

The Children's Giving Tree at Blackwell's



If your home is like mine, with every shelf sagging under the weight of reading matter, you may find it hard to imagine that some children have no books at all. These children aren't in far off Third World countries; they live in Edinburgh just like us, but they have probably never been to a library, much less a bookshop.

Many of us find huge comfort in reading when the world gets too much; for these children, the desperate circumstances of their lives can be too much every single day, but they have no escape, no other places to turn to. **The Blackwell's Giving Tree** is a way in which you can reach out to these young people, and offer them not only the magic of a book, but a book they have asked for themselves, be it a by specific author, on a particular subject, or just 'A book that I can take with me on an adventure.' (This is the wording of one of this year's tags).

Blackwell's began this project seven years ago – sales manager **James Anderson** remembers a tiny tree in a flowerpot with a few tags attached. The response was enormous, the tags were gone in just a few days – and since then the tree, and the project, have grown and grown; 'it felt' says James, (with seasonally-appropriate imagery) 'like an experiment that just snowballed.'

Yesterday, Edinburgh author **Nicola Morgan** launched the 2014 appeal; there are over 300 tags this year, each of them asking for a special book for a special child. As Nicola says, 'These children may not receive anything else this Christmas. How can you say no?'



The idea is simple; you read the tags, choose one (or lots!), find the books that the tags request and buy them. Blackwell's keeps them and kindly gift wraps them for you, before passing them on to the relevant charities – this year these include **Edinburgh Women's Aid, CHAS, Citadel Youth Centre, Edinburgh Young Carers Project** and **Action for Children**. If a child or young person has asked for a type of book rather than a named title, Blackwell's staff are there to help you find something they know will fit the bill. If you can't get into the store, you can phone or email the children's department, and once the other Blackwell's stores are ready (Edinburgh is of course ahead of the game...) you should also be able to make your donation online via the website.



We all know about running, yoga and herbal tea, but 'one of the best ways to relieve stress' says Nicola 'is to give', and she should know, she's written a book about it (*The Teenage Guide to Stress*, 2014) – isn't that great? No more dragging yourself to the gym or pretending you'd rather have some camomile concoction than a strong shot of caffeine and a cake – all you have to do is while away a nostalgic hour in Blackwell's, hand over your credit card, and come away feeling like serenity itself. Just do it quickly, before all the tags are gone and you end up having to endure something much more painful.

The Giving Tree is in Blackwell's now; if you can't find it, you're not in the Children's Department – ask at the desk. If you would like to participate but can't call in, email kirsty.smith@blackwell.co.uk or call her on 0131 622 8225.

You can also follow the appeal on Twitter [@GivingTreeEdin](https://twitter.com/GivingTreeEdin) and on [Facebook](#).

Sick Kids fundraiser Tom is on a charity countdown



The Sick Kids Friends Foundation (SKFF) are calling on big-hearted Scots to help their oldest and most esteemed volunteer reach another fundraising milestone by the end of this year.

94-year-old Tom Gilzean collects for the children's charity and a number of other worthy causes round-the-clock on the Royal Mile. He has to date raised more than £100,000 for the charity.

This year the war veteran has continued his mammoth efforts, collecting £45,000 for a number of charities close to his heart, however the kind-hearted fundraiser is determined to hit the £50,000 mark by the end of the year.

Tom said: "I'm out collecting in all weathers, which can very cold and rainy but I love it. I'm delighted that this is the most I've ever collected in one year and I would like to donate £25,000 to the Sick Kids if I reach the £50,000 mark.

"Nothing will stop me from fundraising and I've already signed up to be a volunteer next year. This gives me something to look forward to as I approach 95 years old. It's so important to me that I keep raising money. I've been fundraising for 80 years now and I'm determined to keep going until I'm 100. I want to say thank you to everyone who gives so generously – I couldn't do it without you."

The money raised by Tom is used to provide world-class equipment such as mini image intensifier scanning equipment

worth £53,000 and extra family-friendly services including art therapy and parent accommodation at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) in Edinburgh. Tom also supports several causes to help injured soldiers, pensioners and disabled children.

The SKFF are asking others to step-up and help Tom raise the final £5,000 required to cross his fundraising finish line by 31st December. Sick Kids supporters can back Tom by donating via his first ever online fundraising page.

Maureen Harrison, chief executive of the Sick Kids Friends Foundation, said: "Tom has been one of our greatest supporters for many years and we're overwhelmed that come rain, shine and even illness Tom continues to work so hard to raise funds for a number of great causes including the Foundation.

"We think Tom deserves to take a break from his tireless campaigning and would love to see as many as people as possible make an online donation to help this legendary volunteer reach yet another ambitious milestone."

To help Tom raise £50,000 by 31 December 2014 visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/TomGilzean>.

Submitted by [Corrie Campbell](#)



**Penicillin deaths – no
suspicious circumstances**



Police in Midlothian have carried out a post-mortem examination on two elderly people, whose bodies were found within a property in Royal Court, Penicuik on Monday, November 10.

There does not appear to be any suspicious circumstances surrounding either individual's death, however further forensic inquiries are still to be carried out.

In line with routine practice a report has been forwarded to the Procurator Fiscal.

Witness appeal following robberies in Breadalbane Street



Police are appealing for witnesses after two men were assaulted and robbed in the Capital.

The incident happened around 9.40pm yesterday in Breadalbane Street.

A 21-year-old and 19-old were sitting within a car awaiting a friend when three men approached the vehicle.

Two of the suspects produced knives and threatened the pair, while the third suspect, who was in possession of a metal pole searched the car for valuables.

Both victims were struck to the head with the pole during the robbery before the men responsible made off from the scene

with a number of their personal belongings. However, neither required medical attention.

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

The suspects are all described as being white, 25-30-years-old, between 5ft 8ins and 5ft 9ins tall with slim builds and wearing dark hooded tops and dark trousers.

Detective Constable Graham McIlwraith said: "The victims were taken by surprise when the suspects approached their car and produced weapons before robbing them of their personal possessions.

"Thankfully, though, neither of them were injured and we are now conducting local enquiries to trace the men responsible.

"Anyone who was in or around Breadalbane Street on Thursday evening and remembers seeing anything suspicious is asked to contact police immediately.

"We would also request that anyone who recognises the description of the suspects, or who has any further information relevant to this investigation, gets in touch as soon as possible."

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

Man charged with serious

assault at Northview Court



A 33 year old man has been arrested and charged with assault to severe injury after a 28 year old man was found seriously assaulted at Northview Court on Saturday.

He has also been charged with a separate and unconnected serious assault that took place on Elm Row on 28th October.

The man is due to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today.

24-year-old man charged following Leith Links attack

Police have charged a 24-year-old man following a serious sexual assault on a 28 year old woman on a path near Links Place in the early hours of Thursday morning.

The area was cordoned off most of yesterday as forensic officers looked for clues.

Detectives also appealed for witnesses to the attack.

A Police Scotland spokesman said the man scheduled to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Monday.

Edinburgh taxi fares set to rise next year



It is a well-known fact that taxi fares here in the capital are higher than in the west of Scotland, and it looks likely that they are to rise further if the council adopts its officers' recommendations next week. But the fare structure is to be simplified particularly over the Christmas period.

General fares are set to rise in line with inflation by 2.1%.

It used to be the case that there was a rise at the end of December, but the advisers to Edinburgh Council, the firm Halcrow felt this was too complicated and have proposed a new simpler system to come into effect next year.

The survey into the taxi fare system cost the council £17,000 which included a survey of 500 residents, two meetings with the taxi trade, and consultation with Police Scotland, council officers and other groups. This is not an additional cost, but contained within the sum already set aside for it.

The proposal is that between 24 – 27 December and 31 December to 2 January fares will increase with a starting fare of £3.60 which is £1.50 higher than the normal daytime fare at other times of the year.

The proposed new fare table is reproduced for you below. If agreed this will come into effect in January 2015. Until then the existing fare table continues to apply with a starting fare of £2.10 under the lowest tariff which rises by 25p after each additional 188metres travelled or 40 seconds of waiting time.

The council last looked at fares in the summer of 2013, and must examine them again now as it has a duty to review fares every 18 months. If any taxi driver is disgruntled about the proposed rise they have a right of appeal against the decision by raising the matter with the Scottish Traffic Commissioner.

In addition to the fare increases proposed for next year the council are also likely to approve the installation of cameras in taxis which it is thought will protect passengers and drivers, although the original demand came from taxi drivers.

It will be for the taxi drivers to deal with data protection issues, and the plan is for cameras to record only what happens inside the taxi and not to record anything in the streets outside. It is specifically provided within the proposals that any images must not be used on social media outlets.

Research showed that 62.2% of the public are happy with daytime fares, although not just as many are content with the night time fares. What do you think? Are taxi fares here in the capital too high?

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/New-taxi-fares-Dec-2014.pdf>

New art exhibition at the palace from today



A new exhibition begins today at Holyrood Palace. This exhibition of Italian art will be shown in the Queen's Gallery and tickets are from £6.50.

A good thing about going to the Palace of Holyroodhouse is that if you get your ticket converted into a [1-year pass](#) you can use it repeatedly without further charge for a whole year. This is true for all properties in the Royal Collection which includes Britannia here in Edinburgh.

The Royal Collection describe the artist on their website:

"He was one of the most innovative artists of the Italian Baroque. Yet Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (1609–1664) was also a violent and impetuous man, who was repeatedly in court for assault, allegedly attempted to throw his sister off a roof, destroyed his own work in front of powerful patrons, and was forced to flee Rome in mysterious circumstances. The turbulence that characterised his life overshadowed his artistic brilliance, and Castiglione struggled to achieve the recognition that he deserved. This first exhibition in Scotland dedicated to Castiglione brings together around 100 drawings and prints, and aims to position the artist in his rightful place as one of the greatest creative figures of the Baroque."

Tickets and visitor information: www.royalcollection.org.uk or +44 (0)131 556 5100.

Castiglione: Lost Genius

The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse

Friday in Edinburgh – What's On Today



Spanish Fine Foods and Gifts Open Day: join [El Olivo](#) olive oil company for a glass of wine, and taste the oils and other Spanish delicacies. Gifts, oils, chorizos, tapenades spices, antipasti, rice, vinegars and much more! Plus Spanish wines from **Calduero Importers**, jewellery, baskets, cashmere ponchos and nutritional advice. 11am -9pm (drop in), 1 Dalrymple Crescent. 10% of takings will be donated to local cancer charity **itsgood2give**. For more information call El Olivo on 0131 668 4751 or email info@elolivo-olive-oil.com Hasta luego!



Caesura #27: Goodnight Press. One of a series of events exploring experimental writing and performance through stripped-back, often anarchic, performances. This month's event features Belfast-born writer and critic **Maria Fusco**, London-based experimental poet **Jennifer Cooke**, sound poet and Dada scholar **David Hopkins** and found poetry duo **Ed Smith** and **Thomas MacColl**. For ages 12+. 8-10pm (doors open 7.30), Demonstration Room, [Summerhall](#), 1 Summerhall. Tickets £5: book via Summerhall's [website](#) or at the box office (0131 560 1581).

Jenni Calder and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*: a new edition celebrating the 200th anniversary of what is widely regarded

as the first historical novel in the western tradition. Come along to hear Jenni Calder discuss the themes of *Waverley* and her reworking of the text for modern readers. 3-4pm, [Scotland's People Centre](#), New Register House, 3 West Register Street. Free tickets should be booked via [eventbrite](#). Part of Previously...Scotland's History Festival.

Amnesty International and Relief Theatre Present *Even If We Lose Our Lives*, exploring the difficulties faced by women in modern **Afghanistan** through the stories and words of **Parween**, founder of the only girls' school in Laghman province, **Manizha**, the American-raised organiser of a women's shelter, and **Dr D**, an anonymous gynaecologist operating in an unnamed province. Interviews were conducted by actor and human rights activist **Christine Bacon**. Each performance will be followed by a short talk and Q & A session led by Amnesty activists and other guest speakers. All proceeds will go to Amnesty International. Please note: this play includes references to violence and domestic and sexual abuse. 8-9.15pm tonight and 15th November, Cairns Lecture Theatre, [Summerhall](#), 1 Summerhall. Tickets £6/£5: book via Summerhall's [website](#) or at the box office (0131 560 1581).

Storytime: 10.30am today and every Friday, [Piershill Library](#), 30 Piersfield Terrace.



Edinburgh University Singers: Parry *Blest Pair of Sirens*, Parry *I was glad*, Stanford *Magnificat Op.164*, Finzi *Part Songs*. Conductor and organist: **John Kitchen**. 1.10pm, [McEwan Hall](#), Teviot Place. Free and unticketed.

LGBT Women's Wellbeing Group: Feeling Good. An opportunity to learn about – and try out – relaxation techniques and adrenalin boosters that can make us feel good about ourselves. 2-4.30pm, [LGBT Health & Wellbeing](#), 9 Howe Street. Contact

alison@lgbthealth.org.uk or call 0131 652 3283 for more information or to be added to the group's email list.

Edinburgh College of Art Friday Lecture Series: Michelle Sank. Sank is a photographer whose work reflects a preoccupation with the human condition, encompassing issues around social and cultural diversity. Free and open to all: for details of time and location contact [ECA](#).

Bookbug: 30 minutes of rhymes and songs for very young children. 2.30pm, [Corstorphine Library](#), 12 Kirk Loan.

[Macular Society](#): Macular Degeneration (loss of central vision). If you have MD or know someone who does, drop in for an informal chat and coffee with others who have the same condition and learn more – don't worry on your own, join the group for friendly support, information and help. 10.30am-12 noon today and on the second Friday of each month, Falcon House, 91 Morningside Road, EH10 4AY.



The Hare and the Tortoise: Recitals for Wrigglers. A concert for babies and toddlers. 10.30am, Charles Smith Room, [Morningside Library](#), 184 Morningside Road. Tickets £5 for one adult and one child, £2.50 for each additional child.



Scottish Fair Trade Forum Fair Trade Awards Ceremony and Exhibition Launch: an evening of awards and culture. Browse the stalls, taste **Equal Exchange's** new hot chocolate, be the first to hear who this year's award winners are (awards presented at 6.30pm), and view the Fairtrade Foundation's photography exhibition ***Fairtrade at 20: The Power of You***. The exhibition will then run in the Chaplaincy Centre until 21st November. 6-8pm, [Chaplaincy Centre](#), University of Edinburgh, 1 Bristo Square.

The Transfer of Science and Philosophy Across Religious Boundaries in the Middle Ages: Professor Charles Burnett of the **Warburg Institute**, London, one of the world's leading scholars working on the history of science in the Islamic World, will deliver this special lecture exploring what happens when a scientific or philosophical work is translated from one religious culture to another, specifically from pagan Greece to Islamic Arabic and from Islamic Arabic to Christian Latin culture. 6-8pm, King Khalid Building, [Royal College of Surgeons](#), Hill Square. Free tickets should be booked via [eventbrite](#). For more information contact rosie.mellor@ed.ac.uk.



Quiz Aid! come and have fun and test your knowledge at this **Christian Aid** fundraiser, and help people in the world's poorest communities work their way out of poverty. Come with a ready-made team of 4-6 people, or come on your own and join a team on the night. Enjoy a glass of Fair Trade wine or juice. Donations for bottle stall much appreciated. 7.30pm, The Walpole Hall, [St Mary's Cathedral](#), Palmerston Place. £5 per person, no charge for children.



Image by John McKenzie for
L & T

Indian Encounters: a new exhibition exploring the changing relationships between Great Britain and India during the 18th and 19th centuries through the lives of two men with very different experiences of British Imperial rule, **Captain Archibald Swinton** and **Maharaja Duleep Singh**. Duleep Singh became **the first resident Sikh in Britain** after he, at the age of 10, had to surrender the Sikh Punjab and all his treasures to the **East India Company**. Archibald Swinton served in the East India Company's army at the beginning of its military

expansion into India. 18th century miniature paintings and 19th century jewellery, plus ***Casualty of War***, a contemporary work completed in the miniaturist tradition by artists **The Singh Twins**, reflecting on their personal view of Duleep Singh's life and their own Sikh heritage in Britain today. 10am-5pm from today, Exhibition Gallery 2, Level 3, [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street. Free. Closes 1st March 2015.



The Travelling Gallery: GENERATION TG – a group exhibition including five artists working in a range of media, focusing on what it is like to be a contemporary visual artist in Scotland and including a film of artists talking about their work to pupils from Edinburgh schools. 1.30-4pm, [Craigmillar Community Arts](#), 58 Newcraighall Road.

The Fine Art Society of Edinburgh: Derek Clarke MBE RSA 1912-2014: Portraits of Rocks – Eighty Years of Landscape Painting. The first major exhibition of landscape paintings by the late Derek Clarke to be shown since the artist's death in February at the age of 101. Inspired by Scottish and Irish landscapes and painted over a period of 80 years, the 25 paintings in this exhibition had, until recently, sat undisturbed in the artist's Stockbridge studio. Clarke studied at the **Slade School of Art** (1931-35) and taught at **Edinburgh College of Art** for 30 years, retiring in 1978. His pupils there included Elizabeth Blackadder, Barbara Rae, John Bellamy and George Donald. 10am-6pm Monday to Friday, 11am-2pm Saturday, [Bourne Fine Art](#), 6 Dundas Street,

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Cooperative Capital

National Trust for Scotland's pop-up shop

Learning to grown your own organic food

Crime prevention afternoon at Morningside Library

Sale at the Fruitmarket Gallery

You may already know that the administration at Edinburgh Council is run by a coalition of Labour and SNP councillors. Although it would be true to say that it is the Labour group who subscribe most vocally to the notion of a cooperative way of working, the whole council has agreed to run a Cooperative Capital to some degree or other during the last two and a half years.

A small department of council officers is charged with the responsibility of working across the whole council to find ways of introducing cooperatives in some form wherever possible. Although Harlaw Hydro is a cooperative project which was started by a local community in Balerno, the council gave it support in kind by offering services of council officers in advisory positions. [Harlaw Hydro](#) is now fully subscribed and building has begun on the hydro scheme which will produce electricity and invest surplus funds back into community projects. This is quite rightly held up time and again as an example of what can be achieved.

Most recently the council leader, Andrew Burns was appointed

the Chair of the Cooperative Capital Innovation Network which is a UK-wide body, of which The City of Edinburgh Council was the first Scottish member.

There are several areas in which the council pledged to develop cooperative initiatives all under the ethos of 'doing things with people rather than to people', namely energy, housing, childcare and social care. Now the council will agree next week on a way of evaluating all of these. This is in response to a demand by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee who want to ensure that the benefits of any cooperative schemes are measured in some way. The evaluation tools will then be put in place with data from the first two years which will provide a baseline.


Examples of cooperatives in Edinburgh include the Edinburgh University Student Housing Cooperative, Energy for Edinburgh (ESCo) which will run a range of energy-related projects, the Edinburgh Community Solar Cooperative which will install solar panels on council-owned buildings and collaboration on the Craigmillar Eco Housing Cooperative which will provide affordable homes in Greendykes.

All of this and more will be discussed at the full council meeting next Thursday. Council papers will be published on the [council website](#) later this morning.

This festive season give the gift of 'Glad'. Support the National Trust for Scotland and buy some gorgeous goodies, a gift membership or just make a Christmas wish come true at Gladstone's Land where there is a pop-up shop and Christmas wishing tree.

Visit the winter wonderland to find unique gifts, perfect stocking fillers, decadent decorations, sensational Christmas cards and stunning Scottish products. More details [here](#).



 PC Dickson from St Leonard's Police Station, Edinburgh will be at Morningside Library, tomorrow afternoon between 2pm – 4pm.

He will be available to advise the community on ways to protect their property and help the police. He will have available crime prevention advice and provide how members of the public can report suspicious activity and/or persons in their area.

PC Dickson will also have available the items below from the South Edinburgh Crime Prevention Panel:

Bike "D" locks – £12.50

Shed alarms – £10


Personal alarms – £5

Hi- Viz rucksack covers – £5

[Post](#) by [Morningside Library](#).



The Fruitmarket Gallery is counting down the days until Light Night with a sale. Get money off some of the lovely items in their shop from now till 23 November 2014.

 Today it appears that this book by Richard Murphy is discounted by 20%.

“This brilliant Artist Books department includes many locally, self-published or hand made artist books that deserve your attention. The Fruitmarket Gallery is proud to support local artists, so please come in and browse our great selection.”

JCDecaux sign advertising contract with Edinburgh council



The council has now signed a deal with JCDecaux the outdoor advertising company to put up adverts on bus shelters for the next 10 years. This is the same company which provides the Dublin Bikes in association with Coca Cola and Dublin City Council, so is it time for Burns Bikes to be rolled down The Mound? It appears so.....read on....

The contract covers the design, installation and maintenance of 436 advertising bus shelters and management of all non-advertising bus shelters in the city. This will include the first network of digital screens in the city centre. JCDecaux will also provide interactive “LiveTouch” screens in the main hub of Princes Street providing tourist, local and council information.

JCDecaux will also provide 60 large-format billboards

including the first large-format digital screen and consult with the city for the provision of wayfinding signage and a city-wide bicycle-hire scheme.

Working with the City of Edinburgh, JCDecaux will market sponsorship and experiential advertising for key city events including the Edinburgh Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Edinburgh will draw upon JCDecaux's design experience to deliver street furniture products that will enhance the cityscape. The City of Edinburgh has selected bus shelters from JCDecaux's Foster range, designed by Foster.

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, Finance and Resources Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "We're very pleased to be working in partnership with JCDecaux to revitalise public advertising and street furniture across the city. Through this joint venture, we will truly be putting Edinburgh on the map as a forward-thinking, creative Capital city."

Jean-François Decaux, Co-CEO of JCDecaux said, "JCDecaux is delighted to have been awarded this exclusive contract to be the media partner for the city of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city and a major financial, cultural and tourist hub. We look forward to working in partnership with Edinburgh to install well-designed and maintained street furniture and billboards, including the first digital screens in the city centre, benefiting residents, visitors and local businesses. JCDecaux works with cities across the world to create advertising-funded services that answer civic needs and enable brands to meet their communication goals."

The company won the bid after a competitive tendering process.



courtesy of Dublin City Council


Councillor hits back at MP's allegations



NOW UPDATED TO INCLUDE Ms Gilmore's reply

Following our [Five things you need to know today article](#) published this morning, (where we mentioned the local MP Sheila Gilmore's allegations that an Edinburgh councillor had not properly consulted with community groups to get their views) The Edinburgh Reporter has now had a meeting with Councillor Gavin Barrie, against whom the claims were made.

Ms Gilmore alleged that Councillor Barrie, the council's Regulatory Convener, had not consulted community groups about changes needed to the licensing scheme by which houses rented to several people who are not members of one family (for example student) are designated as Houses in Multiple Occupation. These houses are then subject to stringent safety standards, such as the fitting of smoke alarms.

 Councillor Barrie, SNP representative for Inverleith Ward, explained to us why it was not only unnecessary but also inappropriate for him to consult on the terms of the report being presented to the [Regulatory Committee](#) meeting on Monday 17 November: "The reason why we appear not to have consulted any groups is simple. This is a factual report about the legal ability of the council to have an 'overprovision' policy or not. The way the legislation is set out means that there is 'overprovision' and 'overcrowding' which are two different things.

"The regulatory committee meets on Monday to discuss only the

technicalities of what the council can or cannot do within the legal framework. Overprovision would be determined by circumstances where there were HMO properties on the market which landlords could not fill. That would suggest there is overprovision. We would then consider that the market is saturated and we would stop granting HMO licences if there were empty houses in a certain area.”

Councillor Barrie also explained to us that if there are several HMO properties in a street or a stair that is not necessarily ‘overprovision’. The regulations and the law by which the council’s decisions are made does not allow them to take that into account.

Barrie continued: “On Friday of this week there will be objections to some HMO applications on the basis that there are several HMOs already granted for a specific stair, but this is not a valid ground of objection.”

The councillor explained that in his role as Regulatory Convener he had already discussed with his Vice-convener, the Labour councillor Angela Blacklock, the wording of a motion calling for a further report looking at the social impact of HMOs and what current legislation might allow us to do in future. This is an addition to the recommendations made in the report (which we reproduce below).

Councillor Barrie asserted that this was done yesterday before the MP made her claims about him: “So Ms Gilmore completely pre-empted our actions on this, which were in the process of discussion by email between myself and my Vice-convener.

“The motion is not yet in the public domain, but the Capital Coalition motion was agreed yesterday and it will be presented to the Regulatory Committee meeting on Monday. It will call for the recommendations in the current report to be agreed, but will also call for a further report in three months time on which consultation will be necessary.

“In addition it is untrue to say that I have not ever spoken to Southside residents about this report. I attended a Living Southside meeting in September when I mentioned what would be happening in November. I explained that within this paper the social demographic of people living in HMO properties is changing and that it is no longer only students who live there. This is brought about as a result of social welfare changes. People on welfare benefits are now only able to live in an HMO property whereas previously they would have got their own flats.

“When I sat down after addressing the meeting, the lady next to me commented that this will ‘not happen in Marchmont or in the Southside yet as the rents are still too high here for people on benefits’.

“I completely refute the allegation made against me by Sheila Gilmore.

“There is no need to consult on a factual report. The fact is that I was invited to the Living Southside meeting and talked about the report that would be discussed at this month’s meeting. If people read the report they will understand that there is nothing to consult on. This is a factual paper and we will consult when we examine the social impact – which we have already decided to do.

“Lastly I have been made aware of an email which Ms Gilmore sent to three Labour members of the committee, asking them to take a course of action within the committee. The Regulatory Committee is a quasi-judicial committee and there have never been, nor ever will be party lines adopted in this committee. For someone in politics to try and interfere with the workings of a quasi-judicial committee is completely wrong, and this matter may be raised with The Standards Commission.

The Edinburgh Reporter asked Ms Gilmore for her comments which she emailed to us as follows:

Sorry for not getting back to you sooner. I have been out most of the day doing constituency visits.

I am delighted to hear that the Council will be consulting with community councils and other community organisations like the Southside Association and Living Southside on issues around HMOs. I know that people are very keen to see a broad review of the way in which a number of policies impact upon the aim of retaining balanced residential communities in our city. They are very anxious to ensure that there is real 'joined up' thinking and working across various parts of the council .

Although Councillor Barrie states that the Report coming to the regulatory committee on Monday 17th is purely a statement of the factual position, it does in fact contain a recommendation that the City of Edinburgh Council should NOT adopt an over provision policy. This is a new power which was made available to councils in 2011 amendments to the Housing (Scotland) 2006. The suggestion is that this would remain the position for a year at least. The precise wording of the recommendation the Committee is invited to consider is: 'Agrees that an overprovision policy is not justifiable at this time, but that it will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported to committee.'

The committee was being invited therefore to make a decision rather than simply note a factual report. In the light of the various meetings and debates which have been taking place in various parts of my constituency, and especially in the Southside I was concerned at such a decision being made in isolation from other relevant policies.

The recommendation proceeds on an interpretation of the 'overprovision' powers which I think is a very narrow one looking at levels of demand and the state of the market .

Interestingly other councils have interpreted the meaning of 'overprovision' somewhat differently. For example Dundee City Council has adopted a policy on overprovision as follows:

'With a view to preventing excessive concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in any area of the city, the Council have adopted a policy on the overprovision of HMOs.

This policy is to the effect that if there is a concentration of HMOs in any one particular Census Output Area (COA) in excess of 12.5% of qualifying residential properties in that COA, then the Licensing Committee will consider this to amount to overprovision of HMOs in that COA and may refuse a licence. '

Aberdeen Council in consulting on whether to implement an overprovision policy stated that:

'Applications could be considered as overprovision where the proportion of HMOS within the COA already exceeds, or would exceed, a fixed percentage of the total number of dwellings in that COA. '

The 2011 Act states that :

'In considering whether there is or would be overprovision for the purposes of subsection (1) in any locality, the local authority must have regard to—

*a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality,
b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation is required to meet that need,
c) such other matters as the Scottish Ministers may by order specify.*

Obviously it is up to every Council to reach its own view on whether an overprovision policy should be adopted, either for their whole area, or for small parts of it. This it seems to me is a policy decision which should be widely consulted upon, and where there are a number of arguments which may be made about how to balance 'need' and 'numbers'. Part of this debate would be whether a particular area may benefit from the application of an over provision policy, even if demand remained high elsewhere in the city. My call was simply for

that debate to be had with the widest possible consultation.

I understand that Councillor Barrie has suggested that this is a quasi judicial decision. When the Regulatory Committee is making a decision on individual applications then it is indeed operating in a quasi judicial capacity. However decisions on policies to be applied are not quasi judicial in nature . Similar situations arise in relation to the distinction between planning policies and planning decisions on specific applications.

I know that residents will be looking forward to taking part in consultation and debate with the Council.

Best wishes

Sheila Gilmore

http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/item_6.2___Review_of_HMO_market_17_11_14_FINALv3_1.pdf

Police investigate 'horrendous' sexual assault in Leith Links area



Police in Edinburgh are appealing for witnesses following a serious sexual assault in North of the city.

The incident happened around 1am today in the Leith Links area.

A 28-year-old woman was approached by a man who produced a knife before subjecting her to the attack.

The man then made off and the victim contacted police. Officers are now carrying out a thorough investigation of the scene.

Anyone who can assist with this ongoing enquiry is asked to come forward.

The suspect is described as being of Pakistani/South Asian appearance and wearing a grey hooded top and black tracksuit bottoms.

Detective Inspector Keith Fairbairn said: "This was a horrendous attack, which left the victim deeply distressed and she is now being supported by Police Scotland and other relevant partner agencies.

"The incident was carried out in a public area and we are keen to hear from anyone who was in or around Leith Links in the early hours of Thursday morning and saw anything suspicious.

"Similarly, anyone who recognises the description of the suspect, or who has any further information that can help us trace the man responsible is also asked to contact police immediately."

Chief Inspector Sara Buchanan said: "We understand that this incident may have an impact on the local community and so high-visibility patrols are currently being deployed within the Leith Links to engage with members of the public and offer reassurance.

"In addition officers will be liaising with relevant partner agencies to assist anyone affected by this attack.

"I would urge anyone who wishes to speak with an officer in relation to this incident to approach one of the officers at the scene, contact 101 or make an anonymous report via the

charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”

The Hibernian Tunnel aims to inspire players



The eagerly awaited unveiling of the first phase of the new Hibernian Tunnel has now been installed, ready to make its home debut against Queen of the South on Saturday 15 November, kick off 3pm.

The new-look Hibernian Tunnel will dramatically transform the look and feel of the area occupied by the players just before they step onto Easter Road's turf.

Special messages chosen by supporters will adorn the walls of the tunnel – firing up the Hibs' players minutes before kick-off to remind everybody about the privilege and responsibility associated with wearing a green shirt.

The club apologised to fans on their website for the delay and thank everybody who purchased a tunnel plaque for their phenomenal support and patience while the project was finalised

Meanwhile striker Dominique Malonga has flown out to join up with the Congo national squad for the African Cup of Nations qualifiers against Nigeria and Sudan and will therefore be unavailable for the visit of Queen of the South on Saturday.

Paris-born Malonga, who qualifies to represent Congo through his parents, was previously capped at under-19 level by France.

After scoring six goals in 10 appearances for Hibernian, Malonga was named in Congo's 26-man squad for the monumental clash against Nigeria in Group A.

In other news, Irish teenager Cody Mulhall returned to action for the Under 20s and scored a memorable late equaliser as Hibs recorded a creditable 1-1 draw against a strong and experienced Celtic team featuring Scotland striker Leigh Griffiths.

The highly rated youngster has been sidelined following a bad injury last year.

Witness appeal following Canongate armed robbery



Police in Edinburgh are appealing for witnesses following an armed robbery at a city centre shop.

The incident happened around 6.40pm yesterday (Wednesday) at the Canongate Store in the Canongate.

A 21-year-old man was working alone within when four men entered and brandished knives.

Two of the suspects then seized the till, which contained a large three-figure sum of cash. A plastic container containing a two-figure sum was also stolen before the men made off into Bulls Close where they were lost to sight.

Officers are now conducting local enquiries to identify those responsible and anyone who can assist with their investigation

is asked to come forward.

All of the men were wearing construction hats and facemasks covering their noses and mouths.

The first suspect is described as white, in his early twenties, 6ft tall with a medium build. He was wearing a high-vis jacket with a silver hooded top underneath and grey cotton bottoms.

The second suspect is describes as white and wearing a high-vis jacket with a hooded top underneath.

The third suspect is described as white, around 18-years-old, approximately 5ft 10ins tall and wearing a high-vis jacket.

The fourth suspect is described as white, around 16-years-old, approximately 5ft 4ins tall and wearing a black hooded top and bottoms.

Detective Constable Alison Wyllie said: "This was a terrifying ordeal for the shopkeeper, though, fortunately, he was not injured during the robbery.

"The suspects were distinctively dressed and so anyone who recognises their description or who remembers seeing anything suspicious in the are is urged to contact police immediately.

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

Cruising from Leith



Cruise and Maritime voyages are increasing the number of

cruise ships which depart from and return to Edinburgh next year, on their liner, Marco Polo, in its 50th anniversary year.

The company asked passengers what they wanted and are reacting to the demand for cruises leaving from a port as near to home as possible. This is an opportunity to bag a bargain for next summer as the company has some two for the price of one fares on departures from Dundee, and fares allowing the second passenger to travel for half price on the sailings from Port of Leith.

Here is the schedule for next year:

Marco Polo from Edinburgh – Leith

Depart 24 June on an 11 nights cruise to Iceland and Northern Isles visiting the Shetlands, Faroes, Westmann Islands, and Orkneys plus four Icelandic ports including overnight in the capital Reykjavik. Expect magnificent scenery and remarkable natural surroundings.

Prices are from £1219 for the first person and half price for the sharing second person (ie £609).

Depart 5 July on a 6 nights cruise to the Scottish Isles and Faroes. The cruise provides an ideal summer break calling in to the Faroes, Shetlands, Outer Hebrides and Orkneys, CMV's comprehensive choice of optional shore excursions ensures your time will be well spent.

Prices are from £669 for the first person and half price for the sharing second person (ie £339).

Depart 11 July on a 12 nights cruise to Baltic Cities & St.Petersburg. This itinerary takes you to Copenhagen, Helsinki, overnight in St. Petersburg, medieval Tallin in Estonia, Stockholm, and Fedrikstad for visiting Oslo. CMV's choice of optional excursions allows you to tick off your

bucket list of places and things you want to see. In Russia everyone with a British passport on a CMV excursion gets a group visa entry so you can avoid the cost of a visa and the application fee.

Prices are from £1339 for the first person and half price for the sharing second person (ie £669).

For full details of these and other itineraries go to www.cruiseandmaritime.com

Prices are per person based on two people sharing a standard twin inner cabin on a full board basis with afternoon teas, daytime activities and evening entertainment. Bookings must be made by 12 December 2014, are subject to availability and may be withdrawn without notice. Gratuities of £5pp per night will be debited to the onboard account.

Reservations Cruise & Maritime Voyages
(CMV) www.cruiseandmaritime.com 0844 414 6185

Thursday in Edinburgh – What's On Today




Firrhill Christmas Market: enjoy seasonal refreshments as you browse the fabulous stalls – crafts, gifts, cards, jewellery, cakes, decorations and much, much more...7.15-9.15pm, [Firrhill High School](#), 9 Oxfangs Road. Entrance £2, under 12s free.



Previously...Scotland's History Festival starts today! Talks, discussions, walks, tours, song, theatre; celebrate Robert Louis Stevenson, hear about The Kaiser's Spy in Scotland, experience a mediaeval concert at Rosslyn Chapel, learn how to write historical narratives at the City Art Centre, and be part of history in the Grassmarket when Chris Rutterford incorporates pictures of locals and visitors into a 64' outdoor mural. For details of these and many more events, see [Previously's website](#). Festival ends 30th November 2014.

Writing Your Story, Writing History, with RLS Fellows J David Simons and Chris Dolan. Robert Louis Stevenson was a master of writing the past to create wonderful stories such as *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Treasure Island*. To celebrate RLS Day, join this masterclass in writing narratives from the past, either through actual historical figures and events or through personal histories and memoir. 1.30-4pm, [City Art Centre](#), 2 Market Street. Free, but places are limited and must be booked via [eventbrite](#). Supported by Scottish Book Trust.

Amnesty International and Relief Theatre Present *Even If We Lose Our Lives* , exploring the difficulties faced by women in modern **Afghanistan** through the stories and words of **Parween**, founder of the only girls' school in Laghman province, **Manizha**, the American-raised organiser of a women's shelter, and **Dr D**, an anonymous gynaecologist operating in an unnamed province. Interviews were conducted by actor and human rights activist **Christine Bacon**. Each performance will be followed by a short talk and Q & A session led by Amnesty activists and other guest speakers. All proceeds will go to Amnesty International. Please note: this play includes references to violence and domestic and sexual abuse. 8-9.15pm tonight and 14th & 15th November, Cairns Lecture Theatre, [Summerhall](#), 1 Summerhall. Tickets £6/£5: book via

Summerhall's [website](#) or at the box office (0131 560 1581).

Bookbug: 30 minutes of rhymes and songs for very young children. 10.30-11.00am, [Oxgangs Library](#), 343 Oxgangs Road North.



Robert Louis Stevenson All-Day Reading: the Robert Louis Stevenson Club journeys with the travel writing of RLS – backpacking, canoeing, hiking with a donkey, crossing the Atlantic and Wild West and sailing the South Seas. 11am onwards – drop in or stay all day, [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), 43-45 High Street. Free and unticketed.

Share A Story: storytime for the under-5s. 10.30-11am today and every Thursday, [Morningside Library](#), 184 Morningside Road. No need to book – just come along!

Robert Louis Stevenson: Rare Pieces from the Collections: a chance to see rare material relating to RLS from the National Library's collections, including first editions and photographs. On display for a limited period today only. 11am-2pm, [National Library of Scotland](#), George IV Bridge. Free and unticketed.

Gaelic Songs and Rhymes for children and babies. 10.30am, [Leith Library](#), 28-30 Ferry Road. (Next session on 27th November at Blackhall Library.)

Tusitala's Colinton: tour Robert Louis Stevenson's Colinton following the new **Poetry Trail**, viewing the statue of a young RLS with the sculptor, and exploring RLS's haunts in the Manse garden. 11am-12.30pm, begins from [Triangle Public Garden](#) viewing point on Woodhall Road. To book call 0131 441 2537 or email ccct@colinton-conservation.org.uk.




Image courtesy of

Davide Panseri

Cafe Voices: Stevenson Stories. Join storyteller **Peter Snow** for an evening of RLS stories as part of the Storytelling Centre's monthly Cafe Voices session. 7-8pm, [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), 43-45 High Street. Tickets £5: book [online](#) or call the Centre's Box Office on 0131 556 9579.

Becoming Julie: My Incredible Journey – Julie Clarke launches her new book. Julie was born a boy in 1950s Scotland, but after battling her demons for many years she underwent transgender surgery in 2006 to become a woman: her 'poignant, funny and always honest' book charts her struggles along the way. 6.30-8.30pm, [Waterstones, George Street](#). Free tickets available in store: further details on 0131 225 3436.

Words and Deeds, Weapons and Wounding: Edinburgh  University's exhibition *Words and Deeds: Women, Warfare and Caregiving* explores the often neglected and understated story of women in warfare and was housed at **Surgeons' Hall Museum** in 2013. Subsequently a new exhibition has been developed by the Museum to be displayed in conjunction with the original exhibition. *Weapons and Wounding* highlights the severity of injuries, exploring the progression of weaponry and the ever increasing need for new medical and surgical techniques to cope with wounding in warfare. 10am-8pm Monday to Wednesday, 10am-5pm Thursday to Saturday, [Leith Library](#), 28-30 Ferry Road. Closes 29th November 2014.

Pass On a Poem: 'a chance to explore poetry in a beautifully bookish though wonderfully informal setting.' Read a favourite published poem aloud, or just come along to listen to a diverse collection at this live poetry event. No previous experience of poetry or reading live required! If you know what you want to read, email the shop with details and they will add you to the list. 6.30pm, [Golden Hare Books](#), 68 St Stephen Street.

Royal Mile Walking Tour: Walking tour of the Royal Mile, from the Castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, led by **Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides**. 10am-12 noon, today and every day to 30th November 2014, starting from the foyer of [The Hub](#). Booking is essential and tickets are £3/£1: contact George Laing on 0131 334 8490 or gklaing@aol.com. Part of Previously...Scotland's History Festival.

Live Music Now: Laura Margaret Smith (mezzo-soprano) and **Geoffrey Tanti** (piano) perform *A Castle Mills Suite*, a new cycle of songs by **John Maxwell Geddes**, commissioned as part of the World War One Centenary Art Commissions. 6-6.30pm, [Scottish National Portrait Gallery](#), 1 Queen Street. Free and unticketed.



Image courtesy of
Lufke

Censoring Creativity: From Plato to Bach. Professor **Stephen Rose**, Royal Holloway College, University of London, will speak on this topic in the University of Edinburgh's **Music Research Seminars series**. The talk will be followed by a Q & A session and a drinks reception. 5.15-6.15pm, Lecture Room A, 2nd Floor, Alison House, Nicolson Square. All welcome. For more information or any special access requirements contact a.c.davison@ed.ac.uk.

Generation DJ Set: Loops Haunt. Residing deep in the Scottish countryside Scott Gordon 'Loops Haunt' has been producing experimental electronic and audiovisual artwork since 2003. His sound often encompasses ineffable ambiances and rugged industrial sounds sculpted into structure. For **GENERATION By Night**, Loops will offer a site-specific set, responding to the artworks on display and the theme of GENERATION: 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland. 6pm, [Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art ONE](#), Belford Road. Free and unticketed.

Artist Talk: Ross Sinclair. Ross will talk about the process of re-staging *Real Life Rocky Mountain*, before performing as part of it. 6pm, [Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art ONE](#), Belford Road. Free and unticketed. Part of GENERATION By Night.

Portrait Gallery Insights: George Jamesone, Scotland's First Portrait Painter. Kate Anderson, Senior Curator at the Portrait Gallery, discusses the life and work of George Jamesone. Jamesone was a key figure in the development of portrait painting in Scotland; he was the first great native-born artist in a profession dominated by foreigners. 5.30-6pm, [Scottish National Portrait Gallery](#), 1 Queen Street. Free, but places are limited and should be booked by calling 0131 624 6560.

The Drawing Room: an informal artist-led drawing session. Each session is developed by a contemporary artist and is inspired by the GENERATION exhibition, whilst also reflecting concerns in the artist's own work. All materials supplied: no experience necessary. 5.30-6.45pm, [Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art ONE](#), Belford Road. Free and unticketed. Part of GENERATION By Night.

Write On! a new free writing group for people in South Edinburgh who would like to try something new or develop their creative writing. A friendly, supportive group offering planned writing sessions, structured around prompts to kickstart your imagination. Interests in all kinds of writing, including **poetry**, **prose** and **memoir** welcome, as are people completely new to creative writing. The group is about **writing for pleasure** rather than critiquing writing styles. 3.30pm today and every Thursday until 11th December 2014, [Tynecastle Community Wing](#), Tynecastle High School, McLeod Street. Advance registration essential: contact Rose at [Health All Round](#) for more information: 0131 337 1376 or Rose@healthallround.org.uk.

Communities for Conservation: Food and Mood Workshop. Join

this workshop to learn more about a healthy, balanced diet. A fun and interactive session looking at the role of fats, sugar and salt. 11am-1pm, [ELREC](#) (Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council), 14 Forth Street. Book your free place via [eventbrite](#), email JGaunand@elrec.org.uk or call 0131 556 0441.

India in the Archives: The Royal Society for Asian Affairs India Collection. Renowned historian of colonial Lucknow **Dr Rosie Llwellyn-Jones** will present material from the Collection. 4-5.30pm. Sidney Smith Lecture Theatre, Medical School, Teviot Place, Doorway 1, Room 2.520, [University of Edinburgh](#). One of a series of seminars arranged by the [Centre for South Asian Studies](#).



Ecumenical Friends at St Cuthbert's. Charles J Burnett: Heraldry – the Shorthand of History. Everyone warmly welcome; bring your own packed lunch, tea and coffee provided. 12.30-2pm, [St Cuthbert's Parish Church](#), Lothian Road. £1.50 per person. Organised by Edinburgh City Centre Churches TOGETHER.

Kirk O'Field Coffee Morning: Edinburgh Food Initiative food co-op selling **fresh fruit and vegetables**, **sale table** with new and nearly-new goods – as well as **teas, coffees**, and the **renowned bran scones and butteries!** 10.30am-12 noon today and every second and fourth Thursday in the month, [Kirk o'Field Parish Church](#), 140 The Pleasance.



Dancing Mice Album Launch: 'Eroded takes in electronic pop, weird folk, psychedelia, and post punk, melding them into a quirky, erudite style with some cool pop hooks'. Plus guests **Sacre Noir**: Scottish-based electronica three-piece, and **PAL**: pop/new wave influences and songs in German.

7pm, [Henry's Cellar Bar](#), 16a Morrison Street. Free entry.

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



MP slams council review of HMO properties

Robert Louis Stevenson Day

Autumn Fair

Ceilidh

Law Society of Scotland video

Sheila Gilmore, MP for Edinburgh East, has criticised a review of Edinburgh's HMO market for failing to consult with community groups who have called for a changes to the licensing regime.

Ordered by regulatory convenor Councillor Gavin Barrie, the review is up for approval in a report which will be considered by Councillors on Monday. That report claims that while the number of HMO licenses in the city is at an all time high, the number of new licenses granted has plateaued in recent years. The report was based on consultation responses from tenants groups, letting agents and landlords, but makes no mention of contact with community councils and organisations in affected areas.

Using 'heatmaps' the report shows there are high numbers of

licenses already granted in the Southside, Tollcross, Marchmont and Leith Walk, but recommends the council makes no use of new powers to establish 'over-provision zones' because there is still market demand for licensed properties.

Community groups across the city, including those in the Southside in Ms Gilmore's constituency, have become increasingly concerned that the number of proposals student accommodation going before planners have gone before planners while no action has been taken by city officials to better manage the number of HMOs granted in 'hotspots' identified in the heatmaps.

Commenting on the report, Ms Gilmore said:

'Community groups in my constituency, such as Living Southside, have been asking to get round the table to discuss the HMO market for months, but they have not been given any opportunity to provide feedback as part of the review. One group, Living Southside, sat through a meeting with Cllr Barrie in September about this very issue, but the review, and any input they could have, was not mentioned once.

'The review has consulted tenants groups, letting agents and landlords views who have reported there is demand on a city wide basis. But in doing so it has failed to consult with community groups who identify there is acute over-provision in parts of the city.

'Allowing further unfettered access to hotspots where HMO numbers are already high is a decision which cannot be taken lightly. This decision cannot be taken in isolation. Any decision needs to be taken in conjunction with local residents and in cooperation other council departments, such as housing and planning, who have a stake in this issue.

'Consultation must be reopened so that residents and community groups can have their say, and feedback if they think the Council should employ new powers to introduce overprovision

zones'.

Today is Robert Louis Stevenson Day and if you go along to the National Library on George IV Bridge between 11am and 2pm you will be able to see their Stevenson exhibits up close as the curators bring them out for display. No booking, but tweet like mad today using the hashtag #RLSDay

Later today there is an Evening with Robert Louis Stevenson at the Laigh Hall organised by Edinburgh Napier University.

An evening discussion about Robert Louis Stevenson hosted by Louise Welsh and Nigel Planer.

Full Details

□Round off your celebration of RLS Day by joining us for an hour of lively discussion with Q&A about Stevenson, his life, work and travels with Glasgow-based author Louise Welsh and actor, comedian, novelist and playwright Nigel Planer. The event is hosted by Edinburgh Napier University's Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW), in partnership with the UNESCO City of Literature Trust. The event will begin at 6.30, lasting approximately 1 hour. The audience is invited to arrive from 6.00pm to allow for a timely start to proceedings.

Location and Time

6.30pm to 7.30pm

Laigh Hall, The Faculty of Advocates, Parliament House, Edinburgh EH 1RF

Cost

£7.00

✖ ***

Gica Loening is hosting a St Andrews Day **Porty Ceilidh for all the family** at The Wash House Community Centre on 30 November from 3.30 to 5.30pm.

Tickets £6 Adults, £4 Children (under fives free) – for sale at The Wild Flower Shop. 90 Portobello High Street or at the door.

Need to know how to complain about a Scottish Solicitor? The Law Society of Scotland have produced this video to help you.

Alex Salmond's last First Minister's Questions



First Minister Alex Salmond is in the last days of his role at the helm of The Scottish Government, and today he will face the Labour, Conservatives and LibDems at First Minister's Questions (FMQs) for the last time. He will stand down as leader of the SNP and as First Minister at the SNP conference this weekend.

There have been few occasions in the last seven years when he has found himself on the back foot in the Holyrood Debating Chamber and there is little doubt that today will be any different. You can watch FMQs live [here](#) on the Scottish Parliament website.

The questions tabled for the First Minister today are these:

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

1. Jackie Baillie: To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-02376)

2. Ruth Davidson: *To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister. (S4F-02375)*

3. Angus MacDonald: *To ask the First Minister what response he has received from the Prime Minister to his recent correspondence regarding European Council fisheries negotiations. (S4F-02378)*

4. Kenneth Gibson: *To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government considers that the devolution of health and safety legislation would lead to more prosecutions where serious injury or death has occurred. (S4F-02379)*

5. Graeme Pearson: *To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the Law Society of Scotland's discussion paper, Legal Assistance in Scotland, which says that the current system is not fit for purpose. (S4F-02386)*

6. Alison Johnstone: *To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's position is on underground coal gasification and whether any licences have been granted for exploration. (S4F-02392)*

When quizzed at a press conference at Bute House yesterday as to whether he will miss the First Ministerial podium and FMQs, he answered: "Yes I will miss it greatly. I love FMQs and I love the Scottish Parliament. I think the Scottish Parliament has emerged as the dominant political forum of Scotland not just in the last seven years, but over the period since 1999. We take that for granted now. We take that as an obvious statement but it was by no means taken for granted when the Parliament was reconvened in 1999. It is now the dominating force in Scottish Policitoics and the credit for that goes not to one administration or one First Minister but to all members of the Scottish Parliament. Of course not all requests or

demands can be satisfied but the people have a voice. There are very few parliaments which have that level of transparency. I look forward to watching FMQs instead of participating.

Questioned later as to his statement that the referendum was a once in a generation opportunity he appeared to have strayed from his original position, in light of the referendum result perhaps, when he replied: "I would say that although the Yes vote didn't win the referendum, I think Scotland is in a position to gain very substantially from that process.

"I do believe that Scotland will become an independent country and I think we are on a pathway which has been reinforced by events of the last year."

Asked whether he shared the First Minister in waiting's view that she will live to see an independent Scotland the First Minister confirmed that he thought that Scotland will be independent within his lifetime, saying: "Oh yes, I don't have any intention of finding myself in a position where I could be less ambitious than Miss Sturgeon!"

As to whether the former MP will now return to Westminster, as widely predicted, he would not be drawn. This was not really the time or the place. Although today may be Alex Salmond's last stand as SNP leader and First Minister in the Debating Chamber, he remains an MSP and we will all have to wait his next press conference for any future announcements of note.

Ruskin letters sold for double estimated price



Yesterday Bonhams in London sold letters sent by John Ruskin to his wife Effie Gray, who provided the inspiration for Emma Thompson's new [film](#), for £88,900 which was more than twice the estimated price. The seventy-five signed letters were sold to an anonymous telephone bidder.

Interest in the love-triangle of John Ruskin, Effie Gray and John Everett Millais is particularly high due to the recent release of the hit film, [Effie Gray](#). The doomed marriage of Ruskin and Gray, his coldness towards her and her affair with the artist John Everett Millais, undeniably provide a compelling story, and this Victorian scandal has long captured the public's imagination. It was the subject of the 1912 silent film *The Love of John Ruskin*, the 1975 BBC series *The Love School* starring Peter Egan, and numerous stage plays.

The fascinating series of letters which were auctioned at Bonhams provides an uncensored and previously inaccessible insight into the dark heart of Ruskin's blackest years, revealing the complexity of his character. Pertaining to such a distinguished writer, art critic and social theorist, the letters constitute an invaluable literary resource.

Although written to a priest, many of Ruskin's letters digressed from the subjects of the Church and the Lord's Prayer, instead imparting the anguished confessions of a man lamenting the folly of his engagement: 'I married like a fool, because a girl's face pleased me. She married me for my money, breaking her faith to a poor lover.'

Effie Gray's broken-hearted lover was just one whose life was ruined by contact with the cursed marriage. In another letter from the collection, Ruskin referred obliquely to Rose La Touche, the cherished student and pre-Raphaelite ideal with whom he subsequently fell in love, and related how his

separation from Effie corrupted that relationship: 'in the last ten years, and especially in the last year, my *life* has been set on a cast – and that of a righteous girl with it. – And both are destroyed.'

But the profound misery evident in these letters is matched by a hard vindictiveness. One letter betrayed the ruthlessness, even cruelty, of its writer as he informed Malleon: 'The first condition of my keeping friends with anybody is that when I ask them to do a thing, they should do it. If – without showing just reason – they twice give me trouble to ask twice, I have done with them.'

Matthew Haley, Head of the Bonhams Book Department, said: 'The letters are a vivid reminder that there was passion and tumult underneath the outward formality of the Victorians. Here we see the bitterness and regret that haunted Ruskin throughout his life.'

Federation of Small Businesses Annual Dinner



The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) held their annual dinner tonight in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. They listened to a speech by the Secretary of State for Scotland, Alistair Carmichael who brought the business owners up to speed on the UK Government plans for them between now and the General Election.

Tickets were £50 for members and £80 for non-members, but in a curious twist (can someone explain this to us please? – the event is sponsored by Edinburgh College – and has been for four years now.

Photo courtesy of Charmaine Gittens

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facebook.com/cgphotographyandmakeup

Man missing from the West End

✖ A man has been reported missing this evening to Edinburgh Police and they require help in tracing his movements since he was last seen around 8am in the West End.

Jamie Buchanan from Morrison Street has not returned home or made contact with anyone since this time.

Concern is now growing for Jamie's well being and anyone who can assist in locating him is asked to come forward.

He is described white, around 6ft tall with a slim build and short light brown hair. He was last seen wearing a black jacket, jeans and white/mint green hi-top trainers and a snap-back baseball cap.

Inspector Gill Geany said: "Jamie's disappearance is out of character and we are obviously eager to establish his whereabouts as soon as possible.

"Anyone who believes they have seen him since Wednesday morning is asked to contact police immediately.

"I would also urge Jamie to get in touch with a family member, friend or with police to let us know he is safe and well."

Those with information can contact Police Scotland on 101.

A Friday morning at Castlebrae Community High School



Castlebrae Community High School in Craigmillar was threatened with closure until the [Save the Brae group](#) got into full swing in March 2013 and managed to persuade the council to keep it open.

At that date the school roll had fallen over the previous ten years to 198 pupils in 2012/13 and council officers recommended that the remaining pupils were moved to Liberton High School or Portobello High School with suitable transport put in place.

Following the decision to retain what activists regarded as a community asset, the council set out clear measures for assessing whether the school is a success: one of those is improved attainment and achievement, and an increase in community activity in the school.

Recently the school adopted a new uniform, which all pupils were encouraged to wear with pride when the new interim headteacher was appointed for this school year. In 2013 the council set aside additional funds to allow new staff to be recruited and to improve the physical surroundings. Part of the school buildings are closed off to pupils to allow any improvements to be concentrated on areas which are used most.

This year there was a set back in the school's progress when headteacher Derek Curran was removed from his post due to

allegations of domestic abuse. He was arrested and charged in this connection in July this year.

The new headteacher, Norma Prentice who was head at Drummond Community High School in the city centre was given a warm welcome when she took charge this summer. She has a great deal of management experience of a community school and is contracted to run it until summer 2015.

The Edinburgh Reporter went along one Friday to see what goes on. There are classes for pupils as well as adult learners all going on at the same time.

[Castlebrae Community High School](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The council had already gone through a consultation process and had clearly listened to the community. Local politicians Sheila Gilmore and Kezia Dugdale issued a joint statement praising the action group : “Campaigners will be relieved their hard work has paid off. Save the Brae should be congratulated for their tenacity in refusing to back down. Parents and pupils kept up the pressure on the administration despite misleading claims about poor outcomes and educational performance.

“Contrary to some suggestions that few responses were received in response to the consultation, the community came together to make their views known and were able to show Councillors that the school is an integral part of local community life.”

The council adopted an action plan in December 2013 highlighting the positive developments at Castlebrae during the year, and also took some steps to help the school move forward. The plan was devised by an action group made up of senior education officers, teachers and councillors.

Some of the vocational courses offered at Castlebrae appear to

be good grounding for jobs after school. The pupils run a cafe called Red which allows them to plan menus, do the cooking and serving as well as add up the bill for those eating at the lunchtime venue correctly, thus combining arithmetic, English and cooking all in one project.

There is a hairdressing salon where you can make an appointment to have your hair done at bargain prices. Local people also use the fitness suite and the craftworks area or the art department for their own projects. It is true to say that the school roll has fallen a little this year, but all the pupils we met were very polite – and mostly they were wearing their new uniforms!

The school newsletter, Mrs Prentice's first, has a wealth of information for those considering Castlebrae for their children next year, and shows much more than our snapshot of one morning can possibly do! Read it here:

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Castlebrae-Newsletter.pdf>

In 2011 HM Inspectorate of Education had examined the school when they reported that in key areas the school was either satisfactory or weak. They believed then that young people were not making enough progress, that the quality of some courses and programmes was not consistently high enough and that better arrangements for pupils transferring from school to work should be made.

The inspectorate visited the school again in May 2013 and found that the pupils were “increasingly taking responsibility for their learning and contributing to the life and work of the school” but that there was still not enough improvement in attainment levels and the school needed to do more to plan its improvement. A further examination will be carried out within 18 months – so presumably that could well be imminent.



Is the 'sad clown' image myth or reality?



The myth of the sad clown is a pervasive and enduring one, but is there any truth to it? Robin Ince, comedian and broadcaster, explores this common perception in a Radio 4 Documentary "Tears of A Clown". The show is both frank and funny, and provides a bountiful amount of food for thought.

It features the well-known voices of comedians such as Stephen Fry, Kenneth Williams, Jo Brand and Josie Long. It also includes hilarious clips from the man who has brought this subject to the fore, Robin Williams.

Williams' recent suicide rocked the world of comedy, and brought sadness and disbelief to his legions of fans across the world. Robin Ince explores the subject in a sensitive and honest way. He discusses the relationship between comedians and mental health, with input from comedians and academics, biographers and psychotherapists.

Edinburgh is arguably the spiritual home of countless comedians, and every August we share our city with many of these self-confessed clowns. I've been fortunate enough to spend time with many comedians over the years, and yes, lots of them exhibit self-doubt, and a need for approval and admiration, but don't we all? Isn't that just part of the human condition? On the whole, those I have met have dark moments and yet they also express the pleasure of spending their lives doing a job that they love.

As comedian Josie Long succinctly puts it in the documentary, her comedic performance "doesn't just come from tragedy, it also comes from a natural, joyful propensity for showing off."

I asked Robin why he thinks the sad clown myth is so prevalent and persistent. "I think one reason is the idea of dramatic irony – 'oh look, that human that makes so many people laugh is actually miserable' – this means that it is a better story for documentary makers – so Kenneth Williams or Tony Hancock are focused on, rather than other comedians who were just jolly, as that is not such a sustainable and alluring narrative. Also, comedians express what lies within them (or at least some of them do), so Simon Amstell can stand on stage and talk of existential angst; most people do not have such access to expressing themselves so specifically."

A particular highlight of the programme is the no-holds barred honesty of the comedian Jo Brand. She is well known for her sardonic humour, but her experience as a psychiatric nurse means she is uniquely placed to comment on this subject with a greater degree of knowledge and empathy than most stand-ups.

She muses: "I think there must be something in clichés or they wouldn't be clichés. I think comedians are quite emotionally disturbed people, there is an over representation of comedians who have lost a parent when young." "These sort of catastrophic events do not bode well for future mental health." she says, with characteristic dryness.

Jo Brand, for all of her sardonic wit, speaks eloquently and intelligently about both the theory and the human experience of mental health. She explains that human beings and their mental health is a complex issue, and she considers whether the 'tears of a clown' perception, although it holds a grain of truth, falls short of telling the full story.

Robin Ince agrees with this, saying: "There are comedians who have been racked with demons, but there are stand ups who perform well into their eighties, such as Bob Hope and Groucho Marks."

The show is by no means sad or depressive in tone. Hilarious

clips from various comedians, particularly Robin Williams, ensure it is light, entertaining and yet accurate.

Robin Ince ensures there is a balanced, objective view by asking the professionals in the field of mental health to provide their take on the subject. Some recent academic findings found comedians measured high on both depressive and manic facets of personality.

Robin Ince agrees: "The life of a stand up is a self - inflicted bi-polar life of extremes. You can go on stage and have incredible highs, then you're alone in a hotel. These self- imposed extremes of highs and lows can put you in a mental place that perhaps is not the best place for humans to be."

Josie Long is particularly honest and insightful in her description of the mental stresses and strains of the life of a stand-up. "It can be very hard to cope with putting yourself out there to criticism" she admits. The added stress of being funny when, frankly, you are having a bad day must add an extra layer of stress that the majority of us don't have to deal with. Most of us can retreat into the haven of our family and friends if low mood or other mental health issue occurs. Those in the public eye don't have this luxury. The tour dates are booked, the audience waits expectantly. The comedian seems to feel, rightly or wrongly, that 'the show must go on'. Audiences, particularly the discerning Edinburgh audience, can be quick to register their disapproval if they feel their chosen performance does not meet their own subjective, individual view of what is funny. Comedian Barry Cryer admits, "Its brutal, you are naked. If you don't make them laugh, you're dead."

But, to look at it another way, it's not just performers who experience cognitive dissonance in their everyday lives, we all do to some extent. Does stand -up comedy allow a creative outlet for this common issue? Robin Ince describes the

Edinburgh Fringe show 'Cheaper than Therapy' where stand ups explore and share their experience of therapy and the idea of stand up as their therapy. He describes stand-up as both 'the disease and the cure', and admits to being one of those for whom comedy is in the blood, a way of life, something that he has to do.

The Edinburgh Reporter asked what helps him during these extremes of high and low. "I think what keeps me grounded is a mixture of the needs of my family, especially my son; plus I can be grounded by my fortune that what antagonises me can be expressed nightly."

Could it be that emotional difficulties and mental health problems are common among the population, but performers are more willing than most to express it?

Robin replies: "We are hopefully approaching a stage where people can be more honest and less embarrassed by mental health issues, the mind and brain is being increasingly understood as is what leads to depression and bipolar etc. but there is a way to go. It does seem that odd childhoods and problems are common amongst artists, but that doesn't mean such things are exclusive to them"

How much does the media contribute to this common perception? Ince and his guests assert that recent TV documentaries depicting the lives of comedians Frankie Howerd, Kenneth Williams, are less than balanced, protesting "There was hardly any hint that Frankie Howerd was funny".

Robin Ince freely admits that he is not reaching any definite conclusion on the subject," I think there are no definite answers, but I will keep pondering and I am always fascinated by any new psychological paper, though sometimes it may reveal more about the psychologist's presumptions."

"After doing the documentary, I think comedians are surprisingly mentally healthy. They are often oddballs, and

the highs and lows may seem exaggerated by the extreme nature of energetic showing off for two hours a night then silence in a soulless hotel, but the ability to return to the stage night after night, whatever might have happened the previous day, seems to show a more effective carapace than we might imagine.”

The Documentary Tears of a Clown is available as a BBC Radio 4 Podcast at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04n20v4>

See robinince.com for details of Robin Ince on Tour in UK, Australia and US.

If you need to talk to someone about anything which is troubling you, then the Samaritans have a 24/7 helpline T 08457 90 90 90 or [click here](#) for details of a number of other organisations who offer help and counselling.



Skoogmusic is crowdfunding!

University of Edinburgh spin-out transitions from education to mainstream with the launch of the Skoog 2.0

Having spent the last four years exporting their products to schools worldwide, Edinburgh-based Skoogmusic is tackling the mainstream consumer market.

With around nearly 2,000 Skoogs in schools from the UK to Australia and Hong Kong to the US, the founders of Skoogmusic,

Ben Schögler and David Skulina, have created a new product for anyone to enjoy, and have launched it on crowdfunding site indiegogo.com today.

The Skoog, is an innovative, accessible, musical instrument for everyone, and was initially developed to help children with disabilities enjoy and play music. Roughly hand sized, the soft, squeezable Skoog allows users to 'play' a wide range of instruments, or sounds that they've recorded themselves; and in 2009 it was included by Local Education Authorities and Music Hubs as part of the Special Education Needs and mainstream music curriculum.

"The Skoog is essentially every musical instrument in one small squeezable cube," said Ben Schögler, Creative Director at Skoogmusic.

"At some point in their life everyone has wanted to make music – whether it be by the traditional route of learning an instrument, which can be hard, or by simply tapping a beat on a worktop. Being musical is in all of us in one form or other.

"We've spent the last four years developing the product for the education market, and taking on board feedback from teachers and parents – but at the same time we've been working towards creating Skoog 2.0 for mainstream consumers," he said.

Like the original version, the new Skoog still has the same tactile multi-dimensional control over sound, but the new, smaller Skoog is now multi touch – meaning all five surfaces can be played at once. It's also wireless, iOS compatible and comes with its own music-making app.

"We've really considered what users want from Skoog 2.0," continued David Skulina, Chief Technology Officer at Skoogmusic.

"From technology early adaptors, to parents and even DJs we've

asked people what they want to achieve from Skoog – and built it in. We've even developed an app for the new Skoog called Mogo, which gives Skoog 2.0 the high quality sound of the original Moog synthesizers – all under your control. The possibilities for creating music, from one little box are endless, and fun.

“To have something that gives a direct connection between movement and sound is exciting. Anyone can experience what it's like to create music – whether you want to play electronic music, brass, string, woodwind, percussion, or record your own sounds.

“Launching on indiegogo.com will allow us to finance the next stage of the product's development and continue to ensure that Skoog 2.0 is both at the cutting edge of technology and delivers tactile, immersive musical functionality for everyone – and grow the business,” he said.

Submitted by [Natasha Loble](#)



Mind Your Language – It's Apparently Christmas...



Today's society does like to use acronyms in everyday language. In an age of instant communication there seems to be an almost over-bearing laissez-faire attitude to the use of the English language. Perhaps it's yet another sign of my aging process but I received an email from someone the other

day which they ended with TY and their name. Folk of my daughters age do not hesitate to tell me this is 'shorthand' for Thank You. Now you may think I'm being old fashioned here but this irritated me greatly. Any appreciation I may have had for this person showing a molecule of gratitude disappeared when I realised they couldn't be bothered to type the words 'thank you'.

Among the many banal comments on the social networking site Facebook, the tendency for people to type omg seems to be growing. Some people use it twice as in 'omg omg I can't believe what's happening in the X Factor.' Now to me – and I suspect I'm not alone – this may well as well be a foreign language. My younger daughter Michaela tells me omg is an acronym for Oh My God. This appears to be yet another Americanism to have crossed the pond to our shores and is another that irritates me greatly.

Not so long ago when someone told you good news, you might expect to say "congratulations". This would be the polite way to react if, for an example, someone said that she was going to have a baby. Now it seems not only acceptable but a requirement of young people to shriek 'Oh My God!!!'

Although the phrase has the word "God" in it, it has now become so frequently used that most people don't associate it with religion. This means people use it whether they're religious or not. Now, I'm not a religious person by any manner of means but the use of the word God in everyday language with it not having any religious meaning is another abuse of the English language. For which I blame the Americans...

Add to this the fact that most towns and cities in Scotland now have their Christmas lights adorning their High streets – six weeks before Christmas – and you may appreciate why a part of me yearns for years gone by. I write this rant after a hard day at the office, having consciously avoided heading towards

the thronging masses of Edinburgh's Princes Street. Some people in Leith already have their Christmas trees up and lights blazing in their windows – I kid you not, dear reader. We have not yet reached the halfway point in November. How many of those so eager to scream Happy Christmas from their houses will actually go to church services on Christmas Eve? In fact, how many go to church at all? It seems to me that many people are not celebrating the birth of Christ but the time of the year when they can spend money they haven't got, scoff food that isn't particularly good for them and guzzle copious amounts of alcohol which will inevitably lead to unacceptable and in some cases embarrassing behaviour.

They're encouraged by the relentless advertising of 'the build-up to Christmas' on television. Already tonight I've seen Tesco's telling us it's time to put our party hearts on, Sainsbury's saying it's a time for sharing and the infuriating Coca-Cola advertisement with a big red truck with the picture of Santa emblazoned on the side trundling through town. No mention of Christmas on the Coca-Cola advert – just yet another Americanisation 'the holidays are coming...' Someone please tell me I haven't slept through an entire month and it's still mid November – not mid December.

I know this will come across as yet another rant from a grumpy old man. And it is. Or as my daughters may put it on Facebook *'OMG, Dad is in one of his moods again. Hope I don't c him b4 I go Xmas shopping. LOL'*

But if anyone out there has a degree of sympathy for me, I would like to say thank you. Or, in today's language TY.....

Mike 'The Grinch' Smith

Celebrating Jaco: The Music of Jaco Pastorius – SNJO at The Queen's Hall



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The name of **Jaco Pastorius** is legendary in the jazz world; one of the few musicians who can be recognised by their first name alone. Pastorius was a musical genius who effectively reinvented the playing of bass guitar, bringing the bass from an anonymous role in the rhythm section to the front of the stage. A multi-instrumentalist, he initially played drums but soon moved to upright acoustic and electric bass as a teenager. In 1976 he produced an eponymous and ground-breaking first album where he redefined the art of electric bass guitar, combining astonishing technical skill with speed, creativity and musical sensitivity.



Weather Report at Shinjuku
Kosei Nenkin Hall, 1981

Pastorius played bass with the seminal jazz-rock band **Weather Report**, before recording his second solo album, *Word of Mouth*, with his own big band. He was one of the few musicians to cross the jazz-popular music divide with success, making two influential recordings playing bass for **Joni Mitchell** on her *Hejira* and *Shadows and Light* albums. Unfortunately, the

incredibly talented Pastorius also suffered from bipolar disorder. His mental health and career disintegrated rapidly in his thirties leading to his tragic and premature death at the early age of 35.

Over the last few years, the **Scottish National Jazz Orchestra (SNJO)** has performed a number of highly successful collaborations, supporting internationally acclaimed jazz musicians in celebrating the works of the jazz masters. The SNJO celebrated its anniversary this year, twenty years after its formation by the internationally recognised Scottish tenor sax player, **Tommy Smith**. This November, the SNJO set out on a short tour celebrating the works of Jaco Pastorius with the virtuoso bass player, **Laurence Cottle**.



Laurence Cottle

Cottle is highly regarded and an ideal musician to celebrate Pastorius, having had a successful career in both jazz and rock worlds, and gaining huge respect for his bass-playing talent and musicianship. Cottle was born in Swansea and quickly grew into jazz through his family, initially playing trombone in his father's traditional jazz band, before moving on to electric bass and his own rock bands.

He played in a number of highly respected bands, including **Bill Bruford's Earthworks**, and even (whisper it) recording as the session bassist throughout **Black Sabbath's** *Headless Cross* album.

In a highly varied career he also managed to write a number of commercially successful tunes, including the themes from the TV shows **Friends** and **Third Rock From The Sun**. Hearing Jaco Pastorius' first album was a life-changing experience for Cottle. Cottle later joked that he would have stopped playing bass if he'd realised quite how good the album was.

Cottle actually met the famous bass player as a teenage while

studying music at **Berklee College of Music in Boston**, and managed to spend the afternoon and evening with Pastorius, juggling foam balls on Boston Common before Pastorius' concert, and later listening to a pre-release copy of the *Word of Mouth* album with Pastorius and friends. He is a highly talented musician and arranger, and has worked with his own big band on a number of arrangements and performances of Pastorius' work.

All of this sets the stage for Friday's first performance by Cottle and the SNJO at Edinburgh's **Queen's Hall**. Tommy Smith brought in Cottle, with virtuoso English jazz flautist **Gareth Lockrane** and Argentinian maestro percussionist **Marcio Doctor**, to celebrate the works of Jaco Pastorius with the orchestra. They played Cottle's own, new, arrangements of Pastorius' work, including both Pastorius original compositions, and pieces composed by other jazz musicians but which will be forever associated with Pastorius.

Cottle's arrangements provided the perfect balance, allowing the SNJO to show their power while simultaneously focusing on Cottle's (and Pastorius') bass lines. Cottle's five-string bass playing was mesmeric, delivering stunning bass riffs and solos at speed with utmost precision, while clearly enjoying every minute as much as the audience. Meanwhile, Lockrane provided a number of intricate solos on flute, bass flute and piccolo, and Doctor (unfortunately hidden out of sight at the back of the stage) completed the 1970s jazz-rock theme with a Latin slant to the sound of the jazz orchestra.

Cottle's arrangements allowed the excellent SNJO band line-up to showcase their own musicianship through a number of stunning solos. The performance included featured solos from Tommy Smith on tenor in *Punk Jazz*, and **Tom Walsh** on trumpet in *Scent of a Secret*, and a number of individual solos including **Alyn Cosker** on drums, **Paul Harrison** on piano, **Martin Kershaw** and **Paul Towndrow** on altos, **Tom MacNiven** on trumpet, and **Chris Greive**, **Phil O'Malley** and **Keiran McLeod** on trombones.

The evening was completed with an electric, almost rock and roll solo from tenor **Konrad Wiszniewski** during the encore *Chicken*; a tune made famous by, and synonymous with Pastorius, although written some years earlier by **Pee Wee Ellis**. This iconic Pastorius tune brought to end a fantastic evening and a huge success for the SNJO, Tommy Smith, and Laurence Cottle.



Review: The Kite Runner at King's Theatre



Khaled Hosseini's acclaimed tale of guilt and salvaging redemption through the eyes of Afghan children, *The Kite Runner*, has had its fair share of adaptations over the years. Adding to a list that's already bursting at the seams, is Matthew Spangler's startling stage production. It arrives at Edinburgh's King's Theatre in the capable hands of the Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company; soaring as it should.

An Afghan refugee living in America looks back upon his life and the bonds he has made. He looks back to his time in Kabul with his childhood friend; flying kites over the city in competitions and developing a brother-like relationship; that seems to fall apart as easily as it came together.

Scored almost entirely from the stage by percussionist Hanif Khan, the simplistic set up is immersive from the onset. Projections on to curtains and carpets mark location changes from Amir's grandiose estate and Kabul's cultured, dusty streets. Ben Turner's leading performance as an guilt stricken

coward is wonderfully diverse, as he steps in and out of his character's adult and child self. He performs, for the first act, almost entirely alongside Andrei Costin – an actor who descends into the vital, vulnerable role of Hassan competently. Although a supporting character, his part is vital to the first act's complex, upsetting climax that leaves the audience shaking as the curtains fall for interval. It's a production rife with personality, in both the bright and morbid sense.

The second act takes on a significantly more rushed pace, moving from The Middle East to the tackily portrayed United States of America with such strong deviation it threatens to take away from the emotional gravitas of the first. But as it develops, it saves itself from being swallowed by hyperbolic romanticism; ending on a teary, charming note.

As the curtain fell on the King's Theatre to rapturous applause, I heard the woman behind me speak a phrase that can either be interpreted as great praise or a true insult: "I've never seen anything quite so faithful to the book." Spangler's appreciation of Hosseini's talent means that it doesn't veer too far from the source material, instead soaring in its faithful, moving translation to stage. By turns shocking and choking in its emotion, The Kite Runner is a production you will be truly sorry to miss.



The Kite Runner plays at The King's Theatre until Saturday November 15th. Tickets are available from EdTheatres.com

Veritas Italian Restaurant Stockbridge

Veritas on Deanhaugh Street is as authentic an Italian restaurant you will find in Edinburgh. Located just along from the bridge and down a candlelit stair leading to the basement on the main road through Stockbridge. Walking down the stairs with all the candles made me feel very festive – it is coming round so fast this year!



Veritas Edinburgh

The restaurant interior is really cosy and romantic with rustic style tables, lots of candles and the smell of food drifting from the kitchen. I was there for a special Tasting of Italy evening which they had organised to showcase this different dishes on the menu. Think tempura soft shell crab, crostini with sautéed liver, Neapolitan Octopus soup, fresh linguine, and homemade tiramisu ([click to view the menu](#)). We had a tasting menu featuring food and wines all selected to show off head chef Riccardo Verrecchia's favourite dishes following Roman and Neapolitan traditions and time honoured recipes. We were seated in the private room at the back which has a huge long table and surrounded by wine bottle in racks rather like bookcases.

We had a lovely Prosecco to accompany our aperitifs which were polenta crostini with liver which was lovely, a spicy Calabrian n'duja bruschetta which was perfect with the light Prosecco, crispy fried sage leaves and a chickpea flour foccacia with gorgonzola.



Veritas Crostini

The next course was a suite of seafood starters beginning with

an octopus soup which I have not tried before. I was a light and tasty broth with pieces of perfectly cooked octopus that they bring in from the Mediterranean and it tasted amazing. The octopus was also used in a potato salad which was the tastiest potato salad I've ever had! The calamari was great – so often you get greasy undercooked chewy squid rings in this country but not at Veritas. They use the whole squid including the tentacles and cook it perfectly. Again the soft shell crab was very well cooked but the batter made it a bit greasier but the flavour of the crab more than made up for this.



Veritas seafood

Our trio of pasta was next and by this point I was starting to wonder if I could eat all the courses left on the menu. Ravioli filled with Italian sausage and aubergine was a real standout for me. I am a massive ravioli fan but this seriously impressed me – it was deeply flavoured and perfectly cooked. A hint to Riccardo's interest in traditional Italian recipes was the Spaghetti alla Canella dating from 1800 when cinnamon was used as seasoning. The risotto al Chianti e Rosmarino for me was nice and perfectly al dente, but had quite a strong flavour of the herbs rather than anything else. However everyone else finished their plates so it was probably just not to my taste.

No we are not finished yet... There are still the main courses to go! We had a small portion of rolled veal with speck served with a Roman potato croquette and caponata all of which were lovely and I really enjoyed despite being really rather stuffed by this point!

Finally we were on to dessert and I had spotted there was tiramisu and I really wanted to save space for that. The tiramisu was lovely and well balanced but the real intrigue on the menu was the ice cream. Veritas makes their own ice cream each week and our flavour was a special for that night and was

inspired by Keller from the French Laundry who felt that his guest Bourdain smoked a lot so he infused his dessert with a cigar. The ice cream was creamy with an aromatic flavour and a really spicy kick – it was surprisingly delicious!



Tiramisu and Ice
Cream

The wines we had were wonderful with the food we were served, but a stand out red was my favourite. For a fantastic Italian meal you should head to Veritas and enjoy, I will definitely be going back soon!

The menu will also feature specials for the week of homemade pasta and desserts plus if the team at Veritas can they will happily make your favourites or suggest alternatives for you to try.

They are open every evening and at the weekends. Dinner for two costs around £50 with wine.

<http://www.veritaseh4.co.uk>

Twitter @VeritasEH4

Free Wifi in Muirhouse

Muirhouse Millennium Community Centre could be added to your free [WiFi Spots](#) in Edinburgh.

Our Address is 7 Muirhouse Medway EH4 4RW.

Thank you on behalf of the manager & the board.

Submitted by [Jim McGinty](#)

Thank you Jim – we have a wifi map over [here](#)..... It is needing updated – anybody got any more suggestions for us then we will have an updating session!