

# Five things you need to know today!

## Friends of Easter Drylaw Park

### Walking Football

### Rockin for Tots grows up to be a charity

### Festival Tip of the Day

### Autumn grants

Do you live near, visit or travel through Easter Drylaw Park? Would you be interested in getting together with others to chat about the way forward for the park? Anyone interested in coming along is invited to Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre on Wed 26<sup>th</sup> August, 7-8pm.

If you would be interested in being part of a 'Friends of Easter Drylaw Park' group, or have experience of another 'Friends of ' group and could share your experiences, please come along.

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Walking Football at Balerno has now been embedded into the Adult Education programme for 2015/16 with the new batch of sessions starting on 4 September.

A sign-up form is available [here](#).



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Rockin' for Tots has so far raised over £23,000 for Simpsons Special Care Baby Unit over the past 10 years. It has been so successful that the group applied for and was granted

charitable status early this year. Rockin' for Tots holds Scottish Charity Registration Number SC045422.

Rockin' for Tots hold music events and auctions to raise money for Simpsons and they have had lots of celebrity support, for example, from [Doug Aldrich](#), [Fish](#), [Royal Blood](#), [Sandi Thom](#) and [Ritchie Blackmore](#) and also support from local business [Edinburgh Harley Davidson](#)

So far, Rockin' for Tots efforts have helped Simpsons to purchase an EEG machine, a travel incubator and a CPAP ventilator.

Founder member of Rockin' for Tots, Andy Cowe from East Lothian, says:

'Rockin' for Tots is really important for my wife Gill and I because it was set up in memory of our twin daughters Robyn and Erin who were delivered by emergency caesarean due to suffering acute twin to twin transfusion syndrome. Robyn was stillborn and Erin survived for a day. It's a way of doing something positive from what we went through that helps to provide much needed equipment for neo-natal units and other services involved in saving the lives of newborns.'

If you want to support Rockin' for Tots, check out their [website](#) where you can find out about upcoming events and online auctions.

Their next gig, An Evening With Bernie Marsden, is on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at the Voodoo Rooms, West Register Street, Edinburgh – you can book via the [website](#).

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I heard on Radio Scotland yesterday that rather than calling it the Edinburgh Festival (or indeed Festivals!) we are now supposed to just call it 'Edinburgh'. That gives locals like us a bit of a problem when offering tips – but maybe at the

end of all the festivals we will set up an Edinburgh Tip of the Day as part of our Five things. We invite you to tell us your tip and it may be included this coming week – which is really surprisingly the last of the Festival! The fireworks are next week , but before then perhaps we will find some fireworks of our own.

We recommend the Book Festival to you this morning. There is just so much to see there but at least it is all in one place and someone said there are more seats there than anywhere else in Edinburgh!



Ken MacLeod, Ron Butlin and Lizzie MacGregor try out a book bench on George Street

Today South Queensferry author Ken MacLeod is appearing to present the book of Iain Banks' poems he has combined with some of his own poetry.

Usually MacLeod is himself a renowned science fiction writer, so this is a bit of a departure for him. He was a great friend of Banks who died two years ago, and this is a personal quest as well as a creative one.

[Tickets here](#)

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**Action Earth** is helping to get people and communities busy outdoors. The campaign has grants to give to groups of volunteers who are carrying out environmental projects in Scotland.

Grants from £50 to £250 are available for practical activities that involve volunteers in improving outdoor spaces or creating habitats for wildlife. Grants can be used to purchase plants, tools and materials or to cover volunteer expenses.

The campaign is run by Volunteering Matters (formerly known as

CSV) from April to December each year and is supported by Scottish Natural Heritage.

If you have any questions contact **Robert Henderson**

on T: 0131 622 7766 or

[robert.henderson@volunteeringmatters.org.uk](mailto:robert.henderson@volunteeringmatters.org.uk)

For more information and to apply online go to:

[www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/actionearth](http://www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/actionearth)

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## Leith Walk By-Election – Susan Rae blogs



*It's time for "participatory budgeting" to move up a notch argues Green Candidate, SUSAN RAE.*

I cannot ever imagine a time when participatory budgeting will be sexy. I'd love to see a march on the City Chambers with banners declaiming "We demand participatory budgeting! Now!".

But I concede I might wait a while.

It's a pity, in a way, because behind the clumsy label is an idea that is both simple and radical. It is simple because it says that people who are most directly affected by a decision about how to spend money are best-placed to make that decision. And it is radical because it involves council officers letting go of that decision.

What is participatory budgeting? Well, it is not merely consultation or feedback or research where citizen's views are just "taken into account" but the decision itself remains with the council. In participatory budgeting the decision itself is handed over.

Here in the Leith Walk area we have had participatory budgeting in the shape of "feith Decides" for 5 years now. Pioneered by former Green councillor, Maggie Chapma, and enthusiastically backed by council staff and the community alike, it involves setting aside a part of the annual neighbourhood grants fund (typically £20k out of a total fund of £40k) to be voted on by people from the Leith community. It is modest in scale but as a tool for engaging people from Leith in the process it has been very successful with over 1,600 people voting in the last round on which grant applications should be funded.

Building on that success, the city council has adopted a participatory budgeting action plan, designed to roll out the process in each of the neighbourhoods in Edinburgh – not necessarily in the same form as feith Decides, but focusing on particular age-groups, such as older or younger people, for example.

The Scottish Government has also shown special interest in feith Decides as part of the context for its Community Empowerment Bill.

So, given that progress, what next for participatory

budgeting?

Firstly, I'd like to see all 12 neighbourhoods adopt participatory budgeting as a core part of how they distribute grants to local organisations, with an expectation that at least half of the funds available for grants should be decided in this way. Neighbourhoods could also look at how other local funding decisions, including local grants known as NEPs, could be allocated in a participative way.

Secondly, I believe there may be opportunities to think about how some centrally-driven budget decisions could be opened up. Future capital projects perhaps? How best to support the cultural sector in the city or grassroots sport?

Thirdly, there's the council's own annual budget process. At around a billion pounds, by law the council has to set its budget and, of course, by law there are many things the council has to do, whether it is securing a primary school place for a five year-old or home care for a 90 year-old. Even within that, however, I'd like to see progress towards identifying 1% of the budget which could be opened up for participatory methods.

Earlier this year, Green councillors in their budget amendment, secured support for additional help for participatory budgeting, recognising that it can still seem unsettling for budget-holders used to keeping control. I hope that this support can help achieve a step change in how the people of the city can influence spending decisions in their name.

Meanwhile, if anyone can come up with an alternative, sexier label – please get in touch!

*Susan Rae lives in Pilrig and is the Green candidate in the Leith Walk by-election [on 10 September](#).*

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# MP questions use of Dover House



Dover House in London is the Scotland Office's base and has in the past held receptions for the Scottish Fashion Awards and the Scotch Whisky Association.

Now an SNP MP has asked Scottish Secretary David Mundell about the current use of the Scotland Office in London. Clearly there is a political edge to the questioning as the SNP feel that they are now in London in such numbers that a Scotland Office is both expensive and unnecessary.

In response to a series of parliamentary questions seeking the number of public engagement events that have been held in Dover House aimed at promoting Scotland's place in the UK and across the world lodged by Dunfermline and West Fife MP Douglas Chapman, the only answer from the Scotland Office has been "a variety of events."

The Fife MP has now written to the Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell to ask for greater clarity over how to hold events in the building and the ways in which the venue can be used to promote Scotland on a global platform.

Commenting, Douglas Chapman MP said: "Too often the Scotland Office has worked against Scottish interests and, with Scottish taxpayers paying for this grade-one listed mansion, it is not unreasonable to ask what it is actually being used for."

"David Mundell says Dover House is used for a variety of

events, including by third parties, and so he should publish full details instead of providing evasive answers. Given the significant running costs of the Scotland Office people should be able to see how this asset is being used to promote Scotland's interests.

"I fail to see the need for David Mundell to be unclear and imprecise in his answer to my questions.

"The SNP have long called for the Scotland Office to be scrapped – especially in light of its running costs soaring despite a shrinking remit – but if these calls are to be ignored Dover House's only purpose should not be as a palatial suite of offices for Mr Mundell."

You can read the question lodged by Margaret Ferrier MP and the answer provided by David Mundell by clicking [here](#).

Open House London offers one way of getting in to Dover House at least on a Sunday. Click [here](#) to book a visit to the Georgian mansion at 66 Whitehall. Open House London explain: "The building became the Scottish Office in 1885. For a period during the Second World War it was used as the London headquarters of General Montgomery. Since 1999 it has been the London headquarters of the Scotland Office and the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland."

Have you attended an event at Dover House in recent times? Do let us know if you have! [theedinburghreporter@gmail.com](mailto:theedinburghreporter@gmail.com)

Photo [Steve Cadman](#) from London, U.K. – [Dover House](#) Uploaded to Creative Commons by [Kurpfalzbilder.de](#)

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 REVIEW – The Man \*\*\*\*\*



Set on London's famous Speakers' Corner, The Man is a powerful, satirical monologue which deconstructs the vast array of contradictions in our society. The Man's visually striking costume gets the message across even more so as he moves around the stage dressed head to toe in black while his whole head is painted yellow to imitate the smiley "have a nice day" face.

There is impressive wordplay, clever comparisons, and social commentary that provokes rethinking of social norms among the audience. All that we have grown accustomed to is torn apart by The Man. He is funny, grandiose, and audacious in his delivery.

From the growing power of multi nationals (with which he makes genius comparisons to religion), to the fact that Britain's Got Talent has been won by a dog – twice.

Nothing we see as normal nowadays is safe.

The Man has produced an outstanding hour of introspection that no one was expecting, but leave appreciating. A five star journey.

Assembly Rooms (Venue 20)

August 22-30

Time: 22:30 (1 hour)

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# Another Win for Table-Topping Hearts



**Heart of Midlothian 3 Partick Thistle 0**

**Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Saturday 22 August 2015 – Tynecastle**

For a brief period on Saturday afternoon, Hearts were knocked off their perch at the top of the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership table. League champions Celtic had defeated Dundee United in the early afternoon kick-off meaning Robbie Neilson's side – tipped to be champions earlier this week by former captain Steven Pressley – were in second place going into the 3.00pm kick-off against Partick Thistle at Tynecastle. Their fall from top place didn't last long. By 4.50pm, the marauding maroons were back on top of the league following a fine 3-0 win over the Jags.

Hearts had suffered a pre-match blow when the influential Jamie Walker was ruled out of the game due to a foot injury. Gavin Reilly took his place.

Hearts normally start games in Gorgie in a frenetic fashion. However, on Saturday it was Partick Thistle who applied the early pressure although they didn't seriously trouble home keeper Neil Alexander. Inevitably, it was Hearts who came closest to scoring when fine play from the skilful Sam Nicholson was almost finished off by Juanma.

It was Sam the Man who almost broke the deadlock after 12 minutes with a ferocious effort from 20 yards which forced Thistle keeper Cerny to push the ball over the bar. Next, skilful play by Hearts captain Alim Ozturk found Prince Buaben who set up a shot for Callum Paterson but the Scotland Under

21 player's effort on goal was deflected. Then Juanma found Igor Rossi but the defender showed why he is a defender when he volleyed an effort wide of goal.

It was all Hearts now and after 29 minutes, the Maroons duly went ahead. Nicholson's corner was headed on by Paterson and as the Thistle defence tried desperately tried to clear, Osman Sow showed a predator's instinct by prodding home from six yards.

### **Half-time Hearts 1 Partick Thistle 0**

After an initial flurry from the visitors trying to get back into the game, Hearts almost doubled their lead ten minutes into the second half. Great play from Buaben set Sam Nicholson free. The young winger hared in on goal and looked certain to score. However, he pulled his shot agonisingly wide and Tynecastle collectively groaned.

Nonetheless, the youngster didn't let his head go down. Minutes later, Hearts were awarded a penalty kick when Paterson was brought down in the penalty box. Juamna's spot-kick was saved by Cerny but Sam Nicholson was the quickest to react to the rebound and blasted home for Hearts second goal.

Just two minutes later, Nicholson was involved again when he played Juanma through on goal and the Spaniard showed real composure to chip the ball over the Thistle keeper to make it 3-0 and seal the points for the Maroons.

The Firhill side have only scored two league goals all season so their chances of getting anything from the game were slim to say the least. They nearly pulled a goal back with ten minutes left when substitute Osman headed goalwards but Hearts young substitute Sean McKirdy cleared off the line.

Gavin Reilly almost made it 4-0 but the former Queen of the South striker's fine effort was pushed away by Cerny.

There was just enough time for Hearts to introduce yet another product of their flourishing youth academy when 16-year-old Calumn Morrison was given a late run out.

At the end of another fine afternoon, Hearts were back on top of the Ladbrokes Premiership after a fifth league win on the bounce. Yet, afterwards, Robbie Neilson was still not entirely happy.

“We were a bit wasteful in the first half,” he told the official Hearts website. “We got into good areas but didn’t create a lot of great chances.

We were OK today, not great. The second half was better in terms of attacking, and I’m pleased with the clean sheet, but there’s a lot we could have done better.”

It’s this kind of attitude that will ensure Hearts continue to make such astonishing progress under Neilson and Craig Levein. A title challenge this season? Perhaps not. But a top six finish is certainly achievable.

**Hearts:** Alexander, Paterson, Ozturk, Rossi, Oshaniwa, Sow (King, 64’), Buaben (McKirdy, 74’), Gomis, Nicholson, Reilly, Juanma (Morrison, 86’).

**Partick Thistle:** Cerny, Miller, Seaborne, Welsh (Osman, 61’), Booth, Amoo (McDaid, 74’), Bannigan, Doolan, Stevenson (Lawless, 56’), Frans, Fraser.

**Referee:** John Beaton

**Att:** 16,657

**Top man:** Sam Nicholson

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# Lewis Allan joins Forfar on loan



Lewis Allan has joined Forfar on loan from Hibs for the duration of the season, and made his debut in the Loons 4-1 win over Stenhousemuir this afternoon.

Speaking to [hibernianfc.co.uk](http://hibernianfc.co.uk), the highly rated youngster said: "I'm delighted to be playing first team football.

"It really is a step up from playing in the Development League in terms of the intensity and the fact that you are battling to earn three points in every game.

"Forfar are challenging for promotion this season, so it's a great environment to be in.

"I'm hoping to gain a lot of experience from playing first team football week in, week out; I can only benefit from doing that.

"Plus I'm learning from playing alongside the likes of Derek Young and Rab Douglas.

"I'm really looking forward to helping Forfar and I'm very excited about it."


The teenager signed a contract extension at Easter Road in February will keep him with Hibs until 2018, but Head Coach Alan Stubbs has sufficient cover up front and believes that Allan's career would benefit from regular first team football.

He made his debut for Hibs against Falkirk in December 2014 before moving to Dunfermline Athletic on loan where he played eight times.

Earlier this season he came on as a substitute for Dominique Malonga after the striker sustained an early injury against Rangers at Easter Road in the Petrofac Training Cup.


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## Saturday in Edinburgh – Whats' On Today

**Greengage Arts:** a hands-on craft workshop, inspired by  nature. 1-4pm, Real Life Science Studio, John Hope Gateway, [Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh](#), Inverleith Row. £3 per person, payable on the door – no booking required. Also at same times on Sunday 23rd August 2015.

**Run for Me – Dance for Me – Think of Me:** a fun, action-packed weekend to celebrate the life of the late **Louise Duncan**, Minister of Balerno Church, and to raise funds for the charity that did so much for her in her last months, **Marie Curie Cancer Care**. Today there will be a coffee morning with delicious home baking to enjoy with your coffee or tea, or to buy to take home. 10am-1pm, St Joseph's Hall, (next to) [Balerno Church](#), Balerno. All welcome, no tickets required, just come along. All proceeds will go to Marie Curie Cancer Care.



**Tiger Tales:** stories and craft for children aged 4-8 years.   
3-4pm, [Fountainbridge Library](#), 137 Dundee Street. All welcome! The next session will be on 12th September 2015.


**Juniper Green Farmers' Market:** stalls with an extensive range of products, including breads, cakes, cheeses, fish, meat, pies, preserves, coffee, Fair Trade goods, hot snacks and drinks. The market also offers local residents the chance to meet with their local councillors, community councillors, MP and MSP. 9am-1pm today and every fourth Saturday of the month, [Juniper Green Village Hall](#), 1A Juniper Park Road. Organised by Juniper Green Community Council.







**Head-to-Head Sculpture City Walking Tours.** A National Galleries of Scotland walking tour taking a fresh look at Edinburgh's sculptural and architectural gems – hear the stories behind the city's imposing figure sculptures and monuments. Please come dressed for the weather and be prepared to walk at a pace, as the tour will cover a large area of the city. 2-3.30pm, meet at main entrance, [Scottish National Gallery](#), The Mound. £10/£8: please book in advance as places are limited to 15 per tour – tickets are available from the gallery's Information Desk or by calling 0131 624 6560.



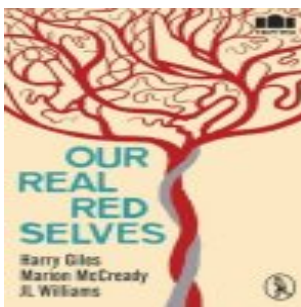
**Summer Storytime: *Blown Away*.** Come on an unexpected journey  with the fearless **Penguin Blue** in 'the most captivating picture book debut of the year' by **Rob Biddulph** – then join in arts and activities related to the story. 3pm, [Waterstones](#), 83 George Street.

 **Summer Storytime: Roald Dahl.** Listen to stories by one of the greatest children's authors, then join in related arts and activities. 12 noon, [Waterstones West End](#), 128 Princes Street.




**Summer Storytime:** Come and listen to **David McKee's**  *Elmer*, then join in related arts and activities. [Waterstones](#), Ocean Terminal, Ocean Drive. Please contact shop on 0131 554 7732 for times.

**Edinburgh Art Festival – Spotlight Tours of Scottish Art: People, Places, Ideas.** Guided tours of the City Art Centre's Scottish Art collection, focusing on people, places and ideas. 11am or 3pm, (meet at reception) [City Art Centre](#), 2 Market Street. No booking required, free – suggested donation £2.



**Edinburgh Book Fringe:** daily events – all of them free (donations appreciated) – for two weeks at **Word Power Books**, Edinburgh's independent radical bookshop. Today: **Harry Giles**, **Marion McCready** and **Jennifer Williams**, three poets whose work moves between life, war and death, read from their new anthology *Our Real Red Selves*. 1pm, [Word Power Books](#), West Nicolson Street. All welcome! No booking required, but arrive promptly as space is limited.

**Curated by...** a season of films hand-picked by invited  Festival regulars. Each screening will feature an in-person introduction by the curator, revealing their passion for the film and their reasons for choosing it. Today: **David Forsyth**, Senior Curator of Scottish History and Archaeology at the

**National Museum of Scotland**, presents ***Braveheart*** (15) and challenges the notion that this is one of the most historically accurate depictions of events surrounding a Scottish hero ever committed to celluloid. 9pm, [Cameo](#), Home Street. Tickets may be purchased from the Box Office in person, by calling 0871 902 5723 or online.

**The Fed Peasants:** folky jazz originals from the Edinburgh-based band. 9pm, [The Skylark](#), 241-243 Portobello High Street.



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# Five things you need to know today!



**National Galleries of Scotland Bill**

**TTIP protest**

**Fringe Tip of the Day**

**Dean Valley Regeneration**

**Dads Build a Bike project!**

You have a few days left to comment on the National Galleries of Scotland which is making its way through The Scottish Parliament at the moment. Comments must be made by Monday to be valid.

The purpose is to allow the council to sell a piece of Princes Street Gardens to the Galleries so that they can build an extension. You can read about the whole bill [here](#) and if you

would like to know more about the details of the sale then [Read more here.](#)

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In the festival spirit, local people will gather this afternoon at the Scott Monument for street theatre as part of a day of action against the international trade deal Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, (TTIP).

This deal is opposed by more than 500 European groups, from citizens groups like 38 Degrees, to trade unions, nurses and farmers.

The organiser Gail Davies said: "TTIP threatens the NHS, our education and water by forcing these public services to open to American corporate providers. It destroys the idea that we are all equal before the law, by establishing a secret and separate legal system for the multinational corporations, in which they can sue governments for anything that impacts on their profits, such as regulations on smoking, fracking bans or a rise in the minimum wage. It will reduce our food standards, by allowing in foods that are currently banned, like cheap American 'growth hormone' beef, and in so doing will make life harder for Scottish farmers. If that is not enough, it could also reduce regulations on dangerous chemicals to little more than a bad joke."

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Our Fringe Tip of the Day is to go and see The Hogwallops! They are first timers at the Fringe and are part of the circus offering that Underbelly are staging at The Meadows. [Read more here.](#)

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The Dean Valley is to be renovated and improved by improving the walkways and the adjacent structures along the Water of Leith. This will involved different owners along the length of

the waterway and will address maintenance and access issues. There is also a possibility of generating income from a small-scale hydro electricity project, which would then be used to pay for ongoing maintenance costs.

There has already been some discussion with local councillors and Stockbridge Primary School.

The Neighbourhood Partnership which meets on Monday will hear about the up to date position of the project. They have an interest as they have already provided a small grant towards drafting a conservation statement which you can read [here](#).



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Now of course all that is required is some funding to progress the project, and the group will approach Heritage Lottery Fund, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Climate Challenge Fund and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

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## Tynecastle Sold Out Again as Hearts Play Down Title Talk

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson has played down talk of Hearts mounting a challenge for the Ladbrokes Premiership League title and said his team are a long way off being considered serious contenders.

Former Tynecastle skipper Steven Pressley said earlier this week that he believes his former club can win the league. However, his former team-mate Neilson laughed off such talk.

“I think everyone wants someone to challenge Celtic. Aberdeen did it last year and I think they’ll do the same again this year,” Neilson explained at Hearts Media Conference. “It’s good for Scottish football that we’re talking about it.

I still think both Hearts and Aberdeen are some way off challenging over the long term, but we're moving in the right direction. The money coming in that Celtic have got is night and day compared to what we've got. If you drive a car that's worth £10,000 and someone else drives a car that's worth £200,000, who do you expect is going to win?

"We have to find different ways to try and compete, and we're doing that, by doing different things, looking at different players. It's always going to be difficult, and I don't see it changing at all just because of the stature of the club. It's very difficult to compete on the same financial footing."

Neilson was delighted that five Hearts players have been named in the Scotland Under-21 squad for next month's 2017 European Championship qualifier in Lurgan.

Jack Hamilton, Jordan McGhee, Callum Paterson, Sam Nicholson and Billy King make the 22-man squad to face Northern Ireland on Saturday 5 September.

Meanwhile, Hearts have announced that Saturday's Ladbrokes Premiership game with Partick Thistle at Tynecastle is now a sell-out. Hearts previous two league games in Gorgie, against St. Johnstone and Motherwell, were also sell-outs indicating the huge amount of interest in the league leaders this season.

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## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 Review – Soweto Afro Pop**

# Opera \*\*\*\*



Photograph: Marion Smith

Among the plethora of big names at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe are some little golden nuggets of entertainment from those whose name may not be immediately recognisable to some.

Soweto Afro Pop Opera are back in town following on from last year's visit and although their show this year has reduced somewhat in size, it is still very enjoyable. The 2015 version has just three young men from Soweto but their talents showcase light opera and modern popular music as well as traditional South African music which had their audience clapping and foot-tapping enthusiastically.

The trio aren't short on humour either and their interaction with their small but appreciative audience was warmly received. Although the talented threesome had to rely on backing tracks as their musical accompaniment, their version of 'Somewhere There's a Place For Us' from the musical West Side Story and 'There's Music in the Air' by Soweto-born jazz singer Letta Mbulu were excellent.

Soweto Afro Pop Opera are steadily building a reputation for musical excellence and versatility. Their wide-ranging repertoire is aimed at culturally bridging the UK and South Africa – and they are succeeding. My only minor gripe is that the show isn't long enough and the fact there were fewer than 100 people watching such talent was a tad disappointing.

Their show at Chambers Street in Edinburgh (just off the Bridges, so it's easily accessible) starts at 5.00pm and finishes before 6.00pm. So, if you're heading to another later gig, why not pop in and see this splendid family show. You'll be glad you did.

Edinburgh Reporter rating \*\*\*\*

[Ticket information](#)

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# Dylan McGeouch signs three year deal with Hibs



Dylan McGeouch has joined Hibs from Celtic for an undisclosed fee and the midfielder has agreed a three year contract.

The 22-year-old made 26 appearances on loan last season, scoring three goals, now McGeouch will return to Easter Road on a permanent basis.

Speaking to [hibernianfc.co.uk](http://hibernianfc.co.uk), McGeouch said: "I'm really pleased to join Hibs permanently and picking up from where I left off last season.

"I really enjoyed playing for the club and working with Alan Stubbs, so when the opportunity came up to come back to Hibs it was the right choice for me.

"At this stage in my career, I need to be playing games on a regular basis and I felt I really benefitted from that experience last season.

"Now I'm looking to kick on and help the team to challenge for promotion."

Head Coach Alan Stubbs said: "I'm absolutely delighted that we've managed to sign Dylan – his return will add real quality to the squad.

"He was one of our stand-out performers last season and he is



a player that I've wanted to sign on a permanent basis from the very first day he joined on loan.

"So the fact that we're now in a position to make that move a reality is fantastic news for everybody connected to the club."

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## Edinburgh International Book Festival: Mary's Meals – The Shed that Fed a Million Children

'We believe in the goodness of people...Mary's Meals is a series of lots of little acts of love' (Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow)

Many organisations start life at a kitchen table; more than a few have probably started in a shed – but how many are still in that shed twenty-three successful years later? A charity initiated by two Argyll fish farmers began with the aim of making a small difference in Bosnia; today it brings impoverished children across the world into education – and it's still run from the founders' Dad's back garden.



In 1992, **Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow** and his brother were watching television in their local pub when they saw scenes of the **Bosnian** war. Nine years earlier, their family had made a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine at **Medjugorje** – now they saw that very place being ripped apart by conflict. The brothers wanted to do something – but what? They appealed locally for

donations and were inundated; the first responders were their family and close friends, but soon people were just turning up at the door with gifts and money.

‘From this I learned that it is possible to do something as an ordinary person; me and my brother were just salmon farmers, we had small expectations’ says Magnus. They took a week of work, piled everything into a knackered old Land Rover (‘It was probably illegal...’) and set off for Bosnia on ‘a bit of an adventure’. On their return they found so many more donations that the walls of their Dad’s shed (they’d asked him if they could borrow it, just for a while) were bulging. Magnus sold his house, left his job, and decided to take a gap year working for charity. He never went back to the salmon.

In a packed session at the **Edinburgh International Book Festival** on Monday, Magnus discussed with his friend and colleague **Duncan Bannatyne** (yes, that Duncan Bannatyne...) the point at which he decided to dedicate his life to helping others. After that first trip to Bosnia he made several more, thinking that he would just keep going till the donations ran out; they didn’t, and he neither did he.



Magnus Macfarlane-Barrow outside the ageing shed in the village of Dalmally, Argyll, where it all began.

Magnus set up a charity, **Scottish International Relief (SIR)** and over the next ten years that charity delivered over £10 million of relief to Bosnia, set up mobile clinics in Liberia and built homes for abandoned HIV-positive children in Romania. It was Romania – which he visited with Duncan (who funded several projects there, including the children’s

hospice **Casa Bannatyne**) – that really changed him; what SIR achieved there was, says Magnus, ‘a big miracle’. Some of the children SIR helped are now married with their own children; he’s still in touch with them, as is Duncan – in fact one of the children asked Duncan to be Best Man at her wedding (‘he was much more popular than me..I try not to mind’).

In 2002 almost the entire African continent suffered famine. Malawi was one of the worst affected countries and SIR was involved in the relief operation; whilst in the country Magnus met a family of six children whose mother was dying; their father had already passed away. Magnus asked **Edward**, who at 14 was the oldest son, what he hoped for. It wasn’t a laptop or a pair of trainers;

‘I’d like enough food and to go to school one day’

Many, many children were unable to attend school because they needed to spend all day begging for food; lacking education, they had no way to improve their lives. Magnus realised that there was a way to break the cycle of poverty; if school and food became intrinsically connected, hungry children would go to school. SIR started providing school pupils with one meal a day; soon this work became its main focus, and it changed its name to **Mary’s Meals**;

‘The whole thing was ignited by the words of a child – that’s a wonderful thing’.



Haiti – 6 months on  
from earthquake

Mary’s Meals (although ‘Mary’ refers to the Mother of Jesus, the charity helps everyone who needs its help, whatever their faith or lack of it) has a simple but highly effective *modus operandi*; its projects are based on **partnership with local people**. ‘Nice ideas don’t always work...I think this one does

because it is rooted in local ownership'. After meeting Edward, Magnus explained his idea to local villagers – would they not only support it but also volunteer to work with it? Within hours those villagers were setting up rotas and now Mary's Meals has **75,000** volunteers in Malawi alone; Magnus sees them as the bedrock of the charity.

When Magnus arrived in **Haiti** just after the devastating earthquake, he called in on a tented community of charity and NGO workers and was disappointed to see how little contact they were making with local people; Mary's Meals met with locals who quickly became the focal point of its aid response because they knew what to do and got on with it. Walls were rebuilt around schools so that they could become safe points to distribute food.

Local people, says Magnus, are *never* waiting passively for aid, 'They do heroic things every time'. Similarly, in **Liberia**, many teachers are government employees but rarely get paid; they still teach (there is an average of 100 children per teacher, few desks, even fewer books) and appreciative families support them by looking after their farms and homes. When Mary's Meals saw that children were coming to school with nothing, it launched the **Backpack Campaign**; UK pupils donate backpacks filled with essential school items like pens, rulers, notebooks, basic clothes, soap and a spoon, and Mary's Meals delivers them on the ground. It's not just for schools either – **Soroptimist International Groups** are running their own collections.

'Please say thank you. They have made these children so happy; they're now proud kids!' (Patrick Masiye, Standard 6 teacher, Malawi)

UK teachers love the project too; lessons can be based round it, with children gaining an understanding of how few possessions their counterparts have and a sense of achievement in being able to help.



Surely, asks Duncan, there were many challenges in setting up such projects? Magnus agrees; the charity faces issues in all of the countries it works in – **lack of infrastructure, corruption, weak and unresourced governments** – but the focus on local ownership solves many problems. It has a robust financial model and local ‘monitors’ visit each school regularly to check on stocks, but most volunteers are local – mothers, grandparents, aunts and uncles – and they don’t take kindly to people stealing their children’s food; there is no ‘leakage’.

Mary’s Meals strives to use **locally-grown food** wherever possible; in Liberia it makes sure that every school has its own farm or garden. The charity can buy the produce to make the meals, and the farming work also teaches children agricultural skills that were lost during the war. Rice mills have been set up; to encourage more rice farming Mary’s Meals offers not only to buy farmers’ rice but also to mill it for free. In other countries such as **South Sudan**, food still has to be imported; in this most challenging of places to work the need, says Magnus, is huge – few children go to school, but the charity won’t give up.



Magnus in a Haitian classroom – image: Catholic Exchange

Mary’s Meals works in some of the most dangerous areas in the world; in Haiti it is in partnership with **Father Tom Hagan**, a priest whose **Hands Together** group has built schools in the middle of **Cite Soleil**, a slum based on a rubbish tip. Last year nineteen of Father Tom’s staff were killed; there are bullet holes in the schools’ blackboards. ‘The schools are little oases; children can escape from the relentless

violence'. Many children in Haiti are still living on the streets, naked and begging; as well as feeding the children who do attend school, Mary's Meals has set up a project for the street children to attend later in the day. Pupils who have been recipients of Mary's Meals come back to teach these children, and the charity has provided them with school uniforms to wear. It's a way of restoring dignity to people in poverty, 'That one meal a day is changing lives'. Mary's Meals is also feeding 2,000 senior citizens. Despite their appalling living conditions, the children now come to school in pristine clothes; it is, says Magnus, something he has seen in refugee camps in other countries too; 'It's humbling.'

✘ And Magnus is a very humble man; he harbours no illusions that Mary's Meals' success is solely down to him. His work is rooted in his faith, and he believes that God has guided him from the beginning. The charity has no flashy headquarters – Magnus's Dad never did get his shed back (though there is now an office in Glasgow too) – and only 7p in every donated £1 goes on administration. It's very important to Magnus that Mary's Meals remains low cost; it spends little on fundraising and PR and nothing at all on advertising. So what, asks Duncan, can people do to help?

Money is always needed of course, but spreading the word is almost as important. The charity relies on people to fundraise as they think best, and encourages everyone to tell others about its work. It has a network of trained volunteer speakers; 50% of its income still comes from Scotland, but support is growing in other parts of the UK and North America. Its base will remain north of the border; 'I'm a proud Scot and happy to stay rooted here'.

Magnus's new book, ***The Shed that Fed A Million Children***, ✘ tells the story of Mary's Meals; all proceeds will go to the charity. Magnus was reluctant to write it at first; protecting the charity's core values is his priority, and in the book he tries to safeguard these, and to give glory to

God. Although his work is underpinned by his Catholic faith, he hopes that people of all faiths or none will enjoy reading the story of that shed, and what grew from it; 'It's a story of hope'.

Revisiting the children that the charity has helped is to Magnus an enormous privilege; lives have been changed and these young people are now optimistic about the future – for themselves and for their countries. Half of **Malawi's Under-21 football team** would not have attended school without the charity; **Jimmy**, a slum child who often had to swim across a river to avoid the fighting on his way to school, is now becoming a famous singer-songwriter, a role model who goes into schools to talk to the children, to show them that there is a way out of violence;

'If Mary's Meals can do impossible things then so can I, and  
so can you'.

Magnus also wanted to find Edward, the boy whose hopes were the inspiration behind the charity. Magnus felt guilty about Edward; he'd been repeating and publishing Edward's words far and wide, but he knew that Mary's Meals had come too late for him. Edward is still living in poverty, now trying to support his wife and young child from what he can grow; when Magnus found him, Edward had just five bags of maize to get the family through a whole year. Edward did know a little about the charity; when Magnus told him that he had initiated a worldwide movement, and that his own child would soon eat Mary Meal's at school, he was delighted. Edward and Magnus are still in touch, as is Duncan with Adela (Duncan: 'we're Facebook friends', Magnus: '*Facebook?!*')

✘ Mary's Meals now feeds over a million children across the world; it's survived earthquakes and even ebola (all of its workers, local and expat, chose to stay in the affected areas throughout the epidemic). In addition to its main programme it's built a residential school for marginalised deaf children

in Liberia. Magnus hopes that governments will eventually take over the charity's work, but he knows that even where there's a will to do so, the process will be a slow one. Does he, asks Duncan, ever feel overwhelmed? Never, replies Magnus, though he often feels quite emotional about everything when he gets home. He sometimes quotes Father Tom Hagan;

‘What we do here is humility in action, and we need to be realistic about what we can do’.

It costs about £12.20 to provide Mary's Meals to a child for one year (yes, *a year*) but 18,000 children a day still die of hunger. Magnus knows Mary's Meals can't change everything, but he's prepared to try;

‘I haven't yet come across a problem that we can't make better’

Although he didn't mention any of this on Monday, Magnus was named as one of **Time Magazine's Most Influential People 2015** (others include **Barack Obama** and **Pope Francis**); he was awarded an OBE in 2011 and in 2010 Hollywood actor **Gerard Butler** presented him with a **CNN Hero Award**, saying ‘Every day Magnus lets children around the world know that they matter, that someone thousands of miles away cares about them’

He's still working out of that lop-sided shed in Dalmally, but I expect his Dad's found somewhere else to keep his mower. And I don't suppose he minds.


***The Shed that Fed a Million Children*** by Magnus MacFarlane-Burrow is published by William Collins and available from bookshops and online. For more information about **Mary's Meals** and how you or your school can help, visit the charity's website [here](#).






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# Edinburgh International Book Festival: 2015 Siobhan Dowd Trust Lecture

Matt Haig almost didn't get asked to deliver this lecture  at all.


When Tony Bradman (Chairman) and Kate Powling (Director) of the Siobhan Dowd Trust started to think about someone to follow in Patrick Ness's illustrious footsteps (he gave the first Siobhan Dowd lecture last year) Matt seemed to tick all the boxes; they liked his books and his Book Trust blogs, he was funny, he had experience of life. They were even quite interested in his list-making prowess – until Tony read the one entitled *Things I Love*. It included Rome. motorways at night... and Marmite and peanut butter sandwiches. Tony was shocked – well who wouldn't be? Luckily, he overcame his (understandable) horror, and here we are today, and here is Matt, asking ;

‘What is the point of books?’

 This is the kind of question to which you think you know the answer until you have to find it. Most species, as Matt points out, survive just fine without books; nothing has become extinct for lack of reading matter. Books can nourish your soul, give you a map to help you navigate your inner world – but can they really save your life? Well yes, says the author of *Reasons To Stay Alive*; they saved his.

When Matt was in his early 20s he suffered a sudden and catastrophic breakdown. Without warning he was overcome by anxiety and depression; suicide became an attractive option.

He became agoraphobic, had panic attacks, withdrew from his social circle; the only person he could talk to was his then girlfriend (now wife) Andrea. The two of them moved back to Matt's parents' house in Newark ('the one place I'd been trying to get away from as a teenager; the dumbest place on earth'). My own in-laws 'downsized' the minute their last child moved out; a friend turned her son's room into a sewing studio...luckily Matt's Mum and Dad hadn't quite got around to any of that; even Matt's childhood books were still in situ, so Andrea suggested he try reading some.

Concentration didn't come easily; Stephen King, one of  Matt's teenage favourites, was a no-no, so he settled on *The Outsiders*, SE Hinton's classic coming-of-age tale about children from the wrong side of the tracks. He knew the story – he'd read it eight times before – and this was one of its attractions, it allowed him to connect with a younger and healthier version of himself. 'It helped me to choreograph the anarchy of my mind'. It also had a beginning, a middle and an end; it let Matt believe in the possibility of order and of change. And that is what stories are about.

Over the next few months Matt read more and even started writing. Everything else was still a huge challenge – even going on an escalator was hard – but the narrative shape that he saw in books began to show him some shape in his life; he also realised, like Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, that he was not alone. Writing *Reasons to Stay Alive* (some years after his breakdown) was not a dangerous act but a liberating one; 'depression is like a vampire; it can die in the light. Writing about it changes it.'

Matt Haig may feel that books saved him, but the current Secretary for Education begs to differ. The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan, a former corporate lawyer with no teaching experience, has said that pupils should steer clear of the arts if they want good careers. You can probably guess what Matt thinks about Ms Morgan's views, and the EIBF audience is clearly on

his side. He deprecates the idea that children should think of reading simply as a tool to pass exams and get a highly paid job, and he doesn't do so for airy-fairy reasons.

Rates of mental illness are soaring in the under 18s; half of all adults with mental health problems develop those problems as teenagers. There has been a 70% rise in 10-14 year olds attending Accident & Emergency Units for mental health reasons, and teenage suicides are increasing fast. These, says Matt, are preventable deaths, and he believes they are caused by our increasing cultural isolation.



Image: [www.canongate.tv](http://www.canongate.tv)




Image: Helen Jones, EIBF

Reading increases empathy; it shows us people who have been through difficult times and come out the other side. Novels help us to make sense of our own lives and to understand things outwith our experience;


‘Books remind us that in our minds we can be free.’

For reading, Matt suggests, is the ultimate rebellious act. In a world that wants to isolate us, to keep us shallow, alone and unquestioning, stories connect us to one another. Great books have changed the world; Melvyn Bragg lists the King James Bible and *On the Origin of the Species* as two of the twelve most influential books of all time, but it’s not just the famous ones that can change your life – any book that speaks to you is important. And some of the best sources of those books are libraries, ‘one of the few places not in love with our wallets’.

When the Trust visits schools, Tony says, it sees the  Education Secretary’s ideas in action; despite teachers’ best efforts, the joy of reading is being sucked away by the endless pressure to perform well in exams;

‘We must not GCSE the life out of books’

As the parent of three children who have suffered the stupefying effects of Higher English, I can identify with that one. Matt suggests that we need to look hard at the kind of society we want; should it be based on money, status, competition, division and the rat race? Or on kindness, understanding, compassion, generosity and the sharing of ideas and feelings? He does believe, though, that society is starting to change; new generations are questioning the material values of the last one – they want something different. And people are finally ready to talk about mental health; numerous shows in the Edinburgh Fringe touch on it, and here at the Book Festival writers from Andrew Scull to June Andrews and Matt himself will address aspects of the subject.

 At the beginning of this session, Tony Bradman shows a short film about the work of the Siobhan Dowd Trust. Siobhan, whom Tony describes as ‘a shining meteor’ of a

writer, died in 2007, leaving the royalties from her celebrated books to support projects bringing the joy of reading to disadvantaged young people. From funding school libraries in deprived areas to taking sixty children – children for whom, in the words of their teacher, ‘reality has come to soon’ – on a trip to the Book Trust’s Young Adult Literature Convention, the Trust’s work reaches out to people at what can be the most vulnerable times of their lives. For a little while at least, it allows them to be free.

For more information about the Siobhan Dowd Trust, visit its website [here](#). Matt Haig’s book, *Reasons to Stay Alive*, is published by Canongate.



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## Man charged with 47 housebreakings in the capital



A man has today been charged with a total of 47 offences related to housebreakings and attempted housebreakings in Edinburgh.

The 28-year-old was traced, arrested and charged and appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on 6th August in connection with 10 housebreakings.

Officers from the Community Investigation Unit continued to conduct extensive enquiries and subsequently recovered £9000 worth of stolen property from three addresses the capital. The Edinburgh Search & Recovery Team (SART) is currently working

to reunite this property with the rightful owners.

As a result of these enquiries, the 28-year-old has today been charged and reported to the procurator fiscal in connection with a further 37 housebreakings.

Detective Inspector Alan O'Brien said: "Operation RAC is dedicated to the pursuit of those perpetrating housebreakings and associated crime. I want to reassure the people of Edinburgh that there are dedicated and specialist resources relentlessly working to safeguard our homes and property."

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## Alex Harris joins Queen of the South on loan



Hibs' winger Alex Harris has joined Queen of the South on loan for the rest of the 2015/16 season.

Academy graduate Harris, 20, has recorded 28 starts and scored once since making his first team debut in October 2012.

The highlight of his career with Hibs came when he helped the team come back from a three goal deficit to beat Falkirk in the Scottish Cup semi-final, scoring a sensational 25 yard goal.

Last season the former Scotland under-19 internationalist spent time on loan at Dundee.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs said: "It's important that Alex continues his development by playing regular first team football and unfortunately we couldn't offer him that here."

“He has been a model professional and we will be monitoring his progress with close interest.”

Photo by John Preece

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# Edinburgh international Book Festival – 20th August

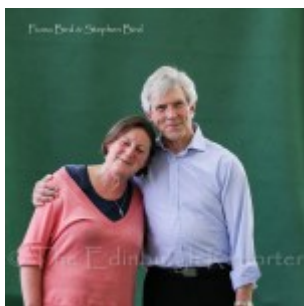


Latest gallery of authors, with these ones attending the Book Festival at various times on the 20th August

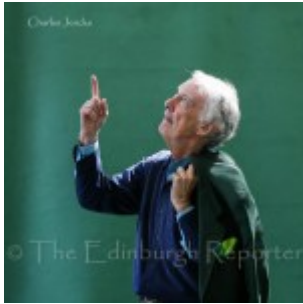














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# Letter from Scotland



Every night I hear the curfew – after which all good Edinburgh citizens should be in bed. But the fireworks at the end of each Tattoo on the castle esplanade are the signal for foreign festival-goers to rush to their final show of the night or to parade down the Royal Mile, or through the Grassmarket, looking for somewhere to eat or drink.

We are having a really good festival season this year. Ticket sales are up – by a third, according to some venues in the Fringe. The crowds in the streets seem more swarm-like than ever. And the weather has been mild and fairly dry. Six out of

the seven shows I have been to have been packed out. The seventh was Stravinsky, which might explain why the Usher Hall was only half full.

But while the crowds in central Edinburgh were enjoying themselves, the rest of Scotland was returning to normal after the summer holidays. The schools reopened, the Labour Party continued the almost annual process of electing a new leader and the inquiries and court hearings resumed.

The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon spent her first day back at school announcing an ambitious target – to close the attainment gap between good schools and poor schools. Wisely, she did not put a time scale on it, because this seems to me to be a huge task. But the Scottish Government is going to introduce a common nation-wide test to measure standards in all primary schools. “I want to be judged on this,” Ms Sturgeon told pupils and parents at the Wester Hailes Education Centre. “I want to close the attainment gap completely.” A fund of £100m is being targeted on the poorest performing schools.

Funnily enough, the new-elected leader of the Labour Party in Scotland, Kezia Dugdale, also wants to make education a top priority. In her first major speech as leader, she spoke of her own school experience. In Elgin she was an average pupil in a good rural school but when her family moved to Dundee she found herself top of the class in a poor-performing school. And when she went to Aberdeen University to study law she was surrounded by “by privately educated students whose backgrounds I couldn’t relate to and whose achievements I couldn’t compete with.”

Another comprehensive school pupil was strutting his stuff this week, none other than the mighty man from Fife, Gordon Brown. No, he wasn’t performing at the Edinburgh Festival, he was at the Southbank in London lecturing Labour Party members on how they should vote in the UK leadership election. “Don’t

vote for Corbyn” was his message but, speaking in Delphic tones as befits a former leader, he did not mention Jeremy by name. Instead he warned against Labour being a “permanent party of protest.” My own reaction was – what’s wrong with protest, after five years of “austerity” and another five to come? The amusing thing is that the more the grandees of the Labour Party warn against a Corbyn victory, the more the members want to vote for him. It shows just how out of touch the old leaders have become.

Another weakened institution, the Catholic Church, found itself in more trouble this week. Archbishop Philip Tartaglia was forced to apologise for decades of abuse by a number of priests, nuns and teachers at a string of church institutions supposed to be caring for young people. It followed the publication of the McLellan Report, an independent investigation into allegations of child abuse, commissioned by the Catholic Church and headed by Rev Dr Andrew McLellan, a former moderator of the Church of Scotland. He recommended more support for survivors, a re-writing of the church’s child protection policy and training for all staff in recognising and preventing abuse. The victims themselves said neither the report nor the apology were enough.

The fatal accident inquiry into the bin lorry crash in Glasgow before Christmas which killed six pedestrians is now nearing completion. This week it heard from the lorry driver Harry Clarke. But he was not able to throw much light on the incident since he had fallen unconscious at the wheel. His lawyers also advised him not to say too much, since he is facing a private prosecution by some of the families involved. It has emerged during evidence at the inquiry that Mr Clarke had suffered blackouts before and it’s alleged he failed to disclose them when he took up the job of a lorry driver with Glasgow Council.

We have finally got a date for the closure of the Longannet coal-fired power station in Fife. It will close at the end of


March next year with the loss of 236 jobs. The owners, Scottish Power, and the Scottish government, blame the early closure on the £40m bill the power station faces each year to connect to the national grid. But the station would have to close anyway in four years' time because of its age (nearly 50 years old) and ever increasing carbon taxes.

The closure will of course put us back on track to reducing Scotland's carbon emissions. And the government has been underlining its "green" credentials this week by keeping the ban on GM crops and closing the Marine Protected Area off the Summer Isles to scallop dredging. The scientists and fishermen are furious. But aren't they always?

Finally, what are the scientists and the fishermen going to do about the jellyfish invasion around our coasts ? Apparently, their numbers have been growing for the third year in a row. The most common are large "barrel" jellyfish, but there have also been increases in the numbers of mauve stingers, moon jellyfish and Portuguese Men O' War. No one knows the reason why, though I bet it's climate change and they will all go away again when Longannet closes !

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## Friday in Edinburgh – What's On Today

**Run for Me – Dance for Me – Think of Me:** a fun, action-packed weekend to celebrate the life of the late **Louise Duncan**, Minister of Balerno Church, and to raise funds for the charity that did so much for her in her last months, **Marie** 

**Curie Cancer Care.** As part of the weekend, **Balerno Village Screen** will tonight show ***Young @ Heart (PG)***, the true story of the final weeks of rehearsal for the **Young At Heart Chorus** in Northampton, MA, whose average age is 81. The Chorus's repertoire is unexpected – it includes songs by **James Brown** and **Sonic Youth** – and they have toured Europe and sung for royalty, but this account focuses on learning new songs for a concert in their home town, a concert which succeeds despite several heart-breaking events. 6.15pm, St Joseph's Hall, (next to) [Balerno Church](#), Balerno. Free tickets may be reserved via eventbrite [here](#) or collected from The Mill Cafe or Balerno Post Office. Balerno Village Screen is a community cinema offering free admission and funded by donations.



**In Basho's Footsteps: Streams and Mountains.** Poet **Pablo F Velcarce** and artist **Anya Gleizer** hiked 2,000 km across Japan's wilderness in the footsteps of **Matsuo Basho**, the ancient haiku poet. Through contact with local artists, Zen monks and nature itself, the two artists came closer to the state of mind and awareness that Basho deemed necessary to make art. This exhibition shows the art inspired by the adventure: painting, poetry, installations, video and performance that echo the spirit of the journey. 11am-5pm, [Coburg House Studios](#), 15 Coburg Street. Ends 25th



August 2015.

✖ **St Mary's Cathedral Tours:** free tours of Scotland's largest cathedral, a renowned masterpiece of Victorian Gothic architecture, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. 2.15pm today and every Friday in August, [St Mary's Cathedral](#) (meet inside West Door), Palmerston Place. Free. Also at 10am each Tuesday in August.

**Phill Jupitus: Sketch Comic at the Scottish National Gallery** ✖ The legendary stand-up, poet and sketchman returns for another three weeks of digital drawing, chat and mirth. Each morning Phill will select and sketch (on an iPad) a favourite of his from the gallery collection. Come and watch, chat with Phill and join in on your own iPad or sketchbook – make and share your own sketches. Phill's work will be posted on **Facebook** and **Twitter** each day and you are encouraged to post yours too. Phill will be at a different gallery each week; for the final week he moves to the **Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art**. Wednesday will be a special **Sketch Comic for Kids** sessions, but grown-ups are still welcome to come along. On Thursday evenings Phill will host a special in-conversation event with a different special guest each time – see listing. 10am-12 noon today and every day until 27th August, [Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art](#), Belford Road. Free and unticketed.





**Edinburgh Book Fringe:** daily events – all of them free (donations appreciated) – for two weeks at **Word Power Books**, Edinburgh's independent radical bookshop. Today: author and former *Scotsman* journalist **Peter Ranscombe** discusses his novel *Hare*, in which he imagines what might have happened to the mass murderer after he turned King's evidence against William Burke and was set free. In Peter Ranscombe's story, Hare flees to Boston, only to become caught up in a murderous plot, set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. 1pm, [Word Power Books](#), West Nicolson Street. All welcome! No booking required, but arrive promptly as space is limited.



**POUT Fest Tour:** POUT started life four years ago as an LGBT film festival from independent film distributor **Peccadillo Pictures**, created as a response to audience demands for more queer-oriented cinema on the big screen. After the overwhelming success of the London POUT Fests, Peccadillo have decided to take POUT on the road via an ongoing touring

festival of selected films. Today's film is **52 Tuesdays (15)**: teenager Billie thinks she knows everything about her mother Jane, but she is surprised when she learns of Jane's plans to transition, and further upset when she learns that her parents have decided that she will live with her father for a year. All she has left to cling to is her chance to see her mother every Tuesday afternoon. 'An emotionally charged story of desire, responsibility and transformation'. 8.15pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Tickets may be obtained from the Box Office in person, by calling 0131 228 6382 or online: prices vary. Also showing at 1.10pm and 8.30pm on Saturday 22nd August. The final film in this series will be **Soft Lad**, showing on 2nd September 2015.



**Edinburgh Art Festival: GARAGE Presents Skatgobs, The Y Bend and special guests.** Skatgobs is the visceral vocal improv trio of **Phil Minton, Dylan Nyoukis** and **Luke Poot**; 'channelling and contorting the voice into enveloping textures and contours that can be subtly crepuscular one moment and howlingly nightmarish the next, all three are peerless vocal performers'. 7-9pm, [GARAGE](#), Northumberland Street North West Lane. GARAGE is a DIY not-for-profit art space hosting live events throughout August.

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## Five things you need to know today!



**Parking in the city**

## **Broomhouse Community Shop need a bookkeeper**

**There will be fireworks**

**Festival tip of the Day**

## **Edinburgh to Helsinki**

Since the spring of this year council officers have been considering what they might do about evening parking, Sunday parking and the council's overall approach to charging. Their main aim is to discourage commuter car travel in the city, preferring instead that commuters use public transport or a means of Active Travel.

These matters were referred to the Transport Forum for feedback and it is clear that paying for parking into the evenings is well supported by the forum.

Those who live in Controlled Parking Zones might be supportive of this extended charging as it could make their lives easier when they return in the evening or on a Sunday to find a resident's space to park their vehicle.

The council now proposes to roll out shared use parking which will make some of the spaces in the city dual use and therefore more flexible. All residents' zones will have Visitors Permits introduced. This was thought necessary by some carers and those visiting daily where the resultant cost was considerable.

The other part to this strategy is that motorists will be expected to pay for parking in Zones 1 to 6 and in part of Zone 7 on Sundays also in an effort to make streets safer for all. The council aim that by 2030 the transport system in the city is one of the greenest and healthiest in Northern Europe.

Pricing will be set in such a way that motorists will be deterred from bringing cars to the city centre on an all day commuter parking basis. This will encourage turnover of spaces

on a regular basis.

Although these matters are being recommended there will be a long lead in as the council will have to consult on the measures to be put in place and Traffic Regulation Orders will be required. Edinburgh has a low car ownership ratio in any case, five per cent below the Scottish average, and the council want to encourage that along with increased bus usage, cycling and walking to work.

All of this will be discussed at next week's [Transport and Environment Committee](#).

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There is a job on offer in Broomhouse.

This is a vacancy for a bookkeeper within the Community One Stop Shop. It is a 6 month vacancy for 4 hours per week.

Experience essential. Duties include:

- Reconciliation of accounts
- Funding award returns
- Financial support for funding applications
- Invoicing
- Compliance with OSCR returns
- Training and recruitment of a volunteer treasurer for management committee representation
- Preparing of financial reports

Immediate start available. Please send CV to [cossinfo@ymail.com](mailto:cossinfo@ymail.com)

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Another few days until the Festival Fireworks on 31 August but here's a video to whet your appetite!

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Our Festival tip of the day is to go to see *Dr Professor Neal Portenza's Catchy Show Title*

This Australian will have you holding your sides with laughter. He is appropriate for those 12+ but not those of a serious or nervous disposition.

At The Mash House 6-30 August at 19.40.

[Tickets here.](#)

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Finnair is to start a seasonal service from Edinburgh to Helsinki in 2016, offering travellers faster connections to Finnair's network of Asian destinations. The service begins on 18 April 2016 and will operate to 27 October 2016.

Edinburgh will be served by three flights a week operated by a Finnair Airbus A319.

[Read more here](#)

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 Review – Hardeep Singh Kohli \*\*



Hardeep Singh Kohli's show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is tagged 'Big Mouth Strikes Again'. The blurb on the Fringe website states 'The Fringe's favourite comedian, broadcaster, journalist and chef explains all in a brand new show'.

Of course, reviews such as this are all a matter of opinion and what is funny to one person may not be even mildly amusing to another. His self-description as 'Big Mouth' certainly rings true. The Glaswegian certainly isn't slow at giving his opinions on politics, faith and the good citizens of Edinburgh of which he now is, having decided to live in the capital city. The assertion that he is 'the Fringe's favourite comedian' is surely open to debate, certainly if Thursday evening's performance at the Pleasance Dome is anything to go by.

The die-hard fans in the audience certainly lapped up what was on offer although there were some who either didn't get his humour (or couldn't make out what he was saying given his propensity to mumble on occasion) or simply found him unfunny. One person actually walked out of the performance halfway through although it wasn't clear if he had to dash elsewhere or had simply had enough.

Hardeep's political views are well-known and while I personally agreed with the content of his rants about the Scottish independence referendum and Tony Blair's input into the current Labour Party leadership contest, I suspect I

wasn't the only person who felt that they had come to see a stand-up comic and not a political rally.

The funniest line of the evening came not from Hardeep himself but a member of the audience who was called Daniel. When Hardeep made the assumption Daniel was Jewish on account of his name, the instant retort of 'and I'm also an accountant' brought arguably the biggest laugh of the evening. And that said a lot about the performance of someone who is reputed to be one of Scotland's top comedians and broadcasters. It was funny in parts, repetitive in others (the Edinburgh Castle gag just became tedious after an hour) and for some 'gags' tumbleweed wouldn't have been out of place.

As I left the theatre, I couldn't help but feel there should be a revised tagline for the show: Hardeep Singh Kohli – Big Disappointment...

Edinburgh Reporter Review: \*\*

[Ticket Information](#)

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## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 – REVIEW – Chris Betts – Social Animal \*\*\***



Chris Betts-Social Animal is an hour of insightful observations gained from years of working behind a bar. The Canadian comedian delivers a clever and witty analysis of what



it's like from the perspective of the bar tender as he watches humans intoxicate themselves, and tells us about the chaos that ensues.

There are sections that explore the beautiful art of toilet wall humour, as well as in depth commentary on the hen and stag scene. While his calm demeanour adds to the bite of his punch lines, some parts can come across a little preachy, a bit like a Kevin Smith monologue.

Betts builds a great rapport with the audience and pushes boundaries once or twice, yet that rapport suffers at times when we feel we're being lectured. From racial or sexist slurs to men's sexual ability, it seemed the crowd was not very appreciative of the comic's advice.

However, the show, for the most part, is funny. His bar room observations are well thought out and should speak to anyone who's ever had to deal with a tipsy, over-enthusiastic female or watch an alpha male shepherd his flock.

Ultimately, Betts' original and comically unique perspectives make this an enjoyable experience, and Social Animal is certainly worth a look.

Pleasance Courtyard (Venue 33)

August 20-30

Time: 21:45 (1 hour)

[Tickets here](#)

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# Edinburgh to Helsinki direct

# from next year



Finnair is set to launch a seasonal service from Edinburgh to Helsinki in 2016, offering travellers faster connections to Finnair's network of Asian destinations. The service begins on 18 April 2016 and will operate to 27 October 2016.

Edinburgh will be served by three flights a week operated by a Finnair Airbus A319.

"The new Edinburgh route will open up travel to Finnair's extensive Asian network for Scottish passengers with short connections at Helsinki Airport.

"Edinburgh Airport is seeing a continuous growth in demand for international flights, recently announcing a 10.2% growth year-on-year to July 2015 and we look forward to welcoming these passengers on board Finnair," says Petri Vuori, Finnair's Vice-President of Global Sales.



Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Airport, said: "This is a significant route for Scotland and one we have been working very hard to secure. Not only will it give Scots fantastic connections to the Far East via Finnair's excellent hub in Helsinki, it will also open up our country to significant traffic from Russia, China, Japan and Finland itself.

"I hope that this is the beginning of Edinburgh Airport further strengthening Scotland's links with these key global destinations."

Finnair, recently named Northern Europe's Best Airline for the sixth year running by Skytrax, is the European launch customer for the next-generation Airbus A350 XWB aircraft. The

completely new aircraft type substantially raises the bar for passenger comfort, environmental performance and operational efficiency.

Finnair is also the first airline in the world to operate the A350 on scheduled services to China, where Shanghai will be served with a daily A350 service from 25 October 2015, followed by Bangkok and Beijing, with Hong Kong and Singapore A350 services to be added in 2016.

The Edinburgh service is one of four new routes launching in summer 2016, with the launch of services from Helsinki to Billund, Denmark; Pula, Croatia; and also the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the Arctic Ocean.

The Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities, Keith Brown, added: "This is another fantastic service to add to the growing number of international destinations available from Edinburgh Airport, and I congratulate both the Airport and Finnair on this announcement. This link to the Helsinki hub will bring real benefits to Scottish businesses by opening up more links to international markets and will also boost our tourism industry by providing greater choice and capacity for visitors.

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## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 – Le Haggis lean on Edinburgh Rugby's Simon**



Edinburgh folk are being invited to polish up their party

pieces in a campaign to find new talent fit for a top Fringe cabaret show.

Le Haggis, which has been winning five star reviews and praise from celebrities and TV commentators, is a sell-out success at the prestigious Colombino Spiegel tent in the Assembly George Square Gardens.

The show's organisers are committed to developing community talent and putting it in the spotlight alongside top national and international acts.



Edinburgh Rugby prop Simon Berghan decided to prove that he had a potential off-pitch career as a strongman by lifting The Empress Stah and Justine Squire, two of the most glamorous performers from Le Haggis, onto his shoulders.

Simon said: "I'm delighted to lend my weight to the search for talent fit for the Fringe. Edinburgh is a fantastic city that I'm proud to call home and the whole Edinburgh squad are really enjoying this year's Fringe – when we're allowed time off from pre-season training!"

With so many Scots brought up to do a party piece, Le Haggis artistic director Graham Main, believes there is a rich seam of potential cabaret talent out there.

He said: "We really want Edinburgh folk to show us what they can do – it might be music, dance, acrobatics, magic – anything that would entertain a cabaret audience of 400 on a great night out. The more weird, wonderful and fun the better.

"Some of our own band members and performers have been plucked straight from the community in Dumfries and Galloway. And our top national and international acts all come up through the ranks – so we really want to give Edinburgh talent a chance to shine."

Le Haggis has been praised by Radio 4 comedian Mervyn Stutter, TV arts commentator Martin Hall and many others, Andy Murray's mum Judy tweeting: "Scottish music meets the circus, very different – go and see it".

It is a pulsating mix of old and the new, traditional and edgy, with a combination of Scottish and international acts.

Many of the songs are contemporary takes on Burns' best loved works. There are also other favourite Scottish tunes, plus superb original work.

Born in Burns' favourite town, Dumfries, the show has developed over the past two years as a fun, cheeky, and sometimes romantic and beautiful, celebration of life and Scottish culture.

### **How to enter Dae A Turn**

To take part in Dae A Turn you need to be over 18 and be an Edinburgh resident.

Just grab your phone or video camera and get some footage of yourself doing your turn and show it to them by way of the Le Haggis Facebook [page](#)

Their favourites will be invited along with the most suitable being offered the chance to appear with Le Haggis on the last nights of their run – which are 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August.

Photos courtesy of Colin Hattersley

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[colinhattersley@btinternet.com](mailto:colinhattersley@btinternet.com)

[www.colinhattersley.com](http://www.colinhattersley.com)



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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe – SANCTUARY

## *HEARTBREAK STORIES BEHIND SOLDIERS' THANK-YOU NOTES*

✖ An actress has written a play about the impact of war on women – after receiving heart-wrenching letters from soldiers in Iraq.

Susanne Sulby – whose father was in the US Marines – felt helpless after years of seeing conflicts on the news, so decided to send care packages to squaddies overseas she had never met

They responded with extreme gratitude and gave moving accounts of the toll war was taking on them. In one email, a battle-weary soldier said: “Even the youngest soldiers don’t look young any more.”

Their words form part of Sulby’s powerful one-woman show, *Sanctuary*, which examines the repetitive cycles of war, and the effect it has on three female characters: a mother bombarded by TV broadcasts of death, an emotionally detached correspondent, and a prisoner of war.

Sulby said: “I felt completely impotent in the face of the endless media coverage of a world plagued by horrors, so I decided to do something.

“I contacted a group called [anysoldier.com](http://anysoldier.com) that provides the names of servicemen wanting packages from home. I sent candy, board games, movies and toiletries, and would picture them opening their box and finding something they liked or missed from home.

“Much to my surprise, it was greatly appreciated by the soldiers. I was learning that every small thing I could add to the goodness of the world makes a difference. I was beginning to have faith in humanity again and move toward my sanctuary.”

As well as the soldiers’ correspondence, Sulby uses video and First World War poetry to question the roles and responsibilities of individuals in wartime, and says the seeds of the play were sown during the Bosnian War of the mid-1990s.

“I couldn’t believe that after the tragedy of the Holocaust, the world could still tolerate ethnic cleansing,” she says. “I could not help wondering about the feelings of other women who were close to the conflicts I saw on television.

“A nagging feeling that ‘it could be me’ compelled me to write *Sanctuary*. By the luck of the draw, I ended up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with the luxury of worrying about such trivial things as my skin and what kind of car I drove.”

Sulby hopes the play has a lasting legacy beyond its run at Edinburgh Fringe: “I would love for it to affect a shift in the lives of the audience. I would like to create a ripple effect. Women’s voices are needed in this world: not to drown out men, but for balance.

“The evolution for individuals might simply be to be kinder in their daily lives, to find their voice and use it. Action has magic, grace and power in it. I would say that the most important thing of all is to never give up on the power of love.”

- [Sanctuary](#), theSpace: Niddry Street, 17 – 29 August, 11am & 24 – 29 August, 1.25 pm

**For further information, pictures or interviews, please**

**contact:**

Boo Paterson

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# **John McGinn and Jason Cummings in Under-21 squad to face Northern Ireland**



Hibs' youngsters John McGinn and Jason Cummings (pictured) have been named in Ricky Sbragia's 22-player squad for Scotland's opening UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualifying match against Northern Ireland next month.

Scotland will open their qualification campaign away to Northern Ireland on Saturday, 5th September before a double-header with France and Iceland in October at Pittodrie Stadium (ticket details to be announced).

The Scots will also compete against Ukraine and FYR Macedonia in Group 3 for a place at the finals which take place in Poland in 2017.

Hearts' players Jack Hamilton, Jordan McGhee, Callum Paterson, Sam Nicholson and Billy King are also in the squad.

## **Scotland Under-21 squad to face Northern Ireland:**

Ryan Fulton (Liverpool)



Jack Hamilton (Heart of Midlothian)  
Jonathan Henly (Unattached)  
Stuart Findlay (Celtic, on loan to Kilmarnock)  
Stephen Hendrie (West Ham United)  
Donald Love (Manchester United)  
Callum McFadzean (Sheffield United)  
Jordan McGhee (Heart of Midlothian)  
Callum Paterson (Heart of Midlothian)  
Jay Fulton (Swansea City)  
Cameron King (Norwich City)  
John McGinn (Hibernian)  
John Souttar (Dundee United)  
Charlie Telfer (Dundee United)  
Ryan Christie (Inverness Caledonian Thistle)  
Sam Nicholson (Heart of Midlothian)  
Ryan Fraser (Bournemouth, on loan to Ipswich Town)  
Ryan Gauld (Sporting Clube de Portugal)  
Billy King (Heart of Midlothian)  
Declan McManus (Fleetwood Town)  
Jason Cummings (Hibernian) Lawrence Shankland (Aberdeen)

2017 UEFA Under-17 Championship Qualifier  
Northern Ireland vs Scotland  
Saturday 5th September 2015, 2pm kick-off  
Mourneview Park, Lurgan

Photo by John Preece

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## Man in court following Craigmillar attack



A 37-year-old appeared before Edinburgh Sheriff Court yesterday in connection with a serious assault two weeks ago in Craigmillar and was remanded in custody.

A spokesman for Police Scotland said: "Police in Edinburgh have arrested and charged a man in connection with a serious assault on Craigmillar Castle Road that happened in the early hours of Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.

"A 31-year-old man has also been reported to the Procurator Fiscal in connection with the same incident."

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## **Police hunt bogus workmen after incident in Bonnyrigg**



Police are keen to trace three men in connection with a bogus caller incident in Bonnyrigg that resulted in an elderly woman being robbed of a number of high value items.

The incident happened on Tuesday, August 18, at around 12pm when the men called at the home of a 77-year-old woman on Lothian Street.

The men claimed to work for the local authority before persuading the homeowner to let them into her house so that they could inspect the plumbing in her kitchen and bathroom.

The suspects then completed their checks and left the property.

A short time later the woman noticed that a quantity of her jewellery had been removed.

Police are now appealing to anyone who may have seen the men in or around the area of Lothian Street to get in touch.

Two of the suspects are described as being white, 6 foot tall, slim build with short brown hair. Both men were wearing dark navy jackets and dark coloured trousers

The third man was tanned complexion, between 5ft 10ins tall and 5ft 12ins tall, he had a foreign accent, slim build and short black hair.

Inspector Andrew Toombs, who is based at Dalkeith Police Station, said: "An extensive and robust investigation is now underway and we are extremely keen to trace the suspects.

"This was an appalling and cowardly crime and I would urge anyone who seen these men or has any information that can assist with our ongoing enquiries to please contact police as soon as possible.

"These men have exploited an elderly woman's trust and appear to have stolen a significant quantity of her personal belongings.

"This sort of behaviour is completely unacceptable and we will take all necessary measures to ensure these men are brought to justice.

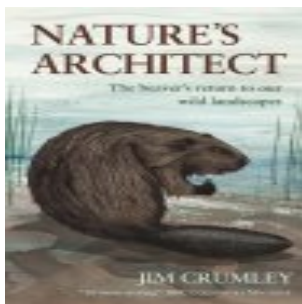
"Thankfully, such incidents are rare in Bonnyrigg but I want to take this opportunity to warn others in the area to stay vigilant."

Anyone who has information that can assist with this investigation is asked to call police on 101 or, alternatively the charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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# Thursday in Edinburgh – What's On Today

**Blackwell's Edinburgh Presents Writers at the Fringe:** every Thursday throughout the Fringe, Blackwell's invites a selection of Scottish performers to give a taste of their work. New and unpublished works of literary art stand alongside established novelists, with any and all genres free to be expressed, from poetry to cutting-edge drama, folk music, contemporary fiction and all that is found between. Tonight's line-up is **Peter Ranscombe, Michael F Russel, Jim Crumley, Vicki Jarrett and Chris Dolan**. 5.45pm for 6pm, [Blackwell's](#), South Bridge. Free tickets may be obtained from the shop's front desk, by calling 0131 622 8229, emailing [events.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:events.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk), via eventbrite [here](#) or from the Fringe Box Office [here](#).



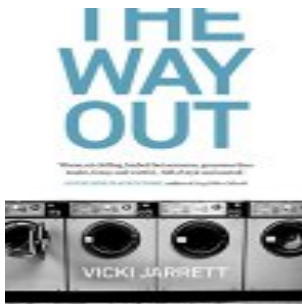
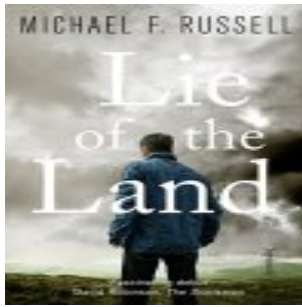



Image: Walter Crosby

**Aquillos Ensemble:** the Ensemble returns to present a selection of movements from *Picasso Pictures* by **Raymond Warren**, plus **Danzi's** *Wind Quintet in B Major* and **Zemlinsky's** *Humoreske*. 6-6.30pm, [Scottish National Gallery](#), The Mound. Free and unticketed.


 **LGBT Disability Social Circle:** a social group for people with learning difficulties or disabilities to meet other people, have fun and discuss sexuality and gender identity. Today: afternoon tea and games. 2-4pm, [Lifecare Centre](#), 2 Cheyne Street, Stockbridge. For more information please contact **George Burrows** on 0131 652 3281 or [george@lgbthealth.org.uk](mailto:george@lgbthealth.org.uk).



**Phill Jupitus Sketch Comic in Conversation:** each Thursday evening during the festivals, Phill Jupitus will be in conversation with a special guest – a passionate, personal and irreverent look at art, a chat about what Phill has seen in the galleries this week, and possibly some sketching! The guests' identities will be announced nearer the time. 7-8pm, Hawthornden Lecture Theatre, [Scottish National Gallery](#), The Mound. Free and unticketed.

**Edinburgh Art Festival – Spotlight Tours of Scottish Art: People, Places, Ideas.** Guided tours of the City Art Centre's Scottish Art collection, focusing on people, places and ideas. 11am or 3pm, (meet at reception) [City Art Centre](#), 2 Market Street. No booking required, free – suggested donation £2. Also at same times on Saturday 22nd August 2015.



**Edinburgh Book Fringe:** daily events – all of them free  (donations appreciated) – for two weeks at **Word Power Books**, Edinburgh's independent radical bookshop. Today: **MacGillvray (Kirsten Norrie) and Carly Brown** read their poetry. 1pm, [Word Power Books](#), West Nicolson Street. All welcome! No booking required, but arrive promptly as space is limited.

**POUT Fest Tour:** POUT started life four years ago as an LGBT film festival from independent film distributor **Peccadillo Pictures**, created as a response to audience demands for more queer-oriented cinema on the big screen. After the overwhelming success of the London POUT Fests, Peccadillo have decided to take POUT on the road via an ongoing touring festival of selected films. Today's film is **A Girl at My Door (Dohee-ya)** (In Korean with English subtitles): Young-nam was a top graduate of the Korean police academy, but has been transferred to a post at a small seaside village owing to

'misconduct'. On her first patrol she encounters the mysterious Dohee, a morose young girl excluded by the community. Compelled to protect her from her family, Young-nam lets Dohee move in with her; all is well with this unconventional arrangement, until their fairytale existence takes an unexpected turn. 6.10pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Tickets may be obtained from the Box Office in person, by calling 0131 228 6382 or online: prices vary. The next POUT film will be **52 Tuesdays**, showing on 21st and 22nd August.



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## Five things you need to know today!



Edinburgh Council meeting

Fringe tip of the Day

iPad arts club

## **At the Cameo**

### **Job at North Edinburgh Arts**

The first full council meeting under the eye of the new Chief Executive Andrew Kerr takes place this morning.

The meeting is being asked to ratify spending on the Tram Inquiry up to £2m under the direction of the Chief Executive.

As well as this the Director of Services for Communities role is being replaced by an Executive Director Place role.

Paul Lawrence has been named as preferred candidate for the role of Executive Director – Place for the council

Councillors will consider a [report recommending his appointment](#) at their meeting this morning.

If appointed, he will be responsible for the development and delivery of frontline services across the city as part of the role, created under the Council's new organisational structure.

The post is accountable for a range of major council services including travel and transport, housing, planning, waste and recycling and street cleansing.

Council Leader, Andrew Burns, chaired the Recruitment Committee. He said: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of Paul Lawrence as Executive Director – Place. The calibre of applicant for the role was exceptionally strong and I am certain that we have chosen the right candidate for this new and important position.

"This is a key role for the city that will oversee essential services such as roads and pavements, street cleansing, refuse collection and housing – services that affect all residents in the city.



“There is no doubting the challenges that lie ahead, as we face increasing financial pressures and demand for services. But I am confident that Paul brings with him the experience and skills to help ensure the best way forward for the Council.”

Andrew Kerr, Council Chief Executive, added: “The Council is set to undergo significant changes as we strive to create a more efficient and effective organisation, improving services as well as making cost savings.

“Strong leadership is crucial to achieving a smooth transition while continuing to serve the people who live in, work in and visit Edinburgh. I look forward to working closely with Paul to build on previous successes and to help shape the future of Scotland’s capital.”

Paul Lawrence began his local government career as arts director for Durham City Council before moving to Northern Arts as assistant chief executive in 1997. He went on to spend 10 years at Newcastle City Council as Head of Culture and later Assistant Chief Executive, where he played a central role in the city’s cultural regeneration and led on a number of economic development projects, including the Science City development.

His most recent position, as Corporate Director, Place, at Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, has involved responsibility for the borough’s ‘Place’ services including waste and recycling, planning, transport and housing. Since joining the council in 2010, Paul has led on the development of new models of citizen engagement and service delivery throughout the borough, as well as overseeing corporate transformation and future strategy as part of the Corporate Leadership team.

The role of Executive Director – Place replaces that of Director of Services for Communities.

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

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Fringe tip of the Day today is to read all of our reviews! They are diverse as our reviewers like all manner of shows. But you can read them all [here](#).

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If you are a romantic and you have nothing better to do on Sunday at 1 o'clock then get along to the Cameo where they are showing Casablanca..... sigh.....

[Ticket details here.](#)

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There is a job on offer at North Edinburgh Arts as a cafe assistant. Is this the job for you? More details [here](#).



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If you are reading this article on paper and would like to visit the website then scan the QR code above with a smartphone or tablet and you will be taken straight there.

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# Seeing Visions and Hearing Voices: Richard Holloway at the Edinburgh International Book Festival



Image (c) Colin Hattersley


Richard Holloway is 81 years old and looks about 60. Nevertheless, the author, ex-Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh, former chairman of the **Scottish Arts Council** and champion of causes from the **Big Orchestra** to **LGBT rights** is not too bothered about death – and that's not because he expects anything much on the other side:

‘I neither expect nor want life after death...all the prospectuses I've read are boring.’

He is, however, concerned about the meaning of the life he still has. Religion is, for him, ‘an unresolved lifelong obsession’; unlike his famous dog **Daisy**, he can't just ‘be’, can't avoid the search for meaning or what he calls his fascination with the *being of being*. If the world came from nothing and will eventually return to it, does our extraordinary experience of the universe also mean nothing? What about all the beauty, nature, art, music and poetry we see around us? ‘We have dreamed such dreams’.



At the **Edinburgh International Book Festival** on Tuesday, Richard discussed his thoughts – and he is at pains to stress that that's all they are, he has no answers to give us – with **Andrew Franklin**. At the coalface of the search for meaning, he says, are the prophets – from **Mohammed** in his cave to **Moses** in Sinai and **Pascal** with the *Memorial* (his record of a transcendent experience) sewn into his coat; stories of people who claim to have heard the voice of God litter history, so what are we to make of these alleged first-hand experiences?

These days people who claim to hear voices are more likely  to be medicalised than encouraged to start new religions. But what if – as **William James** suggests in ***Varieties of Religious Experience*** (1902) – some people really can make contact with the intelligence behind the universe? Do we dismiss them as nutters or do we believe everything they say? Well neither, says Richard – in fact, extremism is really what this talk is all about, and it's something that hurts him profoundly. Conservative religion (of any brand) 'locks us

into a static understanding of history' in its certainty that it is right. Opposition to the ordination of women and to LGBT rights are examples of some parts of the church clinging to its self-made rules; a circular argument that justifies itself by reference to itself.

Religions, says Richard, create structures for comfort but also for power and control; he doesn't like anything or anybody who thinks they're right and all the others are wrong. Prophets through the ages have been killed because they challenged the status quo, the moral certainty of people who think they've got the answer.

So just how do you justify your own moral code then? asks Andrew – what makes you know that gay marriage, for example, is right? Surely you need some kind of moral code – you probably wouldn't support paedophile marriage, would you? (He wouldn't.) For Richard, the only criteria for a moral norm are kindness, a bringing of all people into the human relationship, 'Above all, do no harm'. Moralists may complicate it but 'It's just common sense'. Nevertheless, he struggles to accept the atheist's view that there is nothing transcendent beyond ourselves, seeing it as another version of false certainty;


'It hurts me that this extraordinary experience of the universe could mean nothing...I cannot endure it and I cannot resolve it.'

He clings on to 'what little shreds of religion I have left'.

✗ What then, says Andrew, is the difference between the schizophrenic and the true prophet? Richard has just been chairing **Andrew Scull's** session on ***A History of Insanity***; Scull suggests that insanity is part of the human condition and that artistic genius is very close to madness, although there's no doubting it can also be very painful. Richard's view is that whilst only prophets have direct experience of

hearing a voice, even they can get it wrong, can misunderstand what they hear just as much as we can. We need to be stronger in interrogating them, to treat what people say with wariness ('stay on tiptoe'), but not simply to reduce it to pathology;

'People who do 'neat' turn into fundamentalist believers or fundamental atheists; neither is very interesting'.

It is thinking of what has come from nothingness – the  'mindblowing' beauty of the world – that keeps Richard on the edge of believing that there is some sort of meaning; he lives in 'a permanent passionate state of unknowing'. He has had 'one or two' mystical moments himself, but doesn't base his arguments on them. He's glad religion is still around, but thinks it needs to be purged, and that it's at its best when it's weak. He's very interested in the mystic tradition, in people like the **Sufis** who experience God without talking about it, and are indeed suspicious of talk.

'The heart of religion is silence'

He even wonders whether it might do the church good to take a long sabbatical from all language and just get on with looking after the poor and challenging the corrupt systems of the world.

Living with a critical faculty and an ability for abandonment has, says Richard, led him to lead 'a very uncomfortable life', but if he has any advice for us at all it is to stay open to change, development, new ideas;

'Hold on to all the craziness; in its most creative form it can give you flashes of insight and compassion, and it leads people all over the world to care for the poor and to challenge oppression.'

And with that he is off, bounding away (apparently Daisy can no longer keep up – I have sympathy) to sign books, speak to people and continue his energetic exploration of what it means

to be human. Richard Holloway may have serious doubts about religion, but few can doubt the essential humanity of this compassionate, thoughtful man.

