coming together, embracing and protecting those within.

“The garden design unites the wishes of parents for a contemplative space with a water feature. It also recognises both the rustic and the contemporary spirit of the setting. I hope we have created a garden that gives some comfort to the parents.”

Dame Sue Bruce, former Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This has been a very difficult process for so many people over the past three years so I want to acknowledge my personal appreciation of the support and feedback from parents in helping choose such a fitting memorial.

“The design reflects their wishes for a garden that will provide a private and peaceful place for personal contemplation and reflection.”

Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “The work of the Mortonhall Multi-Agency Working Group will continue so nothing like this can happen again. Lessons have been learnt and the action plan produced last year has now been fully implemented so we can ensure the highest possible standards are adhered to at Mortonhall.”

In line with parents’ wishes an alternative memorial is being proposed as some families had strong views that they did not wish to return to Mortonhall. The preferred location for the second memorial is Princes Street Gardens.

The creation of a memorial was one of the 22 recommendations in Mortonhall Investigation report produced by Dame Elish Angiolini and commissioned by Sue Bruce in January 2013 after concerns were raised about practices at the crematorium.

The remit was to establish the facts regarding practices relating to the cremation of babies at Mortonhall Crematorium and to learn lessons that will ensure best practice for the future.

Dame Elish interviewed bereaved families, current and former members of crematorium staff, representatives from funeral directors, staff from other crematoria, support groups and health professionals and took opinion from experts in the field of human anthropology, law and forensic accountancy. [The report](#), with annexes, extends to over 600 pages in total.

As a direct result the City of Edinburgh Council created a multi-agency working group which consists of representatives from the Scottish Government, NHS Lothian, SANDS Lothian, Sands UK, SiMBA, Mortonhall Ashes Action Committee, funeral directors, Edinburgh Crematorium Ltd and council officials to draw up an action plan to implement Dame Elish's recommendations.



Christmas has come to Holyrood Palace as you can see in our photos here.

For the first time, the Palace of Holyroodhouse is to be transformed both inside and out for the festive season. Until 6 January, the Palace's historic State Apartments, as well as the courtyard and the ornamental fountains, will be adorned with lights, decorations, and rich foliage, making the Palace the ideal place to visit to get into the Christmas spirit.











In the Royal Dining Room the table will be laid with a silver service, presented by Scottish benefactor Sir Alexander Grant to George V and Queen Mary in 1935 to mark their Silver Jubilee. Made in Edinburgh by Henry Tatton, the service was commissioned specially for use at the Palace, with each piece engraved with the Scottish Coat of Arms. Selected pieces from a Bloor Derby porcelain dessert service which was ordered by Queen Victoria in 1842 will also be on display and warden staff will be on-hand to give short talks about the favourite foods that would have been served and the Christmas traditions that the Victorians introduced.

Throughout the festive season families will be able to explore the Palace with a special Family Activity trail, and visit the Family Room which will be transformed into a Christmas grotto. On Sunday 21 and Sunday 28 December, an additional programme of special family events will be included in admission to the Palace, including face painting and storytelling in the Great Gallery. Find out more [here](#).

On Wednesday, 10 December, gather in the Great Gallery at the Palace for carols around the Christmas tree, from 7.00pm until 8.30pm. Find out more about this special event and book tickets [here](#).

On selected dates in December and January, Exclusive Evening Tours offer the opportunity to experience the festivity of the Palace after visiting hours, in the company of an expert

guide. Find out more and book tickets [here](#).

The Café at the Palace will offer a delicious selection of tempting festive treats, from mulled wine to Christmas cake, and a winter cart in the Café forecourt will sell roasted chestnuts and home-made mince pies.

Gift inspiration is on-hand at the Royal Collection Trust Shop, which will also be decorated for Christmas.

Book tickets [here](#).



If you're in Edinburgh you may escape some of the worst weather, but you might be best to stay put.

The Forth Road Bridge is closed and the roads in the Borders could be flooded.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney yesterday chaired a meeting of the Scottish Government's resilience committee, where ministers were updated on steps being taken to address the impact of flooding on communities and key routes and to minimise the risk of further disruption.

Torrential rain and severe winds have had a significant impact across Scotland over the past 24 hours.

Further alerts are in place for most of Scotland over the next 24 hours

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings/> meaning more rain for already saturated ground.

Mr Swinney, Infrastructure Secretary Keith Brown, Transport Minister Derek Mackay, Flooding Minister Aileen McLeod and Community Safety Minister Paul Wheelhouse were joined by key responders including representatives from SEPA, local resilience partners, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue Service, Transport Scotland and operating companies.

MART (Multi Agency Response Team) partners have been activated and present in the TrafficScotland control centre and will remain operational until after Monday's rush hour.

There has been extensive flooding across Scotland, including the most significant flooding on the River Tay in 12 years. On the M90 the local operating company was deployed to pump and clear water. The A82 and M9 have also been affected. On the M8 (W) at Bathgate a lorry struck the central reservation, causing delays.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said:

"The Scottish Government's Resilience Team (SGoRR) has been in contact with the Met Office throughout the week, receiving regular updates on the developing weather system and its potential impacts.

"The predicted weather warnings of yesterday have been accurate and we are now dealing with a very serious situation. We have seen exceptional rainfall, caused in part by rising temperatures and rapid snow melt, combined with gale force winds.

"It is clear that people across Scotland are experiencing some challenging situations and we will do all we can to help them at this stressful time. Local authorities, Police Scotland, SEPA and resilience teams are all involved in the efforts to mitigate the impacts of flooding and weather issues across the country.

"SEPA have issued numerous flood warnings across the country and we would urge people in those areas to pay attention to the up to date information being provided, consider whether you need to travel and take all possible precautions to stay safe, particularly in the worst affected areas."

Environment Minister Aileen McLeod said:

“The situation is being closely monitored by SEPA, and I would encourage everyone to monitor SEPA’s Floodline website for the latest flood information and to sign up to receive Floodline warnings direct to their phone.


“Our emergency services and an incredible number of volunteers have been out in force today dealing with flooding issues in their local area and we would like to commend their efforts and the important role they play in dealing with this serious situation.”

Marc Becker SEPA’s Duty Hydrology Manager said:

“Across Scotland we have seen rivers have risen significantly through Saturday and will remain very high throughout Sunday. This is causing widespread agricultural flooding but is now also widely impacting on transport and communities. We are particularly concerned that the flooding situation will deteriorate further this evening in Tayside and particularly the South West of Scotland and the Borders. The risk to communities in Hawick and Newcastleton are such that SEPA, in discussion with emergency responders, have issued severe flood warnings for both towns. Impacts will include widespread property flooding, evacuations, damage to infrastructure and severe transport disruption.

“Currently, it is anticipated that the Tay at Perth will peak at levels not seen since 2006 and the Ettrick at Hawick is anticipated to be of a similar scale to the 2005 flood event. Flood levels on the Annan and Esk (Dumfries and Galloway) may also approach record levels ”



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code here with a smartphone or tablet.

What's On In Edinburgh? Sofi's Festive Dugs Day!



If you and your dog don't fancy joining the shopping scrum this weekend, why not take a few hours to enjoy yourselves while raising cash for a good cause?

Sofi's Bar in Leith is well known for its regular **Dugs N Pubs** events, at which canines and their owners can socialise over a pint (of water, if you're a dog..) This year, for the last session of 2015, the staff are organising a special **Festive Fundraiser** for animals a little less fortunate than those who get to spend weekends in the pub.



On Sunday you can take your pooch down to Henderson Street for a fun afternoon of canine socialising, while you enjoy **£5 cocktails** (sponsored by **Absolut**), a **pop-up shop** where you can buy gifts for your four-legged friend, and a **raffle** with fantastic prizes (including a doggy pamper day...). There'll be lots of treats and jollity, and all proceeds will go to **Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home**.

You are also invited to **bring along some animal treats and new or unwanted pet toys** to donate to the collection for the dogs and cats who find themselves in EDCH over the holiday.

So that's two excuses for the price of one – you can't let your poor mutt miss his party *and* you're both doing Good Works

too. Everyone's a winner!

Sofi's Dug Day Festive Fundraiser will begin at **1pm on Sunday 6th December at Sofi's, 65 Henderson Street, Leith**. If you can't make the date but would like to be involved, raffle tickets are already on sale at Sofi's (tel: 0131 555 7019).



Morton v Hibernian POSTPONED



Despite the pitch being deemed playable after an 11am inspection, the Morton v Hibernian game has been postponed.

The reason given was due to the roads leading to the stadium being closed.

Many Hibs' fans had already reached Greenock when the news was broken on twitter.

There will be no change at the top of the Championship today as Rangers game against Raith Rovers has also been called off.

Hibs game ON after 11am pitch inspection



The Hibs game against Morton at Cappielow Park this afternoon is ON following a pitch inspection which took place at 11am this morning.

Fans heading to Cappielow Park, will occupy the Wee Dublin end of the ground and should enter via turnstiles at East Hamilton Street.

This area of the ground comprises of uncovered bench seating. Due to the number of Hibernian supporters expected to attend there is no option to accommodate supporters in the Main Stand.

Entry to this match is by pre-purchased tickets, which remain on sale at Hibs Ticket Office or by cash entry turnstiles on the day of the fixture at Cappielow.

Car parking is available at the stadium at a cost of £3 per car, there is also free car parking available in the vicinity of the ground out with the restricted area. Supporters coaches will be parked under the direction of Police and Stewards in a car park just off Sinclair Street but due to restricted access coaches need to drive along East Hamilton Street to the roundabout at McDonalds and then head back East back along the dual carriageway to the traffic lights at Sinclair Street turning right at the traffic lights at Sinclair Street. At the end of the match supporters coaches will be pre-positioned in Sinclair Street to assist in departure from the ground.

At the present time there are no planned roadworks on the approach to Greenock or in the vicinity of the stadium, given the weather forecast driving conditions are likely to be poor so fans should allow extra time for your journey. Up to date traffic information is available on the Traffic Scotland website or follow on Twitter @trafficscotland.

Design Doctor will be at Ocean Terminal this weekend



Today and tomorrow marks the culmination of a Scotland-wide, eight-week social media campaign to encourage people to upcycle and re-use furniture.

The Design Doctor campaign, run by Zero Waste Scotland, will bring all the online elements of the campaign together in an interactive event at Ocean Terminal shopping centre in Edinburgh.

Andrew Pankhurst, Consumer Engagement Manager at Zero Waste Scotland, said:

“Design Doctor is a brand new initiative for Zero Waste Scotland, so we’re delighted that with over 250,000 views on our Facebook and Twitter pages so far, it is achieving its aim of inspiring people throughout the country to try upcycling and to discover the many benefits of re-use.

“Re-using things – whether that be through upcycling, donating unwanted items, or buying from a re-use store not only saves money – it is one of the best options for the environment since it prevents waste going to landfill and lowers the carbon emissions associated with manufacturing new items.”

Attendees at the Ocean Terminal event will be treated to a display of all the upcycled furniture used in the campaign’s online demonstrations and can enjoy face-to-face interaction – or join a workshop – with the campaign’s designers. The upcycling-inspired extravaganza will also feature top Scottish

celebrity interior design expert, John Amabile, who will host a series of exclusive upcycling workshops on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 2pm.

John Amabile – best known for his regular TV appearances on makeover shows such as ITV's *Better Homes* and *60 Minute Makeover* – who also created a series of exclusive upcycling online tutorials for Design Doctor on www.recycleforscotland.com, said:

"I've been in the interior design business for a long time now – and have to say that Design Doctor is one of the most clever and innovative campaigns I've seen in terms of getting people excited about DIY and upcycling! The fact that it's social media-based is brilliant as it makes it so easy to share information, advice and examples and is really effective in encouraging people to share their upcycling successes and inspire others.

"Upcycling is something everyone ought to try at least once. It can be much easier to get really impressive and professional-looking results than you might think – and it makes old, perhaps unwanted furniture look totally chic and desirable again. Not only do you end up with a piece of furniture that's styled exactly to your own specifications – you're also saving yourself the cash that you might have otherwise spent on something new."

Each week of the campaign, three Scottish designers – [Emily Rose Vintage](#) and [Treemendus](#) from Glasgow and [Very Vintage](#) from Edinburgh – completely transformed one of seven items of furniture and shared the details on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). The upcycled pieces were sourced from a range of second-hand stores accredited by 'Revolve[11]' – a re-use quality standard for shops who sell second hand goods in Scotland.

[Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) users who followed the #DesignDoc hashtag were invited to submit an online vote for one of three designs

suggested by the campaign designers. The design with the highest number of votes was then applied to the piece of furniture, with an accompanying 'how to' guide and pictures posted online. The weekly process provided viewers with a range of techniques and tricks to give them the creative inspiration to upcycle their own pieces of furniture.

There are now over 40 Revolve-accredited shops in Scotland selling high quality, low-priced second hand items which are ideal for upcycling projects. Those who have furniture they no longer require can ensure it is re-used rather than sent to landfill by contacting the National Re-Use Phone Line on 0800 0665 820. The facility allows callers to skip the hassle of taking large household items like bed frames, sofas and white goods to the local recycling centre, and have them picked up and taken to be re-used by someone else, free of charge. Re-using rather than recycling 100 sofas, for example, saves 1.5 tonnes of carbon and is a much more environmentally-friendly option.

Follow all the #DesignDoc action on www.facebook.com/RecycleForScotland and www.twitter.com/ZeroWasteScot.

To find out more about the Revolve programme, visit www.revolvereuse.com or follow @revolvereuse on Twitter. Businesses with an interest in becoming Revolve accredited can find out more [here](#).

Hearts Game Called Off

Hearts Ladbrokes Premiership match against Inverness Caledonian Thistle, due to take place at Tynecastle today, has been postponed as a result of extreme adverse weather

conditions.

Hearts say details of the re-arranged date for the fixture will be announced in due course and that original tickets will remain valid for the rescheduled fixture.

Christmas Gift Idea – Musselburgh Racecourse



Okay so this is an early Christmas present as it starts with the pre-Christmas meeting on 7 December – but we are sure someone you know might like it!

Musselburgh Racecourse is rolling out a winter warmer for jumps racing fans which will save them more than £75.

The '4 for £4' campaign gives racing fans entry to four National Hunt meetings for only £4, compared to the £80 admission it would normally cost.

The online deal launches for the pre-Christmas Monday meeting on 7 December and includes racing on 20 January and 8 and 17 of February.

Aisling Johnston, marketing manager at the East Lothian course, said the campaign was aimed at giving something back to racegoers and boosting the atmosphere during quieter months of the winter season.

She said: "This is an early Christmas present from us to our regular racegoers who come out in all weathers. We want to generate a bit more buzz over the winter months and our 4 for

£4 offer is hard-to-beat value in any sport.”

Musselburgh has a strong track record on incentivising race goers, including a recent discounted package which attracted a record 150 students to a meeting, and it holds themed and family days with free entertainments throughout the year to appeal to a wider audience.

The racecourse has introduced a free shuttle bus service to take racegoers using the new Borders Rail Link to and from Newcraighall Station, adding to its existing shuttle service from Wallyford Station.

Aisling added: “We are in an extremely competitive sector where customers are discerning about how they spend their leisure pounds. If we can make it easier on the pocket and easier to get to and from the racecourse, we hope to build on our attendance figures over the season.”

For more information and to book ‘4 for £4’ tickets visit <https://www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk/four-for-four.asp>

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Christmas comes to the Grassmarket

All dogs to be microchipped in 2016

Have your say on Mansfield planning application

Hopetoun turkeys are mad about rugby

Christmas in Colinton

Edinburgh's Greater Grassmarket Business Improvement District (BID) launches its programme of family-friendly festive events, including the Grassmarket Christmas lights switch-on, festive stage performances and a Christmas market. The launch will take place later today.

Edinburgh's Phelan School of Dance, will be performing on the Grassmarket Christmas Community Stage at 2pm. There will be performances from choirs, and local music, art and theatre groups on Fridays – Sundays from 12pm – 6pm. As well as stage performers, there will also be family entertainment street shows taking place throughout the Christmas period.

A Christmas Light Switch-On to remember

The Grassmarket's oldest resident, Maisie Trainer, who has lived in the area for over 65 years, will be switching on the Christmas tree lights at 5pm on Saturday 5th December. Either side of the switch-on will be a 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 (4.30pm) and Pyro Celtica, fusing fire dance and circus in an epic show stopping performance (5.35pm).

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: "We are

really excited to launch our festive events programme and bring Christmas alive in the Greater Grassmarket.”

“We have a wide range of entertainers from local youth theatre groups to experienced dance groups, and we welcome any performers in Edinburgh to get in touch if they would like to perform for free on our Christmas Community Stage.”

Plans to make dog microchips compulsory in Scotland have taken a major step forward this week, as legislation is laid before the Scottish Parliament.

The law change – which received overwhelming support in a public consultation last year – is due to come into effect in Scotland in April 2016, the same time as in England and Wales.

Under the new rules, all dogs will need to be microchipped and their owners’ details registered and kept up to date in a database complying with certain conditions.

[Read more here](#)

Balerno Green Belt tell us that developers Barrett David Wilson have now re-submitted their previously refused application to build up to 150 houses on Green Belt land opposite Cockburn Crescent in Balerno. The revised deadline for residents to comment is Friday 11th December. To submit comments, read more at [Balerno Green Belt](#).

Hopetoun Estate, in South Queensferry, has a team of keen rugby players in residence but they’re not the usual burly bunch...

The Hopetoun ‘team’ is this year’s flock of

Christmas turkeys that have shown an interest in the sport. The discovery came after the feathered friends joined in on a practice session with a Hopetoun farmer's son.

Dedicated rugby fan Joshua Eagers (16) – previously part of the Scotland Under 16 rugby team and now plays within the Edinburgh Under 18 pathway programme – was joined by the adventurous turkeys when practicing his rugby skills one afternoon.

Mike Eagers, Hopetoun Estate's farmer, explains: "Joshua was helping me on my rounds of Hopetoun Estate one day when he took a break to have a kick about with his rugby ball and noticed the turkeys looking on in awe, so Joshua passed the ball to the feathered flock and to our surprise...they got stuck in!"

Now it's a regular session with the Hopetoun turkeys loving nothing more than joining Joshua for "team training" with some of the poultry showing some promise for the game.

Mike continued: "If such a thing as Turkey rugby existed our team would be top of the league – there have definitely been some stand out "players" that could give some local rugby teams a run for their money!"

Every year Mike and his wife Mary rear over one hundred Bronze turkeys on Hopetoun's farm, which then go on sale in the Hopetoun Farm Shop.

Colinton Community Council tell us that Events in Colinton this weekend include:

Colinton Primary School Christmas Fair – Saturday 5th December

Lots of stalls, a Tombola and games

Colinton & Merchiston Choir Concert – Sunday 6th December at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall of Merchiston Castle School.

Details on the [CAA website](#)

Mini Christmas Market at Dreghorn Barracks – Sunday 6th December, 10am – 12noon

More details [HERE](#)

Government hold meeting to discuss Forth Road Bridge closure



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has chaired a further meeting of the Scottish Government's resilience committee, where ministers were updated on steps being taken to minimise disruption following the closure of the Forth Road Bridge.

The First Minister, Deputy First Minister, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport Minister were updated on the plans already put in place to manage transport and traffic following the closure of the bridge on safety grounds earlier in the day.

The ministers were also updated by Transport Scotland, Scotrail, Police Scotland and others on the integrated travel planning that is underway for commuters ahead of the morning rush hour on Monday, with additional trains and buses being scheduled for the duration of the closure.

Police Scotland also confirmed that they had engaged with organisers of relevant events being held across Scotland as well as with football clubs whose supporter travel plans for fixtures on Saturday face disruption, providing them with relevant travel advice.

Briefing was also provided on the engagement already underway with businesses affected by the closure, with further work now being done to understand the precise impact on firms and how contingency planning will be used to support them throughout this process.

Further resilience meetings will be held across the weekend, with a detailed travel plan for commuters to be published before Monday.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said:

“I am extremely grateful for the patience of commuters and businesses across Scotland following the disruption they have experienced since the necessary decision to close the bridge was made on safety grounds.

“Since the closure, Transport Scotland, Scotrail, Stagecoach, Police Scotland, local authorities and other partners have been working closely to minimise that disruption and ensure we put in place robust contingency plans for the duration of the works necessary to fix the bridge.

“During tonight’s meeting, ministers were updated on the latest traffic and travel situation, as well as the work being done to implement additional rail and bus services ahead of Monday morning and for the closure period. We will hold

further resilience meetings throughout the weekend and a full, travel plan will be published detailing the additional services that will be available to those who need to travel.”

Letter from Scotland



To bomb or not to bomb

So the season of Advent begins with RAF planes from Lossiemouth flying off to bomb so-called Islamic State targets in Syria. It has the uncomfortable feeling of the start of another major war. The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon told the Scottish Parliament she was “deeply troubled” by the vote at Westminster to broaden the bombing campaign against IS. There was no overall strategy, she complained, no exit plan and it was against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Scottish MPs.

All but two of Scotland’s MPs voted against the bombing. This puts Scotland at loggerheads with the rest of the UK which I guess is why there was no dissent among the 56 SNP MPs, unlike in other parties. But I guess too there was a widespread feeling among them that this was the start of another British imperialist war.

I think myself that is unfair. The Islamic State is, as David Cameron says, a terrorist group of “Medieval monsters.” Everyone in the world – or at least all countries who signed up to UN resolution 2249 believe “all necessary measures” should be taken to stop their terrorist activities and “eradicate” their bases in Syria and Iraq. How else, in the immediate future, is that to be done but by bombing and then

sending in troops on the ground? Ideally, someone else's troops.

Everyone agrees there needs to be a political solution to the troubles of the Middle East. But that's a long-term process and it's dependent on the defeat of IS, or at least an end to its Medieval activities. Cutting off IS's funds and arms supplies are other obvious solutions but they are uncertain and would take time. Those against the bombing also argue we should instead be creating safe havens but there's already a huge humanitarian operation in the region and Europe is taking in thousands of refugees.

I find myself wondering why we have become so obsessed by the bombing of targets in Syria. We're been doing it in Iraq for months without a similar fuss. I suppose it's a kneejerk reaction to the dreadful killings in Paris last month – just as the “war on terror” was a kneejerk reaction to the New York and London terrorist attacks. And there's also a certain macho fascination with those sleek grey war planes and the satisfying image they give of a modern sophisticated Western world whose technology can wipe out the Medievalism of less advanced states.

The more we bomb IS, of course, the more we annoy their wasps' nests in the West. And it's therefore a fortunate coincidence that Scotland's new Chief Constable – appointed this week – should be a senior officer from the UK National Crime Agency. One of Philip Gormley's first tasks will be to make sure our anti-terror planning is up to speed. He will be the man who handles any terrorist incident. He is also the outsider who will have to sort out the mess Police Scotland has got into over the handling of 999 calls, stop-and-search policy, armed patrols, local accountability, VAT payments and a very tight police budget, which incidentally includes his salary of £212,000 a year.

It's been an unfortunate week for the Forth Road Bridge. A

routine inspection found a fault in one of the steel brackets under the south-bound carriageway. The carriageway was closed immediately and a three-mile long backlog of traffic built up on either side of the Forth as only one side of the bridge could be used. Worryingly, engineers later found eight other similar faults and, as I write, the bridge is still confined to a single lane in each direction. It's a blow to the pride of this middle aged bridge, particularly as its older brother to the east is still going strong after 125 years and to the west its younger brother is quickly growing beside it.

Where is the next generation of jobs to come from ? It's question that often troubles me and it's troubled Sir Ian Wood, the Aberdeen oil tycoon, enough for him to put £25m of his own money into a project to pump-prime those jobs of the future. With his own industry shedding jobs by the barrel-load, he's formed a new agency, Opportunity North East, which will invest money in the bio-sciences, the food processing industry, farming and tourism. Brilliant. Let's hope other investors follow his lead.

Finally, let's go over the sea to Skye and back a few years, 170 million years to be exact. This was a favourite place for dinosaurs at the time and scientists from Edinburgh University have been following in their footsteps. What look like small rock pools on the Trotternish peninsula have turned out to be the footprints of creatures 20 metres long and weighing 10 tonnes. The team from Edinburgh are now analysing hundreds of these footprints and working out exactly which species of dinosaurs lived here. They almost certainly include brontosaurus and diplodocus.

In this week of crucial climate change negotiations in Paris, Scotland's Jurassic Island is reminding us that however big and mighty you are, complete extinction is always a possibility.

Police patrols following closure of Forth Road Bridge



People are urged to consider their travel plans across the East of Scotland, following the closure of the Forth Road Bridge on Friday 4 December.

Work is underway to repair the bridge following the discovery of defective steelwork and it will be closed until the New Year.

Police Scotland is supporting its partners in keeping diversionary routes open and running safely whilst the closure remains in place.

Assistant Chief Constable Malcolm Graham said: "Road Policing Officers are working closely with traffic management partners to monitor the road network in Fife, Forth Valley, Edinburgh and the Lothians, to ensure travel disruption is minimised whilst the essential repairs take place. They are on patrol on key routes to help clear any traffic incidents which do occur and keep people moving.

"I would urge all drivers to consider if your journey is necessary, and to consider other options like public transport. Please check the conditions before you set off and leave extra time if you must travel.

"The closure of the bridge does not affect our ability to respond to emergency calls, and officers will continue to answer 999 calls and carry out our daily tasks as normal."

For more information on the closure of the bridge visit

www.transportscotland.gov.uk

For the latest travel updates visit www.trafficscotland.org or follow @trafficscotland on Twitter.