

# Renewed appeal to trace missing teenager



Police are still appealing for information to help trace a 15-year-old boy reported missing from the Gracemount area.

Thomas Wilson was last seen on Friday, February 13, at around 6pm, walking towards Cameron Toll.

The teenager has links to the Drylaw area of Edinburgh and may have made his way towards there. He also has links to the Niddrie/Craigmillar area.

Officers are urging anyone who can assist with their enquiries to come forward.

Thomas is described as white, 5ft 6inches tall with a medium build and short dark brown hair. He was last seen wearing a grey hooded top with a blue logo, grey tracksuit trousers, a white t-shirt and a silver watch.

Inspector Euan Smith said: "We are still concerned for Thomas's welfare and urge anyone who thinks they may have seen him to contact us."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Police Scotland as soon as possible on 101

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## Edinburgh man admits

# explosives offences



A man has admitted possessing explosive substances after a significant number of items were found in two properties in Edinburgh last year.

Faris Al-Khori, aged 62 has today, Thursday 26 February 2015, pleaded guilty under the Explosive Substances Act 1883, Section 4, following the recovery of material from two flats in Fidra Court and Persevere Court in April 2014.

The items were discovered following a fire in a communal area of Fidra Court flats on Friday 18 April 2014. Both flat complexes were evacuated whilst suspect items were recovered by army explosives experts.

Detective Superintendent David Gordon, who led the investigation said: "This was a significant and complex inquiry for Police Scotland, working with our partners from the outset to safely deal with the volatile items that were being stored, and to seek to establish Al-Khori's motives for keeping them. Extensive inquiries both nationally and internationally were carried out, which did not identify any link to terrorism or extremism. We are satisfied there is no immediate threat to the community.

"Counter terrorism is one of Police Scotland's highest priorities, and whilst Al-Khori has no such known links we will always treat all information received with the utmost importance where any risk to the public is identified. Members of the public can call 101 or the anti terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

"We welcome the conviction at the High Court today and await sentencing."

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# Dylan McGeouch looks forward to Alloa game



Dylan McGeouch believes that the Hibs' squad are far stronger and more confident than they were when they lost to Alloa Athletic at Recreation Park earlier in the season.

The on-loan midfielder who joined the club from Celtic has been in sparkling form alongside his long time pal Scott Allan who also lives in Glasgow. The pair travel together and have known each other from the international scene. Their form has been one of the highlights of the season and supporters are hoping that McGeouch will move to Easter Road should Celtic fail to extend his contract.

The Parkhead club recently signed two midfielders from Dundee United which could mean that McGeouch has dropped even further down the pecking order and could therefore be available in the summer.

His form is likely to attract the attention of other clubs, but he is clearly enjoying his time in Edinburgh and working under Alan Stubbs.

McGeouch told Hibernian TV ahead of this weekend's fixture: "I think Alloa is a difficult place to go with the astroturf and everything, but as every game goes by we are getting stronger as a group.

"The manager has added a few new players to the squad too and everyone is pushing each other for places.

"I had a wee set-back through injury, so to be able to get

back into the team and get a run of games has been great.

“We’ve had a few positive results and decent wins, so hopefully we can keep that run going until the end of the season and I can play a part in it.”

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## Swan rescued from tree in East Lothian



A swan is recovering following a dramatic rescue involving the Scottish SPCA and the fire service in East Lothian.

Scotland’s animal welfare charity was alerted on Wednesday (25 February) after a member of the public spotted the bird trapped in branches in Haddington.

The swan is now receiving treatment at the Royal Dick Veterinary School in Edinburgh.



Animal Rescue Officer Fiona Thorburn said, “The swan was about 16ft up the tree and clearly in distress. It’s possible he had been up there overnight as it wasn’t until early on Wednesday morning he was discovered.

“The firefighters were able to get the bird to safety using a rope pulley system and I examined him. Thankfully, he had no obvious injuries other than being quite weak.

“It’s likely the swan was looking for somewhere to land and

was blown off course due to the severe winds.

“We would like to express our sincere thanks to the fire and rescue service who were absolutely brilliant throughout the operation.

“It’s very unlikely the swan would have been able to free himself had we not been able to help him.

“Hopefully we’ll soon be able to release him back into the wild where he belongs.

“This is the second time this week firefighters have helped us to save a swan after another one became trapped on Monday. Luckily both swans are recovering well from their ordeals.”

Anyone who discovers an injured or distressed wild animal should call the Scottish SPCA Animal Helpline on 03000 999 999.

Photos by David Morgan

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## Warning after deer mauled by dogs in Blackford area



The Scottish SPCA is appealing for information after two dogs mauled a deer in Edinburgh.

Scotland’s animal welfare charity was alerted on Tuesday after a member of the public witnessed two dogs attacking the animal in a field near Blackford Glen Road.

Animal Rescue Officer Fiona Thorburn said, “When I arrived the

deer was in a terrible state, the bite marks were awful and you could see the muscle had been ripped off her back legs. Sadly, the deer was in severe pain and wouldn't have recovered so the most humane thing to do was to put her to sleep.

"Passers-by described the dogs as two Jack Russell types who were off their leads.

"It is extremely worrying that these two dogs were able to carry out this attack. It could be that they were being walked by their owner who lost control of them.

"Unfortunately we have been unable to trace the owner but we are hopeful someone in the area may have information.

"We always advise dog walkers to take extra care when they are in areas with wildlife. In this instance, an animal has lost its life because these dogs were not under their owner's control."

Anyone with information relating to the attack should contact the Scottish SPCA Animal Helpline on 03000 999 999

Photo by Scottish SPCA

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## Two men arrested after drugs valued at £45k seized in capital



Two men have been arrested and charged after police in Edinburgh recovered a large quantity of drugs and cash during

a day of enforcement in the Capital.

Officers from the Organised Crime Counter Terrorism Unit carried out searches at addresses in the city yesterday as part of an intelligence-led operation.

During a search of a home in Bavelaw Road £16,000 of cash was seized along with evidence of drug packaging.

Further activity was undertaken at a commercial property in Home Street where 28 mature cannabis plants and around 3kg of herbal matter were found inside.

The recovered drugs have a potential street value of £45,000.

The men, aged 31 and 33 have been charged with drugs and serious and organised crime offences and are scheduled to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today (Thursday).

Detective Inspector Paul Grainger said: "Once again, vital intelligence from our communities has resulted in large quantities of drugs and cash being seized.

"Drugs and the proceeds of criminal activity can cause untold harm to our communities and Police Scotland is committed to tackling serious organised crime and associated offences.

"We will continue to act on information from the public to bring those responsible to justice.

"Anyone who wishes to report drug crime or any other illegal activity can do so by contacting 101 or making an anonymous call to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

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# Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) appoints new head of Service Delivery for the East of Scotland.



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has appointed John Miller as head of Service Delivery for the East of Scotland.

As the new Deputy Assistant Chief Officer he will oversee the Local Senior Officers (LSO's) who work with individual Local Authorities and community partners to maintain dedicated local fire and rescue services across the area.

He began his Fire Service career in 1992 and said: "I'm delighted to have been given this opportunity and I look forward to working with colleagues in the East, including our fire board members, to help shape and deliver the best possible service to the communities in the East of Scotland.

"We work alongside various partners to ensure the best deployment of local frontline services and we have a commitment to build on the positive outcomes that have already been delivered through the antecedent fire and rescue services. In particular we will continue to focus on our prevention activities whilst ensuring an operational response where required.

"My role is to promote consistency and make sure we continue to deliver the excellent fire and rescue services that the public expect and deserve."

DACO Miller, who was the former LSO for North Lanarkshire, lives in Motherwell and has served 22 years in the service.



He has had a number of national roles during his career including Road Safety with the Chief Fire Officer's Association in Scotland (CFOAS) and a four year period in Fire Investigation where he helped draft the National Occupational Standards. He was also the secretary of the Business Engagement Forum where he worked closely with key partners to help develop a national business plan.

He added: "I've been taken out my comfort zone and I'm looking forward to the challenges that come with this new role. I'm very fortunate in that I'm surrounded by a range of expertise across the east which I'm sure will be a great benefit to me.

"I'll be out and about meeting staff and finding out what's important to them during what is a huge period of change."

His passion lies within Community Safety and with that he would like to remind everyone of the SFRS FREE home fire safety visits.

"Our visits are designed to be a straightforward process for householders, the visits are easy to arrange and will be conducted at a time suitable for the individual.

"They only take around half an hour to complete and see local crews assess risks before providing advice to householders and families. The crews also fit smoke alarms where needed.

"Encourage those around you to get a free home fire safety visit. Call the SFRS freephone number 0800 0731 999 or text 'FIRE' to 80800. You can find out more by visiting [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk) or by contacting your local fire station."

Photo courtesy of SFRS

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# Rugby – Finn Russell's Ban Upheld

The appeal of Scotland stand-off Finn Russell was heard today at London Heathrow before an independent Six Nations Appeal Committee, chaired by Christopher Quinlan QC (England), together with Jean-Noel Couraud (France) and Mike Rafter (England).



How it should  
have been  
done.

The Scotland outside half appealed against the finding by an independent Six Nations Disciplinary Committee that he had committed an act of foul play under law 10.4(i) of World Rugby's laws of the game in the RBS 6 Nations match between Scotland and Wales on 15 February 2015 and consequently given a two-week suspension. The Appeal Committee, having considered submissions on behalf of the player and on behalf of the Six Nations Disciplinary Officer, dismissed the appeal with the result that the original sanction of a two-week suspension stands, with Finn Russell able to return to play on 2 March 2015.

**Law 10.4(i):** Tackling the jumper in the air. A player must not tackle nor tap, push or pull the foot or feet of an opponent jumping for the ball in a lineout or in open play.

*Image – John Preece*

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# Five things you need to know today



**Bridge 8 Hub**

**At the National Museum of Scotland**

**Dragon Boat Challenge**

**Drumbrae Employment Fair**

**Upcycling this Saturday**



Our chums at Bridge 8 Hub have had good news this week:

“We have been granted planning consent from Edinburgh Council to build Edinburgh’s First Canal Based Outdoor Activity Hub!”

[Bridge 8 Hub](#) is run by Sean Barry out at Wester Hailes where he offers courses in everything from canoeing to archery right by the Union Canal.



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This week marks the last chance to see *Indian Encounters* at the National Museum of Scotland.

The exhibition, which finishes this Sunday (1 March) showcases a newly commissioned painting, *Casualty of War: A Portrait of Maharaja Duleep Singh*, by renowned contemporary British artists The Singh Twins. Alongside the commission, beautifully crafted 19<sup>th</sup> century jewellery and intricate Indian miniature style paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which once represented

the wealth and status of their owners Maharaja Duleep Singh and Captain Archibald Swinton, are displayed.

*Indian Encounters* explores British-Indian relations through the lives of these two men who had very different experiences of British rule in India.

The Scot, Archibald Swinton, served in the East India Company's army at the beginning of its military expansion. During his time in Bengal, Swinton collected traditional Indian miniature paintings, a selection of which is on display in the exhibition.

Duleep Singh became the first resident Sikh in Britain after he, at the young age of 10, had to surrender the Sikh Punjab and all his treasures to the East India Company. During his exile in Britain, he was a favourite of Queen Victoria who often invited him to Buckingham Palace when he was a young man and later became the godmother to several of his children. For a time he lived in Scotland where he became affectionately known as the Black Prince of Perthshire. The exhibition displays treasures and jewellery once worn by him.

Duleep Singh's jewellery and personal belongings have been reinterpreted by The Singh Twins in *Casualty of War*, a painting commissioned by National Museums Scotland, with financial support from British Council Scotland.

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The Dragon Boat Regatta organised by Leith Rotary, Ocean Terminal, Barnardos, and the Retail Trust, has become one of the most exciting and colourful events in the calendar.

The call now goes out to teams to enter and gather sponsorship money for the event.

The Regatta will be held on 7 June 2015 at Ocean Terminal and organisers are hoping that this year's response will exceed

our spectacular record of 28 teams who helped to raise over £50,000 for local and national charities.

Cron MacKay, from Leith Rotary said,

‘This is a huge event for Leith, one of the most fun ways of raising money that we can think of. It’s always been popular with the participants and with the hundreds of spectators and supporters who crowd the harbour to cheer on their team.

‘We’re also delighted to be bringing together the partners in the event – Ocean Terminal, the Retail Trust and Barnardos. We are very grateful for their support and enthusiasm for the Regatta.

‘We know that the community won’t let us down and that more teams than ever will take to the water in June. We know that the spectators will have as much fun as the participants. And we also know that dozens of good causes all across the country will benefit from the huge spirit of generosity that surrounds this event.’

Michelle McLeod Deputy Centre Manager at Ocean Terminal added,

‘The Dragonboat Regatta is one of our biggest days of the year at Ocean Terminal. We’re delighted to be working with our partners on this huge fund-raising spectacle. Race-Day creates an excitement that you have to experience. Whether you are out on the water or enjoying the onshore entertainments it’s a fabulous day out for everyone. We hope that this year even more teams will want to be part of the action. Time to get paddling!’

Application forms are available at [www.leithdragonboats.com](http://www.leithdragonboats.com)

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[Drumbrae Library Hub](#) will host an employment fair on **Tuesday**

**3rd March** aimed at those looking for work, wanting to improve their skill set or seeking advice on volunteering opportunities. Put it in your diary now!

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South West Neighbourhood are organising a free event this Saturday:

*Come to our free event on Saturday 7 March in Gorgie Dalry Parish Church, 12.30pm to 4.30 pm where you can donate unwanted items, such as clothes, books and small household objects, and swap them for free from other people's donations. (We won't be able to accept electrical items, broken items or mattresses). Or come along to one of the workshops to pick up some new skills and tips:*

- *Computer repair workshop – an expert technician from Remade in Edinburgh will be on hand to diagnose and fix problems with laptops, tablets or phones. Bring along your laptop for a health check. From 12.30pm to 4.30 pm.*

- *Sewing workshop – an expert crafter from Remade in Edinburgh will demonstrate sewing machine basics – how to thread, adjust the stitch size, sample simple stitches, and give you the opportunity to try it out. From 12.30pm to 4.30 pm.*

- *Furniture upcycling demonstration – an expert from Upcycled World will show you how to use various techniques to give furniture a new lease of life. From 1.30 pm to 3.30pm.*

*The event will be at Gorgie Dalry Parish Church, 190 -192 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 2NX on Saturday 7 March from 12.30pm to 4.30 pm.*

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

[mc4wp\_form]



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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## Thursday in Edinburgh – What's On Today



**Ecumenical Friends at St John's: Fiona Bennett** speaks on **The Story of Augustine United Church**. 1-2.30pm, [St John's Church](#), Princes Street (please note change of venue and time for this week). £1.50 per person: bring your own packed lunch, tea and coffee provided. These events are organised by Edinburgh City Centre Churches TOGETHER.



**Wester Hailes Wildlife Walk:** a two-hour fully guided flat walk, with binoculars provided and tea and coffee afterwards. Meet at 10.30am at [Wester Hailes Library](#), 1 Westside Plaza.



**Big Scream Club:** for parents and carers with a baby under 12 months. Membership costs £5, lasts until the baby's first birthday and allows you to buy tickets for these screenings at Picturehouse Member's prices (babies admitted free). Only customers with babies will be admitted. Today: ***The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*** (PG). 10am, [Cameo](#), Home Street.



**iWomen Scotland:** a group supporting ethnic minority women with sight loss. Come along, meet the group, find out more about how you can get involved, and share your ideas with the members over lunch. 1pm, **RNIB Scotland, 12-14 Hillside Crescent**. For more information please contact [enquiries@iwomenscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@iwomenscotland.org) or call 0131 474 6179. The group's website can be found [here](#).



**Edinburgh College of Art Thursday Research Seminar Series – Please Touch: Artists in the Archive.** Chaired by **Kirstie Meehan**, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and followed by drinks served in the Common Room of Minto House. 5-5.15pm, Lecture Room 1, [Minto House](#), 20-22 Chambers Street. Free and open to all.



**Guilty As Sin:** 'foot-tapping tunes'. 9pm, [The Old Chain Pier](#), Trinity Crescent.

**Mayfield Salisbury Thursday Club:** **Donald Miller** will talk about **Pre-Colombian Cities**. 2pm, [Mayfield Salisbury Church Hall](#), West Mayfield. Everyone very welcome; please contact Florence Smith on 0131 663 1234 for more information.



**Blast Radius:** Edinburgh-based author **RL McKinney** launches her debut novel, which follows Sean McNicol as he leaves the Marines in Afghanistan to return home, bringing the ghost of his best friend Mitch and memories of their traumatic experiences. 'McKinney sensitively handles mental health issues, and the struggle for identity for those who have endured conflict'. 6.30pm, [Looking Glass Books](#), 36 Simpson Loan. Free but booking is required via [eventbrite](#) – or drop into the shop, email [hello@lookingglassbooks.com](mailto:hello@lookingglassbooks.com) or phone them on 0131 229 2902.





**Moon Hop:** performances from some of the UK's most exciting musicians, plus sets from the Moon Hop DJs and their genre-defying record collection...expect Screammers, Bangers and Cosmic Synths. This month featuring **Lomond Campbell, River of Slime, Hamish Hawk** and **Jo Foster**. 8pm-1am, [Henry's Cellar Bar](#), Morrison Street. £3.



**North Edinburgh Arts: Teen Scream – your local youth magazine.** If you are aged 10-18 years and you'd like to learn more about **graffiti, art, creative writing, digital layout, photography** and **interviewing skills**, come along to these weekly sessions, which start TODAY! 3.15-4.45pm, [Muirhouse Library](#), 15a Pennywell Road. Snack provided too! For more information call 0131 529 5528.



**LGBT History Month Celebration Event** hosted by **Edinburgh & Lothian Regional Equality Council, LGBT Youth Scotland** and **Leith Academy** in collaboration with **Lothian LGBT Development Group**. Featuring keynote speakers, multicultural performances, dances and live music, this family-friendly evening will also be an opportunity to hear how improved equalities can support pupils and students to achieve. Light refreshments will be served. 5.30-8pm, [Leith Academy](#), 20 Academy Park. All welcome: free, but please book online [here](#). Read The Edinburgh Reporter's round-up of LGBT History Month [here](#).



**Scotland-Russia Forum: *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible*.** Author, documentary producer and Edinburgh graduate **Peter Pomerantsev**, who worked for nine years in Moscow, has written extensively about how Putin's Russia has reinvented

propaganda – and what the West should do about it. He is currently a senior fellow at the **Legatum Institute**, London. Peter's book, *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible*, was released in the USA in November 2014 and will be published this month in the UK; it has just been **Radio 4's Book of the Week**. The New York Times described it as 'dazzling and sparkling' while **PJ O'Rourke** called it 'the strangest book of note I have ever read...a calm and incisive report on the current state of affairs in Russia. Yet it reads like a comedy of manners, a dark and grotesque comedy of manners....' Peter will discuss his book and the activities and role of the Russian media – inside and outside Russia – with **Martin Dewhirst** former lecturer in Russian and now Honorary Research Fellow, at the University of Glasgow. There will be light refreshments and an opportunity to purchase the book after the talk. 7pm, Seminar Room 1/2, [Chrystal Macmillan Building](#), University of Edinburgh, George Square. Free but donations to the Scotland-Russia Forum's funds much appreciated.



**Kirkliston Community Centre Ukelele Group!** A new group for adults, starting tonight. Please contact the Centre for more details. 8-9pm, [Kirkliston Community Centre](#), 16-18 Queensferry Road.



**Play Talk Read!** The Play Talk Read bus is coming to Ratho Library today! For pre-school children and their parents/carers. Hop on board to read stories, sing songs, play games and have fun. It's free! 10am-1pm and 2-4pm, [Ratho Library](#), School Wynd.



**Writers Return: The British Council** presents four celebrated authors with suitcases full of travelling experiences, who

will reflect on how travel can inspire and inform new writing. Novelist and playwright **Alan Bissett**, novelist **Anne Donovan** and poets **William Letford** and **Ryan Van Winkle** will tell stories about their excursions, from Iraq to Pakistan; they will read poems and fiction, and explore the unexpected narratives they uncovered along the way. The British Council Writers Return series is a programme that sees writers recently back from overseas share new work inspired by their trips abroad, talk about where they are going, where they have been, and how this informs their writing. For ages 16+. 6.30-7.30pm, Main Hall, [Summerhall](#), 1 Summerhall. Free tickets can be booked via eventbrite [here](#).



**Quiz Night:** a mix of music, film and general knowledge – from science to celebrities ‘a proper pub quiz with lots of smiles and laughs!’ Maximum of 6 per team. 8pm tonight and every Thursday, [The Skylark](#), 241/243 Portobello High Street. Free entry with prizes! Food is served until 9pm.



**Babar Luck:** ‘one of the most refreshing and unique performers around today’ – from rock to reggae, ska and sci-fi folk, plus support from **Small Feet**, **Little Toes** and **Grant McNeil**. 7pm, [Forest Cafe](#), Lauriston Place. Free: BYOB (corkage applies).

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## East Coast FM brings 60's music legends to Haddington



Community radio station East Coast FM has teamed up with 60's legends The Animals and The Troggs as part of fund raising efforts to support the local broadcasting service.

The bands will appear live at the Corn Exchange in Haddington on Saturday 4 April 2015 and will play with members of their original line up in a night that promises to bring back fond memories and create many more.

The Animals were the second British band to top the American charts after The Beatles with the now multi-million selling and legendary anthem, 'House of the Rising Sun'. The band subsequently achieved over twenty global Top Ten hit records, many of which gained the Number One slot in various parts of the world. In Britain alone, the band had no less than twelve chart entries. The Animals were the first British band to tour Poland and Japan.

The Troggs also had a number of hits in the United Kingdom and the United States including the U.S. chart-topper "Wild Thing", "With a Girl Like You" and "Love Is All Around", all of which sold over 1 million copies.] "Wild Thing" is ranked #257 on the Rolling Stone magazine's list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.



Ian Robertson, Station Manager at ECFM said, "We are incredibly excited to have these two legendary bands coming to Haddington for one night only. There are people coming from all parts of Scotland for this, gigs like this don't come along very often."

This celebration of music from the 60s and beyond takes place over the Easter bank holiday weekend. Listeners of East Coast FM and supporters of the station are being encouraged to buy tickets earlier for the event before they sell out.

Tickets are £20 and available from Ticket Scotland, ECFM and

# **Dnipro kids charity worker Ira Polyashova seriously ill with pancreatic cancer**



When Hibs visited Dnipropetrovsk in European competition in 2005, many fans took the time and trouble to visit a local children's sanatorium, and were so moved by what they saw that a group of supporters determined that Hibs' fans would do all they could to help and began to fund raise.

For 10 years supporters have run the Dnipro Kids Appeal, led by Stevie Carr, raising tens of thousands of pounds to support children in Dnipro. Their efforts provide equipment, toys, and much needed and morale boosting trips for the children. Stevie, as the charity's Chairman, and the others continue to be magnificent ambassadors for the club, however their work would not have been possible without the efforts of the people "on the ground."

Ira Polyashova has worked with the charity since the very start, and has been key to its many successes, but this week everyone connected to the charity were devastated to hear that Ira herself is now extremely ill.

Stevie said: "Last month I was informed by Ira that she has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The outlook is not very good and the doctors have suggested that she may only have a few months left. This is especially difficult to take for us

involved with Dnipro Kids as Ira has been a part of Dnipro Kids since our very first visit in 2005, where she acted as translator during the handing over of gifts to the children at the TB Sanatorium.

“Since that day she has been an integral part of the charity, and the organiser for so many events and tasks in Dnipropetrovsk. She has been a tower of strength for us, and often had to stand up to the red-tape and bureaucracy to ensure nothing got in the way of organising trips and events for the kids.

It has been down to Ira that many sponsored kids have had so many enjoyable excursions and birthday trips over the years. Ira has been at the heart of the planning and organisation of the many trips and birthday events that have been organised, right down to the shopping required to ensure that each child received the exact birthday gift that they wanted.

The Dnipro Kids committee are fully committed to supporting Ira during such a difficult time, and will assist her in whatever way we can.”

The committee has established a justgiving page after receiving messages asking how Ira can be supported through this enormously difficult time in a country where medical help falls far short of the support that we enjoy in the UK, and where huge stress is being placed on hospitals and medical facilities by the country’s ongoing troubles.

Anyone wishing to help should visit.

[www.justgiving.com/dnipro-ira](http://www.justgiving.com/dnipro-ira)

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# First Minister pledges increasing funding for childcare

The First Minister the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon has promised that there will be twice as much spent on free nursery places, early learning and childcare over the term of the next Parliament.

In a wide-ranging education speech at the David Hume Institute in Edinburgh, Ms Sturgeon laid out the Scottish Government's ambition to see every child have the educational opportunities that she benefitted from.



During her address, the First Minister set out the contribution education makes to tackling inequality and growing the economy, focusing on the importance of all children, no matter their background, having the best opportunities through early learning and childcare, strong school education and wider access to higher education.

In a move she described as “one of the best investments any government can possibly make”, she confirmed that free early learning and childcare provision would rise to 30 hours per week, matching the time children spend each week in primary school, by the end of the next Parliament.

Committing to funding this expansion, she pledged that by 2019/20 annual revenue spend on early learning and childcare will have increased from an anticipated £439 million this year to around £880 million.

The First Minister said:

“Today I want to highlight some of the areas where we can and

must do better. In particular, I want to focus on how inequality in attainment – starting in the very early years, and persisting into adulthood – is weakening our society, holding back our economy, and constraining the life chances of too many of our fellow citizens.

“Early Learning and childcare promotes opportunity twice over. It enables parents to enter the workforce now and provide a better standard of living for their children, and it helps all children to make the most of their potential later in life. It’s one of the best investments any government can possibly make.

“In my view, it is central to any enlightened view of what modern Scotland should look like and that is why it is such a driving priority of my government. That’s why I can confirm today my intention that spending on early learning and care will double over the course of the next parliament.

“That’s in addition to the extra capital spending we will provide. The great capital investment project of this parliament is the Queensferry Crossing. If I am re-elected as First Minister next year, I intend that the great infrastructure project of the next parliament will be perhaps less visible, but arguably even more transformational.

“It will be the investment in care and learning facilities needed to ensure our early years provision matches our primary school provision. These facilities will create a bridge to a better future for children and families across the country.”

Addressing the need to widen access to university Ms Sturgeon said:

“When I became First Minister, I set out the clear ambition that a child born today in one of our most deprived communities should, by the time he or she leaves school, have the same chance of going to university as a child born in one of our least deprived communities.



“And let me stress that – the same chance. Not just a better chance than they have today. But the same chance as anyone else. In other words, where you are born and brought up and your parents’ circumstances will not be the driver of how likely you are to go to university.

“But to ensure we’re doing everything we can, as early as we can, we are establishing a Commission on Widening Access. The Commission will propose milestones, measure progress, and identify improvements. It will be central to ensuring that our ambition of equal access within a generation becomes a reality.

“It is part of a far broader approach to post-school learning. After all, the key test we need to apply is not whether learning takes place in college, at work or in university. It’s whether the learning is relevant, engaging and widens people’s opportunities.

“So since 2007 we’ve focused colleges on promoting skills which help people to work, and which support economic growth. The number of students gaining recognised qualifications has increased by a third in the last 5 years.”

The First Minister concluded:

“So from supporting mothers in the early stages of pregnancy, to helping people gain their first experience of work, this government is committed to promoting opportunities and reducing inequalities. That’s not something that Government, schools, colleges and universities can do on our own – although our role is hugely important. It’s got to be part of a shared endeavour.

“I want Scotland to be a land of opportunity – a country where every individual, regardless of background or race or gender, gets the chance to fulfil his or her potential. Can that be achieved? Yes, I believe it can and education is the key.

“The removal of obstructions to education, and the opening up of new opportunities, has been the focus of many of the major initiatives of my first 100 days. It is a subject which will receive sustained attention for as long as my government holds office. Because education is not just part of our sense of ourselves, it’s the key to a better future for young people growing up in Scotland today. And it is at the heart of the fairer, more prosperous Scotland, that all of us seek to build.”

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## Two plead guilty to attempted murder in West Pilton



Gary Reid (19) (pictured) and James Hogg (24) have today both pleaded guilty at the High Court in Glasgow to the attempted murder of Jie Yu, who was attacked in West Pilton Park on the evening of Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Hogg pleaded guilty to attempted murder, while Reid pleaded guilty to attempted murder with racial aggravation.

Reid was arrested and charged the next day, while Hogg was arrested in the west of Scotland the following week.

Mr Yu was treated at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and St John’s Hospital for ten days. He continues to recover at home.

In the days following the attack, Police Scotland listened to the concerns of local residents and launched, with our partners in Edinburgh City Council, Stronger North, an initiative tackling anti-social behaviour in the North

Edinburgh area.

Detective Inspector David Pinkney said: “This was a brutal attack on a well liked and regarded member of the West Pilton community.

“Officers worked quickly in order to bring Reid and Hogg to justice for their crimes. Now that Gary Reid and James Hogg have pleaded guilty, I hope Jie and his family can move on from this ordeal.”

Community Inspector David Happs said: “This was an incident that shocked residents in the West Pilton community and led to the launching of Stronger North.

“This is an ongoing initiative, which has seen positive changes in the local area. While there is still work to do, we are committed to working with our partners to create and maintain a better community for the people of North Edinburgh.”

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## **Police warning about fraudulent workmen after incident in Clermiston**



Police are advising people to be vigilant after fraudulent workmen targeted an elderly resident in the Clermiston area of the city.

On the morning of Monday, February 23, three men attended a 79-year-old woman’s address and offered to carry out, what

they claimed to be, essential roof maintenance.

The victim later handed over a four-figure sum of cash before the suspects requested more money and went with her to the bank. Thanks to the vigilance of staff there, the suspects were unable to obtain any more money.

The first suspect is described as white, late twenties, 5ft 2inches tall, with a slim build and an Edinburgh accent. He had dark hair, which was swept to the side, and was clean-shaven. He was wearing a black or navy blue jacket with a collar and a tie.

The second suspect is described as white, in his thirties, 5ft 8inches to 6ft tall, with a heavy build. He had long side burns, fairish hair and blue/grey eyes. He was wearing navy dungarees, work boots, a navy parka, black beanie hat and was a smoker.

The third male is described as white, late thirties, and 5ft 6inches tall. He was unshaven with a thin face, was missing teeth from the sides, and had salt and pepper coloured hair. He was wearing a navy boiler suit and was also a smoker.

Officers are now urging the public to be wary of individuals who approach a property claiming that work needs to be done, and to never allow cold callers into your home.

If you are unsure of the intentions or identity of a caller and feel uncomfortable, intimidated or suspicious, please call Police Scotland on 101.

Detective Inspector Stuart Harkness said: "This was a despicable crime which targeted a vulnerable member of our community

"We have been working with the local banking industry to raise awareness of this type of crime and it has, on at least three recent occasions, prevented monies from being withdrawn by

elderly customers targeted by fraud.

“Given that there have been a number of similar incidents in the city, I am appealing to anyone with elderly neighbours or relatives to be especially observant in relation to potential bogus callers.”

If you have been the victim of fraudulent workman, or have further information about this incident or these suspects, please contact Police Scotland on 101, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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## Further appeal to trace missing Raymond Paterson



Police are keen to trace an Edinburgh man who has not been seen since the weekend.

Raymond Paterson (63) was last seen on Saturday (February 21) at around 2.30pm in Glasgow Queen Street train station. He got off the Edinburgh train and walked towards the Dundas Street exit. He was also seen beforehand on Lothian Buses number 23.

Officers are continuing to carry out extensive enquiries and are appealing to the public for assistance in a bid to trace the man safe and well.

Raymond has strong links to the West Highlands and may have travelled by train to the to the Bridge of Orchy/Glencoe area using the West Coast rail line. Police are also keep an open mind to the possibility that he may be in the Glasgow area and asking city residents for assistance.

He is described as white, 5ft 8inches tall, slim to medium build with blue eyes, short grey hair and has a Glaswegian accent.

He was last seen wearing dark green khaki hip-length jacket and dark green combat-style khaki trousers. He was also wearing a black baseball-style hat and a long black scarf. He also uses a brown wooden walking stick.

Anyone who can assist officers with their efforts to trace Raymond is asked to contact police immediately.

Inspector Graeme Nisbet said: "Police are continuing with their enquiries in a bid to trace Raymond safe and well.

"I would ask anyone who has seen him to contact police on 101 or alternatively the charity, Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

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## Government invests £14.3 m in Wave Energy Scotland



Scotland's first wave energy technology development body Wave Energy Scotland will receive a total of £14.3 million over the next thirteen months, Energy Minister Fergus Ewing announced today.

'Wave Energy Scotland' awarded its first contract to a group of 12 former Pelamis employees, led by former Chief Executive of Pelamis Wave Power Richard Yemm, to capture the knowledge of the Pelamis technology development path for the wider benefit of the wave energy sector. [Pelamis went into administration](#) in November last year and earlier this month

the debts owed by the company were announced at £15m including The City of Edinburgh Council.

Speaking ahead of the RenewableUK conference in Edinburgh Mr Ewing said:

“I am very pleased to offer a significant budget of over £14 million to kick start Wave Energy Scotland. This is the biggest technology development programme the wave sector has ever seen.

“We have adopted a completely new approach to funding the sector. It is one that will foster collaborative research and development and will encourage technology developers to work with large engineering companies, academics and each other to address shared challenges. As Professor Stephen Salter, the founding father of wave energy, said, “Developers need to be in alliance with each other against the hazards of the sea rather than fighting one another for inadequate funding”.

“I am also very glad that we were able to deliver on our aspiration to capture the know-how from device development and retain some of the best brains working in marine energy in Scotland. Only last month, Highland and Islands Enterprise, on behalf of Wave Energy Scotland, successfully acquired the intellectual property and a range of physical assets previously owned by Pelamis. And yesterday, Wave Energy Scotland agreed to work with 12 former Pelamis employees to capture the impressive learning they have acquired on their technology development journey.”

Alex Paterson, Chief Executive of Highlands and Islands Enterprise said:

“I am delighted to have confirmation of the budget for Wave Energy Scotland today. This is an exciting time for the wave energy sector in Scotland and it offers a great opportunity to draw on the expertise which exists in industry and academia. The WES team don't underestimate the challenges which lie

ahead. But this is a chance not to be missed and the team is relishing being able to take a fresh approach to resolving the issues which so often hamper the early stages of the development of innovative technology.

“HIE’s head of Offshore Development, Tim Hurst, has been appointed interim director of Wave Energy Scotland. Using his experience across the energy sector, coupled with expert support from the Carbon Trust and Edinburgh University, Tim is leading the development of the operating model for WES. Good progress has been made and there will be announcements shortly on the first project calls and the recruitment of core staff for WES.”

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## **Hibernian Development Squad 7-0 Kilmarnock Development Squad**



Hibernian Development squad produced a magnificent 7-0 victory over Kilmarnock at Ainslie Pak last night which included hat tricks for Jason Cummings (pictured) and Martin Boyle.

Both strikers have been regulars in the first team but were dropped to the bench in Saturday’s 3-0 win over Dumbarton.

Although Head Coach Alan Stubbs’ decision to play Dominique Malonga and Franck Dja Djedje was vindicated as both scored in the win, the performance of Cummings and Boyle will give him a welcome headache for Saturday’s game against Alloa Athletic.

After the game, Head of Development Coaching Joe McBride told



the club website: "I thought the first 15 minutes was a really strange game, it was played at a frantic pace. I don't know if that was down to the cold and everybody was tearing about, but it was really frantic. It was in and out of possession for us, but the goal settled us down a bit.

"I still thought we could have moved the ball a bit better and kept possession a bit more, but with the two senior forwards up front we always looked dangerous when we got into the last third."

"Boyle and Cummings scored six goal between the two of them, so they had a lot to do with the outcome of the game. Overall I thought we done okay tonight, but those two made a big difference."

Members of the under-17 squad, Waugh and Jack Breen, both featured and the Development Coach was pleased with how both players performed in the game.

"It's the other end of the spectrum with Breen and Waugh as they are two under-17s players and I think Jack is only 15 years old. It's great for them to get experience like that. I thought Kevin looked assured when he came on and Jack showed some lovely touches."

Jordan Sinclair scored the other goal.

Hibernian under-20s: Kleton Perntreou, Aaron Dunsmore, Callum Crane, Neil Martyniuk, Jordan McGregor (Kevin Waugh, 55), Aaron Scott, Scott Martin, Jordan Sinclair, Jason Cummings (Taylor Hendry, 60), Martin Boyle (Jack Breen, 60), Duthie.  
Unused substitutes: Alan Combe, Oliver Shaw

Photo by John Preece

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# smART CRAFT from Wester Hailes at The Gallery on the Corner



Whilst all artists would say that they express themselves through their work, for the members of **smART CRAFT** art is a special way of communicating. smART Craft, which meets at WHALE Arts Agency in Wester Hailes, is a fully inclusive group for adults with mental health issues, learning disabilities or complex or additional support needs, led by a professional artist – and they are now staging their second exhibition at The Gallery on the Corner in Northumberland Street. Creative Release, says WHALE Arts Project Coordinator **Sarah Walker**, is ‘about expression, enjoyment and freedom. Each artist’s individuality is celebrated’.



Artist: Gavin Hendry

The exhibition unveils new work by the group, and is as diverse and colourful a show as you could wish to see. From **Gary Stewart’s** acrylics with their expressive streams of textured greens, blues, pinks and yellows to **Gavin Hendry’s** stunning clay tiles reminiscent of Egyptian hieroglyphics, the pieces on show are fascinating. Where else would you see a pom-pom rug?



This one, the creation of **Tommy Hall** and **John Wireko**, is both

a work of art and a covetable soft furnishing, complemented by the suspended orbs of *Pom Poms – A Collective*. The purples and greens of **Damien McLean's** acrylic echo the colours in the pom poms, but here they are blocks of colour, fans and triangles – the latter mountain-like, with dark pink strokes suggesting the evening sun, or perhaps even the descent of lava.



Artist: Miranda  
Pender

**Andrew Veitch's** contributions are two highly effective pen and acetate drawings of figures; both suggest an inner life and make the viewer wonder, whilst **Miranda Pender's** striking acrylic brings to mind Edvard Munch's iconic *The Scream*, as the figure covers its ears with its hands. **Sarah Maloney's** precise, almost architectural drawing is a complete contrast; it could be the bare bones of a car park – or even one of the futuristic buildings from *The Minority Report*.



Artist: Sarah Maloney

In **Gary Stewart's** pen and perspex work we again see waves of colour, but here there are sharp shapes which, on closer inspection, could be weird distorted faces or perhaps a strange, long-beaked bird. Two mixed media pieces by **Stewart Dalziel** bring to mind the work of Jean Dubuffet or even Jackson Pollock, whilst **Kevin Liston** has used orange, brown and white wools to create a most interesting, tapestry-like picture.



Another face is seen in **Betty Merritt's** acrylic piece, and again the viewer is drawn in, wanting to know more about the subject with its enigmatic, startled blue/black face. The bold primary colours of **Wai Yin Chan's** dazzling pen and pencil work

fill equally mysterious shapes – could they be ice creams? Drinks? Or faces? **Debbie Muir's** acrylic features vibrant pinks and oranges that appear almost tactile, like scrunched up tissue paper.



Artist: Wai Yin Chan

This small exhibition is more thought-provoking than many you might see by established artists; do call in to the gallery to see it. Gallery acting manager Paul Penrice rightly describes smART CRAFT as a 'creative fountain'.



Artist: Michael Dawson

The Gallery on the Corner is also showing some fabulous mixed media work by **Michael Dawson**, who describes his work as 'a universal experience filtered through my life' and neo-expressionist in style; '(it) is often mistaken as 'outsider' but I take that as a compliment'. A stunning landscape *Ardroil Bay, Harris* by celebrated Edinburgh artist and photographer **Erik Petrie**, 'an artist in the true sense of the word' (*Lux Lit*), has also just arrived and is for sale.



Ardroil Bay,  
Harris: Erik Petrie

**Creative Release** is at The Gallery on the Corner until 28th February 2015. The Gallery on the Corner is a commercial art gallery and studio providing a platform to exhibit and sell artwork produced by artists who have a physical or mental health condition: it was the first social firm developed by Autism Ventures Scotland, which was established by Autism Initiatives UK. AVS also runs the lovely **Cafe on the Corner** in Hill Street (which exhibits art too) and **The Hermitage**, a 9-

hole golf course and cafe in The Braid Hills.

**WHALE Arts Agency** is a community arts centre providing opportunities for the people of Wester Hailes and South West Edinburgh to access and take part in a range of arts activities.



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## The Edinburgh Reporter in conversation with Ghostpoet



Three albums into his already promising music career, Ghostpoet (aka Obaro Ejimiwe) has already won a Mercury Prize nomination, only losing out to PJ Harvey's *Let England Shake*.

Ghostpoet's new record, *Shedding Skin*, will be released on 2 March, and according to Ejimiwe, the album will be based more around guitar as well as a full band.

The new album is a sonic departure from Ghostpoet's previous two albums, *Peanut Butter Blues & Melancholy Jam* and *Same Say I So I Say Light*, which feature predominately electronic elements. It's part of the musician's way of evolving and developing.

"I feel with me, I've got to keep pushing myself," said Ejimiwe. "I've loved guitar music forever, and I've had bits of guitar, bass and live drums on previous records. So we try that as a parameter working with those instruments along with a bit of electronic, to see what can be produced."

With *Shedding Skin* acting like a different style of record to anything Ghostpoet has ever done, having a band has generated different ideas and has opened doors for experimentation. His four-piece band includes Joe Newman on guitar, John Calvert on bass and John Blease on drums.

"I made the demos with one-string guitar lines, same with bass and programmed drums," he said. "Having more voices made sure the experimentation was carried out. It wasn't a dictatorship as I'm a solo artist and that was reflected. It was good to work with talented artists, articulating ideas, trying different ideas and we were able to do it very quickly."

Ghostpoet's lyricism has always been the main topic for discussion surrounding his music. There is a certain noticeable melancholy in the solo artist's words. His previous album featured lyrics where the musician was in a 'dark place'. Now Ejimiwe has reverted back to more accessible lyrics. "I made demos before I approached the touring band, John, the bass player, produced it," said Obaro. "In my mind making an album lyrically was going back to the first album where I talked about the life outside my front window, people I interact with, general conversations, the feeling in the air. Last album was inward, this album is much more happier. Makes sense to talk about things again."

Obaro Ejimiwe is renowned for recruiting guest vocalists in his songs and usually fits the right vocalist to the right song. For *Shedding Skin*, Ghostpoet has collaborated with the likes of Nadine Shah, Etta Bond, Melanie De Biasio, Lucy Rose and Maximo Park's vocalist Paul Smith. "When I write lyrics initially, I write with particular singers in mind and ask if they want to get involved. I didn't know if Paul Smith of Maximo Park would do it. He has a distinctive vocal. I'm just privileged he wanted to work with me. He really took the song [Be Right Back, Moving House] to another level."

The increasing guitar focus of the album was mainly influenced

through the intensive listening to Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Interpol, The National and TV on the Radio, a band whom Ghostpoet was due to support on their UK tour before a cancellation prevented Obaro from supporting one of his idols.

“We prepared for the tour at the TV on the Radio gigs so now we’re just kicking our heels until the April dates,” said Ghostpoet. “I’m looking forward to playing live, along with the new album songs.”

*Ghostpoet plays Edinburgh’s Electric Circus on 2 April.*  
[Tickets can be purchased here.](#)

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## Edinburgh enjoying modest growth in demand for hotel rooms



A report from the tourism market research specialists LJ Research shows that there is some overall growth in Edinburgh and Glasgow although Aberdeen hoteliers continued to show decreasing profitability.

In Edinburgh room occupancy was just under 60%, a slight fall on last year, but demand for hotel rooms in Aberdeen and Glasgow, which also fell a little since 2014, enjoyed occupancy rates of 63.5%.

Sustained revenue growth has not gone unnoticed by hotel developers with various hotels such as De Vere Urban Village, Ibis Styles and Motel One having properties in the pipeline. In Edinburgh we have examples of all three groups in the city

centre and at Crewe Toll where the Urban Village is proving very popular with locals as well as visitors to the city.

Looking to the future, a noteworthy uptake in the number of bookings for the next three months was apparent with, in particular, signs of strong demand throughout February as forward bookings were 5% above those recorded a year ago.

Commenting on the positive forward bookings performance **Paul Wakefield, Director of Marketing and Commercial at Marketing Edinburgh** said: "Overall feedback from Marketing Edinburgh's members indicates bookings for February and March are performing well. Along with the mass appeal of the Six Nations bringing UK and international visitors to the city, Edinburgh is also hosting a number of high profile conventions in the coming weeks. For example, the Scottish Renewables Conference and Exhibition 2015 and National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) will bring in a combined 2,300 delegates to the city in March, generating an estimated £2.7m for the local economy and over 2,300 room bookings in Edinburgh's hotels."

**Sean Morgan, Managing Director at LJ Research**, said: "2014 was a remarkable year for tourism across Scotland and it is perhaps quite surprising to see rather muted hotel performance in Scotland's three key cities to start the year. Whilst the trend of steeply falling oil prices appears to have abated, our LJ Forecaster results highlight challenges currently impacting on North Sea oil and gas production and looking to the next few months there are indications of decreasing accommodation demand in Aberdeen.

"Serviced apartments have been identified as a particularly strong performer this month with operators in Edinburgh starting the year buoyantly. It will be interesting to see how performance pans out in the coming months; this will enable better understanding of the extent of the positive momentum carried through from 2014."



Commenting on performance **John Neil, Director of Fountain Court Apartments**, Edinburgh said: “The continued growth in demand for serviced apartments within the city reflects the increasing awareness and understanding now prevalent in the UK market of what exactly our sector offers. Savvy leisure and corporate visitors coming to Edinburgh appreciate the advantages serviced apartments provide in comparison to hotel bedrooms, offering more freedom and flexibility than a hotel and in many cases a more cost effective option, without compromising on service or quality.”

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## Five things you need to know today



**Development Management Committee meets today**

**Nearly new sale**

**Balerno Community High School Charity Ceilidh**

**New music from Eyes of Others now available**

**Jobs at the Airport**



The Council's Development Management Committee meets this morning. It is recommended to the council that they grant permission to the Sainsbury's store at 7 Shrub Place just off

Leith Walk to allow Sunday deliveries between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Surprisingly although the community council received notification of the proposal and there was advertising of the application on 19 December 2014 there have been no objections.

In fact it is not quite correct to say that the permission is granted only to Sainsbury's as it will cover all five of the commercial units currently being built here. The former Shrubhill House was demolished and the new building is under construction. Our photo shows it some months back when it was but a shell. The rest of the building will be used as student accommodation.

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Are you already starting a spring clean? Then if you have some children's clothes you may wish to take a table at the Nearly New sale which is taking place this Saturday.

*Marchmont St. Giles are holding **A Nearly New Sale for Children's clothes this Saturday – 28th February @ Butterflies Cafe, Marchmont St.Giles from 2pm – 4pm.***

*Tables are still available for hire and it only costs £25 to hire a table – anyone can share with a friend/s and they take 100% of the takings! For visitors it's only £1 entry per adult and children are FREE!*

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[Post](#) by [Balerno Community High School Parent Forum](#).



\*\*\*

Eyes of Others (aka John Bryden of The Machine Room) have just published a new track on Soundcloud with the promise of an EP

to come in March. Listen up here!

The band are playing this Friday at Neu Reekie at Pilrig St Paul's. More details on [Facebook here.](#)

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## Wednesday in Edinburgh – What's On Today



**Chutney Exhibition Presents *Knife Whimsy*:** a one-off reappearance of Chutney Exhibition's award-winning Fringe show. Lighthearted apocalypses, the apotheosis of Fred Durst, the eternal battle between man and bus, all culminating in a linguistic battle between Robert Pattinson and Justin Bieber. Spoken word teetering on a knife edge. Whimsy. Wonder. Despair. 8pm, [Banshee Labyrinth](#), Niddry Street. Free admission.



**Introduction to European Cinema:** a great opportunity to see some of the classics of European cinema on the big screen in this series curated by the University of Edinburgh's Division of European Languages and Cultures. Each screening will be preceded by a short introduction by **Dr Leanne Dawson** (University of Edinburgh) or another academic working on European cinema. Tonight: ***The Wrong Move (15)***, Wim Wenders' 1975 drama: a would-be writer travels through Germany encountering history, economics and passion. 6pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Tickets can be purchased online [here](#) or by calling the Filmhouse Box Office on 0131 228 2688. The next film in this series will be ***The King is Alive (15)*** on 4th March 2015.



**Morningside Justice & Peace Group:** ***The True Cost of Renewables***. **Professor Anthony Trewavas** (University of Edinburgh Institute of Molecular Plant Science) will give a short talk on this topical subject, followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion. 10.30-11.30am, [The Open Door](#), 420 Morningside Road. £1 per person: all welcome. For more information please contact Barbara Darcy on 0131 228 1807/b.darcy20@gmail.com.

**Bookbug:** songs and rhymes for young children and their parents/carers. 10.30am, [Oxgangs Library](#), Oxgangs Road North. Free: all very welcome!



**James Boswell, 1765, by George Willison.** **Susanna Kerr**, former Senior Curator, Portrait Gallery, discusses visual messages and symbols conveyed through portraiture in relation to Willison's flamboyant depiction of Boswell: diarist, man of letters, womaniser and drunkard. 12.45-1.30pm, Hawthornden

Lecture Theatre, [Scottish National Gallery](#), The Mound. Free and unticketed.



**Common Crafts:** an evening for stitching, felting and putting the world to rights, Common Weal style. 7pm, [Area C Coffee House](#), 239 Leith Walk. All welcome.



**Common Weal Monthly Book Group:** this will be the first meeting of the group, at which plans will be made and **Iain MacWhirter's *Disunited Kingdom*** discussed. (This group is distinct from the fortnightly group reading the Common Weal book. This group will read more widely but still in the politics/economics/society area). 7.30-9pm, [Area C Coffee House](#), 239 Leith Walk. All welcome.



**Tovey Memorial Prize Competition Final 2015:** the Prize is awarded annually to the music student who shows the greatest promise in composition or performance. 2pm, [Reid Concert Hall](#), Bristo Square.



**Edinburgh Studio Opera: *The Magic Flute*.** Mozart's ever popular magical tale, set in Persia is 'a vibrant and colourful re-imagining of a classic'. The two-act opera follows **Prince Tamino** and bird catcher **Papageno** as they attempt to rescue the beautiful **Princess Pamina**; along the way Tamino and Papageno have many adventures, and discover that not all is what it seems 'A light-hearted but profound examination of man's search for love and his struggle to attain wisdom and virtue'. 7.30pm tonight and at the same time on Friday and Saturday, [Lauriston Hall](#), 28 Lauriston Street, Tollcross. Tickets cost £10/£6 and can be obtained via We Got Tickets [here](#). For

further information and ticketing enquiries, please contact [esoproducer@gmail.com](mailto:esoproducer@gmail.com) or call 07946 149968. Edinburgh Studio Opera was founded as Edinburgh University Opera Club in 1968. For some time it has been very successfully run by students, with professional directors and musical directors whenever possible: this production is directed by **Lloyd Llewellyn Jones**, Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Edinburgh, with musical direction by renowned conductor and cellist **William Conway** (Chamber Orchestra of Scotland) 'an artistic director with an eye for intelligent programming and...a flair for the unpredictable' (Financial Times), assisted by **Peter Keenan**.

**Edinburgh Gay Men's Book Group:** an inclusive group where you can meet new people and read and discuss interesting books. 7-9pm, [LGBT Health & Wellbeing Centre](#), 9 Howe Street. For more information contact [info@gaybookgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@gaybookgroup.co.uk)



**LGBT Icebreakers:** are you are new to Edinburgh? Want to meet new people? Just coming out? Icebreakers is an informal, fun and friendly social group for LGBT people and those who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. For ages 18+. 7.30-9.30pm, [The Regent Bar](#), Montrose Terrace. For more information contact [admin@lgbthealth.org.uk](mailto:admin@lgbthealth.org.uk).



**Play Talk Read!** The Play Talk Read bus is coming to Fort Community Centre today! For pre-school children and their parents/carers. Hop on board to read stories, sing songs, play games and have fun. It's free! 10am-1pm and 2-4pm, [Fort Community Centre](#), 25 North Fort Street.



**Trad Music Sessions at the Dalriada:** 8-10pm tonight and every Wednesday, [Dalriada](#), 77 Promenade, Portobello. All welcome.

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# Horse racing – and the Cheltenham favourite is... Silvianaco Conti

## Looking beyond Silviniaco Conti at the Cheltenham Gold Cup



One of the biggest events of the horse racing season, the Cheltenham Festival is nearly upon us. And with it is plenty of excitement over the showpiece race of this event, the Cheltenham Gold Cup. The blue ribbon race of the jump season is the most valuable non-handicap chase in the UK and former winners include legends of the sport such as Arkle, Golden Miller and Kauto Star.

The speculation over which horse will etch its name into Cheltenham folklore this time round has begun in earnest. The [Gold Cup odds at Cheltenham Festival](#) will tell you that the current favourite is Silviniaco Conti. This season, the impressive gelding has recorded repeat victories in the King George VI Chase and the Betfair Chase. Trainer Paul Nicholls has good reason to hope that Silviniaco will land the big prize at Cheltenham as well.

However, there will be plenty of competition. Last year's winner Lord Windemere will hope for a repeat performance and it is certainly not an impossibility. But, with less than a month until the Gold Cup day, there are plenty of other names on the pundits' lips.

Just a few days ago, Holywell showed that he may recapture some of last season's outstanding form to become a genuine

contender, by romping home to victory at the Ivan Straker Memorial Chase at Kelso. It certainly helped that Tony McCoy was back in the saddle and as a result of Holywell's win, most bookies have shaved their odds on him for the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Indeed, legendary jockey McCoy seems to fancy Holywell's chances, describing him as "definitely a horse who will have a good chance in the Gold Cup."

Another name to watch out for though is Coneygree, the second top British chaser in the Cheltenham Gold Cup after Silviniaco Conti. It hasn't been confirmed whether the 8-year-old will run in the big race, but there is plenty of excitement about the prospect. Should he run and win, Coneygree would become the first novice to triumph in the race since 1974. He recently won his first non-novice race by an impressive seven lengths at Newbury's Denman Chase. That followed an incredible 40-length win on Boxing Day at the Grade One Feltham Novice Chase at Kempton.

One way or the other, there are plenty of horses to look out for at the Cheltenham Gold Cup beyond Silviniaco Conti

Image By Carine06 (Flickr: Silviniaco Conti) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

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## Government continues its freeze on council tax



The Scottish Government has frozen council tax which can be



charged by all 32 councils across Scotland for the eighth year in a row.

Local authorities have confirmed that in setting their budgets for 2015-16 they have agreed to maintain their council tax at 2014-15 levels, bringing the average household saving as a result of the initiative to around £1,200 for a Band D house.

The Scottish Government has fully funded the council tax freeze by providing an extra £70 million each year which is included in the local government finance settlement of over £10.85 billion for 2015-16 which the Scottish Government is providing to help maintain and develop the services on which the people and businesses of Scotland depend.

Announcing the Scotland-wide freeze, the Deputy First Minister and Finance Secretary, John Swinney, said:

“This is the eighth successive year that we have worked with our local government partners to maintain council tax at 2007-08 levels, which is good news for communities and households who will benefit from the savings this brings in a challenging economic climate. Savings amount to around £1,200 for the average Band D household.

“This partnership approach with local government is delivering real benefits for the people of Scotland in the face of the biggest reduction in public spending imposed by Westminster on any Scottish Government.

“The Scottish Government is focused on securing economic growth, tackling inequality and protecting our public services and it’s great news for Scottish households who will be spared a raise in council tax for the eighth consecutive year.

“Next month I will bring a further Order to Parliament to distribute the shares of the £70 million and these shares will be added to individual local authority settlement totals for 2015-16.”

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# Teenager charged with two housebreakings



Police have arrested and charged a 15-year-old male youth following two housebreakings in the west of the city.

The first incident occurred between 4pm and 10.30pm on Sunday, February 22 when an address in Clermiston Crescent was subject to a break-in. This resulted in the theft of a Mitsubishi Lancer. A woman's ring was also stolen.

A second break-in occurred at an address in Craiglockart Road North in the early hours of Monday, February 23, resulting in the theft of a Volkswagen Golf.

The 15-year-old was arrested and charged yesterday and has now been reported to the Children's Reporter.

The Volkswagen Golf has been recovered however police are still trying to trace both the ring and Mitsubishi Lancer from the address at Clermiston Crescent.

Chief Inspector Stephen Dolan said: "These were thoughtless crimes and police have taken swift action to apprehend the person responsible.

"However two items from Clermiston Crescent are still outstanding and the ring has much sentimental value to the owner. If someone has information about the whereabouts of these items they are asked to contact us."

Anyone with information regarding either outstanding item is asked to contact Police Scotland on 101 or through

# Property Ombudsman issues new Codes of Practice



The Property Ombudsman (TPO) scheme has launched two new versions of its Codes of Practice for [Sales](#) and [Lettings](#) agents operating in Scotland.

The Codes are unique to TPO and have been raising standards in the property industry for 25 years as part of the scheme's free, fair and impartial dispute resolution service, which helps more than 16,000 buyers, sellers, landlord and tenants with their disputes.

The new TPO Scottish Sales and Lettings Codes of Practice will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and were written with input from the industry with representatives of The Scottish Government, Shelter, The National Association of Estate Agents, Association of Residential Letting Agents and several property agents meeting with TPO in Scotland to discuss the different legislative requirements that apply to transactions in Scotland.

More than 500 TPO Scottish sales and letting agents stand to benefit from the introduction of the new Codes, which have already received the highest form of industry accreditation from the Trading Standards Institute (TSI), which took over the running of the Consumer Codes Approval Scheme (CCAS) from the Office of Fair Trading in 2013.

## **Christopher Hamer, the Property Ombudsman, said:**

“TP0 is launching two new versions of its Codes of Practice for Sales and Lettings agents in Scotland on 1<sup>st</sup> March. These Codes have already received CCAS approval, which enable TP0 members to display their TSI-approved trader status to assure consumers that they are operating to the highest industry standards.

“We worked closely with the industry to develop the Codes, which was crucial to make sure the Codes accurately reflected some of the distinct differences in the Scottish sales and rental markets.

“Having independently reviewed hundreds of complaints from Scottish buyers, sellers, tenants and landlords, we recognised the importance of properly taking into account the different processes that consumers follow when buying and renting property in Scotland.”

The new Codes cover all aspects of the latest property and consumer laws, with additional safeguards outlined for member agents to adhere to, based on industry best practice with specific reference to topics including the agent’s duty of care, Home Reports, market appraisals, tenancy agreements, referencing, marketing and advertising, viewings, conclusion of missives, offers and financial evaluation.

As the largest CCAS member with both a Sales and Lettings Code approved, TP0 adheres to the strict business practices outlined by TSI that exceed government mandates.

TP0’s new [Sales](#) and [Lettings](#) Codes for Scotland are now available to view on [TP0’s website](#)

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# Firefighters called to high rise flat in Wester Hailes



Firefighters were called to respond to reports of a fire at a high rise flat in Wester Hailes yesterday.

The call was received at 8,45pm and involved a fire at a flat on the 12th floor at Cobbinshaw House, Calder Gardens, Edinburgh.

Operations Control Edinburgh immediately mobilised appliances to the scene from Tollcross, Sighthill, Crewe Toll and Livingston fire stations.

Six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used two lines of hose to extinguish the fire and then managed to contain the fire to the flat of origin and prevented further fire spread to the roof of the building.

Two male casualties suffering from smoke inhalation were removed from the property by crews and placed in the care of paramedics. One of the casualties was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary for treatment.

A joint investigation will take place between SFRS and Police Scotland into the cause of the incident.

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## Concern for teenager missing

# from Gracemount



Police are appealing for information to help trace a 15-year-old boy reported missing from the Gracemount area.

Thomas Wilson was last seen on Friday, February 13, at around 6pm, walking towards Cameron Toll.

The teenager has links to the Drylaw area of Edinburgh and may have made his way towards there. He also has links to the Niddrie/Craigmillar area.

Officers are now urging anyone who can assist with their enquiries to come forward.

Thomas is described as white, 5ft 6inches tall with a medium build and short dark brown hair. He was last seen wearing a grey hooded top with a blue logo, grey tracksuit trousers, a white t-shirt and a silver watch.

Inspector Euan Smith said: "We are growing increasingly concerned for Thomas's welfare and would urge anyone who thinks they may have seen him to contact us.

"Likewise, if Thomas hears this appeal we would urge him to get in touch and let us know that he is safe and well."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Police Scotland as soon as possible on 101.

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# Record number of cats rehomed



The Scottish SPCA's rescue centre in Edinburgh found new homes for a record number of cats last year.

Staff at the charity's centre in Balerno rehomed 228 felines, compared to 179 in 2013 and 114 in 2012.

Centre manager Diane Aitchison said, "It's wonderful we were able to find new homes for so many of our fantastic felines last year.

"We took in lots of cats who had been cruelly abandoned. Others were handed in when their owners could no longer cope and some were removed

from their homes because they weren't receiving the care they needed.

"Financial difficulties are certainly a factor, with many people not being able to afford vet bills or the general costs required in caring for any animal.

"Another problem is cats not being neutered, resulting in unwanted litters of kittens some owners don't want to keep or find homes for.

"It's encouraging that so many locals offered our rescue cats new homes last year and we hope this will continue.

"We rehomed 804 animals in total in 2014, including 109 dogs, 106 birds, 89 rabbits and 16 snakes.

"This year we hope to find homes for even more animals and we would encourage anyone in the area thinking of taking on a pet to pay us a visit."

The Scottish SPCA's centre in Balerno is open daily from

10am-4pm and can be contacted on 03000 999 999.

Photo by Scottish SPCA