

Five things you need to know this New Year's Day



1999 Scottish Cabinet Records released today

Free tickets for Edinburgh's Christmas

PlayTalkRead has a bumper year

Community Food Projects to get help in 2015

Loony Dook at South Queensferry

Files opened for the first time at the National Records of Scotland reveal details about the first meetings of the then newly-established Scottish Cabinet in 1999.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS – Cabinet records from 1999 made public](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Cabinet Papers and minutes now available for public viewing show discussion around issues of the day ranging from Land Reform to Freedom of Information.

[Read more here.](#)

Today you might get a free ticket on one of the rides at Edinburgh's Christmas if you take along a box of shortbread or non-perishable food item which will be given to the Trussell Trust who run food banks in Edinburgh.

PlayTalkRead, the Scottish Government's early years campaign, has reached a record number of families in 2014, it was

revealed this week.

Visits to the [website](#) over the year were 122,965 – an increase of 50 per cent on 2013 and a 219 per cent increase on 2012. More than 43,000 people visited Benji and Bessie, the PlayTalkRead buses in 2014 – an 11 per cent increase on last year.

PlayTalkRead encourages parents and carers to play, talk and read with their young children every day to give them the essential skills, motivation and abilities that will make it easier for them to keep learning throughout their lives.

This year also saw the pilot of a sensory playbus for children with disabilities or emotional and behavioural difficulties as part of the campaign – the first of its kind in the country.

Commenting on the campaign, Acting Minister for Children Fiona McLeod said:

“As a former librarian, I’m delighted to see so many families have got involved in the PlayTalkRead campaign by either visiting the buses or the website. I hope they’ve been inspired by some of the ideas.

“Playing, talking and reading are fun ways to spend time with children from the very earliest age and helps build bonds. The PlayTalkRead buses and website are a great source of ideas and inspiration on how to turn daily routines into exciting new games.

“As a government we are determined to identify what works and ensure that the best ideas are promoted and supported more widely. That’s why we are taking the principles of PlayTalkRead and Bookbug and extending them into early primary school to develop a new Read, Write, Count campaign to boost literacy and numeracy in the critical first years of school.”

A new law could help thousands of people grow their own food in community growing spaces, Community Empowerment Minister Marco Biagi has said.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, currently in Parliament, will make it easier for communities to take over land for their own purposes, which could include growing healthy food or building a community garden.

This ties in with the Scottish Government's wider commitment of giving people more control over the decisions that shape their communities.

As part of this, an extra £10 million will be available to support regeneration in Scotland's most disadvantaged areas through the new Empowering Communities Fund, which builds on the existing People and Communities Fund (PCF).

Speaking on a visit to Shettleston Community Growing Project in Glasgow earlier this week, Mr Biagi said:

"The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill will make it easier for residents in both urban and rural areas to access land for community purposes.

"Community growing projects are worthwhile as they can bring together people from all backgrounds, age groups and abilities to work towards one common goal.

"I have seen first-hand the benefits of giving people the power to make decisions about their own area. It can increase their confidence, skills and knowledge and give them more experience when it comes to applying for jobs.

"The Growing Project is exactly the type of community based organisation that we want to see flourish throughout Scotland.

"Giving people the opportunity to grow their own food can help to address food poverty, encourage healthy eating and promote the use of local, seasonal produce."

[listen to 'Community Empowerment in 2015' on audioBoom](#)

It appears that the Festivals Champion Councillor Steve Cardownie may well have been behind the Lord Provost's decision to take part in the Loony Dook at South Queensferry today. Councillor Cardownie admitted this when we met him earlier in the week.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS Loony Dook](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Edinburgh's Lord Provost the Rt Hon Donald Wilson is preparing to plunge into icy cold waters for charity when he takes on the challenge later today.

Part of the three day festival for [Edinburgh's Hogmanay](#), the event will involve over 1,000 'Dookers' being cheered on by 4,000 spectators start 2015 with a dip in the River Forth in the shadow of the world-famous Forth Bridges.

The Lord Provost has signed up to take part in order to raise money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution [[RNLI](#)], which provides a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service across the UK.



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.

First Scottish Cabinet papers released to the public today



When the first Scottish Cabinet met under the leadership of

First Minister Donald Dewar in May 1999 they had a lot to sort out. Not all of it was immediately concerned with making new laws, but dealt with the more mundane such as finding out when and how often they would meet. They also had to decide where they would convene to begin the work of the newly elected Scottish Parliament.



From today Scottish Cabinet papers from 1999 are released to the public among the annual release of archived information at the National Records of Scotland, and they reveal details about the first meetings.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS – Cabinet records from 1999 made public](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Cabinet Papers and minutes now available for public viewing show discussion around issues of the day ranging from Land Reform to Freedom of Information.



These files form part of the annual release of archived information by the Scottish Government. Since 2009 the Scottish Government has proactively opened over 13,000 files at 15 years rather than the traditional 30 years.

Freedom of Information legislation effective from 1 April 2014 has reduced the period of time most information can be withheld, meaning more Scottish public authority information will be in the public domain earlier than it would otherwise have been.

Tim Ellis, Chief Executive of NRS and Keeper of the Records of Scotland, said: “These papers provide an interesting glimpse into the considerations of the then newly established Scottish Cabinet. They add significantly to the broad range of historical records about government activities in Scotland now

available to researchers. And they complement the other unique information about Scotland's people and history that NRS holds on behalf of the nation."



Visiting the archives at the National Records of Scotland, Joe FitzPatrick, Minister for Parliamentary Business, said: "I'm sure the first papers of the Scottish Cabinet included in this latest file release will prove fascinating reading for politicians, historians and the wider public.

"Information made available at the National Records of Scotland as well as the wealth of information proactively made available on the Scottish Government's website demonstrates this Government's on-going commitment to openness and transparency.

"The Scottish Government is proud of its record in ensuring Scotland's Freedom of Information legislation remains up-to-date and the most robust across the UK."

Safety advice for Hogmanay partygoers



Police are preparing for one of the busiest nights of the year and are looking forward to a safe and fun night of spectacular entertainment and celebration.

Police officers and stewards will be on duty at the ticketed street party and across the city to provide assistance and reassurance.

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams and Sam Bryce from G4S met the media at a briefing in the city centre earlier this week and advised revellers:

Get there early – there is plenty of entertainment on offer

Wrap up warm – the weather is expected to be chilly, damp and breezy

Don't drink too much – anyone who drinks to excess makes themselves more vulnerable

Don't bring glass, you won't get into the ticketed area

The event is not suitable for children so leave them with a babysitter

Look after yourself and friends, stick together

Plan your journey home – public transport will be running and if you've booked a taxi, make sure you're ready to be picked up

Enjoy yourself safely – officers and stewards are here to help

Political backing for Hibs' Board's share plans



Plans to widen ownership of Hibs have received the backing of some of Scotland's leading politicians.

Details of the Board's plans will be included in the papers being sent to the 1700 shareholders in the second week in

January, ahead of the Annual General Meeting on January 28th.

Malcolm Chisholm, MSP for Leith and a regular visitor to Easter Road, put his weight behind the plan. He said: "Hibernian is an enormous part of Leith and the community, and it is really exciting to see the Board's plan to create a situation where supporters can become bigger stakeholders in their Club. I am delighted at this news, and would urge supporters to get behind the plan."

MSP Keith Brown is also a keen Hibernian supporter. He said: "I am very happy at the news. I think the plan is one that is very positive, very progressive, and something that all fans can unite behind. The signs are really encouraging at Easter Road."

Fellow Hibeer and political colleague Kenny MacAskill, MSP, added: "This is great news for every Hibernian supporter – that fans will get the chance to have a much greater engagement with the Club and in such a meaningful way. We are seeing secure foundations and a clear direction of travel on and off field."

And finally Iain Gray MSP, who is also Chairman of the Hibernian Community Foundation, lent his support: "I think there are exciting times ahead for the Club and for the supporters. I think the Board's plan is going down very well with fans keen to have greater engagement with their Club. I hope everyone unites behind the Club to make this happen."

All money raised from supporters through this process will go direct into the Club, to help fund sporting ambition, as money raised will not be used to buy shares from existing shareholders. Instead, the money raised will go into the Club in return for new shares. Existing shareholders, including the holding company, will retain their existing shares but their percentage ownership of the Club will be reduced as new shares are issued. New shares up to the value of £2.5m will be made

available so that over time the holding company's ownership will be diluted to less than 50% of the enlarged share capital of the Club.

The Club's property assets – the stadium and training centre – were valued at more than £25m in July 2014 on a depreciated replacement cost basis. It is a fundamental part of the Board's strategy that Easter Road Stadium and the Hibernian Training Centre will continue to be owned by the Club.

Accordingly, supporters will have the opportunity to own shares in the Club which in turn owns Easter Road Stadium and the Training Centre and has received the cash raised by supporters.

The Club has agreed a settlement with Bank of Scotland and is now free of Bank debt. That settlement was funded by new loans provided by the holding company to the Club and by a payment made direct to the Bank. The fixed securities held by the Bank over Easter Road Stadium and the Hibernian Training Centre have been released.

Following the settlement with the Bank, the holding company has agreed to halve the Club's debt by converting £4.5 million of loans into new ordinary shares in the Club. A formal written resolution to give effect to this will be sent to shareholders with the papers for the AGM. The remaining loans will be refinanced as a single £5m mortgage provided by the holding company on terms acceptable to the Club.

To underpin this commitment to wider supporter involvement and ownership, two new Non-Executive Directors are being elected directly by supporters. The election process amongst the 17 candidates is underway and the two new directors will be in place by the time of the AGM on 28 January 2015.

The Board is making these commitments following a full consultation with supporters both at a series of supporter meetings attended by over 500 supporters and based on the

results of an online survey of the views of almost 4,000 supporters.

Hibs.net members visit club training centre



Hibs opened the doors to the Training Centre on Tuesday afternoon and welcomed in users from popular supporters' online forum, hibs.net to give them another exclusive and insightful update from the club's football department.

Since 1994, hibs.net have consistently supported the club's Academy with generous donations, the overall total in excess of £50k, which have been gratefully received by Hibernian and have made a genuine difference.

Hibs.net also sponsors the club's Happy Hibee half-time draw and at the start of the season donated kit which is used by the club's video analysis department.

Approximately 60 supporters, who regularly participate on the online forum, enjoyed the experience, which is the third trip of the season, which included detailed talks from: Alan Stubbs, George Craig, Head of Football Operations, Craig Flannigan, Head of Sports Science and Fitness, Graeme Mathie, Head of Player Identification and Recruitment and Billy Bryson, Senior Video Analyst.

The group also participated in an hour-long Q&A with Head Coach Alan Stubbs, who tackled several key topics and shed some further light on football matters.

Hibs.net also experienced a guided tour of the Training Centre and watched the first team train.

Hibs also thank hibs.net for their continued support and hopefully the experience will further galvanise the bond between the online forum and the club.

Police appeal following serious assault in Princes Street



Police are appealing for witnesses following a serious assault in Edinburgh's city centre.

The incident happened around 6pm yesterday (Tuesday) in Princes Street.

A 25-year-old woman was begging at the Wellington statue in the east end when a male approached from the direction of the St James centre and attacked her.

The victim sustained a cut to her right cheek and the suspect made off up West Register Street before being lost to sight.

Anyone who can assist officers in tracing the male responsible is asked to come forward.

He is described only as being white with a slim build and wearing a blacked hooded jumper.

Detective Constable Andy Cory said: "This appears to have been a random

and unprovoked attack, which left the victim with a painful injury to her face.

“Anyone who remembers seeing anything suspicious on Princes Street on Tuesday evening is asked to contact police immediately.

“In addition, anyone with any further information relevant to this enquiry should also get in touch.”

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

Drugs seized from Ferry Road house



Two people have been arrested and charged under the Misuse of Drugs Act after police in Edinburgh recovered a quantity of controlled drugs in the North of the city.

Officers carried out an intelligence-led search of an address in Ferry Road yesterday (Tuesday) where they seized around 28grams of Diamorphine along with various items of drug paraphernalia.

A number of diazepam tablets and £910 in cash were also removed from the property.

The total value of the recovered Diamorphine is around £3,000.

A 32-year-old man and a 52-year-old woman are scheduled to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today.

Chief Inspector Sara Buchanan, Local Area Commander for North

Edinburgh said: “Whenever the public alert us to ongoing drug crime in their area we will respond appropriately to bring those responsible to justice.

“If you wish to report any criminal activity within your community then please contact your local policing team, call 101 or make an anonymous report via the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”

Latest graduates from the Canal College



The latest group of young Edinburgh and Falkirk volunteers graduated from Scotland's first *canal college* at an awards ceremony held at Polwarth Parish Church beside the Union Canal on Wednesday 17th **December**.

The young people, aged between 16-25 years, and their volunteer mentors, celebrated completing the 14 week heritage skills training programme designed by the Scottish Waterways Trust to help address youth unemployment in Edinburgh and Falkirk.

The £400,000 canal college, which will run for two years up until June 2015, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Union Interreg IVB North West Europe project 'Green & Blue Futures', Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Canals.

The next canal college programme will begin in January. To find out more or register, please contact Danielle Moore on 07795 645 683.

Torchlight Procession lights up the city centre to start Edinburgh's Hogmanay



The three days that make up Edinburgh's Hogmanay got off to a fiery start last night with the Torchlight Procession from the High Street to Calton Hill culminating in the first of several fireworks displays.

Some of the Twitterati got great photos of the event too!

[#Edinburgh](#) [#TorchlightProcession](#) [#hogmanay2014](#) [@edinspotlight](#)
[@EdinReporter](#) [@LoveEdinburgh](#) pic.twitter.com/fIIAITzHwm

– *zoe* (@flowergirlzoe) [December 31, 2014](#)

*Awesome fireworks from the finale of the torchlight procession tonight. Good night all! [#blogmanay](#) [#scotlandhour](#)
pic.twitter.com/FKVduGTlME*

– Edinburgh's Hogmanay (@edhogmanay) [December 30, 2014](#)

*The Vikings are the best part of [@edhogmanay](#). Wonder if they need a shield maiden?! [#blogmanay](#) [#imagelogger](#)
pic.twitter.com/CuW7FIABlK*

– Kirsten Alana ☐☐ (@KirstenAlana) [December 31, 2014](#)

There were record pre-sales of torches this year, as 8,500 torches were sold out before the start of the procession.

Pete Irvine, Festival Director of Edinburgh's Hogmanay said: "It's great to start the three days of Edinburgh's Hogmanay with such a fantastic crowd for the Torchlight Procession. We like to think that Edinburgh's Hogmanay puts Scotland once again at the centre of the world map, and that the experiences that you will enjoy here are because you are in a beautiful city and in the best possible company – the famously friendly Scots. We look forward to welcoming 2015 by linking celebrations taking place across Scotland."

The Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, the Rt Hon Donald Wilson, said: "Every year, I am immensely proud that so many people choose to share their New Year with us, and for me the Torchlight Procession blazes the way for Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations. This year's Procession has supported Erskine, a charity that has been caring for Scotland's servicemen and women since 1916. As we wave goodbye to 2014, the 100th year since the First World War, this seems to me a very fitting charity partner."

Paul Bush, Chief Operating Officer of EventScotland said: "Edinburgh's Hogmanay has once again started New Year celebrations around the world with the spectacular Torchlight Procession. EventScotland are proud to support the event which this year welcomes visitors from over 70 countries. A fitting close to an incredible 2014 which has seen a step change in how Scotland delivers major events.

Celebrations continue tonight with the world famous Street Party. Limited tickets are still available to join the Street Party and also Concert in the Gardens (Gardens tickets only). Organisers advise revellers to get tickets early to avoid disappointment. Tickets are available from the official box office, The Fringe Office, 180 High Street, Edinburgh from 10.00am tomorrow. Tickets for the Concert in the Gardens

Enclosure, The Keilidh, The Candlelit Concert at St Giles' Cathedral and registration for the New Year's Day Scot:Land's event are all sold out. The Loony Dook on Thursday 1st January at South Queensferry is also sold out, but spectators are welcome.



Photo by Lloyd Smith

Photos Chris Watt and Lloyd Smith

Wednesday in Edinburgh – What's On Today



Hogmanay Bookbug! Songs and rhymes for young children. 10.30-11am, [Oxgangs Library](#), 343 Oxgangs Road North.



NMS Hogmany Ceilidh! Enjoy an afternoon of whirling and birling for all ages with the **Canongate Cadgers Ceilidh Band**. 2-3.30pm, Grand Gallery, [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street. Free. 'It's enthusiasm not experience that counts!'



Aerial View: A Guid New Year with STV (U). Go on a trip into STV's past and open the archives to see how the broadcaster celebrated Hogmanay in 1957 and 1978. STV had been on the air for just four months when it screened its first Hogmanay Outside Broadcast in 1957, live from Glasgow Cross. **Rai Purdy** is your genial host for a look back at the year's news,

alongside comedy from **Mike and Bernie Winters** and interviews with members of the public – look out for a Glasgow tram! Fast-forward to Cowcaddens in 1978 for the astonishing, disco-infused, ***Out With The Old, In With The New***. Hosted by former Saint **Iain Ogilvy**, this music and comedy extravaganza features some ‘wonderful Scottish girls’ – **Beryl Reid, Amy MacDonald, Una McLean, Molly Weir** and **Lulu**, while **Rikki Fulton** makes a cameo appearance. ‘When the girls start dancing, you won’t believe your eyes....’ The screening will be introduced by **Jonathan Melville**, Edinburgh arts journalist and curator of **Aerial View**, bringing TV programmes to the big screen. 1pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Book [online](#) or call the box office on 0131 228 2688. Part of the Filmhouse’s **Scotland Galore!** season.



Serenity Hogmanay with Nobby Clarke and Friends: bring in the New Year with ex-Bay City Roller Nobby and friends. [Serenity Cafe](#), 8 Jackson’s Entry, The Tun, 111 Hollywood Road: call cafe for times. £5 per person. Serenity is Scotland’s first Recovery Cafe, run by people in recovery for people in recovery, and for public customers who want good value, good quality food in a relaxed space. All events are drink and drugs-free and are family friendly. For more information call the cafe on 0131 556 8765.



Masquerade Party at Sofi’s! Dress code: masked. 7pm-3am, [Sofi’s Bar](#), 65 Henderson Street. Tickets cost £7 and can be pre-ordered (strongly advised) from Sofi’s, in person, by emailing sofis@bodabar.com or by calling 0131 555 7019.



Hogmanay Hat and Wig Party with DJs Nik Nak. 7pm(doors open –

Nik Nak from 10pm)-3am, [Victoria Bar](#), 265 Leith Walk. Free tickets available from the bar: call 0131 555 1638 or email Victoria@bodabar.com.

New Year's Eve Watchnight/Candlelight Service: inside for the service – outside in time to watch the fireworks! 11.15-11.55pm, [St Cuthbert's Parish Church](#), Lothian Road.



Five things you need to know on Hogmanay Edinburgh!



Tonight's the night

Edinburgh's Christmas is blowing you kisses

Leith Bridge Project

First same sex marriages will take place today

The men in charge of the fireworks

Tonight is THE big night for partying in the city centre.

If you are going out in town then do make sure you know how you are going to get home again. There are free buses from Queensferry Street after the partying and concerts in Princes Street. [Details here.](#)

Remember the advice not to take any glass with you and wrap up

warm!

If you get any photos of the fireworks then will you share them with us and our readers? Use our sister site EdinburghReportage by clicking [here](#).

Today you may be entitled to a freebie on the rides at Edinburgh's Christmas (except the Santa Grotto) as all you need is to have a piece of mistletoe with you. Produce this and you may get one of the 450 free tickets available today between 10am and 5pm.

Greener Leith discusses the interesting possibility of the Leith Bridge project and how much it might cost [here](#) and the report on the possible future project is accessible [here](#).

Leith is one of the areas of the city where car ownership is among the lowest and what is being proposed is a project based on the hugely successful High Line in New York or the Viaduc des Arts in Paris where we shot this tiny little time lapse in the autumn. These are areas above the city's streets where you may promenade or use the walkway for exercise or active travel.

[Walkway above the Viaduc des Arts](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Either way it would be a novel project which is worthy of some discussion and some of your attention if you are at all interested in the Leith area of the city.

Same sex couples can now marry today if they have given 15

days notice of their intention to do so. We interviewed one couple who will be among the first to get married. Good luck Georgie and Stacey!

Watch our interview here.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS Same sex marriage legal from today](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Toby Alloway and Simon Page from Titanium Fireworks are both pretty unassuming characters, but they are in charge of the fireworks display tonight at Edinburgh Castle.

The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to them earlier in the week to find out what preparations they have made.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

You can share your fireworks photos or videos with our readers [here](#) on our sister site EdinburghReportage. We look forward to seeing them!



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.

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh's Hogmanay – Chris Watt

Sue Bruce becomes a Dame in the New Year's Honours



Sue Bruce, Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, has been made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, in recognition of her long and distinguished career in local government.

The announcement has been made within the New Year's Honours list which will be published tomorrow. The Edinburgh Reporter would like to add our warm congratulations to Ms Bruce.

Sue Bruce said: "This honour is something that I never expected to receive and as a lifelong public servant, it is a tremendous privilege to be recognised in this way.

"From my first job as a Youth & Community Worker for Strathclyde Regional Council back in 1976, I have been hugely proud to dedicate myself to local government and am now in my 39th year of public service.

"Serving as Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, particularly during such a challenging and exciting time for the capital, has undoubtedly been the pinnacle of my career.

"Of course, I couldn't have got as far as I have without the support of the people around me and this honour is as much for them as it is for me."

Lord Provost Donald Wilson said: "Sue has successfully tackled some key challenges during her time as Chief Executive and has achieved real progress for the Council.

"From the outset, she has worked tirelessly, way beyond her role and normal expectations of a Chief Executive, particularly in relation to charity work and measures to

enhance the prospects of children and young people in our city.”

Ellen Muir, Head Teacher at Pilrig Park School, has also been honoured with a Member of the Order of the British Empire as well as [Yvonne Ramsay](#) who founded Kinsfolkcarers.

British Empire Medal for caring Edinburgh woman

Yvonne Ramsay from Newhaven will be named as a recipient of the British Empire Medal in the Queen’s New Year Honours when it is published tomorrow.



Yvonne is a member of Kinsfolkcarers and the honour is bestowed ‘For services to Kinship Care Families in Edinburgh’

She was instrumental in founding Kinsfolkcarers a support group for kinship carers in Edinburgh. She realised that there was a lack of support services for kinship carers and together with a couple of other carers, decided to form a support group for kinship carers in the capital.


✘ The aim of the group is to bring together people going through similar challenges to support each other. In response to the rapidly growing numbers attending the group, she contacted The City of Edinburgh Council website and formed a charity so that they could fundraise and help provide better support to the carers coming to the group.

Today the group has 370 members. She set up an emergency phone number, which enables carers to phone for support and advice at any hour of the day or night. The local authority has recognised her role and she has been invited to represent carers on Edinburgh's multi-advisory kinship care group. Through her fundraising she has organised numerous outings for carers and their families. She is heavily involved with the voluntary organisation, Mentor UK, being a key participant in the development of their Kinship Care Guide and interviewing for new staff to work in their kinship care team.

The group has a website which you can access [here](#).

Photo of Yvonne from Facebook.

Christmas Telly? Pass Me the Sprouts

The Edinburgh Reporter's Mike Smith clearly wasn't  impressed with what was on television over Christmas. Well, he isn't impressed any other day of the year so why should Christmas be any different...?

It is, perhaps, another sign of being a fifty something that one of the many gripes I have about life is the lack of entertainment one can glean from television programmes these days. Christmas Day merely underlined just how much tosh is produced for the small screen in an age when celebrities rule (for celebrity this can also mean non-entity) and people with next to no talent can achieve 'fame' On Christmas Day the terrestrial channels in the UK – BBC, ITV and Channels Four

and Five – had schedules so bland it made my partner Marion's attempt at Christmas dinner look positively drooling... (if you're reading this, dearest, you know I'm only kidding. Does anyone know the name of a good lawyer..?) In years gone by, the BBC and ITV would put their Christmas Day faith in a big family entertainment show such as Morecambe and Wise or The Two Ronnies or a big film such as the latest James Bond release. ITV's major offering this year – apart from the obligatory hour long episode of Coronation Street – was Downtown Abbey while the BBC went with the tried – or should that be tired? – and trusted Dr. Who (and the obligatory hour long episode of EastEnders) Predictably, both BBC and ITV stuck with a format that had brought above average ratings earlier in the year with special Christmas Day showings of Strictly Come Dancing and New You've Been Framed. In case any of their viewers didn't realise it, ITV helpfully added 'At Christmas' to their programme title...

Add Paul O'Grady, The Queen's Garden – right after the Queen's Speech at 3.00pm – and the pantomime soap opera that is Emmerdale on ITV and Miranda, Call the Midwife (so a double dose of Miranda Hart – cheers...) and Mrs Brown's Boys on BBC and the Christmas Day television fare was as banal as turkey and Brussel sprouts. Am I the only person who just doesn't 'get' Mrs Brown's Boys? A middle-aged Irishman dressed as a woman who swears a lot seems to be quite popular. Why this is so, I'm not quite sure...

The other terrestrial channels were no better. Channel Four showed a 26 year old Tom Hanks film – Big – and Alan Carr – Chatty Man who is about as palatable as a large plate of undercooked sausages wrapped in bacon. Channel Five showed a 46 year old film, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and a Chas and Dave Knees up – from 1982...

Boxing Day was little better. Naturally, Coronation Street and EastEnders were back on. Both the BBC and ITV resurrected 'old favourites' from years ago with Still Open All Hours on the

Beeb and Birds of a Feather on ITV. If you tried your best to avoid Alan Carr on Christmas Day, then those crafty schedulers at Channel Four repeated the Chatty Man on Boxing Day. What joy...Meanwhile, Channel Five was stuck in the 1970s with Morecambe and Wise, Tommy Cooper's Christmas Special and Carry on Christmas being given prime time slots. This would have been required viewing in 1974 but in 2014 it merely compounded the sadness of the festive schedules. In today's age of multi-channel television with satellite and Freeview channels aplenty there is certainly more choice of viewing than when I was a lad. But, sadly, it means there is more rubbish on than ever before. As Christmas has proved for the umpteenth year in a row. On Wednesday it's Hogmanay. No wonder we turn to alcohol at this time of the year...

Happy New Year, dear reader! (hic!)

Largest charity lunch in Britain is held in Edinburgh



Now in its thirty first year, the Scottish property industry's festival of Christmas (Spifox) December Carol Concert held at St Cuthbert's was followed by a lunch attended by 1,434 guests at Edinburgh's International Conference Centre (EICC) and is believed to be the largest gathering of its kind in the UK.

The charity can trace its roots back to 1983 when a small group of property and construction professionals staged a carol concert at the Parish Church of St. Andrews and St. Georges followed by a lunch at Edinburgh's George Hotel where they raised £3,000 for the Royal Scottish Prevention of Cruelty to Children. By 2004 the carol concert had to be moved

to the much larger St. Cuthbert's and the lunch was moved to what is now the City's largest venue.

The Spifox carol concert has played host to many celebrity readers over the years including Lulu, Esther Rantzen, Sir Tom Farmer, Tony Jacklin, Viv Lumsden, Anita Harris and many others. World renowned violinist Nicola Benedetti last year gave a heart warming speech about her passion for and involvement in children's charity El Sistema.

In 1995 and in recognition for their support for Childline in Scotland, Spifox were invited to a reception at Downing Street hosted by the then Prime Minister John Major. Trustee Alan Watt went on to present a cheque to Childline at Television Centre during Esther Rantzen's That's Life show.

Retiring Chairman Ronnie Urquhart who has presided over the charity for the last five years and who this year passed the reigns to Alistair Carlyle said he was overwhelmed at the events growth with all 141 tables selling out within 48 hours of release. Ronnie's County Properties Group HQ have been the nerve centre for Spifox where he and his team have worked tirelessly for many years to develop the charity.

Spifox have made valuable contributions to 276 charities over the years, this year's benefactors being Action for Children, Teens Plus and Barnardo's. Funds are raised at a number of events during the year but the Christmas lunch is by far the largest contributor.



This year along with table donations and raffle tickets, former Scottish Rugby International and TV commentator Andy Nicol presided over an auction of fabulous lots including hospitality at the Monaco Grand Prix and an Aston Martin weekend at the five star Luton Hoo Spa, neither of which quite eclipsed the 1964 Ford Mustang sold to property developer Alan O'Connor last year, but helped raise an impressive £185,000 taking the total to well over £3 million

so far.

Guests were further entertained by the amazing 16 year old soprano Ciara Harvie who performed a tear jerking Nessun Dorma. Ciara was accompanied at one stage by the Edinburgh Police Choir who performed throughout the day.

In recognition of his support over many years, a special presentation was awarded to retiring EICC Chief Executive Hans Rissmann OBE, who this year handed over control to new Chief Marshall Dallas.

Hard-Working Keatings Remains Focussed

Hearts unbeaten start to their league campaign in the SPFL Championship – at the halfway stage in the season the Gorgie club are an astonishing 15 points clear of second-placed Rangers, the pre-season favourites for the title – has rightly earned plaudits from around the country. Even from across the capital city where Hibernian boss Alan Stubbs heaped praise on his city rivals – before saying his team would look to end Hearts unbeaten run when the pair meet in the New Year derby at Tynecastle this Saturday. A photograph of Stubbs in the national press clenching his fist under the headline ‘The Jambos Are Next’ and his assertion that Hearts can only throw away the Championship given their commanding lead, seemed to be a case of the former Celtic and Everton defender starting the mind games ahead of the capital city clash. Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson, however, is maintaining the stance he has adopted since the first game of the season when his team defeated Rangers at Ibrox – namely, he is not looking any

further than the next game.

It's an attitude Neilson is eager to instil in his players and if centre forward James Keatings is anything to go by, the Hearts chief, nicknamed The Tackle after his heroics in the 2006 Scottish Cup final triumph over Gretna, is certainly getting his message across.

Keatings netted the only goal in Saturday's win over Livingston and his fourth goal in four games has seen the player – who passed up an opportunity to play in the SPFL Premiership with Hamilton Academical to sign for Hearts – become joint top goalscorer at Tynecastle.

Keatings has become a favourite with the Maroon Army, possibly because he's the sort of player who works tirelessly for the team and never lets his head go down when faced with a setback. This was proved at the weekend when, early in the game, he scooped a chance wide from six yards and then missed a penalty kick. However, while some players might have put it down to 'one of those days' and let others take responsibility, Keatings kept working and was rewarded when he drove home the only goal of the game after being set up by Billy King.

"Scoring is what I was brought here to do," Keatings told the official Hearts website. "Four goals in four games is a good record, but I should have more. The chance at the back post and the penalty were unfortunate, it's just one of those things. When I played for Hamilton, I took all the penalty kicks and scored them all. But I've missed two here. I was glad to be able to make up for it with the goal.

"You just need to get it out of your head as quickly as possible. If you let it get to you it'll affect your game, so I focused on getting into the right positions again because I knew I'd get another chance. I'm off penalties now though, the boys have caned me for the miss, so someone else can get a

shot.”

Like his manager, Keatings played down the significance of Hearts opening up a 15 point lead at the top of the table, following Rangers crushing defeat at Easter Road. “We don’t care what Rangers and Hibs, or any other teams do. It’s only down to one team, and that’s us, no matter what. If we win all our remaining games we will win the league. And we’re remaining focused on winning games.”

A mouth-watering Edinburgh derby would seem the best way to start 2015. And James Keatings will be looking to make it five games in a row that he has found the net. If he does, his stock among the Hearts support will rise even higher.

Portrait of Alan Cumming unveiled at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery



If you are a fan of *The Good Wife* then you will know him as Eli Gold who has all the answers for every situation, and on Broadway right now he is starring with Emma Stone in *Cabaret*. Alan Cumming is a Scottish actor of considerable stature who warmed the cockles of our hearts in *Who Do You Think You Are?* when he traced his family roots, and who also has just published his autobiography *Not My Father's Son: A Family Memoir* (2014) which tells us more about that whole experience. But now we have him (or at least a portrait of him) right here in the middle of Edinburgh.

The portrait by Christian Hook is to replace the portrait of The Queen on the ground floor of the gallery.

An impressive, unconventional and vibrant portrait of the actor, this is the result of a nationwide artistic competition, and it is displayed for the first time today at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh.

Alan Cumming OBE is an outstanding Scottish actor, who enjoys an international reputation. He studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow and has appeared to critical acclaim in numerous films, television programmes and plays in Scotland, London and New York, where he now lives. He has also forged a reputation as a highly successful writer.

This portrait is the winning commission for the Sky Arts Portrait Artist of The Year 2014 competition. The artist, Christian Hook, who is from Gibraltar, studied at Middlesex University, and has lectured on the art of Illustration at the Royal College of Art. The competition lasted ten months and involved heats being held around the country in order to find new portrait painters. As the winner, in addition to securing this prestigious commission which now enters the collection of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Hook has received a year's supply of art materials. He painted Alan Cumming in New York; the actor is depicted on stage, before a row of footlights, with a top hat before him, which refers to his role in *Cabaret*. Other details, such as his chosen tartan, allude to Cumming's political convictions, as a supporter of Scottish independence.

Sky Arts Portrait Artist of The Year 2014 airs on Sky Arts 1 at 8pm on Tuesdays. A special episode detailing Christian Hook's experiences of painting Alan Cumming – *Portrait Artist of the Year: Painting Alan Cumming* – will air tonight. The presenters of the series, Joan Bakewell and Frank Skinner, along with Alan Cumming and Christian Hook, were filmed at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery for the series finale.

Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery commented: *"This extraordinary portrait celebrates the art of performance. It's a remarkable tribute to a widely admired actor and an impressive work of painterly drama, which displays the skills of a talented artist, whose work will now become more widely recognised."*

Standard Life lets office in St Andrew Square before it is built



The Standard Life Investments Pooled Pension Property Fund along with joint venture partners, Peveril Securities, has secured a deal to pre-let the entire office space in the new £75m St Andrew Square development in Edinburgh, two years before construction completes.

The lease of 6 St Andrew Square is the largest pre-let of prime grade A office space in central Edinburgh and the largest Edinburgh office letting deal for a decade.

The fund has leased 108,000 sq ft of office space over five floors on a 15 year agreement to global asset manager, Standard Life Investments at an average rent of over £30 per sq ft. Due to global expansion of the business, Standard Life Investments intends to use the building in addition to its existing headquarters at 1 George Street. Over 1000 people are expected to move into the offices in 2017.

The 165,000 sq ft project under construction on the South side

of St Andrew Square in the heart of the city centre is owned by a joint venture of Standard Life Investments Pooled Pension Property Fund and Peveril Securities. The Fund acquired the site along with Peveril in February 2014 to create a first class, mixed-use asset that will deliver long-term income for the Fund and its investors. The development will breathe new life into a site which has lain vacant for years, creating quality stores and prestigious offices, linking Princes Street with Multrees Walk and the St James Centre. Along with the office space, around 50% of the retail space is also pre-let.

David Stewart, Fund Manager of the Standard Life Investments Pooled Pension Property Fund, said:



“This considerable pre-let reflects the quality of the development and we’re really pleased to have secured a lease for the whole of the office space at such an early stage – before construction has even started.”

Ralph Jones, Managing Director of Peveril Securities added:

“This is good news and a letting of this stature demonstrates the quality of the location and potential of the development.”

Standard Life Investments was represented by Jones Lang LaSalle, whilst the joint venture of Standard Life Investments Pooled Pension Property Fund and Peveril Securities was represented by Savills.



Our photographs were taken in July 2014. The site is now cleared ready for new construction.

Letter from Scotland



Time... like an ever rolling
stream

I came across a slip of paper in an old book, the other day, which simply said: “Books, which Miss AP Thomas will collect tonight.” It was written in beautiful, old-fashioned handwriting and probably refers to my mother who was born in 1915. It made me wonder about her early world. People then thought the war was about to end – it was only supposed to last till Christmas after all. They little imagined what the year ahead would bring.

I don’t suppose 2015 will be cataclysmic, though, of course, I can’t be sure. The old year has certainly ended under dark clouds – the Glasgow bin-lorry crash, an airliner lost in the Java Sea, a Greek ferryboat on fire. But it has also been one of those “historic” years, a year we will remember for its Referendum, its Commonwealth Games and its long dry summer. Looking forward, it’s hard to imagine 2015 will be as significant.

Let’s start with the certainties. I predict that the weather will be less predictable than ever, as climate change creeps inexorably across the planet. The winter storms will be more violent, more rain will fall, the average temperature will rise, as it has done, almost without exception, for the last decade. Of course, we will do little or nothing to stop it, especially as the price of oil has halved in the last year.

The United Nations will try its best to warn us of our folly but I don’t expect any great news from the Climate Talks in

Paris towards the end of 2015. Instead the UN will be celebrating its 70th anniversary and holding conferences on the International Year of Light and the International Year of Soils.

It will also be reporting back on the eight Millennium Development Goals. Remember that by 2015, we were supposed to have halved the number of people living in extreme poverty, given every child a primary education, halted the spread of AIDS and malaria, halved the number of people without clean drinking water and reversed the destruction of natural resources such as forests and rare animal habitats. Less than half of these targets have been met.

Nor has the UN done well on stopping wars in Syria and Iraq and solving the eternal knot of Palestine. And, tragically, I just don't see any progress being made in the coming year.

As to the economic outlook, the IMF is predicting a 3.3 per growth rate for the world economy. Here in Britain, the government is hoping for 2.7 per cent. Both forecasts I think are what civil servants might term "courageous", since the Eurozone, Russian and Japanese economies are in dire straits and the Chinese forecasts are dropping with every new report. No one really has yet recovered from the bankers' Great Recession of 2008. In Britain, we have been rebuilding on the sands of part-time, low-paid work and, with more austerity cuts coming from the Chancellor, I don't see any streets paved with gold for many years ahead.

Of course, those on the left of British politics are hoping for a change in direction on 7 May. This interesting General Election is one of the certainties in 2015, thanks to the new system of fixed term parliaments. If the opinion polls are anything to go by, the Conservatives will lose votes to UKIP, but Labour will not win a majority either and our old friend Alex Salmond will be coming storming down to Westminster with a substantial contingent of SNP MPs who will be able to put

Labour into power, at a price. And that price is likely to be “Smith Plus” even more powers for the Scottish Parliament.

Here in Scotland, I expect Nicola Sturgeon’s government to finally get around to addressing the equality gap – with more taxes on the rich in form of a mansion tax and more targeted measures in deprived areas of Glasgow and Dundee. I expect too that she will quietly drop unworkable ideas like a local income tax and the abolition of corroboration.

During 2015, we will all have to come to terms with our sordid past as official inquiries are held in England, Wales and Scotland into child abuse. We will be forced to become a much more aware society and taboos over privacy and confidentiality will have to be broken.

On the environmental front, I predict that the Scottish government will come out against fracking, will hint at a new national park somewhere along the west coast, and will approve the re-introduction of beavers. That in turn will provoke a national debate over the re-introduction of the lynx and even the wolf.

As for the arts and culture, I guess Glasgow will continue to flourish – perhaps with plans for a long-awaited film studio. The Edinburgh Festival will continue to grow like Topsy and thereby lose some of its charm.

And in sport, we will see professional football clubs finally learning to balance their books, as Hearts, Hibernian and Aberdeen have been doing in recent weeks. I predict that Scotland will do better than expected in the Rugby World Cup but fail to qualify for the Cricket World Cup. The first European Games, in Bakur Azerbaijan in June will be a flop....because no one will believe Azerbaijan is in Europe !

I wonder if even half my predictions will come true, like the Millennium Goals, or whether, at the end of the year, I will laugh at my stupidity. The glorious thing is that other events

will happen, totally unpredictable events. Some of them will be horrific, others uplifting. Looking into the future is like looking into a fast flowing river, it's fascinating, hypnotic even, and dangerous. And we are about to fall in.

Hibs' Football Fans in Training course returns next month



The Hibernian Community Foundation have announced detail of their latest Football Fans in Training FFIT course which is open to men aged between 35-65 with waist size of at least 38 inches.

The FFIT programme has been developed by the SPL to include the most effective approaches to weight loss and physical activity.

Designed specifically for male fans, FFIT is a 12 week plan delivered by experienced community coaches at Easter Road. Each week will consist of a different physical activity some of which include challenge football matches. These are accompanied by a 'classroom' sessions that will help give participants the nutritional tools to maintain long term change.

More than 2000 men have participated in FFIT across Scotland since it started in 2010 and its popularity has been cemented through the mutual support and camaraderie of participants and coaches.

Course start date and duration: 12th January 2015 – 12 weeks

Find out more: email: info@hibernianinthecommunity.org.uk or call 0131 661 1903

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Torchlight Procession

Hogmanay buses

Hogmanay Ice Hockey

Massed Fiddles at the Usher Hall

At the Museum this Hogmanay



Photo Lloyd Smith

The three day event that has become Edinburgh's Hogmanay starts today with a torchlight procession up to Calton Hill. Torches were already sold out by last week. The arrangements are that if you wish to join in the procession then you can but you will not be able to buy a torch unless you have already done so or can get some of those available later today. The procession begins in the Old Town on George IV Bridge and makes its way to Calton Hill where there will be fireworks around 8.15pm.

Gather at George IV Bridge start position from 6.15pm
Torchlight Procession leaves George IV Bridge 7pm
Free Event to participate in Torchlight Procession
To carry a torch please book in advance:
Torch Vouchers – TORCHES SOLD-OUT
Limited availability of Torches on the day – Book NOW to
avoid disappointment!
Procession from George IV Bridge to Waterloo Pl and Calton
Hill
Finale Fireworks at 8.15pm approx.

Last year's event welcomed over 35,000 participants and spectators, joining the Up Helly Aa' Vikings, massed pipes & drums and thousands of torch carriers as they illuminate the city from the start position on George IV Bridge to the finale viewing areas at Waterloo Place and Calton Hill.

The Torchlight Procession fireworks finale can be viewed across the city and beyond!

The organisers ask you to note the following:

- Torchlight Procession is an outdoor event using wax-based torches, please dress appropriately
- Wax from torches can blow onto clothing when windy, please dress appropriately
- You don't need to get on Calton Hill! Access to Calton Hill is limited and will be closed when full. Firework finale viewing position also from Waterloo Place.

Details of the bus service which will get you home to Kirkliston, Ratho, Dalmeny and South Queensferry tomorrow night after the Hogmanay celebrations are [here](#).

Stagecoach is running a free bus service leaving Edinburgh from Queensferry Street at Drumsheugh Place until the early

hours.

There is a tradition between Fife Flyers and Edinburgh Capitals to play each other on Hogmanay. Tomorrow the match is at Murrayfield which is a hop skip and a jump from the city centre by bus or tram.

Get along to Murrayfield for the Hogmanay Hockey match which starts at 4pm. Booking details on the Caps [website](#).

Listen to Riley Emmerson the enforcer at Edinburgh Capitals here.

[listen to 'Riley Emmerson' on audioBoom](#)

Tonight at the Usher Hall there will be a great big noisy fiddle concert. Here is what they say on the Usher hall website:

On show will be massed fiddlers, along with the spectacular sight and sounds of singers, dancers and a pipe band. Thrill to the playing of lively jigs and reels, strathspeys, beautiful slow airs and well-known songs. The music is all firmly in the Scottish tradition but with a few surprises!

Under the baton of Blair Parham, the SFO's brilliant young conductor, the show will include the orchestra's own spell-binding arrangements featuring around one hundred musicians including a local pipe band.

The host of the show will be the inimitable TV gardener and broadcaster, Jim McColl MBE who will apply his own unique blend of humour and anecdotes to the evening.

The SFO has delighted audiences both in the UK and internationally. This stirring event will appeal to Scottish music enthusiasts and visitors to Scotland alike and will be an unforgettable highlight of your Hogmanay celebrations.

[Tickets and booking details here.](#)

✖ Activities for a variety of ages at the Museum over the next day or so:

Christmas Art Competition

27 – 30 December

10:30-16:30

Free (drop-in)

Be inspired by the objects in the museum and get drawing. Take part in our popular annual art event suitable for all ages and abilities. Basic materials and lots of encouragement provided.

Hogmanay Family Ceilidh

31 December

14:00-15:30

Free (drop-in)

Enjoy an afternoon of whirling and birling for all ages with the Canongate Cadgers Ceilidh Band. It's enthusiasm not experience that counts!

Edinburgh's Hogmanay: Scot:Lands

1 January 2015

12:00-17:00

Free

Artists and musicians welcome in the New Year at surprising and atmospheric venues in Edinburgh's Old Town and beyond. Begin your journey of discovery at the Home:Land, the National Museum of Scotland.

More information about these activities [here](#) on the museum website.



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.

Tuesday in Edinburgh – What's On Today



'I Know Where I'm Going' (U): the classic 1945 film in which a headstrong, rather proud young woman travels by train and ferry to the Hebrides to marry her wealthy fiancée – but on the way she falls under the spell of the Scottish landscape and encounters another man, with whom she falls suddenly and passionately in love. A film with 'unique power...odd, dreamlike interludes, weird symbolism, a sense of ancient forces and the supernatural, and ...alertness to the possibility of romantic love...a magical, unforgettable experience, a work of real and enduring genius'. 1pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Book [online](#) or call the box office on 0131 228 2688. Also showing at 6pm on Thursday 1st January. Part of the Filmhouse's **Scotland Galore!**

season.

The Death of the Fin King: Bryony Knox's intricate metal creations will bring the ocean to life using puppetry techniques, while **Erin Farley** tells the tale of the struggle between fisherman Johnny Brass and the Fin King. Try out metal working and help to create the Fin King – or make something to take home – at the ***Fish or Fin*** workshops before the performance. Suitable for ages 12+ and adults. 11am-12 noon *or* 2-3pm, [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), 43-45 High Street. Tickets cost £6/£4 and can be purchased online [here](#) or by calling the Box Office on 0131 556 9579. This event has been commissioned by Craft Scotland with support from Creative Scotland, as part of **Tales In The Making**.

eBook Surgery: get help with downloading free eBooks, emagazines and audiobooks. 2-3.30pm, [Central Library](#), George IV Bridge. No appointment necessary – just drop in.



National Museum of Scotland Christmas Art Competition: be inspired by the objects in the museum and get drawing! A popular annual event for all ages and abilities – basic materials and lots of encouragement provided. 10.30am-4.30pm (drop-in), [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street. Last day today!

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (12A): the Oscar-winning Classic set in a private girls' school in Edinburgh, where **Maggie Smith's** headstrong teacher ignores the curriculum and influences her impressionable young charges – her Creme de la Creme – with her over-romanticised world view. 6pm, [Filmhouse](#), Lothian Road. Book [online](#) or call the box office on 0131 228 2688. Also showing at 1pm on Friday 2nd January. Part of the Filmhouse's **Scotland Galore!** season.



Government confirms funding for health research for the next decade



A £12 million scheme which will support Scotland's most promising clinical researchers has been launched by the Scottish Government.

Jointly funded by NHS Research Scotland (NRS), Scottish Universities and health boards, the NRS University Senior Clinical Fellowship scheme will fund up to 15 Scottish clinicians over the next 10 years in order to expand the amount of health research carried out in Scotland.

Clinical research is a valuable resource for Scotland that not only improves Scotland's health but also drives economic growth through the country's growing life sciences industry.

Clinical fellows from the previous scheme have brought in more than £65 million to Scotland through research awards since 2009, either through leading the research or collaborating in it.

This research in disciplines such as cardiology, oncology and psychiatry has assisted in the understanding and treatment of these conditions. Previous appointments have also boosted capacity in areas identified as needing more R&D input, such as paediatrics and toxicology.

Cabinet Secretary for Health Wellbeing and Sport, Shona Robison said:

“I very much welcome this prestigious scheme that will support Scotland’s most promising clinicians to become the health research leaders of the future.

“This scheme demonstrates the importance that we place on research within Scotland, and will help to further enhance our growing reputation as a global centre of excellence for clinical research. It reflects our manifesto commitment to explore ways of incentivising research within the NHS, building on the work of NHS Research Scotland.

“This scheme is a statement of our clear ambition for Scotland to be at the forefront of clinical research in the years to come.”

This scheme follows on from a previous clinical research initiative which successfully appointed 18 researchers, some of whom are already are leaders in their fields.

The scheme will be administered through the Board for Academic Medicine.

Professor Sir David Carter, Chair of the Academic Board for Medicine said:

“The creation of this new NRS University Senior Clinical Fellowship scheme, funded by a partnership between NHS Research Scotland, the five Scottish universities with medical schools and their associated Health Boards, provides an exciting opportunity.

“It will allow outstanding young clinical academics to make a critically important contribution to improving Scotland’s health, health service provision and economic standing.”

Bagpipe playing must be taught to more children



The iconic sight and sound of pipers playing Auld Lang Syne at Hogmanay Street Parties could be under threat – according to piping enthusiasts who are campaigning for more tuition in state schools.

More than 75,000 people are expected to descend upon Princes Street on 31 December to attend one of the world's biggest and most famous celebrations, Edinburgh's Hogmanay Street Party, when thousands of revellers will sing along to the famous song at midnight.

But according to David Johnston, Championships Convenor for the Scottish Schools Pipe Band, the world famous tradition could become a thing of the past unless more is done to increase the number of opportunities for state school pupils to learn how to play the pipes and drums.

David says there is also a concern in piping circles that the skills will become regionalised and elitist with many of the country's top bands coming from rural communities or private schools.

Many of Scotland's state schools are still not offering their pupils the opportunity to learn piping and drumming in the classroom, with Edinburgh and Glasgow viewed as the real problem areas.

David said: "The future of our national instrument is under threat because of the inability of most of Scotland's councils to offer lessons in their schools.

"Some say there is no money for it, some say there is no demand. Yet where we have helped schools get tuition the demand is huge – and if a council can afford a glockenspiel teacher, surely they can afford to teach pipes and drums.

"In several schools across Scotland, parent councils have had to resort to taking their own action to set up after school clubs and bring in teachers at their own expense to offer tutoring to their children.

"I find it disappointing that in so many Scottish state schools piping and drumming is not on the curriculum – yet many private schools have flourishing bands and dedicated pipe tutors which bring huge prestige and self-esteem to band members and to the school.

"If this worrying trend continues we won't have any future pipers and drummers and hearing the roar of pipes and drums on Hogmanay could become a thing of the past."

Councils in areas such as the Highlands and Argyll and Bute are known to have a significantly larger portion of their students playing the pipes and drums whilst in school than in other areas. In the largest Scottish cities, there are only a handful of pupils playing the pipes and drums and in some council areas, there are no students playing these instruments all.

The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships – the world's biggest schools piping competition – is looking to change this by hosting a unique competition which looks to celebrate the pipes and drums and encourage their growth in schools throughout Scotland.



Craig Munro, a piper from the hugely successful Red Hot Chilli Pipers, believes that if more state schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow were to introduce the pipes and drums into their curriculum, other schools across Scotland will follow.

He said: "It is clear that several schools are trying to get school pipe bands up and running but it's becoming increasingly difficult to get the piping and drumming onto the curriculum.

"If schools can offer students the likes of the recorder to learn music, then why not the bagpipes? It seems as though there is a lack of choice as to whether or not kids can learn the pipes and drums whilst in school. What many people perhaps

don't realise is that it is possible to build a fulfilling career from the bagpipes."

He added: "What's great about The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships is that they help to raise the profile of these instruments and encourage our younger generations to learn them."

Last year, the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships attracted more than 400 young pipers and drummers from schools across Scotland.

The 2015 Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships are to be held at Broughton High School in Edinburgh on Sunday 8 March. Schools still have until 26 January 2015 to submit an entry. For more details, please visit: www.thechampionships.org



Fireworks will see the old

year off with a bang



The Edinburgh Reporter was asked up to the castle earlier today to see the preparations they are making up there for the fireworks displays on Hogmanay.

We met Simon Page and Toby Alloway from Titanium who are in charge on the night.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

There will be four fireworks displays fired from Edinburgh Castle and Princes Street Gardens on 31st December – countdown fireworks at 9.00pm, 10.00pm, 11.00pm culminating in the magnificent midnight moment from Edinburgh Castle and Calton Hill. All displays are designed and fired by Titanium Fireworks Ltd.

Share your photos or videos of the Hogmanay fireworks with our readers [here](#) on our sister site EdinburghReportage. We look forward to seeing them all!

Did You Know?

· The Edinburgh's Hogmanay Spectacular Midnight Moment Fireworks Display is 5 minutes long with many of the fireworks fired at the same time, but if each effect were fired individually the display would last for over four hours.

. If you take the burst radius of all the fireworks (the circle of stars seen visible high in the sky) and line them up next to each other, the display would stretch from Edinburgh to Glasgow and back.

. If you measure the lift height of each effect from where it is fired to where it bursts in the sky for all the fireworks effects and add them together they would reach from Edinburgh to Paris.

. There are over 2200 individual cues delivering nearly 11,000 shots into the sky producing hundreds of thousands of stars in 18 different shades of colour.

. It's taken over 70 hours of design time for the Midnight Moment Fireworks display to fit perfectly with this year's music.

. A production team of four people have spent a combined total of 480 hours in advance preparation for the shows. That's before 5 days' work begins on site in Edinburgh.

. A crew of 14 pyrotechnicians will walk around 105 miles whilst setting up the fireworks in their positions at Edinburgh Castle, West Princes Street Gardens and on Calton Hill.



Hogmanay starts tomorrow



Edinburgh's Hogmanay is a three day party with events for all the family, but in the words of Chief Superintendent Mark Williams who heads up Police Scotland in Edinburgh the street party is not a place for small children. As well as leaving your children at home you should also leave any glass at home too as you will not be allowed into the cordoned off city centre with any glass containers. But this does not mean you can't have a tipple as you are allowed to bring alcohol with you, but it must be in a plastic container.

You will need a wristband to gain access anywhere near Princes Street or the gardens, but remember you can also see the fireworks at midnight from Inverleith Park and Calton Hill.

Pete Irvine of Unique Events who is in charge of all the Hogmanay celebrations said there is one change this year: "On 30 December the fireworks after the torchlight procession will be higher than ever as the launch site has been changed and they will pitch further into the night sky. We have seen a simulation of the main display for Hogmanay and it looks very special indeed."

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS Edinburgh's Hogmanay](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Now is the time to look out your Tupperware and your thermals, although we are told the weather is set to be fair. Graeme Forrester, Senior Met Office Advisor, said: "It won't be as cold as it has been the last couple of nights and current forecasts show it will be quite blustery with some patchy rain around through the afternoon and evening."

Concert in the Gardens is headlined by Lily Allen, who will be joined by special guests Björn Again and Soul II Soul. Enclosure tickets for the Concert are sold out, but there are still limited Gardens tickets available. The Waverley Stage at the Street Party will see performances from Twin Atlantic, Young Fathers and Twilight Sad while the Scottish Stage on Frederick Street will welcome Eddi Reader, Breabach and the Ross Ainslie & Jarlath Henderson band.

Free Hogmanay NightBus services will run throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians for revellers at the Street Party and throughout the City Centre, supported by Johnnie Walker and courtesy of Lothian Buses (Stagecoach are providing the services to Ratho and South Queensferry). The services start at approximately 00:20 and run until 04:00 – details of times and routes can be found at www.edinburghshogmanay.com. These safe rides home are part of the **Join the Pact** global responsible drinking initiative from Johnnie Walker which has secured over one million personal commitments from people across the world to never to drink and drive.

While all tickets for The Candlelit Concert, The Enclosure at Concert in the Gardens and the Keilidh on the Mound sold out, there are still Street Party wristbands and Gardens tickets for Concert in the Gardens available – these can be booked online at www.edinburghshogmanay.com or on the phone on 0844 573 8455 but must be collected from the Box Office at 180 High Street, Edinburgh before 9.00pm on 31 December. Pre-Booked torch vouchers for the Torchlight Procession are also sold out

as are places at the Queensferry Loony Dook on Thursday 1st January although spectators are most welcome at both events.

Edinburgh's Hogmanay will continue on Wednesday 1st January with a programme of free activities for all the family. For the hardy, the sold out **Loony Dook** – the annual New Year's Day dip in the River Forth – will start off with a Dookers Parade through South Queensferry featuring pipers and a host of entertainment at 1.20pm followed by the brave (or daft) Loony Dookers. For those not quite brave enough to take the plunge, there are plenty of vantage points to watch the action and spectators are welcomed.

Revellers are also invited to come and enjoy some of the very best of art and culture from across Scotland, brought to Edinburgh's Old Town at **Scot:Lands**. Visitors can take a journey around ten atmospheric venues in the Old Town, each curated and customised by notable artists and arts organisations from all over the country. This cultural feast, supported by the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund starts from midday. Participants are invited to pre-register at www.edinburghshogmanay.com to be allocated a departure point at one of the two Home:Lands destinations

Hibs' supporters chance to own 51% of club



Hibs' fans will have the chance to own up to 51% of the club through a new share issue which was announced at a press

conference this morning.

The board also confirmed that the stadium and training facility will remain in the hands of the club, and the initiative has the backing of Hibs' legend Pat Stanton.

A statement outlining the plan was published on the club website: "Today the Board of Hibernian Football Club is announcing its intention that supporters will have the opportunity to own up to 51% of the shares in the Club. All money raised from supporters through this process will go direct into the Club, to help fund sporting ambition.

"Money raised will not be used to buy shares from existing shareholders. Instead, the money raised will go into the Club in return for new shares. Existing shareholders, including the holding company, will retain their existing shares but their percentage ownership of the Club will be reduced as new shares are issued. New shares up to the value of £2.5m will be made available so that over time the holding company's ownership will be diluted to less than 50% of the enlarged share capital of the Club.

"The home of Hibernian Football Club is Easter Road Stadium. The Club has also created a state of the art Training Centre. The property assets were valued at more than £25m in July 2014 on a depreciated replacement cost basis. It is a fundamental part of the Board's strategy that Easter Road Stadium and the Hibernian Training Centre will continue to be owned by the Club.

"Accordingly, supporters will have the opportunity to own shares in the Club which in turn owns Easter Road Stadium and the Training Centre and has received the cash raised by supporters.

"The plan enjoys the support of Hibernian legend Pat Stanton.

"The Club is pleased to confirm that it has agreed a

settlement with Bank of Scotland and that the Club is now free of Bank debt. That settlement was funded by new loans provided by the holding company to the Club and by a payment made direct to the Bank. The fixed securities held by the Bank over Easter Road Stadium and the Hibernian Training Centre have been released.

“Following the settlement with the Bank, the holding company has agreed to halve the Club’s debt by converting £4.5 million of loans into new ordinary shares in the Club. A formal written resolution to give effect to this will be sent to shareholders with the papers for the AGM. The remaining loans will be refinanced as a single £5m mortgage provided by the holding company on terms acceptable to the Club.

“To underpin this commitment to wider supporter involvement and ownership, two new Non-Executive Directors are being elected directly by supporters. The election process amongst the 17 candidates is underway and the two new directors will be in place by the time of the AGM on 28 January 2015.

“The Board is making these commitments following a full consultation with supporters both at a series of supporter meetings attended by over 500 supporters and based on the results of an online survey of the views of almost 4,000 supporters.

“The Board will be sending details of its plans to shareholders in the second week in January in advance of the AGM.

“Club Chairman Rod Petrie said: “The environment of Scottish football is changing including a working group set up by the Scottish Government to look at supporter involvement with football clubs. After extensive consultations with supporters we have decided on the Hibernian Way, the right way forward for Hibernian Football Club.

“Supporters will have the opportunity to contribute directly

to their Club. The more supporters contribute then the more of the Club they will own. And by owning the Club they will also own Easter Road Stadium and the Training Centre and the cash they raise.”

“Leeann Dempster added: “The Board’s plan is radical, a real first in Scottish football. I think it’s daring, exciting and we now need all supporters to rally behind the plan and take the Club forward on a united footing. The opportunity exists, and now it’s up to all of us to take it and make it work.

“Supporters should not lose sight of the fact that the one thing they can always do to support the Club in its ambitions is to come along to games and support the team – through buying Season Tickets, through walk-up and through buying merchandise from the club store.

“Hibernian supporters are rightly proud of the Club and its history, and I want to assure them that the plans we have will make them even prouder in future.”

“Pat Stanton said: “A lot of people have come forward since relegation, and they’ve done so because they care passionately about our Club. A lot has been said, and now it is the time to get behind the team, and support this plan. As far as I am concerned, the plan gives people what they have been telling me they want, a much greater stake in their Club.

“I am particularly delighted that the stadium and training centre will remain in the ownership of the Club, and therefore the supporters. I would urge supporters to look at what is being proposed, and I think they will find it to their liking.

“Things also look to be going in the right direction where it matters most, on the park, and I would urge everyone to unite behind the Club.”

“Head Coach Alan Stubbs added: “I think supporters will really

embrace the opportunity to have such a stake in their Club, and I echo Pat's sentiments that we all need to unite behind the Club now. If we do, we can progress even faster."

Liam Craig praises Hibs' fans for their part in Rangers victory



Hibs' captain Liam Craig praised the supporters for their part in Saturday's historic 4-0 win over Rangers at Easter Road.

The former St Johnstone player scored Hibs' fourth in the victory, his first league goal since scoring the penalty which beat Hearts in the new year derby in front of a sell out crowd.

The rest of the year however is one that Craig want to forget. After sufferng relegation, the midfielder was told that he was no longer in the manager's plans and that the club would not stand in his way should a suitable offer come in. Over the summer he was linked with a move to Aberdeen or back to Perth however it was Terry Butcher who left and Craig insisted that he wanted to remain to help the club back into the top flight.

When Alan Stubbs was appointed as Head Coach, one of his first acts was to assure Craig that he would remain club captain.

Speaking to Hibs TV after the Rangers game, Craig said: "Credit to the fans and players for achieving the result because it was a real team effort."

“There is no better feeling than winning that convincingly against Rangers at Easter Road – it was massive.

“We’ll enjoy it, but we’ll look forward to the next big game on Saturday.

“I think over the last three games the team has been excellent with two clean sheets.

“We’re under no illusions how hard it will be at Tynecastle, but it’s a game we’re looking forward to.

“The fans played their part too – they were excellent. As a Hibs player, to hear Sunshine on Leith after the game was a special feeling – hopefully we’ll hear them singing it again after the game on Saturday.”

Photo by John Preece

Monday in Edinburgh – What’s On Today



The Case of the Curious Clock. The clock did not strike. Midnight was not marked. The New Year did not arrive. Join textile artist **Sarah Reay** and storyteller **Allison Galbraith** in a workshop of textile design and story creation. Choose a piece of reclaimed fabric, create your own stories and find out if New Year ever arrives. Drop in over the course of three afternoons: each day will culminate in a short performance. For adults and children aged 8+. 1-4pm (performance 3.30-4pm daily), [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), 43-45 High Street. Free and unticketed. This event has been commissioned by Craft

Scotland with support from Creative Scotland, as part of **Tales In The Making**.

National Museum of Scotland Christmas Art Competition: be inspired by the objects in the museum and get drawing! A popular annual event for all ages and abilities – basic materials and lots of encouragement provided. 10.30am-4.30pm (drop-in), [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street. Also at same times on Tuesday 30th December 2014.



The Snow Queen: a special performance of this classic winter tale. Let storyteller **Grace Banks** and glass artist **Laura Reid** take you on a journey as they bring the story to life using song and illustrations in glass (inspired by toy theatres). Laura will also demonstrate the various **glass engraving methods**, including the 16th century technique of **copper wheel engraving**, before each performance. For adults and children aged 8+. 11am-12 noon or 2-3pm, [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), 43-45 High Street. Tickets cost £6/£4 and can be booked online [here](#) or by calling the Box Office on 0131 556 9579. This event has been commissioned by Craft Scotland with support from Creative Scotland, as part of **Tales In The Making**.

Keith Edwards Quintet: 'hard-bop' swinging arrangements from **Keith Edwards** (sax) with **Donald Corbett** (trumpet/flugelhorn), plus **Robert Pettigrew** (piano), **Jay Kilbride** (bass) and **Bill Kyle** (drums). Their two sets include some original compositions by trumpeter Corbett, some rarely heard jazz tunes, and pieces by late, great heroes of British jazz, Londoner Tubby Hayes and Scots trumpet legend Jimmy Deuchar. 9pm, [The Jazz Bar](#), 1a Chambers Street. £5/£4 on the door, cash only.



Movie Monday: *From Scotland with Love*. Made entirely of

Scottish film archive, *From Scotland with Love* is a 75-minute film by award winning director **Virginia Heath** with a transcendent score by Scottish musician and composer **King Creosote**. 'A journey into our collective past, the film explores the universal themes of love. loss, resistance, migration, work and play. 8pm, [Sofi's Bar](#), 65 Henderson Street. Free entry and free popcorn! First come, first served, so to reserve a seat either call 0131 555 7019 or send Sofi's a [Facebook message](#). See The Edinburgh Reporter's article 'Top 5 Films of 2014 – A Personal Selection' (of which list this film was top) [here](#).

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Lunchtime Concert

Your patch of Edinburgh

Royal Society of Edinburgh lecture

The news your way

Exercise with a professional

One for your New Year calendar. Just after things get back to normal the Eric Liddell Centre is putting on a concert.

First Monday Lunchtime Concert – Monday 5th January. Doors Open 12.30pm

with The Fauchdean Players – Woodwind Trio

“The fourth of our monthly lunchtime music mini-concerts running over the winter in the Centre’s Robertson Gold Medal Suite, we are delighted to have The Faucheldean Players (Woodwind Trion) along to play.

“It’s a simple format: Doors open at 12.30pm, with the concert starting itself at 12.40pm. Afterwards, there will be a light lunch served. Entrance is just £5, payable at the door (which included lunch). Finishes by 1.30pm. Vegetarian lunch option available.”

Thousands of people have helped the council to create a new map of Edinburgh’s “patches” following an online consultation.

The new boundaries are detailed on an [interactive map](#), which was drawn up as part of the City of Edinburgh Council’s “Natural Neighbourhoods – what’s your patch” project.

The Council says the replies will help them to deliver services and will also inform consultations such as the ongoing Council ward review, and the Scottish Government’s consultation on data zones.

Although many service areas reflect current natural neighbourhoods, some service boundaries are based on historical areas and the city has been changing markedly over the last few years.

Five people who took part in the survey have won old-style prints of their area from Our Town Stories.

Cllr Maureen Child, Communities and Neighbourhoods Convener,

said: “We produced a set of natural neighbourhoods in 2004 as part of a review of ward boundaries. The city has changed much since then, the overall population has increased substantially, new neighbourhoods have appeared and demolition has taken place in other areas.

“Whether it’s Broughton or Barnton, Craiglockhart or Comiston, we all have some idea of which area of Edinburgh we belong to. Some of these areas are not so clearly defined though, and having a better idea will help the Council to deliver services more effectively.

“When it comes to gathering the data, there isn’t any right or wrong answer. It’s the kind of thing that most people have a view on and we wanted to capture these views to map the natural neighbourhoods in the city.”

Professor Tim Benton, UK Champion for Global Food Security & Professor of Population Ecology, University of Leeds will deliver a lecture on food sustainability in February 2015 at The Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Global demand for food is set to double by 2050. As this happens, the consequences of climate change on farming will increasingly be felt. The resulting competition for access to land and water, and the impact on the natural environment – habitat loss, biodiversity, water bodies, and carbon emission – will have profound implications, at both local and global levels. In his talk, Professor Benton will consider how far we can expect to be able to grow more food sustainably, and discuss whether we need to change our expectations of what can be made available.

Booking details [here](#).

What is your news? Do you want to tell us about something you have seen or got to know about? What is really happening where you are? If you see or want to tell us about something newsworthy then do share it with our Edinburgh Reporter readers by [adding it to the EdinburghReportage storyboard here.](#)

Whether it is of national newsworthiness or it is just your own family news then please share it with us. The Edinburgh Reporter cannot be everywhere so we rely on you to keep us in the loop. The best will feature on this website.

Hotel guests looking to experience a fast-track – and healthy – tour of Edinburgh’s famous landmarks can now do so with the help of one of the world’s leading endurance runners.

The Crowne Plaza Edinburgh – Royal Terrace has created the perfect solution for on-the-go guests to combine business, site seeing and exercise.

Available 24/7 to all guests, The Energy Station is a dedicated unit within the hotel that provides a range of specially designed running, cycling and walking routes conceived by General Manager Lucja Leonard – using her skills as a leading super-marathon runner.

Lucja has six years experience competing in long distance running events and only last week returned from South Africa after finishing eighth in the gruelling Kalahari Endurance Marathon.

From running up Arthur’s Seat, to experiencing the bustling Princess Street or the iconic Calton Hill, Lucja has designed three unique routes for guests to witness the world-reknewed splendour of Scotland’s capital – at a time and pace that suits them.

Ranging from 3-5 miles, the routes are suitable for runners of all ages and experience and are designed to be completed within an hour, perfect for executive guests on a tight deadline.

Lucja is on hand to lead group sessions, be a running partner and give advice on warming up and warming down as well as overseeing the day to day management of the hotel.

She said: "Many of our guests are pressed for time, having the dedicated energy station allows them to choose a time or route that suits them and their working schedule, its open 24/7 so guests are always in control of their stay and trip.

"We understand the needs of today's modern business traveller and how vital it is to make every stay as productive and successful as it can be for them.

"Our guests are passionate about what they do and so are we, a business trip is seen as a positive opportunity to connect with others and our Energy Station and running routes are an extension of that."

The seven individual townhouses that make up the hotel date back to 1860 and provide the perfect starting point for a whistle stop tour of the historic city centre.

The Energy Station includes professional running maps and when guests return from their sight-seeing they can grab a towel, complimentary water and fresh fruit to replenish their energy.

Lucja added: "Not only does it provide an opportunity to see the world famous sites of Edinburgh, it provides a healthy environment to socialise and I have been a running partner more than once to guests, which I really enjoy.

"The feedback we have had from guests so far has been overwhelmingly positive, they said the maps were clear and

direct and they enjoyed the views and exercise.”

Located just five minutes from Princes Street, the Crowne Plaza Edinburgh – Royal Terrace, has recently undergone a dramatic face lift involving a £7.25 million investment.

The hotel specialises on meeting the needs of the modern business traveller, reinforcing the Crowne Plaza ethos of giving corporate guests the opportunity to keep connected and working, to refuel and to enjoy a rejuvenating night’s sleep to be ready to tackle the day ahead.

As well as offering Crowne Plaza’s exclusive Sleep Advantage™, which includes a range of features from luxurious bedding to quiet zones, each of the 97 rooms includes complimentary high speed internet and flat screen TV’s.

For more information or reservations on Crowne Plaza Edinburgh – Royal Terrace, please visit www.cpedinburgh.com or call 0131 557 3222.



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.