

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Muirhouse Community Shop up for an award

Big Clear Out!

Today at Edinburgh Art Festival

Recycling is changing

A Tattoo proposal

The wonderful work done at Muirhouse is being rewarded by yet another shortlisting for a national award. We think this is fabulous news. Their article tells you all about it [here.](#)

Gambado, Edinburgh's biggest indoor soft play and party centre at Fountain Park is launching the first of its monthly 'Big Clear Out' events on Sunday 31st August, from 9am till 11am, to help raise funds for its affiliated charity SiMBA, Simpson's Memorial Box Appeal.

The event, perfect for people who either want to have a clear out of items including clothes and toys which are in nearly new condition, de-cluttering or looking to make some money, will run on the last Sunday of every month.

The cost to take part is £15 per seller, with £5 going to SiMBA. The event is free to everyone hoping to snap up a bargain and for those bringing kids along there will be a reduced 'shop and play' fee of £5.

Chris Hairs, General Manager at Gambado Fountain Park, said:

“We are delighted with the interest already shown in this event not only from people wanting to make more space at home with a big clear out but also by those who are keen to get on board and help us raise much needed funds for this incredibly worthwhile charity.”

SiMBA, which is very close to the hearts of the staff at Gambado, was chosen as their charity of the year to raise funds for in recognition of the amazing work they do supporting people who have been affected by the loss of a baby. Over £2,000 has been raised since the beginning of the year with various activities and event including a team from the centre taking part in Kiltwalk and a hugely successful Easter event.

Sara Fitzsimmons, SiMBA director, said: “This sounds like a fantastic event with a great opportunity to have a clear out and to raise money for our charity at the same time. The ongoing support from the entire Gambado team has been amazing – we feel very honoured to be their affiliated charity and can’t thank them enough”.

To book a space at the event, please call 0131 202 3566 or email edinburgh@gambado.com and check out Gambado Edinburgh Facebook for more details.

Gambado Fountain Park boasts everything from slides and ball pools to an imagination station and gated sensory area for toddlers. It also features an innovative climbing wall for young daredevils and an impressive 31-seater traditional carousel.

Opening times until 24th August at Gambado are Monday to Sunday, 9.30am – 5pm and thereafter Monday to Thursday, 9.30am – 5.30pm, Friday, 9.30am – 6.30pm and Saturday and Sunday, 10am – 6pm. Prices start from £3.95 per child.



Today at Edinburgh Art Festival

Join us at the Edinburgh Art Festival Kiosk every lunchtime during the festival for a free guided tour of parts of our programme. Led by our volunteers, our tours are a great way to find your way through the city and the festival. All tour routes are flexible and can be altered depending on your interests; if there's an exhibition you really want to see just ask and we'll try to fit it in.

This tour explores work by artists whose work crosses the boundaries between music, performance and visual art in galleries around the city centre.

Edinburgh Art Festival Kiosk Located on the corner of George Street and Frederick Street, EH2 3E

The council is determined to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. They have a new system [with smaller bins](#) for general waste and more room for recycling being rolled out on 1 September.

Watch this video to understand where your rubbish goes:

[The Recycling Centre or Materials Recycling Facility – how it works](#) from [RecycleNow](#) on [Vimeo](#).

For all of you out there wondering how to pop the question we have the answer. This is how to do it – in front of 9,000 people!

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

Dovecot to recruit apprentices



Dovecot Studios will advertise the Apprentice Programme to recruit three new Apprentice Weavers over the course of the next three years, continuing a 100 year old tradition of collaboration with contemporary artists and designers.

Dovecot's three year Apprenticeship will be open to applicants over the age of 16 offering a unique opportunity to learn from Dovecot's Master Weavers. As a world leader in tapestry weaving, Dovecot Studios is dedicated to the continued development of this highly skilled art form, ensuring that this continues to thrive; nurturing innovation in new tapestry weavers who will carry the medium forward for future generations.

The Apprentice Programme sustains the lineage of Dovecot tapestry weaving as an essential feature of Scotland's creative community. Through hands-on learning experiences, the exceptional skills of this art form are passed from Master Weaver to Apprentice, building expertise for the future. Following the successful completion of the three year Apprenticeship, the aim for the Apprentice is to remain part of Dovecot's weaving team and to continue a career progression in the Studios to Junior Weaver, Weaver and then, following 10 years weaving experience, Master Weaver.

A Dovecot Apprenticeship covers technique, design practices and artistic collaboration. Dovecot aims to maximise the Apprentice's creative and intellectual potential by developing individual strengths and a design philosophy, gaining an

understanding of the professional context and practice of tapestry and rug making. Apprentices work in a studio setting alongside fellow weavers and are encouraged to build a personal creative identity and aesthetic vocabulary informed by historical, cultural and technical knowledge and by the practical experience of making textiles and collaborating with leading contemporary artists.

David Weir, Director of Dovecot Studios, commented:

‘Dovecot’s Apprenticeship Programme is an important new phase of learning and development for the Studios, growing our expertise for the future. It builds on the successes of the past ten years in re-establishing Dovecot as an international centre for the creation of contemporary tapestry in Scotland. The legacy of those founding weavers whose ethos of the artist craftsman, so valued by William Morris, is as relevant in today’s fast paced technological world as it was at the beginning of the last century’.

Film review – Wakolda (Lucía Puenzo, 2013)



In almost every scene of Lucía Puenzo’s chilling Wakolda, the foreground is overshadowed by the looming Argentinian mountains in the distance. This overpowering vision is akin to that of the film’s subject – a war criminal, pleasant if unexplored, but hiding something altogether more abhorrent.

In Argentina, a family reside in their currently empty hotel

by a great lake, eager to relax in to the beauty of their surroundings. A traveling doctor follows them, asks for a room and becomes company to them, insisting he does everything to help their medical ailments. His secrets are unknown to almost everyone.

Puenzo's latest work documents the life of a runaway Josef Mengele, one of World War Two's most infamous war criminals famous for experimenting on children and the disabled during the war years, dubbed 'The Angel of Death'. Set 15 years post-war in 1960, the man has resumed an assuming and almost normal presence, if not for his ink-riddled diaries, full of anatomical sketches of the most absurd, twisted kind.

It's execution is beautiful in many respects. Cinematographer Nicolás Puenzo layers a cold, noir like filter over the story, delivering stunning wide shots of snow laden Argentina, as well as intimate shots of freckled faces and bruising skin. Very few cinematographers succeed in portraying either of these, Mr Puenzo does a gorgeous job of both. The cast deliver great performances individually, especially young Florencia Bado as the object of Mengele's persistent experiments, whose subtle embrace of her own juvenility echoes the effortless performance of Ivana Baquero in Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*.

It does, at times, enjoy nudging the viewer on the arm and letting them know this man is actually evil. What should be subtle is sometimes a little condescending, translating into ITV daytime drama rather than a serious war film as it veers of the path it's trying to follow. However these encounters are thankfully a rarity.

Twisting and deceptive, *Wakolda* unfolds like a platonic, biological *Lolita*. Bleak, chilling and hard to shake, Puenzo's adaptation of Josef Mengele's infatuation with experimentation and the body is as powerful and uncomfortable as you would expect.

Wakolda opens at Filmhouse, Lothian Road on Friday 22nd August

COMPETITION – Win two tickets to Kiss me, Honey Honey!



Grant Stott and Andy Gray are favourites at the King's Theatre panto at Christmas. But this Fringe they are giving their Kiss Me Honey Honey show one last outing.

You can win two free tickets here. The show opens tomorrow so our competition will be fast and furious – **you have till Monday at 12 noon to send in your answer. The tickets will be for a show between Monday and 24 August 2014. There are no shows on 21 & 22 August. Click the link below to buy tickets.**

Watch our video interview with the pair who went with us on the Edinburgh Tram for their first tram journey! They performed excerpts from the show and chatted to The Edinburgh Reporter about it.

Name(required)

Email(required)

☐ Daily email from The Edinburgh Reporter?

Which radio station does Grant Stott work for?(required)

Submit

Δ

[Tickets here from the Edinburgh Fringe website.](#)

Films at the Old Quad



A special charity screening of *Good Will Hunting* is to be shown as part of the University of Edinburgh's outdoor cinema series in the Old College quad, run in association with Edinburgh International Film Festival.

The acclaimed film is being shown to celebrate the life and work of the late Robin Williams, who won an Oscar for his role as psychologist Sean Maguire. All proceeds will go to the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

Quirky romantic comedy *Amelie* and 1940's classic *Casablanca* have also been added to the programme.

Good Will Hunting (Cert 15, 1997), 19 August – 9.20pm

A special charity screening of *Good Will Hunting* in aid of SAMH. Robin Williams won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Sean Maguire, a psychiatrist who helps

Matt Damon's brilliant but troubled young janitor.

[Book tickets](#)

Amelie (Cert 15, 2001), 17 August – 9.15pm

Bursting with imagination, Amelie is not like the other girls. Discovering that her goal in life is to help others, she invents all sorts of tricks that allow her to intervene incognito into... other people's lives, including an imbibing concierge and her hypochondriac neighbor.

[Book tickets](#)

Casablanca (Cert U, 1942), 18 August – 9.00pm

The classic and much-loved romantic drama Casablanca, always found on top-ten lists of films, is a masterful tale of two men vying for the same woman's love in a love triangle. The story of political and romantic espionage is set against the backdrop of the wartime conflict between democracy and totalitarianism.

[Book tickets](#)

Full listings for Film in the Old College Quad can be found

here: www.ed.ac.uk/festivals

Tickets cost £5 per film (family matinees are free) and can be booked via the Edinburgh Festival Fringe website.

Film in the Old College Quad, which will take place from 17 to 23 August, is presented by the University in association with the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

Produced by Unique Events.

Quick eats and tasty treats at Edinburgh's Festivals



Festival season is well underway and it's all rather hectic! With so many things to see and do you may find you don't have a lot of time to think about eating so here are our pick of the best outdoor bars, pop up venues and places to grab a quick bite in between shows.

[The Pleasance](#)

Everyone loves the Pleasance and with 16 spaces for acts to perform it's got a lot going on. Many people hardly leave this fringe staple – it's not hard to understand why. You'll feel right in the heart of the festival here, with plenty of famous comedians to spot, and there's a dedicated kid's zone section

too. Food is served from a number of stalls and the usual student cafe options stay open late to cater for everyone.

60 Pleasance, EH8 9TJ



Pleasance Courtyard

[Assembly George Square Gardens](#)

Another festival spot to sit out and enjoy the sunshine and to be honest it's my favourite place to sit and soak up the atmosphere. It is run by Assembly, and home to eleven of their venues – you can surely find something fabulous to go to! Plus the bonus is that there is loads of space settle down for a pre or post show drink with friends in their outdoor bar area. There are some fantastic food options available here – try the nachos with pulled pork and homemade guacamole from the Mexican Kitchen, Fabulous Pad Thai at BKK or the Sweet Potatoes at Scoop.

George Square, EH8 9LH



Pad BKK

St Andrew Square and George Street

Full of great options and some fabulous street food from [Nusou](#) and also Henderson's you can relax in the Gardens on stripy deckchairs, do a spot of shopping and take in a show! Festival sorted. The Assembly Rooms is the biggest venue hosting some really big names but don't forget to head to the Stand Comedy Club too to see some old favourites and new faces taking their turn on stage.

[Underbelly's Udderbelly Pasture](#)

'You just head down the road and turn right and the big purple upside down cow!' The tourists looked at her like she was a

nutter... no honestly I am not joking! It's a festival favourite hanging out at the cow on Bristo square before going to see one of Underbelly's comedy acts. We can recommend heading to Stocks for a proper burger – the cheese and bacon is my favourite!

Bristo Square, EH8 9AL

[Gilded Balloon Teviot](#)

During August the Gilded Balloon take over the massive and labyrinthine Edinburgh University Student Union building in Bristo Square – meaning anyone can get in, no student card needed. They have nine performance spaces and bars and a café open all day, serving a wide selection of food and drink. There's also a beer garden, juice bar, crepe stall and food area.

Bristo Square, EH8 9AJ

[Summerhall](#)

Summerhall are open all year round and are the site for many other festivals and shows including the Science Festival and host creative and performing arts shows. They do go the extra mile in August with their outdoor bar in the courtyard, which is often the centrepiece of some of the theatrical performances. They have a Pickering's gin tent and serve their own Barneys beer both of which are brewed on site and La Favorita serve wood fired pizzas from their van. Make sure you try their set menu in the Royal Dick bar which is excellent value at just £13.50 for 3 courses and features dishes such as scallops and black pudding, followed by duck breast and dauphinoise and blood orange zabaglione for desserts.

1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL



Royal Dick Bar

[Ting Thai Caravan](#)

Started as a temporary street venue in the summer festival – Ting Thai was so popular that they decided to stick around. If you're looking for friendly service and great Thai-style street food then look no further. Ting Thai's interior is minimal and industrial, the music on the playlist is always good. Try the bubble prawns and Pad Thai – awesome!

8-9 Teviot Place, EH1 2RA

[Mosque Kitchen](#)

This is an Edinburgh institution! Offering generously sized dishes of tasty Indian food with no frills or pretension. A perfect choice if you're around Bristo Square and you're looking for a more reasonable alternative to the Fringe food vans – Curry in a Hurry and my word is it good!

33 Nicolson Street, EH8 9BX



Henderson's Edinburgh

[Henderson's](#)

For simple but wholesome veggie food, Henderson's is hard to beat. One of the first vegetarian restaurants to open in the UK, it has gone from strength to strength, with a restaurant, shop and bistro on Hanover Street, a café at St John's church at the corner of Princes St and a fringe outlet in St Andrew Sq. They do take out sandwiches, wraps and cakes, sit down meals in the cafes and proper restaurant food in the downstairs bistro (book in advance for this).

94 Hanover St / 3 Lothian Road,

[Los Cardos](#)

A really great Mexican lives in this tiny little restaurant on Leith walk. Choose from well-priced burritos, fajitas, quesadillas and tacos. A little off the beaten festival track but still worth a mention! .

281 Leith Walk, EH6 8PD

[Tuk Tuk](#)

The menu gives a really great selection with around a quarter of the dishes vegetarian or offering a vegetarian option. The theme is Indian road and railway street food as eaten by the real tuk tuk wallahs. They suggest 3-4 dishes per person as they are served in smaller size portions, and that was definitely more than enough for us. The bright orange entrance and Bollywood movie posters are a great backdrop match perfectly by the eclectic Indian inspired music. Tuk Tuk is how Indian food should be and its BYOB – perfect for groups before a show.

1 Leven Street, EH3 9LH

[Hanging Bat](#)

A local favourite on Lothian Road since opening in late 2012. The Hanging Bat is a perfect spot for those looking for a quick bite to eat – they offer a selection of North American style dishes such as pulled pork, nachos and a fine selection of hot dogs – try the Alsation. All this tasty food can be washed down with a selection of craft beers with over 20 on draft and their own brewery on show through the glass walls at the back.

133 Lothian Road, EH3 9AB

Have we missed anywhere you love – let us know!

EIFF Short film event today



EIFF is delighted to announce the screening of the first EIFF Short Film Challenge which will be held on Saturday 16th August at Filmhouse. The shortlisted films will be screened after which a guest Jury will be awarding winners of the challenge prizes.

EIFF Short Film Challenge is a brand new short film competition launched by EIFF in 2014.

Twelve finalists have been selected by EIFF programmers and the shortlisted films will be screened at Filmhouse in Edinburgh later today. A specially selected jury will attend the screening and announce the winners at the end of the event.

Alongside the shortlisted films, we will be screening EIFF 2014 Short Film Award winners *The Bigger Picture* (Daisy Jacobs), *Monkey Love Experiments* (Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson) and *My Stuffed Granny* (Effie Pappa)

The winner of the Best Film Award will also receive an all expenses paid opportunity to attend Encounters Short Film & Animation Festival in Bristol in September 2014.

Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival is the UK's

longest running competitive short film and animation festival. It presents one of the world's best-known showcases and meeting points for emerging talent, and seeks to promote the importance of short film as a means to develop the next generation of filmmakers and animators – See more at: www.encounters-festival.org.uk

The EIFF Short Film Challenge screening is a free ticketed event. To book tickets please see: www.filmhousecinema.com/

Film Review: Effie Gray (2014) at the Scottish National Gallery



Until late September, the impulsive, almost scintillating work of English artist and art critic John Ruskin, is being displayed the National Portrait Gallery in the exhibition, 'Artist and Observer'. In celebration of this, National Galleries Scotland invited director Richard Laxton to bring his much anticipated and consistently delayed feature, Effie Gray, to the city. After several attempts to release it and intrusive copyright claims getting in the way, Effie Gray met its first public audience in Edinburgh rather than Cannes. In front of a packed out crowd of art lovers in the National Gallery's Hawthornden Lecture Theatre, eager to delve into the life of Ruskin's wife and inspiration, that he grew apart from so quickly.

In 19th century Scotland, an artist and his significantly younger partner wed, moving to his parent's English home where

she is exposed to greater riches and high society. As her husband works in his own space, the young woman soon realises that this societal shift will change her attitudes and expectations in life.

Effie Gray is a deftly crafted period drama that flourishes in the hands of its screenwriter and co-star, Emma Thompson. Often, her unique wit and intelligence shines clearly on screen even when she isn't there. She's a wonderful wordsmith, bringing issues to what could be a rather dreary, overdone idea and injecting it with great life. The story follows the couple through their wholly depressing relationship. The eponymous character lives a life of lustrous riches whilst appearing wholly unsatisfied, allowing the viewer to delve into a 19th century film that doesn't all revolve around a ball room and grand dinner table. In its more quiet moments, it can grow slightly lethargic almost grinding to a halt. But this relaxation makes you notice the finer details that appear in its beautiful shots.

Starved of intimacy and the freedom to do as she pleases, Dakota Fanning delivers a grower of a performance in the film's lead role. She starts off slightly wooden and cliched and yet, over time embodies her character both physically and mentally, appearing glassy eyed and emotive by the time the credits roll. Her accent is distracting though, leaving us wondering if her Scottish attempt could've been *that* bad?

Effie Gray may be rather sombre and bleak, but its execution is so beautiful that it's apparent flaws can be partially forgiven. This is period drama that ventures outwith the usual tackiness of sweeping romance.

The John Ruskin is currently open at the National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street.

Effie Gray opens in UK cinemas in October this year.

Five things you need to know today



Custom House Leith

Lily Allen to headline Hogmanay

Sheraton is very grand!

Craig Hill sweeps Edinburgh's streets

Your reviews

The council will ratify the decision to purchase Customs House in Leith when it meets next week. The building will cost £650,000 and it is proposed that the council sets it up as a museum. The problem is that the council have not yet quite finalised the plans for the building, but they had to go ahead and buy it anyway as it was seen to be a one-off opportunity. So if the negotiations which the council is having with third parties to decide upon the use of the Custom House are not concluded by next spring the council may be left to carry the expense of renovations.


Councillor Richard Lewis will chair a project group to oversee the future proposals. There are clearly financial risks in this strategy, but if the council have paid only market value for the building, as stated in the report, then even if they had to sell the building on, it appears that they are starting from a reasonable position.

That has to be balanced against the risk of losing the building for the community in Leith who are desperately keen

to establish a museum. If the council had made a conditional offer for the property then National Museums Scotland would not have accepted it and would instead have placed the property on the open market. This is part of the flagship projects envisaged by the Tourism BID, one of two being established in the port.

The price will be paid from the Common Good Fund which currently has a balance of £1.6m.

Pop superstar Lily Allen will headline Edinburgh's Hogmanay 2014/15 'Concert in the Gardens'.

 Hogmanay headliner Lily Allen

The concert is organised by Unique Events on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council.

This special headline show will end a spectacular year for Lily Allen and will be the final show of her 2014 world tour.

On her headline appearance at Edinburgh's Hogmanay, Lily Allen has said: 'I've always wanted to spend Hogmanay in Scotland so the fact that I get to do it this year but performing onstage in front of a whole load of people up for the best time makes it extra special. I can't wait.'

Lily Allen at the Concert in the Gardens includes very special guests to be announced, set beneath the dramatic backdrop of Edinburgh Castle and the spectacular Midnight Fireworks, broadcast around the world and showcasing Edinburgh's Hogmanay as one of the biggest and best New Year parties on the planet. Councillor Steve Cardownie, Festivals and Events Champion for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Edinburgh's Hogmanay has long been the envy of cities across the globe and the celebrations to bring in the start 2015 are set to be no exception. Headliner Lily Allen is sure to be a big hit with revellers, and coupled with an absolutely spectacular

fireworks display, we are aiming to yet again bring together and entertain thousands of people as the capital brings in the bells.”

Pete Irvine, Artistic Director of Edinburgh’s Hogmanay, said: ‘We are delighted to announce Lily Allen in this the final week of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Lily’s had a great year headlining at festivals and playing all over the world. Edinburgh’s Hogmanay is THE New Year party, Lily is THE party girl.’

Recently listed as the only event/festival in the ‘Discovery Channel – Top 25 World Travel Experiences’, Edinburgh’s Hogmanay is recognised globally as one of the world’s best New Year celebrations and last year welcomed visitors from over 60 countries to celebrate at the ‘Home of Hogmanay’.

Over three-days of spectacular free and ticketed events in 2013/14, audiences of over 130,000 joined the celebrations, with 5 of 6 main ticketed events sold-out before the 31st December.

How to buy tickets

Revellers can purchase tickets for Concert in the Gardens and all other Edinburgh’s Hogmanay events including Edinburgh’s Hogmanay Street Party, The Keilidh at the Street Party, Torchlight Procession and Concert in St Giles’ Cathedral from 10am Friday 22 August through

The [Edinburgh Hogmanay](#) website

By calling Edinburgh’s Hogmanay Box Office on 0844 573 8455 or by calling into the Hogmanay Box Office at The Fringe Office, 180 High Street, Edinburgh.

The Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa has been voted Scotland’s Leading Hotel in the World Travel Awards for the second year

running. These awards are nominated by travel and tourism professionals worldwide and this accolade recognises the Sheraton Grand's commitment to excellence in the past 12 months. Hailed as 'the Oscars of the travel industry', World Travel Awards is acknowledged as the ultimate travel accolade that aims to celebrate those organisations that are pushing the boundaries of industry excellence.

Tristan Nesbitt, General Manager at the Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa said: "To win this award for the second year running is exceptional recognition for my team. This award is voted by our clients and guests so is testament to our warm welcome and high levels of Scottish hospitality with excellent service. We look forward to building on this success and continuing to welcome our travellers and Edinburgh locals who remain loyal to the Sheraton Grand."

Fringe stalwart Craig Hill kept it clean when he helped City of Edinburgh Council's street cleansing team spruce up the capital during the Festival.



Craig Hill helps street cleansing staff spruce up the city. The comedy veteran and Edinburgh resident pitched in to help the local task force tackle one of the summer's busiest spots, against the familiar backdrop of his own promotional posters at Middle Meadow Walk.

Craig is one of hundreds of performers to be promoting their shows using the Council's official advertising, which for the first year will generate thousands of pounds towards keeping the city clean during the festival.

The scheme, now in its fourth year, dissuades illegal fly-posters by providing alternative advertising opportunities, saving the Council up to £350,000 on the cost of cleaning away flyers and posters.

And now, for the first time, revenue from the advertising contract with print and distribution company [Out of Hand](#), in partnership with [Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society](#), will be ploughed back into keeping the city beautiful for residents and visitors.

Money gained from the contract to advertise on Council-owned assets will be used to fund additional street cleansing and litter capacity over the busy festival period.

Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: “Last year’s Fringe Festival Advertising proved a real success so now it’s great to be able to harness this to help keep our city beautiful for everyone.

“Edinburgh Festival Fringe is an amazing experience for performers, visitors and people living in Edinburgh, but it has an undoubted impact on the city’s environment.

“That’s why we’re glad to be able to work with Out of Hand and Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society to provide a solution benefitting both citizens and those making the most of this world-famous festival.”

The City of Edinburgh Council’s outdoor advertising poster project, delivered by Out of Hand, provides different styles of advertising on around 900 Council-owned assets throughout the city, including wrap-around lamp post advertising and tower columns.

Revenue gained from advertising of performances during the period will fund operational costs associated with the Fringe.

Amongst these measures are the employment of more than [70 temporary street cleaners](#) to patrol the city’s streets to tackle litter resulting from increased footfall and a batch of extra large bins, to be located in some of the city’s busiest areas to cope with the rise in rubbish.

Comedian Craig Hill added: “Edinburgh is so gorgeous I’m really pleased that one of the Council’s priorities is keeping it clean because it’s too beautiful a city to mess up!”



If you have been to see something side splittingly funny or a show which made you think then do share your reviews with us. The EdinburghReportage site has an Edinburgh Festivals page which is waiting for your views.

[Please put up photos, video or text here.](#)

The Festival of Politics kicks off with a fiscal focus



If “Balancing The Books” were a Fringe event, you’d walk in and find face-painted jesters gleefully and precariously posturing paperbacks on their noses, foreheads and any other suitable extremities.

An audience can only dream. No such theatrics were found at the Festival of Politics panel discussion at The Scottish Parliament this afternoon—but the physical fireworks were made up for by dazzling rhetorical performances by the assembled speakers, tackling the fiscal uncertainties surrounding the

independence referendum and responding to audience questions and concerns.

The three panellists' opening remarks immediately set the tenor of the following 90 minutes: a no-frills, participatory panel starring a hard-nosed activist, a diligent academic and a seasoned economic journalist. (Email us if you have a good "So-and-so walk into a bar" joke about such a posse.)



From left to right: Robin McAlpine, Charlie Jeffery, Paul Johnson and Bill Jamieson. Photo by Noah Caldwell

From the social-democratic wing, Common Weal's Robin McAlpine pointed out that it is a fundamental flaw of many in the current campaign to consider Scotland's future in terms of its past. A combative – yet extremely well-informed – advocate of Scandinavian-style public spending, McAlpine admitted that raising taxes won't achieve the social safety net dreamed of by many in his camp. Instead, higher, more equal pay and an industrial economic policy that increases productivity (Britain's is 16% lower than most developed countries') will ensure a greater tax base by default. The key? Structural change led by strong public services.

Economist Paul Johnson, director of the London think-tank Institute for Fiscal Studies, purposely approached topics from a UK-wide context. What do the long-run numbers tell us? (We're talking about the "Books" here, after all.) What can we see from the hinterlands beyond September 18? (Panel chair Charlie Jeffery of the University of Edinburgh later extolled Johnson for his prolific 50-year projections, which I assume is a compliment in the world of fiscal policy.) In a sidelong dig at McAlpine's dream of a high-wage Scotland, Johnson dutifully pointed out that the UK hasn't given up on wage increases, it simply doesn't know how to do it. And that pesky long-run? In a strict numbers game, as the retiree population grows, health spending follows. Currently, one-third of all

public spending goes toward health—soon, it will be half.

Journalist and commentator Bill Jamieson was introduced by Jeffery via a “lugubrious” quote from his recent Scotsman article, which essentially foresaw a bleak economic landscape post-September 18, regardless of the outcome. Upon finishing the depressing citation, Jeffery slyly ribbed, “So, Bill, how’s it looking now?”

As chuckles subsided, Jamieson cut through the melodrama: a larger, more involved state actor is nothing without efficiently prioritised public spending. From 2000-2010, Scotland enjoyed a 60% overall increase in public spending (and still has higher per capita spending than the rest of the UK), yet myriad problems persist—the same issues (poverty gap, land ownership, homelessness, etc.) prompting Yes activists to call for higher public spending. The two guides out of this fiscal wilderness—or, as Jamieson called them, “lamp-lighters”—are the Independent Budget Review from 2010, and Jo Armstrong’s work on the efficiency of Scotland’s public services. (Invoking the former, Jamieson got quotational revenge by citing Jeffery’s own comments on questioning Scotland’s uneven allocation of subsidies to various social groups; “Touche!” Jeffery responded.) A thorough journalist accustomed to poring over tomes, Jamieson implored the audience to find the two documents downstairs in Parliament’s library—a homework assignment that I’m unsure was accepted by the majority in attendance.

It didn’t take long for the open question period to lead to the Golden Goose of the referendum campaign: currency and debt. “Well that’s an easy one to answer!” offered Jeffery. “Paul?”

Johnson took a swing at the question of whether or not Scotland should pay its portion of the UK debt upon a Yes vote. Scotland will hold the cards, in such a case, he pointed out—and, legally, an independent Scotland can’t be forced to pay its share of the debt, which is an automatic trump card in post-Yes negotiations (is it fitting or worrisome that the economist used the most gambling metaphors?). The problem, of

course, lies not with the legal motivation to pay the debt—an estimated £120 billion, costing £4 billion in interest every year alone—but in the perception of Scotland by the international community. If Scotland chooses to renege on its share, foreign lenders may shy away, or increase interest on the loans that are enacted.

The buck was passed to McAlpine, who claimed that a post-Yes Scotland should pay its share—but it should be dubbed a “British Aid Payment.” The ensuing laughter topped any audience response so far, but a macabre undertone lurked beneath: if you admit that the UK is in such shambles that it needs foreign aid, you might need to come to serious terms with that sentiment upon a No vote next month, which seems more and more likely.

The next jab came not from the panel, but from the audience. Addressing the pay gap between men and women, a participant pointed out that the panel was entirely composed of men—something she had noticed at last year’s Festival of Politics, too. Thankfully, Jeffery was quick to acknowledge that a female panel member was on the books until a few days prior, when she pulled out (mercifully, it wasn’t mentioned who among the current three was a last-minute replacement).

The panel approached the gender gap problem in economic, not social terms. Equal participation by both genders would be more of a boon to the UK and Scotland than nearly any other economic influx, said McAlpine, adding, “The oil will run out. Here’s to hoping that the women don’t.” (It’s worth acknowledging that this and the British Aid comment decisively won McAlpine the Most Humorous Panelist award, if that counts for anything.) Women tend to find more part-time work, according to Johnson, but in the public sector fare far better than in the private sector—a bump for those (ahem, McAlpine) fighting privatisation.

The panel finished with a curt discussion on the weapons at Trident (a moral question for Scots, according to Jamieson), nationalisation (or “collective ownership,” as McAlpine likes to call it) and the NHS. (There is a paradox inherent in Scottish health care: more is spent on health in Scotland than the rest of the UK, but a high level of complaints persists. Would this improve if it were outsourced? Cue a return to the debate over privatisation in three, two, one...

If you missed this joust, don't fret. The Festival of Politics continues throughout the weekend, culminating on Sunday with discussions on EU Membership and Immigration (surely, those won't get heated). If the Fringe is more your thing, have no fear as musical acts intersperse the lectures and panels, if you need a break from the heady content here and there.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Tim Vine *****



Timtiminee, Timtiminee, Tim, Tim To You

It's hard to believe it's nearly 20 years since Tim Vine lifted the Perrier Newcomer Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Back in 1995, Vine was a fresh-faced stand-up comic who delighted his audience with his quick-fire repartee.

Vine has matured into one of Britain's leading comics and now, two decades later, one has to queue for at least half an hour round the Pleasance Courtyard to wait patiently to gain entry to see the great man in action. But that's what devotees of the star of BBC's Not Going Out are more than happy to do for they know what to expect – an hour of non-stop gags, puns and old-fashioned comic delivery.

Tim Vine's shows this year have all been sold out. He's a regular performer at the Edinburgh Fringe and I suspect the majority of his adoring audience will have seen him several times before in Scotland's capital city – and keep coming back for more.

Now it may be something to do with my age but I find some of today's so-called comedians about as funny as a trip to the

dentist. Tim Vine is a throw-back to an age when comics would deliver gag after gag and invoke hoots of laughter. There's none of the observational comedy which is the trademark of some other stand-ups – Vine's show is 60 minutes of non-stop classic joke-telling. Yes, some of his puns – okay, *all* of his puns – bring groans from the audience. But that's why they're there – to hear the old puns and jokes and just plain daft routine that has them doubled up with laughter.

This is the third time I've seen Tim Vine in Edinburgh and I felt my jaws ache having laughed so much. His humour is simple but hilariously effective. His show runs at the Pleasance until 24 August. If you haven't seen him yet this year – or have never seen him at all – you may be out of luck as the only chance of getting a ticket is through returns. If you can't get a ticket I can only say you have missed one of the best stand-up comedians in the country right now.

You can at least try for tickets [here](#)

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2014 REVIEW – FunBags a Go-Go! ****



FunBags a Go-Go!, St John's (9 Victoria Street) 3:45pm, until 23 Aug (except 13, 20), Free


If it's a [very likeable sketch comedy trio](#) you're after then 'FunBags' are 'a go-go' in Space 2 at St John's.

Jo Burke, Jacqui Curran and Gemma Layton come together to create a joyous blend of comical sketches which had the audience in stitches from start to finish.

A funny festive opener leads to more hilarious material, some of which is outrageous yet well-considered, pushing the boundaries of what you might expect from the quaint, colourful flyer artwork. A Downton Abbey-esque recurring spoof is a particular highlight, with the trio's use of props commendable.

The venue may be a slightly sweltering 'standing-room-only' affair, but this just gives you more reason to get there early. Before the show, Gemma Layton appears in ['Mercedes Benson Presents... The Pleasure is Yours'](#) in the same venue at 2:30pm.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Andrew Lawrence *****

 This show is a must see without a doubt but if you are going to see it I recommend you turn up on time....more of this later.

Lawrence starts off his show by explaining that he came up with the title "Reasons to Kill Yourself" back in April of this year. He mentioned the sad death of Robin Williams earlier this week and said that he felt he needed to. The comedian made some jokes but only to emphasise his show name was thought up months ago. We were then treated to an hour of great comedy by a man who is a storyteller keeping you in

suspense all the way through.

Lawrence uses as his subject matter a number of mundane topics like work, being force fed and his birthday.

After about 20 minutes he finished off one story by picking out the people who turned up ten minutes after the show started which earned him a loud cheer and plenty of applause from an audience who agreed with him.

Lawrence talked about giving up the stand up circuit but I believe he would be a great loss because he is one of THE funniest people out there. Judging by the audience reaction at the end this seems to be a settled view.

The show is on at The Assembly Rooms George Street until 24th August at 8.45pm (one Extra show has been added to Friday Night 11.15pm) but 23rd August has sold out.

Find Andrew on his website: www.andrewlawrencecomedy.co.uk or Twitter: @andrewlawrence

Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Party in the USA *****

Q: How many Manhattan financial professionals does it take to break the global economy?

A: You don't know, man. You weren't there.

When New York's JV Squad take to the stage at Underbelly Topside to begin Party in the USA, live drums kick in and

snippets of Miley Cyrus's anthem drift in and out of focus. It's immediately clear this is going to be an acid trip of a show. Fortunately, there's plenty of Bud Light Lime (urgh!) to go round, and strudel in case we get the munchies.

Party in the USA aims to do no less than recreate 2008 New York, the causes and effects of the credit crunch, and the circumstances of Barack Obama's election. Like the city itself at the time, it's trippy. Time is bent and warped, nobody knows exactly what's going on, and we're all hanging on for dear life, hoping everything's going to turn out OK. We follow young Deutsche Bank intern Jeff and his friends as he takes acid for the first time in the penthouse of the Plaza Hotel, travels to an anarchist squat in Germany, then returns to Washington, D.C. hoping he'll be in time to save the world.

Like a psychedelic trip, Party in the USA teeters within touching distance of deep understanding and universal answers. But even with all the Russian literature degrees in the world, there's little we can do other than repeat, "Everything's going to be OK." And that's OK, too. That's how things did get fixed. Within hours of the capital spigots opening again, the bankers were flouting their own credit rules and everything was back to normal.

Party in the USA present a full range of characters with some of the best hair on the Fringe – hopeful, glib, aspirational, spacey, funny, and loving. But no easy answers. We're in the future now, and Congress's legislative fixes seem to demonstrate a misunderstanding of how early 21st century American capital works. But then, a substantial proportion of Manhattan's financial professionals don't get it either.

The JV Squad have the courage to follow all this through to its illogical, messy conclusion. Behind the raucous energy of this cleverly-scripted, inventively-designed and charmingly-acted production (as one of the characters would hope, it's a "matterful" show), there's an uneasy feeling that we could be

in for another bad trip tomorrow.

But maybe everything will be OK.

Party in the USA is on at Underbelly Topside (Venue 300),
15:00, Aug 15-25.

Submitted by [Ricky Brown](#)



the Edinburgh International Book Festival – Ghost ships and Nature's Power



Top author Rebecca Hunt's gripping novel 'Everland' relates the story of two Antarctic Expeditions.

One is the tragic tale of a failed expedition of 1913, the members of which have now passed into legend, and an anniversary expedition which takes place in 2013. The parallel tales, a century apart, portray the building tensions between the characters of each expedition as they battle against the enormity of nature in this unforgiving and hostile environment.

In many ways the hostility of nature is the main protagonist, and Hunt's descriptions of the bleakness of the landscape and the terror of the travellers are vivid. She read from her book painting a picture of the moments where the 1913 expedition members fear for their lives as "Waves rose into unfathomable

masses." It seems that they will drown in their small boat but unexpectedly they survive the storm. The psychological state of mind of the main character is revealed as instead of being joyful at their reprieve he relates "Preparing the soul for annihilation is hard enough, and all we were rewarded with a miracle."

She described how "hope became a filthy secret" as it seemed unlikely they could return to safety. The modern expedition, although they have the benefits of modern technology, have the same physical and psychological battles to contend with and tensions inevitably run high as their situation becomes more and more perilous.

The theme of man's battle with nature within historical fiction was carried on by author Valerie Martin.

Valerie Martin's book "The Ghost of the Mary Celeste" is a multi-faceted retelling of the well-known story of the mysterious ship. In 1872 the eponymous merchant ship turned up off the coast of the Azores. The ship was deserted, with no sign of the ten souls who were known to have been aboard, including the Captain Benjamin Briggs and his wife and daughter. There was no sign of violence, storm damage or sickness, and this mystery has haunted and tantalised over the intervening years. Famously, Arthur Conan Doyle became fascinated with this mystery too, producing a fictionalised account for Cornhill magazine, which further caught the public's imagination and added to the mythology of the Mary Celeste.

Valerie is clear that the mystery is not solved in the book, although various theories have been put forward. These range from sea monsters to water spouts and piracy, but none of these are satisfactory.

The book reinforces that idea that man courts disaster when it pits itself against the enormous power of nature. Whatever the

detail of the events, it is clear that the ocean was the final victor in the story of the crew of the Mary Celeste.

Valerie Martin explained:- "Conflict deepens between the characters and nature. The extremity of nature is a strategy to force the characters to reveal what is inside them. My own experience of nature is pure terror. Others think it is a wonderful thing to challenge themselves by going to terrible places. I really just want the easy chair."

She continued: "In the nineteenth century people went to sea not for adventure but because they needed the money, this was why they braved the danger. The sea was an incredibly dangerous place. Captain Benjamin Briggs of the Mary Celeste was one of six children. Five out of those six children were lost at sea, from accidents, drowning or disease."

Journalist Lee Randall who hosted the talk asked both authors about their literary device of using multiple narrators to tell their respective stories. Rebecca Hunt explained that she felt that by using more than one narrator, she could provide different perspectives and give a fuller, more rounded version of events. "When one story is told through many eyes, it becomes none of their individual stories, it's something in the middle."

Valerie Martin agreed with this: "Historical fiction is particularly suited to this method of having different points of view, because by definition it's not true. Fiction writers are committed to telling lies, and all fiction is a version of events. In history as well as historical fiction it's hard to put your finger on what really happened. History weighs heavy on us. When we are confronted with unpleasant facts, such as political corruption, these facts can be disturbing, so stories can be rehashed and refocused. As time passes stories get rewritten, and all history is to some extent historical fiction."

Lee Randall remarked that both books have a sense that the past is always with the reader, and asked for the authors' views on ghosts.

Rebecca Hunt replied: "Well, I don't know about ghosts, but in the Antarctic there is a sense of the men of past expeditions still being there. Scott's hut with his clothes and possessions is still there, perfectly preserved, and his body is still there in the ice somewhere. You do get the sense that history is not dead in Antarctica, it is still present. I find the story of Scott's failure and demise heart-breaking. Different accounts do paint a very different picture of Scott, and this is what started me thinking about the multiple narrators. Different accounts give a different sense of him. Even Scott's own diary will show an exaggerated side of him as he was under such tension and pressure."

Valerie Martin took up the thread and explained her own view of ghosts: "I don't believe in ghosts but I believe that many people do. There's a long tradition of ghost stories throughout the world. I don't know why we like to scare ourselves, but we do, ghost stories are cool! Most people don't admit to believing in ghosts, but at the same time everyone has a ghost story, something extraordinary or inexplicable."

An audience member, possibly disappointed that the book does not provide a definitive answer, asked Valerie what she felt the most plausible explanation for the mystery of the Mary Celeste is. "Alien Abduction" she jokes. The audience's laughter shows they aren't buying this, so she continues in a more sensible, but no more enlightening vein. "I tried to get information from older sea captains about what would be the most likely cause, but I found them unwilling to speculate. However, from the accounts it was obvious to me that the crew left in a hurry. They didn't take supplies, they didn't lower the sails, and they didn't lash the wheel. The Captain of the Mary Celeste was an experienced, well respected Captain who

would not have left the ship that way. This makes me speculate that the Captain was not on board when the others left. But it's unlikely we'll ever know.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival runs until the 25th August at Charlotte Square Gardens

Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Hiraeth ***

Each summer, youngsters of all ages descend on Edinburgh, crackling with creative intent. They make Auld Reekie feel young again. When twenty-five year old theatre designer Buddug James Jones and her "acting life raft" Max Mackintosh take the Big Belly stage at Underbelly Cowgate, they're all freshness and enthusiasm. The pair embark on a hour-long journey from a small Welsh family farm to London, during which Mackintosh's energy is sufficient to portray not just a version of himself, but also Buddug's mother, father, grandmother and first boyfriend, a faded Welsh rocker, and a Portuguese Lothario.

The show includes a partly improvised diversion during which the cast discuss the nature of art with members of the audience. While art need not always be about big, new ideas, the Fringe is at its best when looking at things from a new or different angle. Hiraeth's problem is that while figuring out art, moving out, failed crushes, the death of a grandparent, and working towards a first job are impossibly massive and new from the perspective of teenage or early-twenties rural West Wales, without something more, they constitute a diary of things that happen to all of us.

Fortunately for the show, the charm and energy of the cast

leaves the audience generously disposed to James Jones and Mackintosh, and they receive a generous ovation when the hour is up.

Hiraeth is on at Underbelly, Cowgate (Venue 61), 16:50, Aug 16-24.

Submitted by [Ricky Brown](#)



Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Musical CID *****



This is a great concept for a show. It is hosted by Abi Roberts (who is appearing in the brilliant Twerk in Progress at The Voodoo Rooms 4.50pm every day) and features a different comedy guest every day.

Today's guest was the fantastically funny Luisa Omielan who is starring in "Am I right ladies" at The Counting House 10.15pm.

The format is pretty straightforward: the guest has chosen songs for different aspects of their life things like first kiss, a getting ready to go out song, funeral song etc. Luisa's choices were decent enough and included Beyoncé (not a fan to be honest) Cher, Savage Garden and a few others.

But the best part was the unrehearsed karaoke of Dead Ringer for Love with Abi as Meat Loaf and Luisa as Cher. The audience loved it!

Throughout the show the chat between host and guest was very funny indeed.

The daily guests will include Al Murray and Nathan Caton and the show runs until 24th August 12.30pm at The Gilded Balloon Turret

Tickets are £9.50 (Concessions £8.50)

Find Abi on Twitter: @abiroberts and Musical CID: @comedydiscs

Find Luisa on Twitter: @luisaomielan

Film Review: God Help the Girl (Stuart Murdoch, 2014)



It's an ambiguous Glasgow under a dull light. The music scene is there, as are the high rise buildings and the grey skies. However, notably absent from God Help the Girl is the city's vibrancy, wit and charm. Unfortunately, Belle and Sebastian's founding member has omitted the ingredients that could have made his musical great.

Stuck in a depressed state, a girl named Eve seeks solace in the music she writes. She confides in and works with James and Cassie, two inspired souls whom she collaborates with musically. As their inspiration blossoms, Eve must question whether this upward spiral she is on could possibly uncoil.

Stuart Murdoch's intentions with his own music coming to life on film were a little too flimsy in their execution. What could be brimming with charm and invention is disappointingly cookie cutter in terms of its writing and performances. His scriptural effort echoes those achingly rehashed indie teen 'dramedies' that BBC Three seem to be churning out to a non-existent audience. Murdoch could have used the great city of Glasgow as a platform for his cast to perform on, but its existence is hollow and unapparent. Bar the occasional thick accents and a passing reference to 'neds', this could be any of the UK's steel grey cities.

Characters are thinly developed and halfheartedly performed, surprising from a writer with so much lyrical talent, and a cast with indelible skill. Doe eyed and pale skinned, Emily Browning, playing Eve, does an excellent job of looking the part, but struggles to embody the broken soul she's meant to represent. Hannah Murray playing her rather ditzy accomplice does so competently, but essentially reenacts the role she most famously played in E4's Skins.

It doesn't fall totally flat. When it comes to the music, Murdoch has everything on point. Spattered evenly throughout, they come along to salvage the film from growing monotonous. Their screen execution is often twee, but does have gleeful, endearing moments that will delight any fan of musicals, and should satisfy a fair chunk of Belle & Sebastian's crowd.

Stuart Murdoch's visual interpretation of God Help the Girl should have been a powerful homage to his music and the city he hails from. Instead, we are left with a rather diluted and stale view of teenage harmonic angst, with some jubilant tunes along the way. Maybe if Murdoch had handled the musical side of things whilst handing the scriptural and directorial reins to someone more experienced, God Help the Girl could have risen from the flat note it ends up groaning on.

God Help the Girl has its UK Premiere at Edinburgh's Corn

Exchange on Saturday August 16th, featuring a live performance from Belle and Sebastian. Tickets for this are available [here](#).

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – The Curing Room *****



Theatre is often mistaken as a medium used for glittering grandiosity, but one significant production is counteracting almost everything you have grown familiar with. Under harrowing darkness, **The Curing Room** has the incontrovertible ability to seep under your skin in a way that will demand that you never forget what you saw.

In the dark basement of a Polish monastery, seven Soviet Prisoners of War are imprisoned by the Nazi regime and left naked, to wither and die. With nobody else to help in the war torn world outside, the men must question the value of their own lives and those around them, as they are forced to survive in a room that holds nothing but themselves.

Impeccably cast and strikingly performed, The Curing Room's ensemble present the attitudes of these soldiers with indelible conviction. Rupert Elmes delivers a performance full of gravitas and nobility that instantly asserts his position in the production. This filters down through the cast, each giving equally riveting performances, notably newcomer Matt Houston showing an exquisite emotive range, and Will Bowden, who adopts a sharp sense of brutality that ricochets against the men around him.

During the time you spend with these men, you bear witness to a redefining of their own masculinity, brotherhood and morals. It asks questions that its subjects struggle to answer, but the reactions are so passionate and authentic that even you as the viewer put yourself in this grueling situation. David Ian Lee is the man responsible for this, crafting a script that is entirely fearless and savage. It has a strong, shuddering heart running through it, simultaneously caustic and graphic in its execution.

Very few theatrical productions allow themselves to purposely fall apart in fear of looking unrefined. In its sprawling depiction of brutality and brotherhood, *The Curing Room* becomes visceral, haunting and affecting – a truly momentous theatrical achievement.

For tickets, head to the [Edinburgh Fringe](#) website

Festival Fringe Review: Ben Hart – The Vanishing Boy ****

✖ This magic show at Underbelly uses a fascinating narrative to tell a story, illustrated by illusions and tricks along the way.

Ben Hart, the young magician is very talented using textures with his tricks (water, paper, cloth, rope, dust and balls). He does not go for the big illusionary props. There were some of the standard tricks that are the stock in trade for most magicians but others which the reviewer had not seen before which Ben had designed. He uses dexterity and sleight of hand that at times has to be seen to be believed.

The packed audience certainly found him very entertaining. At times they were spellbound and wanting the tricks to continue. One audience member commented to the reviewer as he was leaving that the show was “Wonderful, purely poetic!”

Children in the audience were invited up on stage to participate. There may have been one small swearword but otherwise this is a show for them – accompanied by adults, of course!

using textures with his tricks (water, paper, cloth, rope, dust and balls) so he does not go for the big illusionary props. There were some of the standard tricks that are the stock in trade for most magicians but then there were others which the reviewer had not seen before which Ben had designed. He uses dexterity and sleight of hand that at times has to be seen to be believed.

This show has been very popular so it pays to book your tickets in advance at the Underbelly, Cowgate for the 4.40pm show – 10 out of 13 of his shows have been sold out so far! The show runs till the 24th Aug.

[Tickets here](#)

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Tickets for the Forth Road Bridge Festival

Golf in the Park

Buttercup Farm

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Loretto School

Tickets for the Forth Road Bridge 50th Birthday Party and Torchlight Procession will go on general sale at 10:00am today.

This unique and spectacular event will include fireworks and thousands of torches which will light up the Forth Road Bridge on the evening of Saturday 13 September, celebrating 50 years since the bridge opened and forming the finale to the Forth Bridges Festival as well as a signature event in the Year of Homecoming Scotland 2014.

2,014 torch-bearers will form a kilometre-long river of fire across the bridge to Fife before returning to a giant 'Bridge Party' in South Queensferry. Party-goers will enjoy a range of first-class food, drink and entertainment, including an exciting programme of live music headlined by legendary Scottish rockers Big Country and special guests Bwani Junction, who last year famously performed at the top of one of the bridge's 156m towers.

A highlight of the Bridge Party will be the spectacular fireworks finale, launched from the Forth Road Bridge at precisely 10:06pm in recognition of the structure's 1,006-metre main span. This statistic made the Forth Road Bridge the fourth longest suspension bridge in the world and the longest outside the USA when it first opened in 1964.

The fireworks display will be set to music, with Bridge Party ticket-holders enjoying the very best experience of this one-off spectacle with a magnificent view of the bridge and the soundtrack amplified throughout the party arena.

The event will conclude with a giant outdoor ceilidh – the

“Forth Fling” – before party-goers are transported back to Fife and Lothian by free shuttle bus.

Only 2,014 tickets, priced £23 plus booking fee, are available to take part in both the Torchlight Procession and the Bridge Party. Additional tickets are also available for the Bridge Party only, priced £13.50 plus booking fee.

Tickets can be purchased from 10:00am on Friday 15 August via the Forth Road Bridge website www.forthroadbridge.org and the Forth Bridges Festival website www.forthbridgesfestival.com.

For safety reasons the Torchlight Procession will be restricted to over-16s only. The Bridge Party will be open to all ages but under-16s must be accompanied by an adult.

No local parking will be available at the event or in the surrounding area, so free shuttle buses are being provided for all ticket-holders from a choice of locations both north and south of the Forth.

For safety during the fireworks, the bridge will close to all traffic in both directions at 10 p.m. for a maximum of 30 minutes. Temporary traffic restrictions will also be in force in both North and South Queensferry in order to minimise disruption and ensure public safety.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Convener of the Forth Estuary Transport Authority, said: “The Forth Road Bridge was a huge engineering achievement for Scotland when it opened in 1964, and in the 50 years since it has provided fantastic service, carrying over double the weight and volume of traffic envisaged by the engineers who designed it. The bridge has transformed the economy of the east of Scotland and the lives of millions who now take crossing the Forth for granted.

“With the new Queensferry Crossing set to open in 2016, this is a pivotal moment in the history of the bridge. The torchlight procession and Bridge Party on 13 September offers

members of the public a chance to take part in what is sure to be remembered as a unique and historic event.

“We are grateful to EventScotland, City of Edinburgh Council and Fife Council for their support in making this celebration possible. We look forward to bringing both sides of the Forth together for a spectacular and memorable occasion.”

Mike Cantlay, Chairman of VisitScotland, said: “As a signature event of Homecoming Scotland 2014, the Forth Bridges Festival is set to be a spectacular celebration of these iconic landmarks. Homecoming Scotland boasts nearly 1,000 events up and down the country, each one offering a distinct slice of Scottish culture. Taking part in the Forth Bridges Festival is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I, for one, would not miss this party for the world!”

Edinburgh’s Lord Provost Donald Wilson, said: “I am delighted Edinburgh will be hosting such a spectacular public celebration for the 50th anniversary of the Forth Road Bridge.

“The ancient burgh of Queensferry is a beautiful conservation town with a thriving community centre, and the bridge over the Firth of Forth water will provide a truly unique setting for the torch procession and fireworks display.

“The events will also highlight the impressive history of engineering in this part of Scotland and celebrate how the Forth Road Bridge has brought communities from Edinburgh and the Lothians with the Kingdom of Fife closer together for half a century.”

Councillor Jim Leishman, Provost of Fife, said: “The Forth Bridges Festival is a great celebration of these world famous icons which provide a magnificent gateway to Fife for visitors and locals alike.

“The bridges are an essential link to and from the Kingdom, used by many thousands of people every year, and something we

maybe take for granted. The 50th birthday of the Forth Road Bridge is an ideal opportunity to take time to learn about the rich history of the bridges and the surrounding area and celebrate these unique landmarks on our own doorstep.

“The Torchlight Procession will provide the perfect finale to the Festival, bringing 2,014 people across the bridge to Fife.”

The Forth Road Bridge Birthday Party and Torchlight Procession is being produced by Edinburgh-based Unique Events, Scotland’s leading independent events company, best known for the world famous Edinburgh’s Hogmanay celebrations along with firework partners Titanium, the team behind the Edinburgh’s Hogmanay Midnight Fireworks and London 2012 Olympics opening and closing ceremonies.

Funding for the event has been provided by Homecoming Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council and Fife Council.

Building around the buzz of the Edinburgh Festival and the forthcoming Ryder Cup, a new golf event will be held in Edinburgh later this month – one hoped that will become an annual gathering.

Golf in the Park, which is being organised by the Edinburgh Golf umbrella group, takes place at Bruntsfield Short Hole Course on Saturday August 23.

The event is based around golf’s historical past, but hopes to inspire and encourage people into golf in the future. Terrific prizes will be on offer on the day, including tickets to The Ryder Cup at Gleneagles next month.

“Whilst it is Ryder Cup themed, we see this being an annual event, under ‘inner city’ golf, where we can really develop in

future years an exciting and amazing package to showcase golf," said spokesman Bill Buchan, who sits on the SGU Board for Participation.

"This year we plan to take golfers on a journey from 500 years ago – golf has been played at Bruntsfield Short Hole Course for about that period – up to today and will encourage people to dress up in plus fours, use hickory clubs etc, with people from the World Hickory Open on hand.

"We are also trying to bring more community to golf, by hosting an 'inner city' event right in the heart of the capital. We have also spent considerable time in improving the facility at the Meadows, free of charge, so that after the 23rd there will be some benefit to the general public.

"We are also promoting health and fitness within golf by including Pure Gym on the day who plan to develop golf specific programmes for golfers of all levels."

The event will take on a team format, the cost to enter being £100 per team for businesses and £50 for golf clubs. Also backing the event is the adjacent Golf Tavern, who have been a terrific help, and where golfers have been replaying their rounds since the 1400's. They will effectively be the clubhouse for the day.

"We see this as a great opportunity to connect with clubs, as we expect to have over 20 clubs from the Lothians there," added Buchan. "Also, as the day is during the Edinburgh Festival, I feel that we have a great opportunity to attract a lot of interest from golfers from all over."

"We have developed great links with the business community," continued Buchan. "We have a lot of great prizes in place, including Ryder Cup tickets, Open Championship tickets, free use of a £90k Jaguar Coupe 5.0 sports car for a long weekend from Stratstone for nearest the hole at the 18th, fourballs from the likes of Royal Dornoch, Nairn and Kingsbarns and a

great deal with Royal and Awesome to kit out a team.


“Ultimately, we want to develop this further in future years to help break down the barriers that sometimes surround golf. Our overriding aims are to build awareness of golf in Edinburgh, promote clubs as friendly environments and to show everyone that golf can be fun.”

Almost 50 teams have signed up already so hurry to book your place! [Register here.](#)

There was a sense of nostalgia in Drumbrae when community members joined to open the first new park in Edinburgh for 15 years.

Former residents and families of workers from the area gathered to celebrate the completion of Buttercup Farm Park, created on the site of one of the city’s most successful poultry farms.

Built in 1922, [Buttercup Farm was established by Andrew Ewing](#), founder of Buttercup Dairy Company, which at its peak had more than 250 shops over Scotland and the north of England.

 On Wednesday, Mr Ewing’s relatives, including great nieces and nephews and children of former poultry farm workers, some of whom had lived on the farm, helped to officially open the aptly-named park.

The £235,000 project, designed by City of Edinburgh Council, was supported with funding from [Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust \(ELGT\)](#) and [Waste Recycling Environmental Limited \(WREN\)](#) and will be completed in two phases.

The initial phase, now finished, has included the implementation of a new park landscape, play area and toddler zone with lawn, picnic tables and seating. The second phase will begin in autumn, and will involve the planting of trees and preparation of wildflower meadows.

City of Edinburgh Council’s Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: “Our parks are the jewel in Edinburgh’s

crown so it's fantastic to be able to add a new one to the city's repertoire.

"This park has been designed with local people in mind and I'm delighted to be able to open a space with such close links to the area's social history. I'm sure will be a great asset for the community."

✖ Charlie Cumming, Chief Executive of ELGT, said: "Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust has been proud to be a partner in delivering Edinburgh's first new park since 2000 and we look forward to working with local residents on future projects as the park progresses."

Ben Walker, WREN Grant Manager, added: "WREN is committed to funding projects that make a real difference to local communities, children and families. The project has seen the delivery of a modern community park with original and exciting features and elements for the whole family to enjoy.

"It will encourage outdoor activities and promote a healthier lifestyle for all. We are delighted to support City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust to provide this new valuable community green space to be enjoyed for years and years to come."

Local author Bill Scott, who wrote *The Buttercup – The Remarkable Story of Andrew Ewing and the Buttercup Company*, also joined the celebrations on Wednesday.

His novel charts the success of Andrew Ewing, who started out life as a penniless child in Stranraer but went on to establish one of the most successful poultry businesses of his time, including the 86-acre Buttercup Farm.

A generous and religious man, Mr Ewing refused to charge for any eggs laid at his farm on a Sunday, donating more than 100,000 to hospitals every week, and eventually died without any money, having given most of it away.

Find out more about Buttercup Farm Park [on the Council's website](#) .

Simon Napier-Bell, Dan Willson and The Jellyman's Daughter will appear At Born To Be Wide Talk Show at The Edinburgh International Book Festival. Veteran artist manager and author, **Simon Napier-Bell**, is set to make his Scottish debut at a special evening hosted by leading music industry event organisation, **Born To Be Wide**, and the **Edinburgh International**

Book Festival. The free talk show takes place from 2100-2300hrs on **Monday 18 August** at the Guardian Spiegel Tent as part of the **Jura Unbound** programme, and is hosted by journalist and **Born To Be Wide** co-Director, **Olaf Furniss**. He will also interview **Dan Willson** [aka **Withered Hand**] – who has been described as the “UK’s best lyricist” – about his approach to song-writing and **The Jellyman’s Daughter** will perform live. Napier-Bell will talk about his career and what led him to write his latest book, **Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay**, the world’s first definitive account of the music industry, which goes back 300 years.

The former manager of acts including **The Yardbirds, Boney M, Japan, Marc Bolan** and **Wham!** will also discuss why he opted to crowd-source his latest publication, enlisting the support of an impressive cast of music industry figures and writers. These include **Jeff Beck, Simon Cowell, Julie Birchill, Mark Knopfler, Miles Copeland** and **Vicky Wickham**.

“Olaf first invited me to speak at a Born To Be Wide event three years ago, and I am delighted to finally be able to accept the invitation,” says Napier-Bell, who will fly in from his home in Thailand to take part in the evening. “I am very much looking forward to making my debut at the Edinburgh International Book Festival.”

Napier-Bell’s previous works were based on his own experience in the recording industry, and provide an entertaining insight into different areas of the business. His first book, **You Don’t Have To Say You Love Me** focused on the swinging 60s and was followed by **Black Vinyl, White Powder**, which explored the role of sex and drugs in British popular music. Meanwhile, **I’m Coming To Take You To Lunch**, recounts how Napier-Bell wined and dined Communist Party officials to ensure Wham! became the first western pop act to play in China.

“There are several authors who have written a great book about the music business, but only Simon has written four,” says Born To Be Wide’s Furniss. “Combined with Dan Willson and The

Jellyman's Daughter, the evening promises to provide a fantastic insight into music-related writing, and will be accompanied by some wonderful musical interludes."

Following the Born To Be Wide Talk Show, Napier-Bell will sign copies of his books, with DJs drawn from the Scottish music scene, providing background music.

Event Details:

Monday 18 August

2100-2300hrs [followed by book signing and DJs until 0100]

Born To Be Wide Talk Show with:

Simon Napier-Bell, Dan Willson, The Jellyman's Daughter and host Olaf Furniss

Free Entry [please arrive promptly to ensure admission]

Jura Unbound at The Guardian Spiegeltent, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh

Loretto School in East Lothian is celebrating another excellent year for A level results.

Sixth Form pupils achieved a 99% pass rate and 39% of the A levels were passed at grade A* to A, an increase of 2% from last year and outstripping this year's national average by 13%.

A record 69% of the results were awarded A* to B grade. 11 pupils achieved an impressive straight A* or A grades across a range of subjects.

Hamish Lamotte, 18 from Haddington, a prefect and Loretto's Pipe Major in his final year at Loretto, achieved a remarkable 4 A*, securing his place to read Natural Sciences at Selwyn College, Cambridge.

Pupils have won places at a wide range of universities and many will be going on to the more selective universities including Oxford, London School of Economics (L.S.E.), Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Durham and Glasgow to read such subjects as medicine, law, architecture, engineering, physics and economics.

Headmaster, Dr Graham Hawley said, *"I am delighted with what is another strong set of results at Loretto across the whole ability range. These outstanding achievements pay testament to the hard work of the pupils and the work ethic of the School. The pupils should be justifiably proud of their success and they will undoubtedly continue to thrive in their further studies. Loretto has always prided itself in developing the whole person in mind, body and spirit, and preparing its pupils for life after school. We are delighted that such a high percentage of our leavers enter their chosen university."*

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Shappi Khorsandi- Because I'm Shappi ****

✖ Shappi Khorsandi is someone I have been longing to see live.

Finally I got the opportunity and the wait was worth it. This is one very observant comedian who has the audience in raptures at the stories and jokes she tells.

I first saw her on TV's Live at the Apollo and from there I

was hooked.

Her show at The Pleasance Dome is a treat with stories about her children, chess, public schools and her father that has the audience laughing, gasping, ooohing but at one point groaning.

There are also a few moments of a more serious nature in which Shappi chats about her experience of racism in the 80s mainly relating to her father. All in all a great hour of comedy by this comedienne .

Shappi is appearing at The Pleasance Dome until the 24th August except 16th at 8.30pm Tickets are £12.00 (Concessions are £10.50)

Scottish band Kitch return from Kendal Calling to release an EP



Despite being compared to Scottish legends The Jesus and Mary Chain and The Pastels, Kitch remain self-effacing and modest about their unfathomable sound. Kitch were invited by the legendary Tim Burgess to play his Tim Peaks Diner at this years' Kendal Calling. The band played two live sets to a rowdy crowd including an intoxicated lady sprawled out on the monitors. I met up with guitarist Paul Band and bassist Blair Hoggan to discuss the birth of Kitch and their explorations so far.

Paul Band: "I was reading a book about Pulp and they decided they were going to take up a kitsch aesthetic and I thought that was a good name minus the 's'. The singer Dan and I were in the same class at school and we were introduced at a party and realised we had quite a lot of common ground. He was saying 'I love The Smiths' so that was good enough for me."

Beginning as a two piece consisting of Paul Band and singer Dan Johnston, the Morrissey/Marr like partnership rehearsed quietly, conjuring up intoxicating raptures and sprinkled top melodies in Paul's bedroom. After receiving the surreal message from Tim Burgess, Kitch's full line-up was born within an hour.

Blair Hoggan: "I met Dan at a party and it was actually Valentine's Day." Paul intercepts: "Dead romantic." (laughs). Blair continues: "We got talking because he had seen Enter Shikari and I really like them. A month later we went to a pub quiz and Dan ran up to me saying Tim Burgess had messaged him on Twitter. He asked me if I played guitar and if I would be able to play bass and I said of course I could.' He asked me if I knew a drummer so I texted my best mate Blair Fowler and within an hour we had a full band."

Paul: "If I'm really honest, if Tim Burgess had not messaged us I think we would probably still be a two piece now. It would have gone on forever. I think it was the real beginning of Kitch. For me, it was bizarre getting a message from Tim saying 'come play my venue'. We thought it was a prank at first, but obviously not."

The Charlatans' Tim Burgess asked the band to play his ever-growing Tim Peaks Diner after stumbling upon them on Soundcloud. Tim said: "For the last couple of years we've taken Tim Peaks to festivals like Kendal Calling, The Isle of Wight and Festival Number 6. It's great to have big names like Suzanne Vega, Edwyn Collins and Roddy Frame swing by and play for us but it's also a great place to give a gig to bands that

people won't have heard of too. I can still remember when The Charlatans were looking for gigs and someone offering us a festival would have blown our minds.

"I was sitting in our studio with a friend and we were having a skim around Soundcloud while we were uploading a new release for our label. We came across Kitch and they reminded us of The Pastels and even elements of The Jesus and Mary Chain – I tweeted the song (Chip Shop) and sent them a direct message asking if they fancied playing at Kendal Calling. They hadn't played a gig at that stage and it was just two of them rather than a band. Quite rightly they jumped at the chance of playing and ended up doing two gigs at Tim Peaks – they'd brought CDs and worked hard telling their neighbours on the campsite that they had to come and see them. They went down really well – the Tim Peaks staff can be the hardest to please as they're working and they get to see some brilliant bands and they were all Kitch fans by the end of it."

Having returned from Kendal Calling Paul and Blair commented on their experience playing two live sets and also experience a one girl stage invasion. Blair said: "It was a surprise because we were only scheduled in for the Saturday afternoon during Newton Faulkner, but it was really cool. Everyone from the campsite came to see us, so it was enjoyable." Paul added: "It was a good springboard. Now that we've been invited to play at a festival-even if it's just on a relatively small scale- it's definitely helped us a lot. This wee lassie was grabbing the microphone and lying on the monitors. She had to be escorted off the premises for psychedelic reasons!"

With an array of Scottish bands attempting to emulate the indie folk sound of Meursault and Withered Hand, Kitch stand out like a sore thumb with their quirky epigrams, jaunty melodies and psychedelic colors. With the ability to liquefy your senses and enchant your soul, Kitch are erupting onto the Scottish music scene like a depth charge.

Their newest track 'The Other Place' possesses atmospheric bass lines, hypnotic synths and a humorous tale about a man called Eagle who drinks across the road from the pub he owns: 'You're sipping on a Tennent's tin, with your paper in your hand, as you fly across deserted land.' 'Chip Chop' resembles the chirpiness of The Cure's 'Friday I'm in Love' amplifying jangly guitars and punchy drum beats, whilst 'Stolen Picture' sails you through a Scottish Arcadia with a wavey harmonica and charismatic vocals.

With a rough EP available to listen to on their [Soundcloud](#), Kitch have gained a growth in following since Kendal Calling. Blair said: "Yeah, the EP is going great. The response has been really receptive."

"Everyone has different musical tastes in the band. That's what makes the drums really good in the band because Blair (Fowler) listens to heavy-heavy metal. He puts heavy drum beats into the band where you would normally find something light. He's got a double bass peddler as well which really helps."

Paul said: "We all hate each other's musical tastes so the sounds pull in their own directions, but in the best possible way. Personally, I'm more melody driven with what I'm playing." Blair adds: "It's much more effective having a melody than just being a powerful band."

With Tim Burgess's record label 0 Genesis preparing for the release of Martin Duffy from Primal Scream's debut solo album, he added: "Would we release something by Kitch? Never say never but it's early days for them yet. They need to get out there and play more gigs, write more songs and we'll keep an eye on them from 0 Genesis HQ."

Kitch are set to play Edinburgh's Cabaret Voltaire on September 6.

Edinburgh Fringe Review Bridget Christie – An Ungrateful Woman ****

☒ Bridget Christie is an invigorating start to your day at the Fringe. She practically bounces onto the stage, full of energy and enthusiasm. “What’s the point in being all liberated and free if I’m too knackered to enjoy it?”

Christie makes no bones about the subject matter closest to her heart. This is a show firmly rooted in the feminist movement, but don’t mistake this for being a worthy, depressing show, as it is far from that. Nor is it merely a rant about everyday sexism and misogyny, as easy as that would be to do. No, it’s a spirited, inspirational and deeply funny stream of consciousness, pointing out what we already know; that feminism is not yet done and dusted. She reminds us that feminism is not a fad like Angry Birds, although she does acknowledge “it can involve a lot of angry birds.” She admits to previously having been a part time feminist, but it was what a man did in the women’s studies section of the bookshop that pushed her over the edge into full-time feminism.

Bridget is quick to poke fun at anyone who gets in the way of gender equality, but she is by no means a man-hater, having married and procreated with one. However, middle aged straight white men do come in for a bit of flack, but those in the audience who fall within that category take this in good humour. (Or their wives make them take it in good humour.)

Steve Davis also comes within her cross hairs for his misguided comments about women and their mental focus, leading

to a lot of ridicule about the point of snooker.

She does make some serious points however, like the fact that 200 Nigerian schoolgirls are still missing, and a pregnant Pakistani woman was stoned to death by her own family because she chose who to marry. There's a fabulous routine about how British sexism isn't really that bad, when compared to say, Saudi sexism. "It's not a competition!" she blusters.

Christie lets loose on the advertising industry and points out that they think there are only two types of women. They can either be wanton or vacuous, and if they deviate from this people don't know what to make of it. Her piece about Gisele's splay-legged bikini advert is priceless, involving on-stage contortions and references to molluscs.

Christie is polished and professional, and an incredibly animated stage presence. "Think about my husband" she tells the audience. "You only get this for an hour a day, he gets it for 24 hours."

Bridget Christie –An Ungrateful Woman. The Stand Comedy Club
Until 25th August

Muffins Stuffing 'em in at Riddle's Court

✖ It's a startling fact that the average size of an Edinburgh Fringe audience is four people. But at C cubed, Riddle's Court there's show that stubbornly refuses to conform to type.

'Ernest; or Much Ado About Muffins' has been playing there to virtually full houses since it opened at the start of the


Festival. What is it's secret ? 'Good old fashioned entertainment' says All in One Theatre's Chris Denton. 'When you have Oscar Wilde, great music and beautiful costumes, you can't really fail'.

So despite all the technological advances of recent years, some things never change. Give the public what they want and they'll be happy to take it. At 'Ernest; or Much Ado About Muffins' they're doing just that.

Ernest or Much Ado About Muffins is on at 11:45am at C cubed, Riddle's Court, 322 Lawnmarket. It runs until 25th August.

Submitted by [Jack Ellis](#)

The Edinburgh International Book Festival – Stuart MacBride: brains, bad language and a skeleton called Bob

Chairpersons of some sessions at **The Edinburgh International Book Festival** are excellent (Stuart Kelly, Richard Holloway, I'm looking at you..), some are a little less impressive. If his first few lines are anything to go by, **Philip Ardagh** looks like he might well be in the former category; he's friendly, funny and knows his subject. Ardagh's skills, however, may never be known: once **Stuart MacBride** is let loose he careers through the next hour at the speed of light – conversation of any sort is not only unnecessary, it's impossible. 

In theory MacBride is here to promote his latest Ash Henderson thriller *A Song for the Dying*. In practice, he wants to talk about swearing, brains, and why you should never get into a lift with someone who's just eaten pickled cabbage.


So first the swearing. MacBride's early books are full of it, but like many a middle-aged man, he's having to cut down. He's even drawn a graph to prove it: *Shatter The Bones* was apparently his 'sweariest' book, by the time he got to *Birthdays for the Dead* the F-count was falling, and *A Song for the Dying* is his 'least swearsy' book to date. He's not altogether happy about this, but he felt obliged to humour the 'Blue Rinse Brigade' – elderly ladies who were more than happy with all the violence and gore for which his books are notorious, but who fired off emails in all directions about the Bad Language. MacBride discussed this issue with his friend, writer Allan Guthrie, and decided he'd better do the decent thing. Good behaviour, he assures us, is now the order of the day – though he's certainly not promising total abstinence. According to MacBride, science has proved that swearing is an analgesic that triggers a dampening of the brain's response to pain. And only 'proper' swear words work, none of your namby-pamby 'fiddlesticks.'

Then there's 'unintentional bad language' – and MacBride is off again, with a story about Doric, which apparently doesn't translate too well into Afrikaans. 'Foos yer doos?' ('How're your pigeons?' – an expression you might think more local to Yorkshire than Aberdeen, but it seems not..) means something quite different in Johannesburg: unfortunately MacBride only discovered this after using it to sign rather a lot of his books, 'Now half of South Africa thinks I'm a pervert.'

✗ And now Ardagh – and Allan Guthrie, who turns out to be sitting in the audience – finally have a role to play. *The Completely Wholesome Adventures of Skeleton Bob* ('suitable for all ages....who have money') was MacBride's contribution to the University of Dundee's **Million for a Morgue** campaign (though

he's quick to tell us that it should have been Mortuary – 'We're NOT AMERICANS') Most authors want to read from their published work; MacBride wants to read the bit they wouldn't let him publish. Of course. So now we are treated to a tale of zombies, worms – and brains – as Ardagh and Guthrie gamely join the stage. They're the zombies, by the way, and jolly good actors both. MacBride soon bludgeons everyone into shouting **BRAINS!** at regular intervals, and he's hugely entertained to think that the sound of a hundred voices might permeate the live streaming of George R Martin's session next door.

So what of Logan McRae, who is after all meant to be the subject of this performance, (for performance it certainly is..)? Why, for example, are these books so unrelentingly gory? (my son told me that if I found *Cold Granite* hard to take, I should definitely stop right there...) MacBride is obsessive about the writer's dictum 'show don't tell' and finds dialogue tags ('he said', 'she questioned') so annoying that he has to SHOUT examples at us. The books are gory, he says (oops), because he wants the reader to see what Logan sees. Similarly, they (or they used to...) include a lot of swearing because 'sometimes swearing is really appropriate at that moment.' He has not – despite readers' fears – killed Logan off. Which actor would he choose to play Logan on TV? 'Keira Knightly.'

MacBride doesn't know if there will be a sequel to his standalone *Halfhead*, though he's already thought up the title and the plot. He feels that *Halfhead* has been unfairly  categorised as sci-fi and that this may be why it sold far fewer copies than his other books; he prefers to call it a 'near-future thriller.' He hadn't intended to write a sequel to *Birthdays for the Dead* but he couldn't silence Ash's voice in his head any more than he could ignore the readers demanding to know what happened next. *A Song for the Dying* was difficult to write, but he feels it works.

More stories follow like bullets from a gun. It's been so hot in Aberdeenshire lately that he's been writing naked. He's pleased to learn that many of the audience read in bed – so if it's as hot in Edinburgh....'feel that connection.'

And that just leaves the pickled cabbage. And I'm afraid I'm going to leave that bit to your imagination; suffice to say that it involves MacBride, the effect of long-haul flights on his digestion, and incarceration in the world's slowest lift.

This was a fast-paced, entertaining hour, one in which we possibly learned more about MacBride than about his books. And I'm very glad to see that the long-suffering Philip Ardagh is the star of his own show at EIBF. MacBride was certainly the star of this one.



Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Miranda Sings *****



If her packed out, debut performance in Scotland is anything to go by, Miranda Sings self assigned “5 threat” status is something that all pop stars should be seriously worried about. She is a singer, actress, dancer, model and most recently, a magician; incorporating all of this in to one hysterical live show.

In a festival full of cabaret performances and stand up

comedy, Miranda Sings arrives on Scottish shores from the USA delivering a performance that integrates both of these into a belly-achingly effective comic character. She is the YouTube creation of Colleen Ballinger, a truly talented vocalist who chooses to spend most of her time being bloody awful at her forté. Bad decision? Not in the slightest. Her ability to transform from Colleen to Miranda in a split second is what makes her talent even more impressive.

Ballinger opens the show as herself, becoming Miranda's support act and delivering a sweet, impressionable song entitled 'Taylor the Latte Boy', showing that even out of character she still has a great sense of humour. She follows this with the now famous performance of Wicked's Defying Gravity. Colleen Ballinger's vocal clarity is stunning, like a Disney princess from their nineties renaissance period. It is half way through this performance Ballinger pins back her hair, kicks off her heels to replace them with lurid pink crocs, and changes from bejewelled dress to ill-fitting men's shirt and bright red sweatpants – "Haters Back Off" emblazoned across her rear end. She holds the infamous red lipstick in the air to an array of excited screams and claps from the audience before smothering it on like a young girl in her mother's make up back. She visually and vocally steps into Miranda mode.

Miranda is a self centred, slightly delusional singer with a knack for hitting all the wrong notes and dancing rather awkwardly. Speaking in malapropisms, she delivers an hour long self help sermon, interlaced with fantastic audience participation and hilariously bad renditions of musical theatre and pop songs. It has all the components of a show that would usually fall apart after being packed to the brim with ideas, but it holds together wonderfully, leaving you smiling from ear to ear.

Her crowd is comprised of mostly young kids and teenagers, with some obligatory accompanying parents. A surprising array

considering her humour is sometimes slightly risqué. Her act includes a section on combating 'porn' – a collective term given to all things sexually suggestive, as well as a number of incestuous jokes. Luckily, these are all done in a way that will have parents laughing and children oblivious. She rattles off song after song, including a brilliantly choreographed interpretation of Chicago's Cell Block Tango, for which she happily takes on all the roles. Miranda never breaks under the pressure of her adoring fans, often responding to screams of adoration with creeped out expressions, shrugging her fans off who have been there since the beginning. She is condescending and arrogant in the most brilliant of ways.

In the unlikely event that the character grows tired to the public adoration, Ballinger has her own charm and personality to back her up. For now and for the foreseeable future, Miranda Sings is the YouTube and now, Fringe star that is unabashed, immature and very, very funny.

Miranda Sings plays the EICC until Sunday August 17th. For tickets, head [here](#). Edinburgh Fringe have sold out of their allocation.

Police issue CCTV images and seek help identifying assailant



Police in Edinburgh investigating a serious assault within a nightclub last year have released CCTV images of two men they believe can assist with their enquiries.

A 28-year-old man was struck in the face with a glass during the incident, which happened at Espionage on Friday 20th December 2013.

Police would like to speak to the two men pictured in the footage and anyone who recognises them is asked to come forward.

Detective Constable Richard Johnston said: "The investigations into this assault are ongoing and we are now keen to trace the men pictured in the CCTV footage to help progress our enquiries.

"Anyone who believes they can help identify these men or who has any other information that can assist with our enquiries should contact police immediately."

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

Man in serious condition following crash

☒ Police are appealing for witnesses following a serious road collision on the B9080.

The incident happened around 10.15pm yesterday on the Kirkliston to Winchburgh road, Edinburgh.

A Vauxhall Zafira was travelling south when the vehicle was involved in a head on collision with a single-decker First bus.

As a result, a 38-year-old man, who was a rear seat passenger

in the car, sustained serious injury to his stomach and abdomen and is in a critical but stable condition in hospital.

The 58-year-old male driver of the car suffered spinal injuries and a fractured ankle, and the 34-year-old male front-seat passenger in the car suffered face and leg injuries. Both were treated in hospital.

Three passengers on the bus were also taken to hospital with minor injuries, including a woman who was complaining of chest pain, but all have since been discharged. The driver and six other passengers were treated for various minor injuries.

Enquiries into the full circumstances surrounding this collision are ongoing and anyone who can assist police with their investigation is asked to come forward.

Road Policing Sergeant Ross Drummond said: "This incident has resulted in a number of casualties, some of whom have suffered serious injury.

"We are keen to hear from other motorists who were on the B9080 on Wednesday night and who may have witnessed the collision take place.

"In addition, anyone with any further information relevant to our ongoing enquiries is also asked to contact police immediately."

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Register to vote

Independence Hustings

MP opens Kwik Fit in Corstorphine

Fundraising ball

Edinburgh Festivals

More than four million people across Scotland will receive poll cards this week, as Counting Officers around the country publish formal notice of the Scottish Independence Referendum on 18 September.

In Edinburgh, 350,000 poll cards will be issued to residents who have registered to vote.

Those who have not yet registered, or who are unsure whether they are on the electoral role, are being urged to check before 2 September to avoid missing out on the historic vote.

Only people who are registered to vote, and are aged 16 or over on 18 September, will be able to participate in the poll.

Sue Bruce, Chief Executive of City of Edinburgh Council and Counting Officer for Edinburgh, has encouraged local constituents to take action.

She said: "We are now fast approaching the Scottish Independence Referendum. Preparations are well advanced in Edinburgh, with more than 350,000 poll cards about to be issued.

"There is still time to register for those who haven't yet, and I would urge those who want to take part to do so by 2 September to avoid missing out on this historic referendum."

Poll cards will provide voters with further information on how and where to vote on 18 September, when polling places will be open from 7am until 10pm.

Those who are unsure whether they are registered to vote, or wish to register, should visit [Lothian Valuation Joint Board's website](#) or calling 0131 344 2500.

Further information on voting in the Referendum, including a list of polling places, can be found on the [City of Edinburgh Council's website](#).

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council are staging a hustings on 14 August at 7-9pm at Blackhall St Columba's Church Columba Road when MSPs Sarah Boyack, Alison Johnstone, Marco Biagi and Gavin Brown MSP will debate the Independence questions.



Edinburgh's Liberal Democrat MP, Mike Crockart has cut the ribbon at the grand re-opening of the Edinburgh Kwik Fit Premier Centre on Corstorphine Road.

The new owners of Kwik Fit are investing in a number of centres up and down the country. The centre on Corstorphine Road was chosen for refurbishment due to the commitment of their staff. The upgraded workspace will now benefit both the staff and motorists in Edinburgh.

Whilst there, Mike also got the opportunity to talk to apprentices at the centre about their role and experiences.

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

"The investment that the new owners of Kwik Fit have poured into the local centre is very good news for Edinburgh and its motorists. The town is very fortunate that the company selected the Corstorphine Road branch for refurbishment with all the latest technology and equipment over hundreds of

others.

“During my visit I got to talk to a young apprentice at the centre. It was great to see how passionate they were about their role and hear about the opportunity that this apprenticeship is giving them.

“University is not always the right route for every one and apprentices can be invaluable to businesses of any size. I have actively been encouraging businesses in Edinburgh to take on apprentices and it’s commendable that there’s an apprenticeship scheme at Kwik Fit to give unemployed young people a helping hand by creating jobs and giving them some valuable career skills.

“I hope young people in Edinburgh will see the benefit and apply for the programme.”



Got something to tell us about the Festivals? Been to see a show you are telling all your friends about? Then share your reviews here on our Edinburgh Festivals page!

Go on you know you want to.

