

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Palestinian flag to fly

Leith Walk improvements

EdinburghReportage

Last weekend of the Festival

Kiltwalk 2015

Edinburgh council decided yesterday that they will fly the Palestinian flag for one day above the City Chambers along with the DEC flag.

The Council today agreed to fly a Disasters Emergency Committee flag at the City Chambers in order to promote the charity's ongoing Gaza Appeal, while calling for an immediate ceasefire in the region.

A Palestinian flag will also be flown for one day, marking the council's solidarity with the innocent citizens of Gaza who have suffered such devastating losses.

In moving the motion, Council leader, Councillor Andrew Burns: "I, like many others, have been deeply appalled and distressed to witness the recent loss of innocent life in Gaza and I am pleased that council supported the Coalition motion today.

"The Disasters Emergency Committee provides a very clear mechanism for providing much-needed aid to those affected by humanitarian crises and I hope that flying the DEC flag at the City Chambers, prominently featuring the appeal line number, will not only raise awareness of the crisis but lead to an

increase in donations.”

To donate to the DEC Gaza Appeal, please call the donation line on 0370 60 60 900 or visit www.dec.org.uk/appeals/gaza-crisis-2014

The Leith Walk improvements have begun but @ThreefromLeith has alerted us to this:

Poor drainage on revamped Leith Walk. Big puddle always forms at ped crossing point. Can it be sorted, @Edinburgh_CC?
<http://t.co/XUSoobxRfD>

– Three From Leith (@threefromleith) [August 22, 2014](#)

Brand new paving on Leith Walk already used for parking. Slabs won't last long, @Edinburgh_CC! <http://t.co/CSy0gTlQF0>
– Three From Leith (@threefromleith) [August 22, 2014](#)

Do you have a football team that you play for or support? Then our latest EdinburghReportage storyboard is for you. We have set this one up to show off your team! [Read more here.](#)


It is the last weekend of the Festival and we hope you have seen some great shows. All of our reviews are [here](#).

The Edinburgh charity It's Good 2 Give needs your help with fundraising next year for their Ripple House project.

[Post](#) by [It's Good 2 Give!](#)

Friday in Edinburgh – what's on today




 **Make Your Own Kelpie...**and bring it to life in a story. Craft event for ages 7-11. 2-3pm, [Central Children's Library](#), George IV Bridge.

Edinburgh Book Fringe 2014: Sally Heathcote, Suffragette. Costa award winners (*Dotter of her Father's Eyes*) **Mary and Bryan Talbot** and acclaimed illustrator **Kate Charlesworth** discuss their new graphic novel, a gripping inside story of the campaign for votes for women. 'A tale of loyalty, love and courage set against a vividly realised backdrop of Edwardian Britain, it follows the fortunes of a maid-of-all-work swept up in the feminist militancy of the era.' 1pm, [Word Power Books](#), 43-45 West Nicolson Street. All welcome! Admission free – donations also welcome!

Lunchtime Concert: Julian Layn (Switzerland), piano. 12.15pm, [St Giles Cathedral](#), High Street. Free.

Lunchtime concert: The City of Edinburgh Music School 1.10-1.50pm, [St Mary's Cathedral](#), Palmerston Place. Free: retiring collection.

Pop 3D: 3D Printing Workshop. Come and join an interactive workshop using simple apps to download and create 3D objects that will be printed. 1-5pm, [Edinburgh College of Art](#), Main Building, Lauriston Place. Free but places are limited and must be booked via [eventbrite](#). Part of ECA Masters Festival.

 **Holly Webb at Morningside Library:** reading, signing and craft session with children's writer **Holly Webb**, author

of *The Secret Puppy*, *Alone in the Night*, and many others. Event hosted by The Edinburgh Bookshop for ages 7-12 (approx.) 2pm [Morningside Library](#), Morningside Road. Places are limited so must be booked by calling 0131 447 1917 or emailing mail@edinburghbookshop.com

Edinburgh Napier University Campus Tours: come along to view the fantastic facilities and meet some Student Ambassadors. The tours will run simultaneously at all three campuses, starting at 2pm at each of [Merchiston](#) (10 Colinton Road), [Craiglockhart](#) (Glenlockhart Road) and [Sighthill](#) (Sighthill Court) Campuses. Tours are free but fill up fast, so reserve your place [here](#).

Free Fringe Music at The National Museum of Scotland. Today: **Zi Lan Liao**, Chinese harp. 2-2.40pm, [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – George & Co (The Solo Tour) ****



I have never had the ambition of doing an Edinburgh Fringe show and never will but I tip my hat to those that do. Someone who is appearing in his First Fringe is Australian comedian George Dimarelos and a fine job he has done too.

George is only doing five nights 20th – 24th August and I went

along on the second night. He is an observational comedian and so things like incidents in men's changing rooms, grinding in supermarkets and talking to yourself when no-one else is around are all fair game. His stories included some intriguing ones like his 126 hour journey on the Trans-Mongolian Railway.

I think George was perhaps a bit nervous still but that is unsurprising as this is his first proper length stand-up show, and it is often the case that some nerves make you better. This is I believe the case with George.

His story telling is good with some well-crafted tales which tie in to earlier stories which I think is clever and fun.

A good show and hopefully a return next year for George now he has had a taste of what doing the Edinburgh Fringe is all about.

George and Co (The Solo Tour) runs until 24th August tickets start at £7.50, the show is on at 7.00pm at C Nova, India Buildings, Victoria Street.

Edinburgh to welcome its Commonwealth athletes



CAPITAL TO CELEBRATE LOCAL ATHLETES

Members of Team Scotland including six medal winners will take to the open air quadrangle of Edinburgh's City Chambers next week for a public homecoming celebration of their great

achievements during the Commonwealth Games.

Speaking at a full council meeting on Thursday, Edinburgh's Lord Provost Donald Wilson, declared a an outdoor Q&A with Edinburgh's Team Scotland athletes will take place on **Friday 29 August between 6:00-6:30pm.**

The event announcement comes following the Team Scotland Athletes' Parade which was held in Glasgow on August 15 for all Team Scotland athletes. In Edinburgh, 80 athletes who were born in Edinburgh and are based here for training took part in the Glasgow 2014 competitions, taking 15 medals home.

So far, 24 Edinburgh linked athletes have been confirmed to attend the celebrations.

They will be welcomed by the Lord Provost to a stage in the quadrangle – positioned in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town off the Royal Mile – and will be interviewed by comedian and commentator [Alan Anderson](#) before meeting with fans. A Commonwealth Games flag will be flown at the City Chambers to mark the occasion.

The athletes will then be joined by some of Edinburgh's brightest and best young sporting talent as they join the city's annual Edinburgh Sport Awards. Held jointly between the council and Sportscotland, ClubSportEdinburgh, and Edinburgh Leisure, the awards are held in recognition of the excellent work and commitment of Edinburgh's sports clubs and volunteers.

In what has been an exceptional year for sport in Edinburgh more people and clubs have been nominated for awards than ever before.

The Lord Provost said: "What better way to inspire Edinburgh's up and coming sporting talent than to celebrate their achievements with some of the city's Team Scotland stars."

“Our local Commonwealth Games athletes had tremendous results this summer, and their achievements are helping to encourage the next generation to develop their sporting talent.”

“On behalf of the city, I congratulate all of our athletes and bright young stars and wish them the very best as they face their next sporting challenges.”

The event will be open to anyone of any age and will be free to attend. **Please note that space in the quadrangle is limited, so please aim to arrive early to get a good view.**

Film Review: Two Days, One Night (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2014)



It can be just as complex to replicate human hardship in cinema as it is to create other worlds. The stark nature of the human condition is displayed excellently in the latest feature by the Dardenne brothers, starring Marion Cotillard – Two Days, One Night.

A young mother returns to work to discover that her colleagues have opted for a significant pay bonus, in exchange for her dismissal. Unable to survive and raise her children without her job, she spends one weekend convincing her workmates that she simply cannot leave.

Marion Cotillard delivers a riveting performance as a hollow, shattered mother trying desperately to claw her way out of a dire situation. She is the central figure in a film that never

leaves her side. Present in every shot, some of them several minutes in length, other characters weave in and out, justifying their decisions to a woman facing potential poverty. For these ninety minutes, Cotillard is not an actress but simply a woman, blurring the lines between performance and real life.

It asks a number of questions in a method that lets it lead only ask one. Time and time again, Cotillard's character asks her employees to rethink their decision. Her works seldom change, if at all, and through this her words begin to draw heavy with desperation. There is very little that could be considered inspiring about *Two Days, One Night*. It is heavy, lumbering yet wholly rewarding work. It rewrites the meanings of value, hardship and self worth – asking if this woman's actions are understandable or narcissistic.

Featuring Marion Cotillard's best performance since *La Vie en Rose*, the Dardenne Brothers should be proud of their latest work, both directorial and scriptural. Strenuous and rigid and yet ceaseless and natural, *Two Days, One Night* is a film about how to be zealous when there is very little in the way of reward.

***Two Days, One Night* opens at Filmhouse, Lothian Road on Friday August 22nd**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival – Irma Kurtz:

My Life in Agony



In the end it's all about love, or at least that's what **Irma Kurtz** says, and she should know.

Irma has been *Cosmopolitan UK's* agony aunt for over forty years. She used to get long letters written on tear-stained paper; now it's emails wanting a quick fix, 'the pill for the heartache.' The issues, though, remain largely the same: jealousy, self-esteem – and love, or more often the lack of it.

Irma is here to discuss her new book, *My Life in Agony*, with EIBF Programme Director Janet Smyth. The queue for the session is long and consists predominantly of women of a certain age, though there are a few men too, and good for them. Some of us have been with *Cosmo* as long as Irma; others may not have read the magazine (which has, it must be said, changed quite a bit since the 1980s) for years, but we all still feel we know her. Janet Smyth says she had 'a hiccup of excitement' when she knew Irma was coming to Edinburgh – and there is a definite frisson of anticipation in the audience.

When Irma comes onto the stage she is just as we expect and hope; tiny, vibrant, funny, fast-thinking – and very modest.

Unlike some of her peers in journalism, she's neither bossy nor patronising. Why, asks Janet, has she decided to write the book now? The 'inner voice' told her that this was the right time: Irma's a great believer in instinct -and she wanted to get *My Life in Agony* out 'while people still read hard copy.'

The book features an ongoing conversation between common sense and reason: common sense, says Irma, isn't wisdom, but it is one of the stepping stones to growing wise. She thinks of agony aunts as 'white witches...descended from the old lady

at the bottom of the lane. She doesn't graduate from a school of thought, she goes on thinking.' Agony aunts are often solitary women, women who spend their time observing people, though Irma says it's nonsense to think that they have to have suffered every problem before they can give good advice, 'We'd never survive.'

✖ The book is not a full autobiography – the curtain, observes Janet, is 'only opened a chink' on Irma's own life, concentrating more on her career at *Cosmo* and reflecting on why people bring their problems to her. We do learn, however, that she left the US because 'I didn't like the destiny laid out for me – the lawyer in Connecticut with two cars in the driveway is not for me.' We need, she says, to be honest with ourselves if we want to move forward and find happiness. 'The great lies begin at home...honesty is always hard, but it's worth it.' She'd fallen in love with Paris on a school trip; after college she waitressed for two years to save the money to return, 'I bought my freedom.' But Paris was a disappointment: it wasn't Bohemian any more – Irma's heart was broken for the first time, not by a lover but a city. She moved to London where 'if the Bohemian scene moves, it moves elsewhere', and although she's worked all over the world, London has been her home ever since. Even so, she acknowledges that the more money rules the capital, the harder Bohemia is to find. 'These days art is based on sales, not beauty.'

Irma has had many love affairs since that first one with Paris, but she remains resolutely single. She lived on a boat with a Scot, the relationship finally floundering because she needed the city too much. She had a long friendship with Jeffrey Bernard and may or may not have had a one-afternoon fling with him years earlier. Before working for *Cosmo* (and before that *Nova*) she was what she calls a 'real' journalist and is ashamed to admit that she wanted to see a war zone. Qantas gave her a free first class ticket to Vietnam – 'I was like the women who used to lift their skirts to visit Bedlam.

I learned a lot.'

But then at the age of 36 Irma decided she wanted a baby 'I knew I had to have a child and I knew I'd be good at it.' So she left 'serious' journalism and started on the career she still has today. Her son is now in his forties, married with four children including triplets: Irma refers to them often and is clearly as besotted as any grandma would be. Many of her feminist friends from the 70s chose not to have children, a decision that she entirely respects. Everyone, she says, must make her own choice – but when she gets letters today from young women who say they don't want children, her reply is always 'that's a door you don't slam.' It is still hard, she says, for women to 'have it all' (*Cosmo's* famous byline back in the day) because women are still the only ones who can have babies. Society, she says, still judges women for choosing to remain childless 'they've decided not to use the plumbing', but she hopes that new generations will be less harsh.

So what do people write to Irma about? And have the issues changed over the years? Well yes and no: it's still all about love, self-esteem and sexual jealousy, but she used to learn a lot from people's handwriting: emails have changed that.

Those tear-stained letters often came with some parts scribbled out, she would hold them up to the light to see what was underneath. She also feels that writing things down is hugely beneficial, a benefit that's been lost: she used to receive ten page letters ending 'I feel better now I've put it all on paper.' She would not consult an agony aunt herself, although she does talk to good friends ('they're sick of it!') and she places great importance on keeping a journal, 'I write to myself.'

Nowadays Irma often doesn't even know where the writer is living, and although most problems are the same the world over, cultural and religious context can be important. She worked briefly for *Cosmo* in Australia, the US, Japan and South

Africa – the latter was especially difficult as the apartheid regime meant that some agencies were only open to whites or blacks, not both. In Japan she found that women were rarely outspoken about love and were much more likely to wax vocal about their mothers-in-law, whilst men wrote agonising about their work status. In the UK she often hears from second generation immigrants, ‘inflexible customs cause heartache in all societies.’

Many people now take part in online dating; ‘I’m in love with someone that I’ve never met’ is a line Irma hears from young women – and some men. She urges caution and meeting in a safe place, ‘It’s impossible to fall in love with someone you’ve never smelled.’ Another social change is the rise in loneliness; families are far flung, people work longer hours and live longer lives. Sexual jealousy remains an issue but nowadays, says Irma, women think they aren’t *supposed* to be jealous and are surprised when they are. ‘Friendship with benefits’ is a term she abhors, ‘It doesn’t work any more than communal living worked for hippies in the 60s.’

People talk to Irma; they always have. She sees this as another advantage of being solitary; people feel safe talking to a woman alone. On trains, in cinemas – people share their confidences with her all the time, and it’s not hard to see why; I’d love to chat to her myself. She has a word of warning though; ‘On trains, don’t start too early’ – she has a 5 hour journey back to London this afternoon, so I imagine there’ll be no eye contact until she’s safely south of Peterborough.

Where, asks someone, do men take their problems? There are few agony uncles – Irma has found that men interested in this area tend to become counsellors, ‘they need a framework.’ She fears that men tend to internalise their problems; they also do not ‘do’ gossip, which educates women about the way things work. In traditional Jewish society women met, talked and arranged marriages in the ‘kitchen court.’ Men, she says, ‘are more interested in the football scores; they fear feelings and need

to turn them into actions. Retirement is becoming a serious issue for men.'

Agony aunts in print don't get too much feedback, although Irma once received a death threat just for mentioning abortion. There's a two month delay between the receipt of a letter and the printing of her reply, and she's not supposed to allow queue-jumping, 'though it's tear-making, so sometimes I do.' Online aunts are a different matter, getting so much feedback that she thinks they risk losing sight of the initial problem. For Irma though, 'feedback is rare but generally delightful.'

Unsurprisingly, Irma has always been a feminist; modern feminists are, she says, working for more basic freedoms, in the workplace in particular, and are also getting men involved. The feminists of the 80s could, she admits, be a little dictatorial at times. 'It's better now.'

Does Irma have a message? She doesn't like to use 'should' or 'ought to', but says 'We are born to the world and it's ours to make something of. It's so important for our daughters to know that at last the world belongs to women too.' At its height, *Cosmo* showed women that they could do anything – and at the core of *Cosmo* was and still is Irma Kurtz. Forty years on, the 'professional ear with a big mouth' (her words) is still listening, women are still talking, and it's still all about love.



New RNLi information service on safe crossing times to Cramond Island



Members of the public can now text the word CRAMOND to 81400 and the RNLi will reply with safe crossing times for the tidal causeway which leads to the popular tourist attraction.

This new initiative follows a five year period (2008-2013) where nearly 600 people were rescued from Cramond Island by Queensferry lifeboat.

If you're heading to Cramond Island this weekend you can text CRAMOND to 81400 to get the latest safe crossing times free of charge.

The text service is part of a Community Safety Action Plan run by the RNLi in the area serviced by the Queensferry lifeboat. The aim is to inform people when they can safely cross the causeway to Cramond Island and avoid becoming stranded.

Between 2008 and 2013 the Queensferry lifeboat and her volunteer crew launched to Cramond Island 178 times, they rescued 593 people and saved 4 lives.

Michael Avril is the RNLi's Community Incident Reduction Manager and is building the Community Safety Action Plan with local stakeholders, speaking of the Text for Tides service Michael said:

'We're really pleased to be able to offer this service to the public free of charge, the service is easy to use and will tell people when it is safe to walk across to Cramond Island so they won't end up cut off by the rising tide.'

‘Our research has shown that a high number of people become stranded on the island and we’re hoping to dramatically reduce that number with services like Text for Tides and allow people to enjoy Cramond Island safely.

‘We’re also working with the Coastguard, the council and local businesses to try and reduce the number of people who need to be rescued from Cramond as part of our Community Safety Action Plan.’

This initiative is part of the RNLI’s national Respect the Water campaign which is aimed at alerting the public to the dangers of drowning. 39 people drowned off the coast of Scotland in 2013 with a total of 150 over the last four years.

The figures show a clear gender divide with adult men accounting for over two-thirds (68%) of the coastal deaths.

UK-wide, an average of 160 people die at the coast each year and the RNLI is aiming to halve this number by 2024.

If anyone finds themselves stranded on Cramond Island they should call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. The volunteer crew of the Queensferry lifeboat are on call 24/7.

PHOTO RNLI : Jo Mitchell, Coastguard (left) & Michael Avril, RNLI (right)

Wave energy developers team up with Bosch Rexroth



Wave industry leaders including Edinburgh's Aquamarine Power and Bosch Rexroth join forces to develop a standardised offshore power system

Ground-breaking project offers a 'quantum leap' for the wave energy sector

Pan-European collaboration brings leading players together for first time

A number of leading wave energy firms have joined forces with global drive and control manufacturer Bosch Rexroth in a bid to create a standardised, self-contained offshore electricity generator for the wave industry.

The project tackles head-on one of the biggest challenges in wave energy – how to generate electricity reliably and cost effectively at sea – and has the potential to “transform the wave industry in the same way the internal combustion engine made the motor car possible,” according to Aquamarine Power Chief Executive Officer Martin McAdam.

The new collaboration brings together project founders Aquamarine Power and Bosch Rexroth, along with wave technology developers Albatern, Carnegie Wave Energy UK and Professor Stansby of Manchester University. It also includes Irish utility ESB which is developing the European-funded Westwave wave farm off the west coast of Ireland.

The WavePOD (Wave Power Offtake Device) will provide a commercial solution for the problem most wave energy developers face in transforming linear motion into electrical energy. It comprises an offshore hydraulic generator housed in a sealed nacelle which generates electrical power which is then cabled back to shore.

Bosch Rexroth and Aquamarine Power have already made significant progress with the project and are developing a tenth-scale prototype to be tested at the world-leading

Institute for Fluid Power Drives and Controls (IFAS) at Aachen University, Germany.

Commenting on the project Louis Verdegem, ocean technology specialist at Bosch Rexroth, said: “Creating a way of converting kinetic energy into electricity is essential if we are to effectively harness the power of waves. Currently however, cost effective transformation of the captured energy into electricity remains beyond the industry’s grasp. This is due in part to the fragmented nature of current research and development, which is largely commissioned by individual manufacturers. Through this collaboration we expect the use of standardised components and system architectures to accelerate learning and propel the industry forward.”

The pan-industry initiative has been welcomed by trade body Ocean Energy Europe. Their Chief Executive Officer Dr Sian George said: “If Europe is to turn its advantage in ocean energy technologies into a new industrial sector, collaboration will be key. The WavePOD project provides a vehicle for ocean energy developers from all over Europe to work together and tackle problems in an efficient and cost effective way. We would encourage as many developers as possible to get involved in this project and hope to see this partnership approach applied to other barriers on the road to commercialisation.”

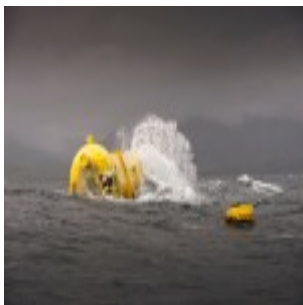


Martin McAdam CEO of
Aquamarine Power

“WavePOD is a quantum leap for the wave energy industry,” says Martin McAdam, Chief Executive Officer of Aquamarine Power. “The global wave energy market has an estimated value worth hundreds of billions of pounds and the WavePOD addresses the sector’s challenges of improving reliability, developing standard components, fostering collaboration and driving down

costs.

“This is a historic moment for the industry as it is the first time technology developers have come together to solve a key industry challenge. It is my passionate belief that the only route to commercialisation is through collaboration, where we work together to solve the common problems we all face.”



The project has been welcomed by Brendan Barry, Manager, Emerging Energy Technologies at ESB, who said: “Wave energy has the potential to provide large quantities of indigenous, renewable energy and reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels. A number of companies have demonstrated concepts for capturing this energy at scale. As an end user of this type of equipment at the ESB Westwave project and follow on developments in Ireland and Europe, I am pleased to see the collaborative WavePOD project driving innovation towards a low carbon future.”

Commenting further on the programme, Tim Sawyer, Project Development Officer at Carnegie Wave Energy said: “Working with Bosch Rexroth we intend to create an industry-enabling technology which will be available as a commercial product for a range of different ocean energy technologies. This makes a huge amount of sense for the industry – rather than every

company developing its own power offtake technology, WavePOD will be a standard product which frees companies to pursue the development of their own unique machines, without having to worry about converting their technology's motion into electricity."

David Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, Albatern, said: "The broad base of this collaboration offers additional confidence to a leading supplier to the industry that the application of their expertise to a common challenge will improve reliability, reduce costs and accelerate a new line of business both for them, and for the other participants."

Professor Peter Stansby of University of Manchester, developer of the new line absorber M4M Wave Power, said: "Conversion of mechanical power into electricity is a generic component of any wave energy converter. As a new developer striving to improve wave energy capture the WavePOD consortium approach to hydraulic PTO development is a great bonus since hydrodynamic expertise in wave-body interaction is quite different from that for hydraulic systems."

Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Max Scratchmann's Moving Pictures ****

Each Fringe is very much of its time and place. Peer through the clouds of leafleters, and the Old and New Towns are plastered with posters for shows jumping on the bandwagon of the latest popular TV show, and headshots of the latest handsome young comedian. This keeps the crowds coming, but it's good to be transported to somewhere different; somewhere

a bit more eccentric. The Free Fringe is providing a number of those opportunities.

Max Scratchmann's Moving Pictures (A Sideways Look At 40 Years of Eccentric Cinema) fits the bill. In the screening room at the back of The Banshee Labyrinth, the audience is far away from the crowds a few yards off on The Royal Mile. And then very far away, as Max transports his listeners from India to Dundee to Bangladesh to Surrey.

Film is the door Max uses in this spoken word show to tell stories of growing up as the son of a jute wallah in India and Bangladesh in the 'sixties, interrupted by a brief return to a Dundee where the household help to which his family has become accustomed are replaced only by grey weather and declining industry. This life, and particularly the movie theatres in the clubs for the families of the workers in the Asian jute mills, leaves a lasting impression on Max. His love of film endures, and as VHS knocks on the door Max finds himself watching silent, seven-minute black-and-white versions of Stars Wars, and attending movie nights with other aficionados in Surrey complete with intermissions and a screener's wife acting as an usherette.

Moving Pictures is an engaging insight into the romance of celluloid, providing other fans with an opportunity to revisit its old, odd glory, and a host of quirky insights for the neophyte.

Max Scratchmann's Moving Pictures is part of the Free Fringe, at The Banshee Labyrinth, 14:20, Aug 24.

Submitted by [Ricky Brown](#)



Drinking water improvements

Scotland's drinking water quality has never been better according to the regulator's report which shows that Scottish Water's compliance with the standards for drinking water in 2013 continued to improve.

Scottish Water take and analyse samples of drinking water from across Scotland 365 days a year. In 2013 a total of 330,156 regulatory tests were carried out on Scotland's drinking water. Of those taken from consumers' taps, 99.89 per cent met the required standards. This continues the improving trend since Scottish Water was formed in 2002 when 99.28 per cent of samples met the required standards.

Not everyone in Scotland receives their drinking water from Scottish Water, with around three per cent of the population receiving their water from a private water supply. The quality of some of these supplies remains of concern. 13.6 per cent of samples taken from type A supplies last year contained the E.coli bacterium, which could present a risk to health, this shows a marginal improvement on last year, but is still too high.

Sue Petch the Drinking Water Quality Regulator said:

"Scottish consumers can be confident that their drinking water is thoroughly tested and that it meets some of the highest quality standards in the world.

"It is satisfying to be able to report a high level of performance, which reflects Scottish Water's efforts over the past year. This by no means indicates that further improvements cannot be delivered. Work is still needed to make sure that all of Scotland's water assets are well maintained and sufficiently resilient to deal with challenges presented by changing source water quality.

“It is important that the quality of private water supplies improves, and there remains much to do here. DWQR is working with local authorities and other stakeholders to make owners and users aware of the health risks their private water supplies could present. They are strongly encouraged to ensure their supplies are improved and maintained where necessary, making use of the grant funding provided by the Scottish Government.”

Warning for pet owners

Animal owners across Scotland are being urged to watch out for poisonous plants that could harm their pets.

This summer’s fine weather has seen flora flourish across the country – but many plants commonly found in gardens and the countryside can cause serious health problems for animals such as horses and dogs.

Scotland’s Chief Veterinary Officer Sheila Voas said:

“Scotland is looking especially verdant this summer but animal owners need to be mindful that such lush and abundant greenery contains hidden dangers. Many plants commonly found in gardens and the Scottish countryside are poisonous to pets and, if eaten, can cause sickness and even death, although thankfully such cases are rare.

“Some of these toxic threats are well known, such as ragwort, yew and foxgloves. But there are also lesser-known risks to look out for including sycamore seeds – which have recently been discovered to be noxious – and hemlock water dropwort, also known as poisonous parsnip, which is particularly profuse this summer.

“It is important that animal owners fully understand these potential perils for their pets and that they are responsible for their animals’ wellbeing.

“In very exceptional cases Scottish Ministers can, under the Weeds Act, require landowners to take action to stop some poisonous plants spreading but this is limited to a very small number of specified plants and is deployed only when there is a clear and direct threat, for example to livestock or horses.

“The onus is therefore on animal owners to remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to minimise the risk of pets falling ill or even dying after accidentally ingesting a poisonous plant and to seek prompt veterinary advice if they suspect their animal may have been poisoned.”

Consultation on scheme to introduce new speed limits



The council has plans to roll out twenty mile per hour zones across the city and they are now running a consultation. They are keen to engage with a wide range of people to hear their views.

The consultation and engagement programme will involve a rolling programme of meetings and drop in sessions in each of the neighbourhood areas. Leaflets and posters will be distributed widely to community councils, registered tenants associations, equalities and community groups, libraries, community centres, Council reception areas, local offices and doctors surgeries. An exhibition of the proposals will

take place from 1 – 14 September in the Central Library, George IV Bridge and maps of the proposals will be available in Morningside and Gilmerton libraries from 1 September.

Edinburgh's Liberal Democrat MP, Mike Crockart is encouraging constituents to respond to the consultation.

Commenting, Edinburgh's Liberal Democrat MP, Mike Crockart said:

"I have campaigned for a long time to make the streets safer for both pedestrians and cyclists and I am pleased to see the council taking action to make the streets more pleasant for everyone.

"Local communities need to be involved in the decisions which affect them, and I am delighted that Edinburgh council are giving people the opportunity to have their say. Whatever your views on the 20mph speed limit proposals, it is important that you have your say and let the council know what you think.

"The consultation is open until the 17th October 2014 and I would encourage anyone who has a view on this matter to respond to it."

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/20mphLeaflet.pdf>

MP checks in to check out

local hotel



Ian Murray MP visits Cameron Toll Travelodge

MP for Edinburgh South Ian Murray today visited Cameron Toll Travelodge in his constituency to learn more about the work of the hotel and to help promote the city's tourism industry.

With the hotel at capacity due to the Edinburgh Festival, Manager Carolyn Bisland and District Manager Jon Soesan took time out to show Ian round the facilities and discuss the contribution the hotel makes to jobs, apprenticeships and the local economy in South Edinburgh.

Ian Murray MP said:

"I'm really grateful to Carolyn and her team for showing me round the hotel. I'm proud that Edinburgh is one of the most attractive tourist destinations, not just during the festival but all year round and Travelodge play a hugely important part in welcoming people to our city. No wonder the hotel is fully booked for Edinburgh Festival, and has seen very strong trading during the Glasgow Commonwealth Games."

"It's critical that the hospitality sector provides good, secure jobs which offer employees career progression. Travelodge's Junior Management Programme is a good example of this and the apprentice I met with was really stimulated by it."

"Having run my own small hotel before becoming an MP, I know the hard work and dedication that's needed and now as an MP, I have seen the contribution the hotel and guest house industry makes to South Edinburgh."

Carolyn Bisland, Hotel Manager at Edinburgh Cameron Toll Travelodge said:

"I was thrilled to welcome local MP Ian Murray to our newly refurbished hotel. By offering good value rooms in the area, our hotel helps boost the local economy every year by almost £2 million, thanks to the amount that our guests spend in local businesses.

"Mr Murray was very interested in finding out about how we are operating during the Festival season, and it was great to share collective experiences of working in the hotel industry. He enjoyed meeting the team and listening to their stories about how they have found jobs and climbed the career ladder at Travelodge.

"Mr Murray is clearly a massive advocate for the tourism industry and it was great to share experiences and ideas with him, whilst demonstrating the positive impact that we make in the area."

Council to fly the Palestine flag for a day

Green councillor Chas Booth, put forward a [motion](#) to Council today arguing that the City Council should fly the Palestinian flag as a gesture of solidarity with the ordinary people of Gaza. This is what he said in support:

"Let me start by saying that I support and welcome everything in the Leader's motion on the subject of Gaza. Indeed, in some ways, it is more comprehensive than my own motion. The horrendous loss of life and ongoing violence in Gaza is something we simply cannot ignore.

"We cannot sit on our hands.

“And while the influence of The City of Edinburgh Council in such matters is small, it is not completely insignificant. Time after time those caught in conflict tell how much it mattered to have support from abroad, however faintly heard.

“Making our views clear to the Israeli Consul and the Palestinian President is the least we can do in the face of the continuing deaths of innocent civilians including many women and children in Gaza.

“And we should, of course, do what we can to assist the victims of this violence, through the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal. The proposal to fly the DEC flag is one we support. So, I support the Leader’s motion with the indication, as stated to the leader, that the Palestinian flag will be flown for one day.

“That is because there is one element of my [motion](#) which has provoked some debate and, while it is symbolic, I believe that it is an important symbol. And that is the flying of the Palestinian flag from the City Chambers.

“Only a few months ago, in December, the council chambers paid tribute to Nelson Mandela. It was one of those occasions where local politics rises above party differences and where there was a great deal of pride in the recognition that the capital had given to Mr Mandela at a time when he was languishing in prison and branded a terrorist in some quarters.

“Time erases differences and gives perspective. Back in the 1980s when Edinburgh was acknowledging Mr Mandela there were plenty of people ready to snipe at the city’s stance, ready to argue that it was petty tokenism, to say that a small city like Edinburgh had no business in international affairs. That it was a “complicated situation” in South Africa and that we should avoid taking sides.

“These arguments seem absurdly myopic now. Of course there is complexity. But there is still right and wrong. Racism is

wrong. Anti-semitism and islamophobia are wrong. And the killing of innocent civilians, including many children, is wrong.

“That’s what I feel about what is happening in Gaza just now. Do I believe it is acceptable to fire rockets into Israel? Of course not. In coming to a resolution in the Middle East there will be negotiation and compromise for all parties. But this is not a conflict of equal powers – the death toll tells its own story. 67 Israelis have died, the majority of them soldiers. And over 2,000 Palestinians, the vast majority of them innocent civilians.

“This is the awful consequence of the disproportionate use of force.

“That is why I put forward this motion, seeking to fly the Palestinian flag in light of the continuing tragedy in Gaza. Of course, there is no monopoly on suffering and anguish but it is to recognise that ordinary people in Gaza have borne the brunt of conflict and in seeking to fly the flag we are seeking solidarity with them.

“With the ordinary people of Gaza.

“The Palestinian flag represents the Palestinian people – not one political group or faction within Palestine but the whole people. It has been used in diplomatic and state occasions all over the world since 1964. Indeed, as recently as July last year the Palestinian flag flew in the Knesset to mark the visit of a group of Palestinian Authority delegates. If it is good enough for the Israeli Parliament, why is it not good enough for our own city chambers?

“The City Chambers has seven fixed flagpoles and five portable ones, so there is plenty of space to fly both the DEC flag and the Palestinian flag side by side if we so choose. In the face of the horrendous loss of life and disproportionate violence in Gaza, it is essential we do what we can to express our

solidarity with the innocent victims. Flying the flag of those who are overwhelmingly the victims in this conflict would be one way to show our solidarity.

“That is why I put forward the motion and why I am pleased the Capital Coalition has accepted that principle and agreed to fly the flag of Palestine for one day.

Councillor Chas Booth is the Green Councillor for Leith.

The council had earlier heard from representatives of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Association of Palestinian Communities in Scotland.

Albie O'Neill who appealed to the council on behalf of SPSC said after the meeting, “The flying of the Palestinian flag above the city chambers in Scotland's capital sends a message to the world that Edinburgh stands with the people of Palestine. Alongside its support for the humanitarian appeal for Gaza, Edinburgh council is continuing its proud tradition of supporting the oppressed peoples of the world. Thirty years ago support was given to the people of South Africa, today it is the people of Palestine. This is a proud moment for the city of Edinburgh.”

Wael Shawish of the Association of Palestinian Communities in Scotland had earlier told the full council of the horrors of living under occupation. He said “Palestinians will be heartened by this fantastic show of solidarity. At a time when the people of Gaza face continuing attacks, this small gesture from the capital of Scotland gives them hope, hope that the pressure from across the world will help bring about a lasting peace which can only be realised by the establishment of a free and democratic Palestinian state.”



Rise in new homes across Scotland

Official figures published today reveal that the number of new homes in Scotland has risen by seven per cent in the last year, the first annual increase since before the recession.

In Edinburgh there are new developments planned for Greendykes, North Sighthill, Leith Fort, Gracemount and Pennywell and Muirhouse. In 2013/14 the City of Edinburgh Council built over 1200 new social rent, mid market rent and low cost home ownership homes. [Click here](#) for the details and a map of completed new homes.

The new figures show that 15,957 new homes were delivered in Scotland in the year to March 2014, compared to 14,895 in the previous year. This is the first increase since 2007-08.

The figure includes new build housing, rehabilitations, and conversions. Private sector house building and housing association rehabilitations accounted for the largest share of this growth, with private sector-led new build completions rising nine per cent on the previous year, to 10,686.

The latest statistics also confirm that the Scottish Government remains on track to deliver on its target of 30,000 new affordable homes by 2016.

A total of 6,850 affordable homes were completed through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in the year to June 2014, up nine per cent on the previous year. Approvals were up 25 per cent to 7,067, while starts were up 55 per cent at 6,530.

Local authority housing figures show that in the last year to March 2014, 1,140 new council houses were built in Scotland, the highest total in 25 years.

The Scottish Government has invested over £135 million through its Council House Building Programme, which has provided more than 4,000 new homes across Scotland since 2009.

Housing Minister Margaret Burgess said:

“It is encouraging to see that the number of new homes in Scotland has risen in the last year, driven in large part by an increase in the number of private sector completions.

“This is the first annual increase since before the recession, reflecting the growing confidence within the housing market, which the Scottish Government has helped to stimulate through investment in initiatives designed to support the sector, and help people into home ownership.

“Nonetheless, new housing supply remains well below pre-recession levels and I recognise that the house building industry continues to face a number of challenges. We are committed to working with organisations across the housing sector to address these, and work towards the shared goal of securing a sustained increase in housing supply.

“While we are making progress, the powers of independence would provide full flexibility over budgets, investment and innovative financing, allowing us to do even more to support the supply of new homes.”

Mrs Burgess continued:

“The statistics also confirm that our Affordable Homes Supply Programme is performing strongly, with completions, approvals and new starts all up on the previous year.

“Since 2011 we have delivered more than 21,000 new affordable homes, bringing us over two-thirds of the way towards our five-year target of 30,000 new homes. We have also delivered over 15,000 homes for social rent, bringing us three quarters of the way towards our five-year target of 20,000 new homes.

“Council house building figures are at a 25-year high in the year to March 2014, with 1,140 new council houses built in Scotland. Over 4000 new council houses have been delivered through the Scottish Government’s Council House Building Programme since 2009.

“The supply of affordable housing continues to be a high priority for us, and we are working with the entire sector to increase the supply of affordable homes and deliver vital support for construction and house building companies throughout Scotland.

“This commitment is underlined by our £1.7 billion investment in affordable housing over the current parliamentary term, supporting an estimated 8,000 jobs each year.”

Get your fitness plan off to a fighting start at Edinburgh Leisure

✖ Edinburgh Leisure is calling on the public to combat cancer and get their new-season fitness plans off to a fighting start at the same time.

Edinburgh Leisure has joined forces with Macmillan Cancer Support to host a series of Body Combatathons at venues across the city from August 26th – 28th with the aim of raising awareness of the charity’s excellent work and boosting vital funds.

Customers can take part in one, two, three or up to seven hours of the Combat Cancer Combatathons.

Based on the hugely popular Body Combat classes, the event will blend various combat sports renowned for their fitness and fat-burning benefits.

The combatathons are the latest event resulting from what is proving to be a successful partnership between Edinburgh Leisure and Macmillan Cancer Support, which was agreed in 2013 with the aim of raising funds for the charity and also raising awareness of the health benefits of exercise.

Events to date have included the Longest Day golf, and various sites hosting Macmillan Coffee Mornings, raising in the region of £6k in 2013.

Edinburgh Leisure is going for a target of raising £10K for Macmillan Cancer Support in 2014.

Ian Grimwade, Head of Business Development at Edinburgh Leisure, said: "At this time of year many of us are wanting to get fit and healthy again after the summer holidays. So we are challenging people to get their new fitness plans off to a fighting start, and help a brilliant cause at the same time, with the Combat Cancer Combatathons.

"We are encouraging as many people as possible to sign up for this adrenalin-pumping event, which will not only help raise cash to kick cancer's butt, but also raise awareness of the benefits of exercise. Plus it promises to be fantastic fun!"

Jayne Forbes, Edinburgh Fundraising Manager for Macmillan Cancer Support, said: "We are delighted to be working with Edinburgh Leisure. They are helping us to make a real difference to people affected by cancer. We help people in many ways, from specialist nurses and doctors, to help and advice for people who have financial worries as a result of their cancer diagnosis. None of this would be possible without the help of our supporters who contribute 98% of our funding. Please look your trainers out and get to a Combat Cancer event near you!"

Participants simply make their donation of £5.

Combatathons are taking place at:

Gracemount Leisure Centre, Tuesday 26th August, 19.30-21.30

Drumbrae Leisure Centre, Thursday 28th August, 09.30-11.30

Meadowbank Sports Centre, Thursday 28th August, 18.00-21.00

Customers can call the centre or simply visit reception to book their place and pay their £5 donation. For further information visit www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

Economy committee consider impact of Festivals



As thousands of visitors descend upon Edinburgh for the summer Festivals, the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee took time to examine the economic benefit of one of the biggest cultural events in the world.

MSPs will investigate the issue during a one-off session yesterday afternoon.

The Committee explored the economic impact of the Festivals

for Edinburgh and the wider parts of Scotland, the significant cultural and social benefits they generate, and what more can be done to increase the attractiveness of Scotland to international visitors through future development of the Festivals' world-leading cultural brand.

You can watch the YouTube video [here](#) (it lasts for an hour and a half!)

The Committee questioned the following witnesses:

Faith Liddell, Director, Festivals Edinburgh

Lady Susan Rice CBE, Managing Director, Lloyds Banking Group [Scotland] and Chair of Edinburgh's Festivals Forum

Kath Mainland, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

Amy Saunders, Senior Adviser, International, Creative New Zealand

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Airport

Convener of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee Murdo Fraser MSP said ahead of the Committee meeting: "The Edinburgh Festivals are firmly established as some of the most creative and innovative Festivals anywhere in the world, attracting thousands of people to Edinburgh and Scotland every year.

"Our Committee will be asking how businesses in Edinburgh and across Scotland can realise the maximum economic benefit from hosting this artistic spectacle but also examining how our tourism industry responds to the challenge of the demands placed on it during August."

Faith Liddell, Director, Festivals Edinburgh said: "Edinburgh's Festivals are Scotland's world-class cultural brands with an international reputation and appeal unmatched by any other cultural events on the globe. We are distinctively Scottish and yet profoundly international, drawing artists, audiences and media from every continent and over 70 countries each year.

“The Festivals are economic powerhouses, cultural platforms, forums for national and international debate, drivers of ambition and creators of cohesion. We are committed to capitalising on our enormous global value for the benefit of Scotland and look forward to working with the Committee to further examine our role.”

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review : Spectacappella! ****

There are some things in life that are horrifically tricky to master, yet impressive to behold once mastered: poaching an egg, juggling, speaking foreign languages, writing a decent review... *A cappella* singing is right at the top of this list.

The release of teen comedy *Pitch Perfect* in 2012 and the continued success of US drama *Glee* have brought *a cappella* back into the spotlight and updated its image from one of tired barbershop quartets to a modern, edgy medium, one that young people are excited to be involved in. **All The King's Men** are at the forefront of this revolution. Named in 2012 as the **best university a cappella group in the UK**, they celebrate their sixth birthday this year and are stronger than ever, counting amongst their patrons Paul Phoenix of The King's Singers and Michelle Carlin of Sydney University.

Opening with a lively mix of Prince's "*I Wanna Be Your Lover*" and Clean Bandit's "*Rather Be*", from the very beginning the group showcased where their strengths lie. Whilst the treble of **Ben Taylor-Davies** was clear and well-controlled in their first number, it was sometimes obscured by the power of the group as a whole.

There is a tremendous sense of fun within ATKM, one that sometimes leads the group a little out of the control of musical director **Jonny Stewart**, yet the audience has no objections. Sharp choreography (often a challenge for a *cappella* groups) and intelligent arrangements abound: Cee Lo Green's "*Forget You*" is standard fare for most a *cappella* groups, yet it was given new life by the seemingly impromptu arrival of **Thana'a Mohajer** with Kanye West's "*Gold Digger*"- Mohajer, one of the strongest voices in the group, also bends over backwards (quite literally) to display the strongest thighs.

Another highlight included **Rufus Talks'** rendition of Paolo Nutini's "*Last Request*"- a quieter moment that provided a welcome respite from the quick pace of ATKM's set.



The surge in popularity of a *cappella* singing is surely a positive phenomenon. Soundtracks recorded in a booth with a sound engineer can hide a multitude of sins, and television shows and films sometimes lead young singers to believe that perfection can be achieved within minutes. ATKM is tribute to the hard work that goes into the mastery of what is in fact a very tricky medium, and they are a credit to their MD.

Spectacappella! is showing at 15:10 at The Space @ Symposium Hall, until August 23rd 2014. **All The King's Men** can be found on Facebook ([facebook.com/ATKMLondon](https://www.facebook.com/ATKMLondon)) and on their website (www.all-the-kings-men.com). Their latest release, **Royal Flush**, can be purchased for £10 from allthekingsmenlondon.-bigcartel.com.



Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Candy Gigi: I'm Not Lonely ****

Candy Gigi: I'm Not Lonely

Heroes @ the Hive

Until Aug 24

I arrived late to Candy Gigi's show, so I missed her opening scene in which she scrubs her teeth with a toilet brush for four minutes before trying to make out with a young male audience member. It was a taster of what was to come from the 2014 New Act of the Year finalist.

Grotesque almost doesn't do justice to the manic, gastronomically in-your-face, clownishly sexualised humour that Candy Gigi Markham, probably fairly safely, can call her own.

With the theme tune from EastEnders blaring out, and a "Please find me funny" poster behind her, the newly single 25-year-old from South Woodford, Essex, wearing her mother's soiled wedding dress in an off-shoulder style, and with lipstick smeared over her face, gorges herself, variously, on red apples and an iceberg lettuce (garnished with parsley). Then she regurgitates them while eyeing up and sitting on the lap of her hapless male victim. "Why don't you kiss me?", she asks plaintively.

"I recently started having some counselling," she blurts out by way of explanation after an awkward silence. "I suffered problems with confidence and self-esteem. I've got too much of it! I love myself and I don't understand why boys don't fancy me. I'm pretty, I'm cute, I'm intelligent."

And then she's at it again, this time bashing the lettuce for good measure. "It's an unpredictable vegetable," she says.

A musical theatre graduate from north London's Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Markham has a clear eye for the absurd. "You think this is easy?" she screams at the eight-strong audience. "I used to want to be a doctor. Then I woke up one day and thought: 'That's what I want to be: this.'"

A giant inflatable penis, a pig's nose and a can of whipped cream spray also feature, as do some broccoli and a banana, but the guy in the front row manages to hold out, even when his wannabe girlfriend starts grating a baby doll in a last-ditch come-on.

There's a surreal, Pythonesque, refreshingly off-the-wall feel to Markham's deadpan acts of desperation, and sprouting up from the raging ugliness is a resplendent voice which suddenly breaks into "I dreamed a dream" from Les Misérables. It's her first Edinburgh solo show, and, if her determination and wild imagination is anything to go by, it won't be her last.

Submitted by [Lee Levitt](#)



Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Aye Right How No? ****



The subject of the Scottish Referendum has been with us for a long time and a lot of the discussion is quite serious.

Aye Right How No is a comedy slant on the question of

independence. Its hosts Vladimir McTavish and Keir McAllister do a very good job of bringing a lighter side to it all.

Ably assisted by the very funny Propoganda Now lads using some great visuals it all worked very well. I especially liked the David Cameron speech spliced with a wee bit of Still Game – that was genius.

Different guests appear every night. These have included Rory Bremner (loads of guests in one!) and Des Clarke.

You can come away from this show with no idea how you will vote but hopefully you come away with a smile on your face after an hour of comedy on a subject which is too often too serious.

The show runs until 24th August 6.30pm The Assembly Rooms George Street.

Scottish Seabird Centre are hiring



And we think you might have to be a bird lover!

North Berwick's multi award-winning visitor attraction, the Scottish Seabird Centre, is seeking an experienced Project Manager to progress plans to extend the existing Centre to house the National Marine Centre.

The National Marine Centre will build on the success of the

five star Seabird Centre, creating additional education and visitor facilities by sympathetically expanding the existing building. This will allow the charity to achieve more of its conservation and education objectives and further enhance facilities for both locals and visitors.

The Project Manager role is a newly created, temporary post that will ensure that the National Marine Centre is fully planned, funded, built, fitted-out and opened.

The successful applicant will prepare and implement an agreed 12-month project programme; work with potential project partners, funders and supporters; and ensure that all plans fit with the Centre's charitable objectives.

A central part of this new job will be to ensure that the charity plays an increasing role in highlighting the international importance of Scotland's outstanding marine environment and wildlife; as well as the need for Scotland's seas, coasts and marine wildlife, including seabirds, to be properly protected and looked after for future generations.

Tom Brock OBE, Chief Executive of the Scottish Seabird Centre, said: "It is a very exciting time at the Seabird Centre as we look forward to playing an increasing role in environmental education and conservation, as well as continuing to improve a wonderful facility for both visitors and the local community.

"Candidates must have extensive project management and fundraising skills, as well as relevant experience and

qualifications. A proven track record in fundraising and project delivery is also essential. We are confident that an enthusiastic and dedicated candidate, who is the right fit for our committed team of staff, trustees and volunteers, will be working with us very soon."

This is a full-time role (although part-time working may be considered) for an initial fixed period of 12 months (this may be extended depending on success and available funding). Salary is dependent on skills and experience. The deadline for applications is Friday 19 September.

For more information please visit www.seabird.org

Facebook /ScottishSeabirdCentre

Twitter @SeabirdCentre

Photo © Sean Bell

Thursday in Edinburgh – what's on today



Live Music Now: Andrew Waite and Seth Tinsley. The accordion, voice and guitar duo perform a mixture of traditional and self-penned songs and tunes in response to John Ruskin's artworks and other portrayals of the Scottish landscape.
6-6.30pm, [Scottish National Portrait Gallery](#), 1 Queen

Street. Free and unticketed.

✖ **The Drawing Room:** an informal, artist-led drawing session. Developed by contemporary artists, each session is inspired by the GENERATION exhibition and also reflects concerns in the artists' own work. All materials supplied, no experience necessary. This session will be led by **Robert Baldock** and **Emma Bowen**. 5.30-6.45pm, [Royal Scottish Academy](#), (Scottish National Gallery), The Mound. Free and unticketed. Part of GENERATION By Night.

Lunchtime concert: **Charles Eliasch** (baritone), **Sofia Dimitrova** (soprano) **Will Shaw** (piano.) 1.10-1.50pm, [St Mary's Cathedral](#), Palmerston Place. Free: retiring collection.

Free Fringe Music at The National Museum of Scotland. Today: **Andrew Waite** and **Seth Tilsey**, accordion, guitar and vocals. 2-2.40pm, [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street.

Lunchtime Concert: **Julian Layn** (Switzerland), piano. 12.15pm, [St Giles Cathedral](#), High Street. Free.

Informal Concert: Piano Speak. **Will Pickvance** performs popular piano improvisations and witty repartee. 'A Bach fugue evolves into a bebop classic on its way to becoming a version of Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*.' 1.30pm, [St Giles Cathedral](#), High Street. Free.

Conserving Stephen Campbell: Kirsten Dunne and Sarah Laing discuss the labour of love involved in installing Campbell's immersive installation *On Form and Fiction* (1990). 6pm, [Royal Scottish Academy](#), (Scottish National Gallery), The Mound. Free and unticketed. Part of GENERATION By Night.

✖ **Blackwell's Edinburgh presents Writers At The Fringe:** every Thursday during the festival Blackwell's invites a selection of Scottish performers to give a taste of their work. New and unpublished works stand alongside established writers. This

week **Sarah Sheridan, Jake Walker Curley, Jim Hall, Nicola White and Matthew Zajac.** 5.45-7.45pm, [Blackwell's, South Bridge](#). Free tickets available from the shop's front desk or by calling 0131 622 8216, or from the [Fringe Box Office](#).

Rocks: through video, photography and live performance, *Rocks* presents the journey of rocks from beach to stage, and the trajectory of a poem from idea to communication. 6-6.15pm, [Edinburgh College of Art](#), Main Building, Lauriston Place. Free; no booking required. Part of ECA Masters Festival 2014.

Edinburgh Book Fringe 2014: Scotland '44 – Ideas for a New Nation. **Dominic Hinde, Lee Bunce, Oliver Escobar-Rodriguez and Laurie MacFarlane** launch their new publication, which proposes ideas for a fairer, greener and more decentralised society for Scotland over a thirty year period, 2014-2044. 1pm, [Word Power Books](#), 43-45 West Nicolson Street. All welcome! Admission free – donations also welcome!

iBeacons Camera Workshop: Otherie. Come and try an app that enables you to attach photos to specific places inside buildings and then share them with other people who visit the same places. Invent a game that can be played with this set-up! 11.30am-1.30pm, [Edinburgh College of Art](#), Main Building, Lauriston Place. Free but places are limited and must be booked via [eventbrite](#). Part of ECA Masters Festival.

Gayfield Twilight Talks: Garden in Mind – designing for health and well-being. **Annie Pollock**, Director of Landscape Design and Architecture at the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre and **Celine Sinclair**, Chief Executive of The Yard, discuss the role of landscape design in creating health-giving environments. Introduced by leading architect **Richard Murphy OBE**. 6-8pm, [The Yard](#), 22 Eyre Place Lane. Free tickets can be booked via [eventbrite](#).



War Poets Collection Guided Tours: Edinburgh Napier University houses a small special collection of material relating to the fascinating history of its Craiglockhart campus, which began life in 1880 as a Hydropathic establishment and was requisitioned by the military in 1917 as a hospital for shell-shocked officers (**Seigfried Sassoon** and **Wilfred Owen** met here.) In the 1920s it became home to the Convent of the Sacred Heart and Craiglockhart College of Education.

Catherine Walker will provide a guided visit and talk about the many interesting characters who have had links with Craiglockhart over the years. 11am-12 noon or 2-3pm, War Poets Collection Exhibition Area, [Edinburgh Napier University Craiglockhart Campus](#), Glenlockhart Road. Free, but each tour is limited to 12 people, so please book by calling 0131 455 4260/4274 or emailing events@napier.ac.uk **The War Poets Collection Exhibition** is open to the public for viewing during campus opening hours – all welcome! There is more information about the War Poets Collection on its [website](#).

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



Holyrood recess

Museum Lates

Your team

Doctor Who Premiere

Edinburgh Apps

From tonight at midnight The Scottish Parliament enters what is known as purdah: that time between the parliamentary session and the Scottish Independence Referendum on 18 September 2014 when no new legislation can be passed.

No matter what your politics are this is an historic moment in Scotland. We will be at the count at Inghliston on 18 September and propose to bring you live rolling coverage of the event. If you have strong views then now is the time to let us know them. [Write to us here](#) for publication.

Deadlines for the Scottish Independence Referendum

The following are the deadline dates

- Registering to vote – Tuesday 2 September 2014
- New Postal vote applications and Changes to existing postal votes – 5pm Wednesday 3 September 2014
- New applications to vote by proxy and changes to existing proxy Votes – 5pm Wednesday 3 September 2014
- Emergency proxy applications, without attestation – Wednesday 10 September 2014
- Emergency proxy applications, attestation required – 5pm on Thursday 18 September 2014

Further information on the council [website](#) about how to register – or you can get a form from your local library.

The National Museum of Scotland is open late tomorrow night. You may still be able to get a ticket to this event filled with music brought to you by DJ Lord Holyrude on his vintage

gramophone. More details here.

Have a look at what happened at the last adult only event at the Museum!

[Museum After Hours](#) from [National Museums Scotland](#) on [Vimeo](#).

We have a whole area of our site set up to accept your content. Called EdinburghReportage it is firmly based on the same platform as [Guardian Witness](#), and the nice people at The Guardian allow us to use it under our branding.

Our latest storyboard is for you to put up photos of your team – this can be a team that you play for or one that you support. You might have some video content – or you may like to use this space to give us some match reports from matches that are not covered by mainstream media.

But please do use it – it is a playground for our readers! And if you have any suggestions for new storyboards then let us know!

[Click here to make your contribution to Your Team.](#)

Doctor Who fans will already know that this Saturday is the start of the new season with Peter Capaldi as the Doctor. But did you know that you can watch a special screening of the first episode on Thursday afternoon as part of The Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival?

“Peter Capaldi’s first appearance as The Doctor will be show on BBC1 and in selected cinemas around the world on Saturday 23rd August but the episode will premier in Edinburgh, as part of the Festival, on Thursday 21st August. The feature length escapade ‘Deep Breath’ is set to be a spectacular

beginning of an exciting new chapter in The Doctor Who saga.
– See more at:
<http://thisisedinburgh.com/whats-on/the-guardian-edinburgh-international-television-festival-2014/#sthash.HLe3n8ca.dpuf>

Enjoy Edinburgh tell you how:

[Post](#) by [Enjoy Edinburgh](#).

Tickets for the public screenings can be booked in person at The Filmhouse Cinema, by phoning 0131 228 2688 or online at <http://www.filmhousecinema.com/>. Timings for the screenings can also be found on the Filmhouse website.

Tickets for Doctor Who and Dynamo: Magician Impossible will cost £10 / £8 concession, Showrunners £6 / £4 concession.

Forward-thinkers are being challenged to come up with innovative solutions to help improve the lives of people in Edinburgh.

[EdinburghApps](#), run by City of Edinburgh Council, pits teams and individuals against one another to create fresh and creative concepts using Council and partner data.

Launched in 2013, the event offered winners business support and the opportunity to work with the Council to develop their concepts further.

Now the competition will return for a second year, in partnership with [Transport for Edinburgh](#), and will centre on two themes: Health and Culture and Sport.

Designers, developers, start-up businesses and other entrants will be able to use data provided to create apps, websites or other concepts. Ideas should either help citizens live healthy and independent lives or encourage interest and participation in culture and sport.

This year's [EdinburghApps event](#) will launch on 5th September with an Ice Breaker evening at the School of Informatics Forum, where anyone interested in entering will hear more

information about the challenge and themes.

Participants will then be given seven weeks to work on their ideas before presenting them at a judging and awards event on 26th October. A series of drop-in sessions will be run during this period to allow competitors to discuss their entries further.



Convener of
Finance and
Resources Alasdair
Rankin

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, the city's Finance & Resources Convener, said: "Technology is key to creating a thriving, equal society and events like these show the multitude of ways we can harness its benefits.

"We were incredibly impressed by the range and quality of entries in 2013 and I look forward to seeing what this year's entries have to offer."

Organisers are hoping to attract a similar calibre of entries to last year's EdinburghApps, which was won by Joint Equipment Store, an app that helps Council lorries operate more efficiently, and Trashman, another app helping the public to locate their nearest recycling bank.

Thanks to the competition these apps are now due for release by the Council in October.

EdinburghApps also ran an interim Hackathon in June, when participants were challenged to use data from the Council, Scottish Government and other partners to come up with solutions to improve road safety.

If you are interested in taking part in this event, visit the [EdinburghApps website](#) and register on the event page or email edinburghapps@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Find out more about the Council's Open Data Strategy [on the website](#).

Livingston 4 Hearts of Midlothian 1

Petrofac Training Cup 2nd Round, Wednesday 20 August 2014 – Almondvale Stadium

A young Hearts team crashed out of the Petrofac Training Cup following a 4-1 defeat to fellow SPFL Championship side Livingston at the Almondvale Stadium on Wednesday evening.

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson made ten changes to the side that defeated Hibernian in the Championship on Sunday, opting to give some of Hearts youth team their opportunity to show what they could do. An indication of this was the fact that half the Hearts team made their first team debuts.

The home side took the lead after just six minutes through White and this proved to be the only goal of the first half. Hearts David Smith came close to levelling the tie early in the second half but, in truth, the Livvy Lions dominated the game. White added a second goal 15 minutes before the end before substitutes Hippolyte and Robertson added two more. Hearts grabbed a consolation in the dying seconds although even this was an own goal from Talbot.

A night to forget for Hearts as their young team bowed out of the Petrofac Training Cup after the Maroons first defeat in competitive fixtures this season.

Livingston: Jamieson, Talbot, Fordyce, Kyle Jacobs, Keaghan Jacobs, O' Brien, Gallacher, McKenna, White, Glen, Mullen

Hearts: Hollis, Robinson, D. Smith, Oliver, Keatings, McKay, Gordon, Beith, L. Smith, McGhee, Henderson.

Referee: Crawford Allan

Att: 3,807

Top man: Those Hearts supporters who made the short journey tonight. Not an evening they'll care to look back on with any great affection.

Scottish Independence Referendum – Today's views

✖ The big news today is oil.

Sir Ian Wood who recently retired from The Wood Group which he took over as the family business and turned into an international success, has spoken today about the remaining oil reserves in the North Sea.

The Scottish Government commissioned Sir Ian to write a report on the oil industry and how to maximise recovery of oil from the seas around Scotland. You can read that publication in full [here](#). Known as The Wood Review the document refers to the amount of 24 billion barrels of oil six times.

✖

The review also recommended that a stronger regulator is put in place to monitor the industry. But as at February this year Sir Ian himself said nothing about independence or any allegiances. Nor has he now. Further in the report he advocated future exploration which he felt was at an all-time low. He highlighted the recent find of 1.8 billion boe in the Norwegian oilfields bordering the UK Continental Shelf which shows how lucrative further exploration might be. He advocated increased exploration and drilling.

Wood has however come out today with a statement that he

estimates there is only 30 years of oil left to explore which some believe is a contradiction of his earlier report and others believe is a knock out blow for the Yes campaign.

Scottish Development International quote Bob Keillor the current CEO of the Wood Group who also mentions 24 billion barrels left in the North Sea. You can read all of that statement in its context [here](#).

Fergus Ewing MSP and Energy Minister in The Scottish Government said: “Sir Ian is of course entitled to his views in the debate on Scotland’s future – but there is a wealth of expert opinion on the huge scale of Scotland’s long-term oil and other energy reserves, and the opportunities which that will offer us as an independent country.

“This is ultimately a debate about exactly how big Scotland’s remaining oil reserves are, and most countries are not nearly lucky enough to be in that fortunate position.

“The estimate of up to 24 billion barrels of oil remaining is the industry’s own projection – and Sir Ian’s own recent report also referenced the remaining reserves in the North Sea as being up to 24 billion barrels, meaning there is potentially as much still to come in value terms as has already been extracted.

“Sir Ian’s estimates would appear to be based on projections which only go as far as the year 2050, but which are themselves substantially higher than those of the OBR.

“Professor Sir Donald MacKay – one of the most respected experts on the industry – has said that the OBR’s oil projections are ‘precisely wrong’ and that the UK Government’s figures are missing a ‘mountain of black gold’. That view is backed up by this week’s report from the impartial N-56 think tank, which has estimated that remaining oil revenues are several times those officially estimated.

“And Professor John Howell, the chair of petroleum geology at Aberdeen University, has said that there are at least 40 years of oil production in the pipeline, not even counting fields which may yet be discovered.

“Oil is a bonus for an independent Scotland’s economy, and not the basis – our onshore tax revenues, excluding oil and gas, are roughly the same as those in the rest of the UK. As Standard & Poor’s have observed, even without North Sea oil and gas, Scotland is a wealthy country which, as an independent country, would qualify for their ‘highest economic assessment’.

“North Sea oil will be a fantastic asset for an independent Scotland for decades to come, and we propose a stable tax and regulatory regime for the sector to help maximise recovery and revenues – unlike the fragmented regime under successive Westminster Governments.”

Better Together had their say on oil too. This is what they say:

“The campaign to break up the UK has flip flopped on its oil estimates after one of the world’s leading authorities on oil and gas said their projections of future tax revenue from the North Sea were too high.

The SNP Government have consistently predicted that there are 24 billion barrels of oil equivalent left.

However, in a statement released today, Sir Ian Wood, former Chair of the Wood Group and author of a major review of the oil and gas industry earlier this year, said that there are 15-16.5 billion left.

This is between 45- 60% less than the Nationalists estimate.

SNP minister Fergus Ewing has previously stated that oil and

gas production would last until the end of the century, and has repeated consistently that there are up to 24 billion barrels of oil left.

However, in an interview on STV News tonight, Fergus Ewing completely switched his position, agreeing with Sir Ian Wood's calculations, without mentioning it is completely different from his own position.

Reacting to Sir Ian's intervention today Fergus Ewing said that Sir Ian was "absolutely right" to identify the opportunity Scotland has to extract "15 – 16 billion barrels of oil".

The nationalists have previously rejected the advice of the impartial experts at the Institute for Fiscal Studies that a separate Scotland would face £6 billion worth of cuts because they disagreed with the oil forecasts used.

Labour Shadow Energy Minister Tom Greatrex said:

"It doesn't happen very often but tonight a nationalist minister has been caught telling the truth"

"If Fergus Ewing, speaking on behalf of the Scottish Government, accepts Sir Ian Wood's projections then it is now time for the nationalists to come clean on the risks separation poses to public spending.

"The experts have said we would face £6 billion worth of either tax rises or spending cuts which the nationalists rejected because of their own, flawed, oil estimates.

"We do not have to take the risks of separation based on the nationalist's dodgy sums. We can have the best of both worlds – a strong Scottish Parliament with more powers guaranteed backed up by the strength, security and stability of the UK by saying No Thanks to separation on 18 September."

A survey released today shows that English voters reject a currency union with a separate Scotland by a ratio of 2:1, according to Better Together.

53% of those surveyed disagreed that a separate Scotland should continue to use the pound with less than a quarter of those polled supporting a currency union.

That is one of the key findings of the Future of England Survey 2014 (FoES). Over 3,600 adults in England were questioned by YouGov as part of research undertaken by Cardiff University and the ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change, based at the University of Edinburgh.

This poll comes the day after Alex Salmond twice described using the pound as a “transitional option.” Mr. Salmond made the remarks during an interview on Good Morning Scotland.

The SNP have previously claimed there is support across the rest of the UK for a currency union. However, this poll follows a similar one in April of this year that demonstrated that more than half of those living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland disagreed. The poll, commissioned by international currency transfer service UKForex, showed that 53% of the 1,600 respondents opposed a currency union if Scotland votes in favour of separation in September.

Scottish Labour MSP Jackie Baillie said:

“It is not surprising that the majority of people in England do not support a currency union. It wouldn’t work for Scotland or the rest of the UK. For us in Scotland it would mean handing over control of our economy to what would then be a foreign country.

“A currency union would not happen if we left the UK. That’s why we need to know Alex Salmond’s Plan B for what would replace the pound. Would we rush to adopt the Euro? Or would we set up a separate unproven currency?

“With just one week until up to one million postal votes are sent out across Scotland, it beggars belief that people are being asked to make such a huge decision without knowing what currency we would use. This really matters to people. How can we talk about paying for our schools and hospitals in a separate Scotland if we don’t know what currency we would use for that? How can families plan for the future if we don’t know what money our wages, pensions and benefits would be paid in?

"The choice facing Scots couldn't be clearer. We can take a leap in the dark with Alex Salmond and independence. Or we can have what most Scots want – more powers for Scotland without taking on all the risks of separation. It's the best of both worlds. We should say No Thanks to putting that at risk."

A number of leading nursing trade unionists in Lothian declared their support for a Yes vote as the one opportunity to protect the NHS in Scotland. Ahead of a statement by Health Secretary Alex Neil on the NHS in Scotland, nurses and members of NHS for Yes gathered near the Scottish Parliament to highlight the risks a No vote poses to our health service.

Community nurse Geoff Earl, who was present at Holyrood for the Neil announcement, said: 'As a nurse it is crystal clear to me that the best way to protect the NHS in Scotland is with a Yes vote. Since devolution, the Scottish Government has shown it can be trusted to deliver for nurses across our health service. When a pay rise was promised, it was delivered earlier this year. Meanwhile, Westminster let nurses down south of the border, reneging on its promised pay increase.

'As the Westminster Tory government systematically breaks the NHS in England into bits, the Scottish Parliament has enabled us to keep our health service in public hands. But there is no doubt in my mind that a No vote will mean that budget cuts south of the border will hit our NHS in Scotland hard.

'A recent report by the Commonwealth Fund found that the NHS in the UK was the world's best healthcare system – ranking top for efficiency, safety and cost. Privatisation puts that at risk. A Yes vote is our one opportunity to protect our NHS and ensure it remains world class.'

Senior charge nurse Andrew Notman, who was also present, said: 'In my personal view the only way to protect services and preserve fairness for staff within the NHS in Scotland is to vote Yes. We need the freedom to choose our own path on how we provide health services for the Scottish people, that is owned by the people of Scotland and run to meet their needs.

'We cannot do this while Westminster controls the purse strings and pushes an agenda of privatisation, fragmentation and cuts.'

Community mental health nurse Michelle Robertson said: 'Only a Yes can protect our NHS. The rush towards privatisation south of the border began under the previous Labour government and has spiralled out of control under the Tories.'

'Currently in the unelected and undemocratic House of Lords a number of peers are involved with private health care companies giving each scope to benefit financially from the growing privatisation of the NHS England.'

'So although health is currently devolved, it's naïve to think that Scotland won't suffer as a result of privatisation south of the border.'

Co-founder and chair of NHS for Yes Dr Willie Wilson said: 'More and more people – both those who work in the NHS in Scotland, and those who depend on it – are coming to realise that only with a Yes vote can we protect our public health service from the damaging effect of rampant privatisation south of the border.'

Have you been watching Referendum TV? It is being live broadcast from Hill Street each day during the Fringe. Featuring Lesley Riddoch and Iain McWhirter with guests it sets out to offer a view on the independence referendum. They admit to being mainly Yes voters but aim to give a fair hearing to both sides.

Watch today's show here:

The Edinburgh Reporter produces a selection of remarks and comments and pointers to articles about the Scottish Independence Referendum whenever we can.

People living in Scotland are invited to vote in the referendum on independence from the United Kingdom on 18 September 2014. The referendum question is “Should Scotland be an independent country?”

Whether you intend voting Yes or No to that question, your views, and those of others, have a place here. We invite comments and we also invite you to write about what you think by using our Submit your Story feature [here](#).

Edinburgh council offers nationality checking service



A new ‘check and send’ service has been launched to help people in Edinburgh to apply for British Citizenship.

People who use the [Nationality Checking Service](#) offered by The City of Edinburgh Council increase the chance of their applications being approved without unnecessary delays.

Trained staff offer a one-stop shop for applicants, who previously had to either travel to South Lanarkshire or south of the border to get documents checked or risk losing original documents by submitting them directly.

Registration staff will make sure that the correct paperwork is being submitted, photocopy all documents and return the originals, check that applications are filled out properly and then send them by special delivery to arrive at the Home Office in Liverpool the next again working day.

Completed forms sent with the right documents are processed

more quickly and cuts down on red tape. Having the forms and documents checked first by trained officials reduces these risks and may also cut the time spent waiting for a result.

The Nationality Checking Service is a partnership between the Council and the Home Office, with a total of 16 existing members of registration staff being trained.

The service is available to any person eligible to apply for British citizenship regardless of where they live.

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, Finance Leader at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "People seeking British citizenship have to adhere to a strict application system and have to pay simply to apply, so it is important that they get all of the details correct. Being able to speak face to face to trained staff here in Edinburgh will offer reassurance that they are submitting all of the relevant documents properly.

"This will also generate much-needed funds at a time when every local authority is under huge financial pressure and being forced to make cutbacks."

The City of Edinburgh Council checking service team are not able to give advice or answer queries regarding applications – these should be directed to the Home Office on 0845 010 5200.

Fees for the service are: single adult, £66; couple, £120; family, £168; child under 18, £36. These are payable to the Council and are in addition to any fees due to the Home Office.

Anyone interested in using the Document Checking Service can contact the team at Lothian Chambers on George IV Bridge on 0131 529 2614.

Thingummyjig is back!

✖ Thingummyjig is back at Edinburgh Corn Exchange on 23 and 30 August and tickets are still available.

Thingummyjig was STV's top rated music and dance programme in the 70s and 80s.

After a gap of over twenty years the Haddington Corn Exchange was selected to revive the show as part of East Lothian's Homecoming Events. Jack McLaughlin who has a real affection for East Lothian having started his broadcasting career on the pirate ship Radio Scotland which was launched from Dunbar. His book about the first days of pirate radio from East Lothian, *Pirate Jock* was published last year.

East Lothian has a strong tradition of Scottish music. The first band featured on Thingummyjig was Jim Johnston from Tranent and Jim also wrote the theme tune for the programme. Bobby Colgan from Macmerry was on drums for that first series and still plays a part in the local music scene.

Some of the original stars of the show such as Alastair MacDonald, Tom Alexander, Morag McKay, the John Carmichael Band and East Lothian's Bobby Colgan all formed part of the line-up with new local musicians and of course joining them on stage the Thingummyjig Dancers.

The night was hosted by the Laird of Coocaddens himself Jack McLaughlin who fronted every edition of the show on television.

Tartan Events was formed in September 2013 and includes three of the original team Jack McLaughlin (show host), Charles Davidson (production) and Cliff Martin (show director).

After a sellout show at Haddington Thingummyjig is now coming to the Corn Exchange in Edinburgh on Saturday 23rd and 30th of August

[Ticket details here.](#)

Church to discuss sex trafficking at the Fringe on Thursday

✖ Sex trafficking is to be discussed by the Church of Scotland at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Members of the Church and Society Council are teaming up with the author and cast members of a play titled 'Broken Dolls' – which explores the realities of human trafficking – for a talk-back session tomorrow after the 6.30 performance at Riddle's Court in the Lawnmarket.

The play has received rave reviews from the critics.

Broken Dolls recounts the story of Narcisa, a young Moldovan girl, tricked and sold into the sex industry when a seemingly innocent interview turns into her worst nightmare.

At the General Assembly of 2012, the Church of Scotland, in a report, drew attention to the anguish and misery caused by human trafficking. It called for action to reduce the demand for sexual services throughout Scotland.

Graham Blount, Church and Society Council Secretary, said: "We welcome this chance to explore human trafficking, its impact

and Scottish responses to it; and invite you to join us for the play and discussion.”

Tickets can be purchased online at the [Edinburgh Fringe Box Office](#).

The Edinburgh Reporter interviewed the stars of Broken Dolls and you can watch that interview [here](#)

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2014 – REVIEW – Jack Dee’s Help Desk ***.5



Jack Dee’s Help Desk, Assembly George Square 6:30pm, until 24 August, See venue for ticket availability and pricing

Known for his generally glum persona, Jack Dee’s one-week run in Edinburgh was marked with very apt, dark skies before his Tuesday evening show. The audience were drenched while queueing for his new format, ‘Help Desk’, the content of which is as unpredictable as the Scottish weather.

If you have a problem, from the mundane to the major, this is your opportunity to submit it to Jack and his team of 4 comedians who differ each night. This variable is vital to the success of the evening, with another variable being the problems which people are willing to submit and their chance of being chosen and discussed. On this occasion, Mark Steel, Hannah Gadsby, Lou Sanders and Clive Anderson joined Jack to delve into the back-stories of a number of the dilemmas,

attempting to conjure humour and some sort of solution from each scenario.

The production didn't quite pack as big a punch as might be expected from such a talented five-piece; the exchanges between the audience and the helpers sometimes dragged. Having said this, it is a refreshing concept and many astute observations were made. It would be excellent to see this show polished and perhaps in a TV or radio format.

Welcome to my Gilded Edinburgh



by Donald Anderson

More so than most capitals throughout the world Edinburgh is somewhat of a gilded gateway to its home nation. It's partly due to its stunning beauty, it's partly down to the city's reputation as an international culture hub, but it's also because Edinburgh is a small city in a small country.

Getting around what you want to see in Edinburgh is much easier than most capital cities and getting beyond the city into fantastic countryside is equally easy. Edinburgh Airport is the main point of arrival, from here the gothic grandeur of the city centre lies only a few minutes away by a variety of means. Getting to the city centre is easier than ever and Edinburgh now has some of the best links of any European city with shiny new trams, a superb shuttle bus service and arguably the best taxi service in Britain.

Once you've set yourself up in where ever it is you'll be staying and are out and about in the town it's good to have an idea about what you plan to see and how to make the most of Edinburgh's many treasures.

I'll start with the City of Edinburgh itself. This urban area is split into two zones, the Old Town and the New Town, the former of which contains many of the city's most significant landmarks. It is amongst the medieval spires and renaissance highrises that you'll find such treasures as the National Museum of Scotland, the John Knox House, Holyrood Palace and, most prominently of all, the magnificent Edinburgh Castle.

The National Museum is the city's most popular free attraction, but there is also the Museum of Childhood, the Edinburgh Writers Museum, guided tours of the Scottish Parliament, and a huge array of shows during the Festival Fringe season when the city throngs with revellers enjoying what must be the greatest arts and entertainment show on Earth. For pure, simple pleasure, however, nothing quite beats a long walk around the ancient architecture and mystical, winding closes.

On foot sightseeing in Edinburgh's Old Town is great all year round and is at its finest when accompanied by an expert historian and storyteller. The best way to unlock the tales beneath the surface is book yourself on a Mercat walking tour. A Mercat tour is a never-to-be-forgotten experience wherein the often lurid (and true) tales of Edinburgh's infamous past come to light. Tales of murder and body snatching are brought to life alongside the stories of Edinburgh's famous historical figures. Descend into the sprawling sub-terrain Blair Street Vaults on a ghost tour or to hear the fascinating history of why they were created; learn about the story of the Royal Mile and Edinburgh Castle, and set out on a spooky night walk. Edinburgh's New Town is characterised by meticulously planned Georgian terrace streets and beautiful classical monuments.

The area's grid arrangement stands in striking contrast to the organic curves of the Old Town. It is where you will find many free to enter attractions such as the National Galleries of Scotland and the Scottish National Portrait Galleries. Be sure to shop in the fashion houses of Multrees Walk and George Street, where upmarket retail abounds, but take time to just soak up the atmosphere in an array of classy restaurants and bars. Edinburgh city centre is an amazing and easy place to explore on foot.

There are, however, a huge selection of open top sightseeing bus tours circulating throughout the veins of the capital. Most of them have their initial departure points at Waverley Bridge and St Andrew Square. From these locations they ferry their passengers high and low, corner to corner. Most offer pre-recorded audio commentary and there's almost always a live English speaking guide on-board. All of them are hop-on hop-off allowing you explore deeper into some of Edinburgh's nooks and crannies in your own time.

It's a great experience in of itself, but it's also a great way to sample the city's many great places and attractions. The best part about the bus tours is that the scope of available routes reflect the ubiquitous nature of Edinburgh's borders.

The city centre is but one small (albeit significant) aspect of the Edinburgh sightseeing experience. Services such as the Edinburgh Heritage Tour make specific visits to outlying areas of natural beauty, including the Royal Botanical Gardens – one of my very favourite places and perhaps one of the country's best free attractions, and all the spots that have earned the praise of UNESCO .

The Majestic Tour leaves the inner city and heads north towards Leith, where you can take in the shoreline of the Firth of Forth and climb aboard Royal Yacht Britannia. There's even a City Sightseeing hop-on hop-off tour which includes a

wonderful Horrible Histories commentary narrated by Terry Deary the famous author himself – great news if you're travelling with kids! Edinburgh's status as the 'gilded gateway' I mentioned previously extends far beyond the airport and [bus tours](#) of the immediate outlying districts.



So far I've focused on the 'gilded' aspect, the beauty and diversity of the inner city, but what epitomises the gateway? I'll start with something that provides a virtual passport to the rest of Scotland. A 3-5 day ['Historic Scotland Explorer Pass'](#) provides free access to 72 of Historic Scotland's cultural attractions. This incredible variety features everything from the biggest and boldest to the oldest and most poignant.

A few particularly famous highlights are Edinburgh Castle itself, Linlithgow Palace, Stirling Castle and Urquhart Castle. You can buy passes online and they are redeemable at the Edinburgh Castle Historic Scotland Pass pick-up point. With knowledge that the explorer pass can act as your ticket around the country's best, what about tours that visit them? A highly recommended coach day tour operator based right in the centre of Edinburgh is Rabbies. Rabbies are long established tourism professionals who have been lighting the way for international visitors for years.

Their best loved day tours take small, close-knit groups on some wonderful explorations of the Scottish Highlands, Borders, and even Northern England. Landmarks aside a lot of the tours also incorporate such things as whisky tasting sessions, golf in the land where it was invented, loch cruises, light hiking portions and castle visits.

The scope of things to discover both in and outside Edinburgh is staggering, and only a few introductory examples have been listed here, more than enough for a good long weekend and even

more. The yearly international festivals themselves can keep you occupied for many days. Edinburgh is a small and beautiful capital of a small and beautiful city, and there's something for everyone with superb world class attractions, wonderful historic streetscapes that gladden the eye or simply some of the most beautiful countryside in the world.

A gilded gateway to help you create some magical memories and treasured experiences in one of the loveliest places there is. I love it, and I'm sure you will too. Donald Anderson is a director at the PPS Group – the UK's largest independent public affairs company. Born and bred in Edinburgh, Donald served for many years as a Labour Councillor, on the board of VisitScotland and was leader of The City of Edinburgh Council for many (it was actually 7.5 years!) years where he spearheaded the City's economic and tourism development at a time of great change and growth in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

For more information please email [CityXplora](mailto:info@cityxplora.com) at info@cityxplora.com

Submitted by [Iain Coupar](#)

