

Edinburgh International Festival tickets go on sale tomorrow!



Stand by your phone or your computer. The tickets for Edinburgh International Festival go on sale in the morning... Organisers recommend Festival fans act quickly to secure tickets to unmissable shows this August.

Tickets are available from 10am on Saturday 23 March online at eif.co.uk, by phone on+ 44 (0)131 473 2000, or in person at Hub Tickets, Castlehill, Edinburgh, EH1 2NE.

Edinburgh International Festival 2013 brings together artists from around the world in a programme which includes the **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** with **Daniele Gatti** and the Festival debut of **Oper Frankfurt** with director **Barrie Kosky**; a **crowd sourced orchestral work** being brought together by **Massachusetts Institute of Technology's** Tod Machover and the ground-breaking anatomical drawings of **Leonardo da Vinci** juxtaposed with the latest medical technology; a tribute to **Frank Zappa** focusing on his orchestral music, and a new commission from **Laurie Anderson** for **Bang on a Can All-Stars**; **Richard Burton** and **Scott Shepherd** playing *Hamlet* and **mini festivals within a Festival of Samuel Beckett** with **Gate Theatre Dublin** and **Pan Pan Theatre**, and dance with **Scottish Ballet**; an exploration of the evolution of instruments such as the clarinet with **Nicola Boud**, and keyboard instruments with **Christophe Rousset**; and an homage to Allen Ginsberg by **Philip Glass** and **Patti Smith**.

And bringing Festival 2013 to a spectacular close will be the ever popular **Virgin Money Fireworks Concert** performed by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Priority entry tickets go on sale

this Saturday.

Details for all shows, preview films and photos are available at eif.co.uk. The free Festival brochure can be picked up from The Hub and venues across the UK and beyond. The brochure is also available, with an extended venue and access guide, in audio and Braille formats.

Ticket prices remain great value starting at just £4.

From 23 March, under-18s and students in full time education can buy any ticket at **50% off** on selected performances. More great discounts become available in the run up to the Festival.

People with a disability can buy the seats most suited to them for the lowest (unrestricted view) ticket price for that performance. Their companion's ticket will be free.

Jackie Westbrook, Marketing and Communications Director, Edinburgh International Festival, said: 'With some of the greatest artists in the world appearing at the Festival this year alongside exciting new names, there is a fantastic range of shows to look forwards to. So please don't wait too long to get your tickets. We look forward to seeing you at Festival 2013.

Jamie Snelgrove, Head of Ticketing added: 'As well as securing tickets for your "must see" shows this year, why not try something new or different. Our box office staff love this year's programme and can't wait to talk to people about it, and maybe give a few tips.'

Here is the programme so that you can make your mind up what you might like to see...

[Eif Brochure 2013](#)

RSNO launch their new season



The Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) has announced its second Season with Music Director Peter Oundjian, following a critically-acclaimed start to the British-Canadian's tenure at the helm. The RSNO will this year perform works ranging from The Planets to pairing up with Phil Cunningham and Aly Bain to celebrate St Andrew's Day, and combining with Dougie McLean to perform Caledonia (both of these in Glasgow). This Christmas will be feted with The Snowman and there will be Sunday afternoon chamber music in Edinburgh at the Dovecot.

There are tickets ranging from Under 16 freebies to under 26 £5 tickets, as well as £5 seats for the unemployed and discounts for groups.

The Edinburgh Reporter was delighted to meet with Peter Oundjian in Glasgow for a quick word before he scooted back to the afternoon rehearsal, and to have the opportunity to interview him about the 2013-14 programme.

The RSNO are performing at the Usher Hall [tonight](#).



But what about the rest of the year? Well, if you want to learn more about the masterpieces of Vaughan Williams and Beethoven then Naked Classics might be a good start. Projections and on-stage interviews will be used to explain the stories behind the pieces, and of course the second half allows you to enjoy the music itself.

Tickets sell fast and [you can buy them on the RSNO website](#)

[here.](#)

In the coming orchestral year, the RSN0 team will build on the successes of 2012/13 by showcasing the continuing development of Scotland's national orchestra and further widening access to live orchestral music, including increasing the total number of Season programmes from 17 to 20 in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and upping its commitment to providing orchestral music to Scotland's medium-sized venues. The RSN0 will also expand its popular and crossover programmes in Glasgow, and continue its much-loved *Naked Classics* and *Chamber Concert Series*.

RSN0 audiences have shown their appreciation for the new guard, with Peter's first three concerts as Music Director virtually sold out in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The RSN0 concerts at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery were also sell-out occasions in 2012, the RSN0 Christmas Concerts in Aberdeen and Dundee sold out and were close to sell-out in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Even the more adventurous presentations have been met with consistently large attendances.

RSN0 Music Director Peter Oundjian said: *"I have been overwhelmed by the warmth with which both my and Thomas' arrival has been received. Speaking personally, in the short time I have been in post we have achieved a great deal; some fantastic performances in the concert halls across Scotland, exciting recording projects [and a memorable tour of China](#). Going forward, I am proud to announce our ambitious new Season, which I hope will appeal to our supportive and growing audiences."*

RSN0 Chief Executive Michael Elliott:- *"We have been blessed with a tremendous start to Peter and Thomas' first RSN0 seasons as part of the team. The last 12 months marked the start of a new era for this organisation, symbolised by the*

start of the construction of our new home in the centre of Glasgow. In the coming orchestral year we have a strong season, with more concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow, a greater commitment to bringing live orchestral music at medium-sized venues across Scotland, increasing our presentation of cross-genre programmes to attract new audiences, and the continued forging of musical partnerships."

RSNO Leader Maya Iwabuchi: *"In my short time with the RSNO, I have already witnessed massive changes within the orchestra and its management. I am truly heartened to be surrounded by colleagues who are working constantly to expand and maintain the artistic trajectory of the organisation in order to enhance the culture of Scotland and beyond."*

Peter Oundjian's opening programme of his second RSNO Season features former Scottish Orchestra Trombonist Gustav Holst's *The Planets* paired with the UK première of James MacMillan's Piano Concerto No3 with soloist Jean-Yves Thibaudet. Peter appears with the Orchestra the following week, with a programme including Dvorak's Symphony No7 and Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No1 with soloist Sol Gabetta. The first two programmes of the Season commence with works by Benjamin Britten (*Simple Symphony*, *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*), celebrating the 100th anniversary of the British composer's birth, and Peter returns to Scotland in November to conduct the epic *War Requiem*, in the week of the anniversary and in the 120th anniversary year of the birth of poet Wilfred Owen, nine of whose poems are referenced in this major work. Peter's further programme highlights include Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*, Walton's Symphony No1, Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*, Beethoven's Symphony No7 and concluding the Season with Mahler's vast Symphony No8, one of the largest-scale choral works in the classical concert repertoire involving huge orchestra, RSNO Chorus and Junior

Chorus, guest chorus and a line-up of talented soloists from across the Commonwealth.

RSNO Principal Guest Conductor **Thomas Søndergård** also commences his second year as a member of the Artistic Team. Thomas' first programme presents Haydn's Symphony No99 and Brahms' Symphony No4, Beethoven Five in Dundee and also as part of the Usher Hall's Centenary celebrations in March 2014. Messaien's *Turangalîla-Symphonie* features later in the Season and Thomas concludes his second year with the Orchestra with a programme including Brett Dean's *Dispersal* and Dvořák's Symphony No9 *From the New World*.

Guest Conductors

The RSNO welcomes new faces to the podium: Alexander Shelley, Jonathan Cohen, Richard Kaufman, Susanna Mälkki, Santtu-Matias Rouvali and Baldur Brönnimann, and heralds the return of Lawrence Renes, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Kristjan Järvi, Rumon Gamba, Hannu Lintu, John Logan and Christopher Bell.

Guest Soloists

Fans of the classical repertoire featuring piano are well catered for in the coming year. French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet plays the UK première of James MacMillan's Third Piano Concerto; *Diapason D'Or* winner, Croatian musical polymath Dejan Lazić returns for performances of Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No1*; Lise de la Salle makes her RSNO début, playing Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No1; British institution John Lill celebrates his 70th birthday with the Orchestra, performing Brahms' First Piano Concerto, a work he last played with the RSNO in 1995; increasingly frequent RSNO collaborator Nikolai Lugansky rejoins for Beethoven's Emperor Concerto; Grammy Award-winning US pianist Richard Goode plays Mozart's

Piano Concerto No17 K453, 2009 London International Piano Competition winner *Behzod Abduraimov* performs *Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto*; *Terrence Wilson* returns to Scotland for *Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue*; *Jean-Frédéric Neuburger* (piano) and *Jacques Tchamkerten* (ondes martenot) join the Orchestra for *Messiaen's Turangalîla-Symphonie*; and *Ingrid Fliter* returns to Scotland to play *Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto*.

For aficionados of string soloists, the RSN0 invites Argentinian cellist *Sol Gabetta* to perform *Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No1*; another RSN0 favourite, home-grown sensation *Nicola Benedetti*, takes to the front of the stage, joined by her partner, cellist *Leonard Elschenbroich*, for *Brahms' Double Concerto*; *Royal Academy of Music* professor *Jack Liebeck* plays *Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No1*; Norwegian virtuoso *Vilde Frang* takes to the platform to perform *Britten's Violin Concerto No1*; enigmatic German soloist *Augustin Hadelich* presents *Adés' Violin Concerto Concentric Paths*; and *Anoushka Shankar* plays her father *Ravi Shankar's Raga-Mala (Sitar Concerto No2)*.

RSN0 Principal Clarinet *John Cushing* emerges from the ranks to perform a work dedicated to him by Scotland's greatest living composer, *James MacMillan's Ninian*. RSN0 Principal Flute *Katherine Bryan* also assumes the role of soloist in the coming orchestral year, for *Nielsen's Flute Concerto*. A wealth of vocal talent appears with the Orchestra in 2013:14, guest artists including *Susan Gritton*, *Jeffrey Francis*, *Russell Braun*, *Tim Mead*, *Benjamin Hulett*, *Neal Davies*, *Kishani Jayasinghe*, *Jesús León*, *Erin Wall*, *Elizabeth Llewellyn*, *Sarah Tynan*, *Caitlin Hulcup*, *Susan Platts*, *Simon O'Neill*, *Luthando Qave* and *Jonathan Lemalu*.

Naked Classics

The investigative series which explores key works in the symphonic repertoire is now in its seventh year and last

Season it experienced a significant increase in average attendance. Paul Rissmann continues to unveil the secrets behind key orchestral works, this coming year examining Vaughan Williams' Symphony No5 and Beethoven's Symphony No5.

Cross-Genre Concerts

Since their inception, the RSN0's *St Andrew's Concerts*, *Festive Concerts* and *Valentine's Day* celebrations have been popular with Scottish audiences. In Glasgow for 2013:14, the RSN0 presents three additional programmes tailored to appeal to a wide range of tastes. In October, and in partnership with multi-arts festival *Glasgay!*, the Orchestra will perform the soundtrack to *The Wizard of Oz*, conducted by Christopher Bell, accompanying the film on the big screen. In March, the musicians will explore the music of one of the most recognisable composers for the silver screen, with *The Music of John Williams*, and in June Scottish folk hero *Dougie MacLean* takes centre stage for an evening of his new and more familiar works.

The RSN0 Chamber Series

The RSN0 Chamber Series builds on its success for its fourth year at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow and Dovecot, Edinburgh. Two chamber events will also be hosted at Glasgow's Cottier's Theatre, as part of the city's West End Festival and the Cottier Chamber Project. Concerts vary from chamber strings performances with Italian theme to an intimate evening of music for viola, harp and flute.

Scottish International Piano Competition

From 2014 the RSN0 will be the official orchestra for the final concert of the Scottish International Piano Competition. Details of the biannual event, the next to be held at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in June 2014, will be announced shortly.

Under 16s Go Free!/Under 26 Ticket

Last year the RSN0 simplified its youth access programmes – already one of the most ambitious initiatives to attract younger audiences to live orchestral music – making it easier to attend RSN0-promoted performances, which has seen a peak in young attenders to RSN0 concerts. On average concert-goers under the age of 26 now account for 13% of the audience, a 2% increase on the previous Season.

Accompanied under 16s can attend the Orchestra's concerts for free (Christmas concerts 50% off) and receive free programmes and those under 26 can purchase tickets for just £5.00.

RSN0 Partnerships

The RSN0 is supported by the Scottish Government and local authorities in Scotland.

The RSN0 is committed to developing creative, dynamic, long-term partnerships with Scotland's corporate sector. The organisation continues to strengthen its reputation for delivering rewarding programmes for its corporate partners, helping to build profile, serve local communities, reward staff and generate exciting stories.

Scotland's national orchestra welcomed Barclays as a key partner in 2012 and look forward to continuing the association in future.

The RSN0's partnership with TOTAL E&P UK Limited is now in its tenth year, testimony to the mutual benefits derived from the alliance. Since the departure of former RSN0 Music Director Stéphane Denève and the conclusion of the TOTAL Denève series, the partnership has evolved to support community projects in the North-East of Scotland, focusing on the RSN0's *Astar* CD for new born babies and its associated early years programme for children and families.

The Orchestra's partnership with ScotRail, the RSN0's Official Transport Provider, continues to provide vital transport for RSN0 musicians and staff across Scotland, promote sustainable travel to a wide audience, and opens doors for ScotRail staff to experience live classical music with their national orchestra.

The RSN0's successful partnership with The Miller Group enters its fourth year with the development of its pioneering programme of musical activities, working with Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) and children and families in Rachel House children's hospice in Fife.

The RSN0 welcomes the fourth year of the Orchestra's association with La Bonne Auberge, a partnership which supports Children's Classic Concerts.

The RSN0 will also continue its successful relationship with Capital Document Solutions, a partnership now in its sixth year, which presents creative marketing opportunities for both partners.

The RSN0 would like to thank all of its sponsors, corporate donors, corporate partners and media partners who make a crucial contribution to the work of the Orchestra: TOTAL E&P UK Limited, Capital Solutions, Barclays, The Weir Group, La Bonne Auberge, The Courier, The Miller Group, Shell UK Limited, Cameron House on Loch Lomond, Italian Institute, Prestonfield, Valvona & Crolla Glasgow Airport, ScotRail, Loganair, Park's Motor Group, Douglas Park BMW, Classic FM, BBC Radio 3, HSBC, First Rule Investment Consultancy Ltd, Gallagher Heath, Smart Graphics, Scots Magazine, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, The Franco-Scottish Business Club, The Scottish Council for Development & Industry, Valvona & Crolla.

For more information on the RSN0, including how to book

tickets, go to www.rsno.org.uk. You can keep up-to-date with the Orchestra's movements on Twitter (@rsno) and on Facebook.



Taxi Driver victim of assault and robbery in Gorgie

Police in Edinburgh are appealing for witnesses after a taxi driver was assaulted and robbed in the Gorgie area of the Capital last night. The incident happened around midnight, after the private hire driver had accepted a fare to pick up the three suspects in Harvesters Way.

He drove them to McLeod Street and parked up close to the Tynecastle Arms, where he was assaulted within his vehicle.

The three men stole his takings and ran off across Gorgie Road, where they were seen to gesticulate, possibly to the driver of a foreign-registered Mercedes that passed as they crossed the road. Two females were also seen walking along Gorgie Road at this time.

After crossing the road the trio were seen heading in the direction of Newton Street, after which the victim could not see them.

The suspects are all in their early 20s, with Scottish accents. The first suspect is described as 5ft tall, average build, brown hair, and wearing a light coloured hooded jumper.

The second man is also around 5ft tall, skinny build, and wearing a black hooded jumper with the hood up. The third and final suspect is described as 5ft 10ins, well built, with

brown hair, and wearing a black hooded waist-length jacket.

Detective Constable Joyce Gunderson said:- “While the victim did not suffer any serious injury, he was left understandably shaken as a result of his ordeal, and we are appealing for any information that can help us trace those responsible.

“In particular, we want to trace the driver of the foreign-registered Mercedes seen driving in Gorgie Road as the suspects made their escape, and the two females who were seen walking along the road and would have seen the trio as they crossed the road into Newton Street.

“Anyone else who witnessed the assault, who recognises the descriptions of the suspects, or who has any other information that can assist our enquiries, should contact police immediately.”

Anyone with information should contact police on 101, or make an anonymous report through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Solicitors AGM in Edinburgh votes to change rules



Solicitors have voted in favour of the principle of changing the current practice whereby a solicitor can act for both buyer and mortgage lender in property transactions.

At the Law Society’s annual general meeting today, Friday, 22 March 2013, 58 solicitors voted to remove the current exception to Law Society conflict of interest rules, which permits a single solicitor to carry out work for a client

wishing to buy a property and their mortgage lender. There were 27 against and three abstentions. Proxy votes were not cast. Acting for both the borrower and the lender has been the norm since 1986.

The Law Society will now bring forward new practice rules for its members to vote on at a special general meeting (SGM) in September. If voted through at the SGM and subject to approval by the Lord President, solicitors will no longer be able to act for both buyer and lender.

Austin Lafferty, president of the Law Society, said: "This was a highly important debate to have and I thank everyone for their contributions. We can view today's vote as just the start of a move towards reforming and improving conveyancing practice and we intend to hold further discussions with the Council of Mortgage Lenders and others. The exception to the rules was introduced in 1986 to help ensure a smooth transaction but the world is a very different place now. The severe economic downturn, increasingly complex transactions, increasing risk of mortgage fraud and the additional pressures from lenders mean that it is no longer appropriate, and indeed is arguably not in the public interest to continue.

"Solicitors provide conveyancing services for communities the length and breadth of Scotland and we are fully aware of the potential for increased costs for buyers and increased paperwork for solicitors. However these costs are not the borrowers, they are costs associated with lenders satisfying themselves on their own lending risk – and it will be for the lenders to decide on whether they are prepared to pass on these costs to their customers.

"The recession meant a greatly reduced the property market, however the risk on a loan has been largely borne by solicitors as banks and building societies have increased the number of claims on the legal profession's indemnity insurance where things have gone wrong – for example if a client has

defaulted on payment or in a repossession case, negative equity means there is a loss to the lender.

“Additionally, we know there have been situations where conflict of interest arises and the protection of borrower client interests as well as the lender simply do not align.”

Recent changes introduced by lenders have also meant that solicitors are no longer automatically permitted to act for clients who have chosen a particular mortgage product.

Lafferty added: “It’s now the case that if a solicitor no longer on the lender’s solicitor panel, they are not entitled to do the work for both parties which means the client can choose to retain their own solicitor of choice and pay an additional fee, or use the lender’s solicitor.

“It’s in everyone’s interests, particularly the prospective housebuyer, to provide efficient and cost effective services. Technology has improved things enormously and it’s worth remembering that conveyancing fees in Scotland are moderate compared to elsewhere – it can be up to three times as much in Ireland. Market forces will also play a role and undoubtedly determine a new fee structure so, while the borrower and lender will each pay for the work of their own solicitor, I do not foresee any astronomical price rises.”

Late night at the Museum – tickets on sale today



Dino-Night at the National Museum of Scotland

***RBS Museum Lates: Dino-Night National Museum of Scotland,
Friday 17 May 2013, 7pm to 10.30pm.***

Tickets go on sale today for the next *RBS Museum Lates* event, which will take place at the National Museum of Scotland on Friday 17 May 2013.

Coinciding with the nationwide Museums at Night programme, *Dino-Night* promises cutting edge contemporary Scottish music in partnership with Live Music Now Scotland, featuring Stirling-based band [*Miniature Dinosaurs*](#). Guests will find themselves entering a Jurassic forest within the Grand Gallery, be able to explore the Museum's Natural World galleries to discover the spectacular dinosaur specimens in our collections and uncover more through a themed programme of talks, workshops and activities.

Stephen Allen, Head of Learning and Programmes at National Museums Scotland, said:- "*RBS Museum Lates have really captured peoples' imagination. Demand for tickets has been huge, and there's been a tremendous response from people at the event, great feedback and lots of fun interaction over social media. The programme for the next one promises bone jarring fun with its dinosaur theme, allowing visitors to engage with our collections in new ways.*"

Bruce Cook, head of sponsorship at RBS, said: – "*RBS Museum Lates is well established now as a hot ticket for a night out in the capital, giving people the opportunity to interact with the museum in new ways. We're very pleased to be supporting such an innovative approach to the arts and culture which also helps nurture up-and-coming Scottish talent from a wide variety of creative arts and enterprises.*"

Popular features will return, with Fresh Air FM bringing silent disco to the Imagine Gallery, pop-up bars in the Grand Gallery and the rare opportunity to simply explore the galleries of the transformed Museum by night.

RBS Museum Lates: Dino-Night, takes place on **Friday 17 May** from **7pm to 10.30pm**. Tickets are on sale now <http://www.nms.ac.uk/lates> or by phoning 0300 123 6789 priced £10 (£8 concessions and National Museums Scotland members).



Professor Egghead ventures to North Berwick



STEP BACK IN TIME AT THE SCOTTISH SEABIRD CENTRE

The incredible Professor Egghead is back with a bang: dinosaurs, volcanoes and plenty of Easter fun!

The ever-popular Professor Egghead is back with a bang for 2013 at the award-winning Scottish Seabird Centre – and this year archaeology is in the spotlight. The Professor has discovered giant bones on the beaches of North Berwick and is now on the hunt for answers to some rather intriguing questions. But what did the bones belong to? Why were they there? Can we prove that dinosaurs didn't really die out?

Visitors can search for answers to these puzzles at interactive daily shows running throughout the Easter holidays (23 March to 7 April, 14:00 to 15:00) in the Discovery Centre's Wildlife Theatre. Children will be encouraged to uncover voracious volcanoes, dig up bones, skate into the Ice Age and even discover the secrets of the great auk in one jam-packed hour of fun. And they may find that there was once something even larger than a gannet lurking around the area!



Plus the clever Professor has all sorts of extra interactive activities up her sleeve including the ever-popular Mini Makers, trails, dressing up and the chance to get crafty. Families can join in as much as they wish with fun and games planned throughout the day from 10:00 to 17:00, and all included with the price of admission to the five-star Discovery Centre.

Tom Brock, Chief Executive of the Scottish Seabird Centre, said:

“We’re thrilled that the intrepid Professor Egghead has returned to the Seabird Centre this Easter to enthral and delight both kids and adults alike. There promises to be plenty of ‘did you know’ facts and amazing discoveries in store for our visitors. It’s particularly appropriate that as we celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland children can find out about the natural world in a fun, exciting and interactive way thanks to the enthusiastic time-travelling Professor. We’re delighted to be part of the innovative Edinburgh International Science Festival, and our Professor Egghead show is a great way to introduce children to science and discovery while making learning engaging and entertaining at the same time. The Discovery Centre has always been a perennial favourite with families – last year’s show was incredibly popular and this year’s brand-new adventure ‘Just in Time’ is set to be a real winner too.”

The hands-on fun continues in the Discovery Centre where visitors can get close to seabirds and other wildlife by controlling live interactive cameras on local islands. Spring is a wonderful time of year at the Seabird Centre when all the seabirds return to nest. The iconic Bass Rock is turning whiter every day as thousands more gannets return to their nests. Visitors can also use the cameras to zoom in to lots of other amazing wildlife including guillemots, razorbills, shags

and seals. In the Discovery Centre kids can explore the Flyway Tunnel, Environment Zone, Telescope Deck and ever popular Kids' Zone.

The Centre also features a superb Gift Shop with a range of great quality gifts inspired by wildlife and coastal heritage, and the excellent Seabird Café overlooking the beach and the Bass Rock is the perfect place to relax and unwind.

- **Professor Egghead's Just in Time runs from 23 March to 7 April at the Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick. The show is part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival (www.sciencefestival.co.uk).**
- **Daily show 14:00 to 15:00 plus interactive activities throughout the day in the Discovery Centre.**
- **Included with admission to the Discovery Centre: adult £8.95, child £4.95, family tickets available and free for Seabird Centre members.**
- **Find out more on www.seabird.org**

Photos (c) Rob McDougall

Royal Society Edinburgh Awards 2013



New RSE Royal Medallists and Prize Winners Announced

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) has announced its Royal Medallists and Prize Winners for 2013, and there are several Edinburgh academics among them including Dr Chris Speed from Edinburgh College of Art who has won the Innovator's Prize "for his creative use of digital technology to enable members

of the broader society to better understand their surroundings and history. Through the use of digital technology members of the public expand their ideas about time, space, history and objects, whilst increasing their knowledge of the technology. He was awarded the Principal's Medal at the University of Edinburgh in 2011 for his work in community engagement." This is in fact a prize connected with the digital totem pole in Wester Hailes. [You can see the raising of the totem pole here in our earlier article.](#)

The RSE President, Sir John Arbuthnott, in announcing the awards said:- "One of the greatest privileges of the role of being President of the Society is the opportunity to meet many of the most talented people working in Scotland today.

Through these awards we are recognising outstanding individuals at points in their lives from those showing great potential at early stages of their career to those who have reached the pinnacle of their discipline and are regarded as such on an international basis. The process of deciding upon these awards provides an opportunity for the RSE and hopefully the research community at home and internationally to learn more about the outstanding and innovative work that is being undertaken in Scotland."

He continued, "Since the inception of the RSE our core founding principle has been the "Advancement of Learning and Useful Knowledge". This programme of awards remains absolutely true to this principle.

The pinnacle of the RSE awards is our Royal Medals and I am delighted to be able to announce that the recipients this year will be, Sir John Cadogan, Professor Michael Ferguson and Sir Ian Wood. All three have made outstanding contributions, Sir John and Professor Ferguson in scientific excellence and Sir Ian for his role in building the Wood Group to be a multi-billion pound international enterprise, as well as his work in broader public life.

We are also delighted to award the James Clerk Maxwell Award in conjunction with the IEEE. This year's winners are, Professors Richard Muller and Richard White of the University of California, for pioneering innovation in micro-electro-mechanical systems technology

Major RSE prizes will also be awarded as follows: the Lord Kelvin Medal to Professor Peter Davies for his work in Fluid Mechanics; the Sir James Black Medal to both, Professor Christopher Haslett for his research into inflammation and for establishing the Queen's Medical Research Institute, and to Professor Andrew Whiten for his research into primates and animal behaviour; and the Sir Walter Scott Medal to Professor David Hewitt for his work on The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels."

Sir John concluded, "I wish to extend my congratulations to all of the 2013 Award Winners. Each of them is an inspiration."

Royal Medals

Sir John Cadogan CBE FRS FRSE, President of the Learned Society of Wales. Professor Michael Ferguson CBE FRS FRSE FMedSci, University of Dundee Sir Ian Wood CBE FRSE, Chairman, John Wood Group PLC

RSE / IEEE Wolfson James Clerk Maxwell Medal

Professor Richard Muller, University of California Professor Richard White, University of California

RSE Medals

Lord Kelvin Medal: Professor Peter Davies FRSE, University of Dundee

Sir James Black Medal: Professor Christopher Haslett OBE FRSE FMedSci, University of Edinburgh; and, Professor Andrew Whiten FRSE FBA, University of St. Andrews

*Sir Walter Scott Medal: Professor David Hewitt FRSE,
University of Aberdeen*

Early Career Prize Winners

*Patrick Neill Medal: Dr Marc Dweck, University of Edinburgh
Makdougall Brisbane Medal: Dr Aidan Robson, University of
Glasgow Thomas Reid Medal: Dr Gordon Pentland, University of
Edinburgh Henry Duncan Medal: Mr Neil McLennan, Aberdeen City
Council*

*RSE Public Engagement Prizes, supported by the James Weir
Foundation*

Senior Prize: Professor Caroline Wilkinson,

*University of Dundee Innovator's Prize: Dr Chris Speed,
Edinburgh College of Art*

RSE Pro-Meritas Medal

Dr Russell Leather, Perth

Mr Angus Shearer, Edinburgh

Dr Alan Walker MBE, University of Edinburgh

Lights will go out in Edinburgh for Earth Hour



EDINBURGH SWITCHES OFF TO SUPPORT EARTH HOUR

Lights will go out at iconic sites across Edinburgh this Saturday night in support of the [Earth Hour 2013](#) global call

for action on tackling climate change.

St John's Church on Princes Street, Castle Rock, and Calton Hill's National Monument and Burns Monument will be plunged into darkness as part of a worldwide bid to raise awareness of the importance of creating a more sustainable future.

Since Earth Hour was set up by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2007, millions of people and organisations across the globe have signed up to switch off lights in a show of support. And as a reward for its support of the scheme, the City of Edinburgh Council has just been given an Earth Hour Super Local Authority Badge by WWF Scotland.

The Rt Hon Donald Wilson, Lord Provost of Edinburgh who has long been a champion of environmental protection, said:- "Climate change is an important issue which we cannot ignore, and Earth Hour is a fantastic reminder of how we need to be aware of how vital it is that we protect our environment.

"Our [Sustainable Lighting Strategy](#) was set up in 2012 and aims to reduce energy use and minimise light pollution, and has led to monument lighting being reduced across the city, as well as low energy electric street lighting.

"We can all play a part in being kinder to the environment, and any action, however small – such as switching lights off at home for one hour – contributes to the bigger picture."

Lang Banks, Director of WWF Scotland said:- "It is great news that Edinburgh has given its backing once again to WWF's Earth Hour 2013. Already it's looking to be another great year with communities up and down the country joining together with others from around the world in a dramatic hour of action on climate change.

"WWF's Earth Hour is a simple way for people to show their support for strong action on climate change. Edinburgh Council's decision to join WWF's Earth Hour highlights commitment to this issue. We hope lots of individuals,

community groups and local organisations feel inspired to take part too.”

For more information about how to get involved in Earth Hour, log on at www.wwfscotland.org.uk/earthhour



Edinburgh Rugby supporting organ donation



In a bid to help the 600 Scots who are desperately waiting on a life-saving transplant, Edinburgh Rugby is urging fans to have a chat about organ donation and sign-up to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

With the team set to take on Ulster at Murrayfield later today, rugby fans are going to be encouraged to think about organ donation when the Scottish Government’s 40-date roadshow visits the national stadium.

Staff will be on hand to answer questions on organ donation and chat to fans at the match.

Speaking about the team’s support for the nationwide campaign, Edinburgh Rugby managing director, Craig Docherty, said: “As a club we pride ourselves in being at the centre of the community and we want to do more to help increase the number of people in Edinburgh on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

“Hundreds of people across the country are waiting on a transplant and they could be helped if more people registered as organ donors. The whole club is very proud to support the

organ donation campaign. It really can save lives.”

NHS Lothian has recently reached an organ donation high with almost half the community now signed up to the NHS Organ Donor Register. The health board now boasts the highest percentage of sign-ups in the country, with 48 percent of big-hearted Scots from the region registering their wish to become an organ donor.

Dr Richard Williams, chair of NHS Lothian’s organ donation committee, said: -“We are thrilled to see that NHS Lothian continues to have the highest percentage of our population on the NHS Organ Donor Register in Scotland. We strive to increase the number of people signing up to the Register, and were overwhelmed to have more than 29,000 Lothian residents join the register in the past year.

“It’s great to see that 48% of Lothian’s population are now signed up, however we want to further increase that figure. We know that people in Lothian are caring and generous, and these figures prove just that.”

Professor John Forsythe, Scotland’s lead clinician for organ donation and transplantation and consultant transplant surgeon at Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, said:- “Boosting the numbers on the NHS Organ Donor Register is vital to prevent three people dying every day while waiting on a transplant. These latest sign up figures give more hope to those waiting that they will get the transplant they desperately need.

“It is important to get people talking about this topic as the more people who add their name to the register, the better chance we have of saving lives.”

Join the NHS Organ Donor Register – www.organdonationscotland.org or text LIFE to 61611. It only takes a few minutes but could mean the difference between life and death for those waiting for a transplant.

Stop smoking and pay for a holiday



Edinburgh smokers are urged to quit today and save enough for a summer holiday. New Smokeline Holiday Savings Calculator highlights how much smokers could save by quitting smoking in time for their summer break

By quitting smoking, the average 14-a-day Scottish smoker could save almost £500 in just three months – enough for a holiday in the sun, according to the results of a new survey to launch the Smokeline Summer Saver Campaign.

A third (32%) of smokers in Scotland are not taking a summer holiday this year because they can't afford to. **However, Edinburgh's 87,267 smokers could save a whopping £42 million over the next three months, just in time for the summer holiday season, if they quit smoking.**

The Smokeline Summer Saver campaign visits Edinburgh today in partnership with Barrhead Travel, at a pop-up beach in Cameron Toll Shopping Centre, to underline the financial benefits of stopping smoking and urge smokers to call Smokeline, the national stop smoking helpline.

For the (53%) of Scottish smokers who have already booked or are planning to book a holiday in the summer, most are likely to spend up to £500 per person on flights, accommodation and spending money, costs which could be covered by quitting

smoking.

The Smokeline Summer Saver campaign will be visiting cities and towns across Scotland over the coming weeks to show smokers that quitting smoking with Smokeline's help could fund this year's summer break. Smokers will be able to use the new [Holiday Savings Calculator](#) to find out how much they could save in time for their summer holiday, by quitting smoking today. For example, a smoker on just 10 cigarettes a day could save more than £500 by the middle of August – enough for a week at a 3* resort in Faliraki or Turkey with Barrhead Travel, including flights.

All of Barrhead Travel's Scottish stores are supporting the Smokeline Summer Saver Challenge, with posters and Quit Guides available to pick up in-store, as well as information online and in ticket wallets.



Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson, said: “We know that quitting smoking is the one of the best things someone can do to improve their health. However what people often don't realise is just how much extra money they could have in their pocket by giving up smoking. Now is the time of year that many people start to think about their summer holidays – whether it's going somewhere new or spending quality time with family and friends.

“But finding the money isn't always easy. That's why our stop smoking campaign aims to show people how they could save enough money to help pay for their summer holiday this year.

“The campaign is backed by a huge range of free support services to help anyone who wants to quit. Smokeline staff can help find the right quitting method to suit their lifestyle and help work towards their summer holiday goals.

“Call Smokeline for free on 0800 848484 or

visit www.canstopsmoking.com to find out more or chat online.”

Bill Munro, Barrhead Travel chairman, said, “Barrhead Travel fully supports this campaign to encourage smokers to improve their health by quitting. Saving the money they would have spent can easily mount up and mean that they actually can afford that holiday or short break after all – and it’s a great incentive to keep going when there’s such a great reward at the end of it.”

Bill was a heavy smoker himself for many years, having started in his early teens and gave up 20 years ago. He has friends who have developed diseases such as COPD and cancer as a result of smoking, so instead of enjoying a well-deserved retirement by travelling the world, some even have a problem walking up stairs. He feels very strongly about supporting this campaign as he has first-hand experience of the results it can bring.

To find out how much you could save in time for a summer holiday this year, try the Holiday Savings Calculator at www.canstopsmoking.com.

If you’re thinking about quitting smoking, or if you’ve recently stopped and are looking for some support to help you stay quit, call Smokeline on 0800 848484 or visit www.canstopsmoking.com and chat online.

Smokeline’s trained advisers can provide free help and advice to support you in your stop smoking attempt. They can also point you in the direction of experienced, knowledgeable people in your local area who can give you all the support and encouragement you need for free. You’re more likely to stop smoking with the right help and Smokeline’s friendly advisers can help you find a way to stop smoking that’s the right match for you and your needs.

If you’re ready to quit smoking, visit www.canstopsmoking.com or call Smokeline for free on

0800 848484 between 8am and 10pm to speak with an adviser and find the quitting method that's right for you.

Robbery in Dalkeith

Police in Midlothian are appealing for witnesses after a disabled man was robbed within his home. The incident happened sometime between 12.30pm and 1.20pm at an address in Easthouses Court, Dalkeith on Thursday 21 March 2013.

A 44-year-old, who has difficulties with his mobility, was sitting in his wheelchair within the property alone when a male walked in. The male engaged the victim in conversation before stealing his wallet, which was on his lap.

A struggle ensued before the suspect wrestled the wallet away and made off from the property.

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

The suspect is described as white, mid-forties with a slim build, dark hair and a goatee beard and moustache. He was wearing a black beanie hat, a black three quarter length jacket and blue jeans.

Detective Inspector Martin Black said:- "The victim was not injured during this incident, but was left very distressed after a male entered his home uninvited and robbed him of his wallet.

"We are conducted local enquiries to see if residents in the area saw anything suspicious and are keen to hear from anyone with information that can help with this investigation.

“Similarly, anyone who recognises the description of the suspect and can assist officers in identifying him is asked to contact police immediately.”

Those with information can contact police on **101** or alternatively, via the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 in complete anonymity.

Five things you need to know today



Tourist dies after collision in West End – Science Festival – Petitions Committee – Summerhall – Hard Rock Edinburgh is 15!

A tourist has died following a road collision in Palmerston Place around 8.30 last night. It is understood the lady was in her 70s and was visiting the city. [More details here.](#)

The Edinburgh International Science Festival begins tomorrow and runs for a couple of weeks from assorted venues. The City Art Centre is one of the main venues and offers five floors of fun. We will have video of our interview with the Chief Executive of the Festival later today.

[The full programme is here.](#)

The council began to hear petitions from the public in

December 2012. Since then there have been several successful petitions which have gone on to become issues for the council to discuss more fully. One petition which has now just crawled over the finish line is the call for a whistleblowing hotline for Edinburgh council staff. Put more officially [the petition](#) is titled "A safer mechanism for reporting Edinburgh Council mismanagement". Only yesterday it achieved the 502 signatures which it needs to be heard at the next Petitions committee meeting on 18 April 2013.



Summerhall is continuing to go from strength to strength as the city's newest and most exciting space for events and business development. Have you been? What did you enjoy? If you haven't been then there is a list of [upcoming events at Summerhall here](#). Tonight the artist John Byrne is in conversation with Joyce McMillan and there are still tickets available.



Hard Rock Cafe in Edinburgh celebrated their 15th birthday yesterday. The Edinburgh Reporter was not invited but it seems to have been a good night...Here is what they were doing to the outside of the restaurant yesterday, and this is what they said about their party:-

“Last night, **Hard Rock Cafe Edinburgh** celebrated its 15th anniversary in true rock ‘n’ roll style with an exclusive VIP party, which saw local band **Bags of Rock** perform to over 200 invited guests, and a special appearance by Hard Rock’s original and longest serving waitress, **Rita Gilligan MBE**.

The great and the good of the city all turned out to raise a glass to 15 years of Hard Rockin’ in Edinburgh, including Edinburgh Rugby player Greig Tonks, who rubbed shoulders with acclaimed Scottish musicians and bands such as Gun and El Presidente, plus Forth One / Clyde presenters in addition to local businesses and media.

Bags of Rock blew the crowd away with a piping hot medley of rock covers including Lady Gaga’s ‘Bad Romance’ and Rage Against The Machine’s ‘Killing In The Name’, to make sure everyone got their dancing feet on, with Forth One DJs keeping the party going until the wee hours.

A silent auction in aid of Nordoff Robbins Tartan Clef Music Therapy took place with guests bidding on a signed Iron Maiden guitar, a Big Country acoustic guitar and signed t-shirt, and a Harley Davidson bike weekend for two.

Earlier in the day, a bevy of Hard Rock Edinburgh waitresses posed with their party hats outside the Cafe with Rita Gilligan on a fleet of classic Harley Davidson motorbikes.

Since pop icon Finley Quaye officially opened Hard Rock Cafe Edinburgh in 1998, thousands of locals and visitors from all over the globe have walked through its doors, either for a slap up meal from the all-American menu or to attend one of Hard Rock’s many live music events and parties – making it one of the crowning jewels of the glorious city of Edinburgh and a true hotspot for rock ‘n’ roll history and legendary food.

In the past few years, a variety of fantastic acts have taken

to the stage at Hard Rock Cafe Edinburgh, including band-of-the-moment The Courteeners plus Ocean Colour Scene, El Presidente and the hugely successful KT Tunstall, who performed live on stage for the cafe's highly memorable 10th anniversary in 2008.

Memorabilia currently taking pride of place on the walls of Hard Rock Cafe Edinburgh includes a tuxedo worn by Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger during their 1976 tour, and a black leather skull jacket worn by Ringo Starr, Additionally The King of Rock 'n' Roll himself, Elvis Presley, has his sombrero up on the wall of the cafe alongside a T-shirt worn by guitar legend, Slash and a 1970 air ticket under the name 'Jimi Hendrix'."



See 'Britain from the Air' in Edinburgh from today



Edinburgh will today become the latest host venue for the Society's Britain from the Air, an outdoor exhibition of more than 100 stunning aerial photographs.

The free-to-access street gallery will be the perfect way to

see Britain from a unique aerial perspective. Combined with a large-scale, walk-on Ordnance Survey map situated in Festival Square, visitors will be able to walk the length and breadth of the British Isles, finding favourite locations and discovering new ones.

Eleven specially selected photographs of striking locations around Edinburgh will also be unveiled as part of the exhibition, which will remain the city until 20 May.



The exhibition is being brought to Edinburgh – a Scottish first – by the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) and street gallery pioneers, Wecommunic8. It is being sponsored by The City of Edinburgh Council, Marketing Edinburgh and Essential Edinburgh in conjunction with Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS), Edinburgh World Heritage and the Grassmarket BID.

Councillor Frank Ross, Economy Convener, City of Edinburgh Council, said: “We are extremely proud to be chosen as a location for the exhibition’s national tour. Edinburgh’s World Heritage Site will provide the perfect setting for these breathtaking images. I hope that people will take this opportunity to learn more about Great Britain but also to explore more of their home city providing a welcome boost to the local economy in the process.”

The RGS-IBG’s Director, Dr Rita Gardner, hopes the free exhibition will encourage the enjoyment and exploration of Britain’s great outdoors: “The Society is delighted that Edinburgh will be the first Scottish partner city to exhibit ‘Britain from the Air’. A unique value in the exhibition lies in its ability to help everyone to appreciate Britain’s extraordinary scenery and to understand more about how people have used and interacted with our landscapes for millennia. As

people take in our wonderfully diverse landscapes, we hope it will inspire them to get out and about around Scotland, England and Wales and see for themselves the wonders of our island.”

Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage, said: “These images offer a fascinating perspective on the city and the UK as a whole. The qualities that make Edinburgh such a distinctive and beautiful city will be clearly shown, such as the stunning landscape setting, the striking contrast of the Old and New Towns and imposing architectural landmarks. The exhibition is a reminder of just what an extraordinary place Edinburgh is.”

RHASS’ chief executive, Stephen Hutt, added: “The Society has almost 15,000 members, many of whom are landowners and farmers responsible for the stewardship of Scotland’s countryside, it is therefore highly appropriate for RHASS to support a project which showcases our stunning landscape.”

Main photo © Jonathan Webb Webb Aviation

Fatal collision in Palmerston Place

Lothian and Borders Police are currently responding to an incident in which a woman has died after being involved in a collision with a vehicle in an Edinburgh street.

The woman and her female companion, who are both believed to be in their 70s, were in the city’s Palmerston Place around 8.30pm when the accident happened.

The women are understood to be foreign visitors on holiday in the city.

The driver of the small van type vehicle stopped and has been assisting police. The road is currently closed and there are diversions in place.

Anyone who witnessed the incident is asked to contact Lothian and Borders Police on 101 or via the charity Crimestoppers on 08000555111

Early bird bookings open at Flybe



FLYBE PUTS WINTER 2013-14 SCHEDULE ON SALE FOR EARLY BIRD BOOKINGS

Flybe's 2013-14 Christmas/New Year schedule from Scotland now on sale, offering a total choice of 27 routes with up to 936 flights per week – including 90 flights a week from Edinburgh to Birmingham.

Flybe, Europe's largest regional airline has put on sale its Winter schedule featuring 27 routes and a choice of up to 936 flights a week from all four Scottish airports including Edinburgh allowing early bird bookings of flights for Christmas and New Year.

Highlights for Winter 2013 – 2014 include:

- *Brand new weekly ski service from Inverness to Geneva starting December 21st.*
- *The first service for winter between Glasgow to Shannon in Western Ireland.*
- *Up to 936 flights a week on 27 routes.*
- *Choice of up to 19 flights a week from Inverness to London Gatwick.*
- *Up to 90 flights per week from Edinburgh to Birmingham.*
- *Currently available for booking for travel between October 27th and February 21st, 2014.*
- *Bookings to span February half term holiday available from tomorrow, Friday 23rd March 2013.*
- *Fares from £29.99 one way including taxes and airport charges – full schedule details and bookings at www.flybe.com*

Flybe has introduced the only scheduled service from Inverness to Geneva, providing a direct route to the Alps for the region's snowsports' enthusiasts. The 'Ski Saturday' service from the Highlands airport will allow convenient access to the slopes of Europe without the need for changes.

Frequent shuttle flights to Flybe's Manchester hub from its four Scottish airports, including up to 30 a week from Aberdeen, offer passengers a convenient link to an even wider choice of seamless onward connections, both regionally with Flybe or internationally to many of the long haul destinations available through its codeshare and interline partners when booked through a travel agent.

Andrew Strong, Managing Director Flybe UK, comments: "Many of

our customers have told us they want to plan ahead in order to take advantage of the lowest possible fares so, in responding to these requests, we have ensured that this year we put our 2013-14 Winter programme on sale extra early.

“The diversity of our winter destinations is ideal for those wanting to book early, affordable business travel as well as those looking for short leisure breaks especially over the autumn half-term and Christmas/New Year period – and even as far ahead as next February’s half term. To ensure the lowest possible fares, it’s advisable for people to book their travel for next winter now.”

Edinburgh West MSP condemns APD rise



OSBORNE’S QUIET AIR PASSENGER DUTY HIKE LAST THING SCOTLAND NEEDS

The revelation that the fine print of Westminster’s budget includes a planned rise on Air Passenger Duty (APD) has been condemned as the last thing Scotland needs.

Despite George Osborne failing to mention his plans for the tax on flights during his budget speech, the accompanying documents make clear that the Westminster Government will press ahead with a hike in APD from 1 April 2013.

Commenting, SNP MSP Colin Keir who convenes the CPG on Aviation and whose constituency is home to Edinburgh Airport said:-“This hike in Air Passenger Duty is extremely bad news

for Scotland's airports and the wider economy.

"We should be doing everything we can to attract airlines to Scottish airports so that we can secure the full economic benefits that good air connections bring with them.

"Increasing the cost for airlines to fly to Scottish airports is the last thing that Scotland's economy needs.

"George Osborne's failure to change course on this tax hike is symptomatic of a Westminster system that simply treats the needs of Scotland as an afterthought if it considers them at all.

"We need decisions over Scotland's taxes to be made by people in Scotland, who are by definition the best placed to put our interests first. Only a Yes vote in next year's referendum will secure us those powers and ensure that the taxation system in Scotland is used to build a fairer, more prosperous country."

Video – Discover Scotland plane launched at Edinburgh airport



Humza Yousaf, Minister for External Affairs, at Edinburgh Airport to officially unveil a new aircraft dedicated "Discover Scotland" and launch six brand new routes – Hamburg, Reykjavik, Berlin, Prague, Copenhagen and Dubrovnik.

The new routes will open up important new trading links for the Scottish economy and easyJet has linked with the Scottish Chamber of Commerce to fly a delegation of leading businesses and organisations on a special trade mission to Hamburg onboard the inaugural flight.

Ten organisations from across Scotland, ranging from manufacturing and photography to legal and linguistics, will spend two days in Hamburg showcasing the breadth and quality of Scottish services and exports.

Council tax changes approved for empty homes

COUNCIL TAKES FIRST STEP IN TACKLING ISSUE OF EMPTY HOMES

The City of Edinburgh Council is set to introduce changes to council tax that will aim to tackle the issue of empty homes in the Capital.

[A report](#) to the Council's Finance and Budget Committee approved today outlines the plans, which includes reducing the council tax discount rate for empty and unfurnished homes from 50% to 10% after 6 months and increasing council tax by 100% after 12 months.

The planned changes come following new Scottish Government arrangements enabling councils, in certain circumstances, to use council tax as an incentive for encouraging owners of empty homes to bring them back into use and increase the available property stock.

This is specifically to tackle empty and unfurnished homes that have been lying unused for extended periods of time. Council tax would continue to be waived for the first six months of a property being empty and generous discounts would be applied if the property is actively being marketed.



Convener of
Finance and
Resources Alasdair
Rankin

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, the city's Finance and Budget Convener, said: "Even though Edinburgh has a relatively low level of empty homes in both the social and private sectors, the Council has a duty to look at all the options open to us to deliver more homes.

"It is of utmost importance that we bring more empty homes back into use and council tax is just one of the avenues that the Council is looking to use. This report is undoubtedly a major step forward in tackling this pressing issue."

The work forms part of the city's Empty Homes Task Force, which was established by the Council with the objective of bringing empty homes back into use. The Task Force has representatives from all political groups, Shelter/Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, Orchard and Shipman and Link Housing Association.

Councillor Cammy Day, the city's Housing Leader, said: "[The Capital Coalition has set up an Empty Homes Task Force](#) to examine ways of bringing empty homes back into use. Link Housing Association – one of the task force members – has secured funding from the Scottish Government's Empty Homes

Fund. The Council also support a number of letting schemes to help owners of empty homes bring them back into use.”

Council records indicate that there are over 1700 properties classed as long term empty and approximately 5800 properties attracting second home discounts. The Council will review all classification to ensure accuracy on an ongoing basis.

It is planned that the policy will be implemented in the second half of 2013/14 supported by an information campaign to raise awareness.

Date set for Independence referendum



Scotland’s referendum will be held on 18 September 2014, First Minister Alex Salmond announced in the Scottish Parliament this afternoon.

The date is contained in the Scottish Independence Referendum Bill, introduced to the Parliament and published today, which also confirms that voters will be asked the question: “Should Scotland be an independent country?”.

[The Scottish Independence Referendum Bill](#)

The legislation provides that the referendum will be:

- preceded by a 16-week formal campaign period, during

which limits will apply to the amount of money any registered participant may spend on campaigning, aimed at ensuring a level playing field for both sides of the debate

- overseen by the independent Electoral Commission, responsible for regulating the campaign rules, informing the public about the referendum and reporting to the Scottish Parliament on the conduct and administration of the referendum
- conducted under the direction of a Chief Counting Officer responsible for appointing local Counting Officers to run the poll in local areas

Mr Salmond said:

“On 18th September 2014 people across Scotland will vote to determine their country’s future. It will be a historic day, and one on which this ancient nation decides its place in the world.

“People will be able to choose if they want a Scotland that is independent and able to make her own decisions – with a Scottish Parliament that is responsible for making the most of Scotland’s rich resources to benefit its communities and safeguard the welfare of our most vulnerable citizens and accountable for how we engage other nations around the world.

“Devolution has shown how we can use Holyrood’s powers to improve lives in the policy areas where we are already effectively independent.

“Scotland has made great strides since our national Parliament was reconvened in 1999 after almost 300 years. We are a more confident country, secure in the knowledge that when we take decisions for ourselves we can help make this a better place to live for all our citizens.

“Landmark policies introduced since devolution have made Scotland a safer, healthier and fairer country. Throughout the

Parliament's history, we have used our powers for progressive purposes – such as free personal care, pioneering homelessness legislation, an end to tuition fees, and protecting the National Health Service.

“But we can and must do more – and only the powers of an independent Parliament with control of the economy, of international representation and of security will allow us to make the most of our huge national potential.

“Scotland now faces two futures: continuing with an outdated political entity that ill-serves the interests of the people of Scotland – a system that will continue to give us governments we didn't vote for. Or independence, where Scotland will get a Parliament that is both fully-empowered and fully-accountable to those whose lives are affected by its actions.

“With full economic levers and access to our huge natural resources, we can not only defend the progress made with devolution but we can become a fairer, more prosperous society. And one where a new, 21st Century relationship is forged between the nations of these islands and with the wider community of nations.

“18 September 2014 can be a date which becomes etched in our nation's story as the day Scotland took a decisive step forward to a better, fairer future.”

[The Scottish Independence Referendum Bill \(and supporting documents\)](#)

The Chief Counting Officer will be the convener of Electoral Management Board for Scotland.

The Bill sets out the details of how the referendum will be organised and regulated.

Details of who can vote in the referendum, are included in the [Scottish Independence Referendum \(Franchise\) Bill](#) published on March 12 this year

The costs of running and regulating the referendum, funding a mailshot for each of the designated organisations and running public awareness campaigns is broken down as follows:

- £8.6 million for running the referendum
- £2.4 million to pay for a free mailshot for the two campaign organisations (which was included as part of the Edinburgh Agreement (paragraphs 22 and 23) at the request of the UK Government)
- £2.4 million for the Electoral Commission providing regulation and oversight of the referendum. Scottish Government has accepted the Commission's recommendation that £1.8 million should be used for public awareness campaigns)

Minister unveils new Discover Scotland plane and new routes from Edinburgh



Minister unveils “Discover Scotland” aircraft taking trade mission to Hamburg

Today easyJet, Scotland's largest airline, was joined by Humza Yousaf, Minister for External Affairs, at Edinburgh Airport to officially unveil a new aircraft dedicated “Discover Scotland”

and launch six brand new routes – Hamburg, Reykjavik, Berlin, Prague, Copenhagen and Dubrovnik.

The new routes will open up important new trading links for the Scottish economy and easyJet has linked with the Scottish Chamber of Commerce to fly a delegation of leading businesses and organisations on a special trade mission to Hamburg onboard the inaugural flight.

Ten organisations from across Scotland, ranging from manufacturing and photography to legal and linguistics, will spend two days in Hamburg showcasing the breadth and quality of Scottish services and exports.



Hugh Aitken, Head of Scotland for easyJet said:

“As Scotland’s largest airline we’re delighted to facilitate the trade mission on board our inaugural flight to Hamburg. The introduction of six new routes will make it easier and more affordable for businesses of all sizes to do business in Europe. We know a great number of businesses already choose to fly with easyJet on our direct flights to cities such as Milan and Madrid, as well as between Scotland and London where we operate a business schedule of up to 160 flights a week.

“easyJet is committed to providing Scotland with an ever wider range of holiday and trading destinations and we look forward to welcoming passengers on board the new services.”

External Affairs Minister Humza Yousaf said:

“easyJet’s new route from Edinburgh to Hamburg will help build Scotland’s business and cultural links with Germany’s second largest and most prosperous city – providing greater opportunities for co-operation between our two nations.

“Scotland is a high quality market for any airline and it is my firm belief that this route will be a great success.”

easyJet expects the addition of a seventh aircraft to Edinburgh Airport to bring an additional 140,000 holidaymakers and business travellers to Scotland – benefitting the economy by almost £90m.

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport:

“Route development is one of our key priorities and we are committed to providing all of our passengers with the best choice of routes possible. The launch of these six new easyJet routes will strengthen our relationship with Scotland’s largest airline and will enable us to widen our reach as a capital city, opening up exciting new trade and commercial opportunities for our local business partners.

“We launched our new Route Development fund in January to drive competition and attract new airlines and new routes to Edinburgh, we will work hard with Scotland’s business community to make sure we are targeting and attracting the routes that they need.”

Nora Senior, Chair Scottish Chamber of Commerce, said:

“easyJet’s continued investment in Scotland is vitally important to our economy, providing direct links to an increasing number of key overseas markets. Chambers of Commerce across Scotland are working hard to support businesses as they seek to develop their international trade ambitions and Scottish Chambers of Commerce are delighted to be working with easyJet to bring this trade mission to Hamburg. Germany is Scotland’s number four export market, worth over £1.3 billion a year to Scottish businesses. New air routes bring such markets even closer and provide new opportunities for Scottish businesses to succeed.”

From 21 March easyJet will link Scotland with Copenhagen, Berlin, Hamburg, Reykjavik and Prague. From 27 April they will also serve the popular holiday destination of Dubrovnik. To serve these destinations easyJet are adding 2 new aircraft to

their Edinburgh base and generating 160 new jobs. In total easyJet this summer will offer 51 routes across Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness.

Flights to Hamburg start from £38.99 including all taxes and charges and can be booked via www.easyJet.com

Theatre review: Takin' Over the Asylum, Lyceum Theatre (****)



Comedy and tragedy make unsettlingly close bedfellows in Donna Franceschild's big, popular drama about the precarious revival of a radio station in a Glasgow psychiatric hospital. And although Mark Thomson's slick, pacey staging – a co-production between the Lyceum and Glasgow's Citizens Theatre – brings plenty of laughs, there's an undercurrent of threat and unpredictability, even violence, that raises darker questions about patients' freedoms, and about the sanity of the mental health system itself.

But make no mistake – it's a hugely enjoyable evening, full of thought-provoking fun and often rowdy laughter. Based on scripts from Franceschild's successful 1990s BBC TV series of the same name – but substantially rethought for this 21st-century theatrical reincarnation – it follows failed DJ and double-glazing salesman Steady Eddie McKenna (a quietly strong performance from Iain Robertson) as he brings his cherished collection of Marvin Gaye, Otis Redding and Sam Cooke LPs to

entertain the patients in the St Jude's mental institution on its almost-defunct hospital radio system.

It's not long before the new arrival starts to transform the lives of patients – from hyperactive young Campbell (a brilliantly volatile Brian Vernel) to cleanliness-obsessed Rosaline (in a touchingly warm performance from Caroline Paterson). But as their confidence, creativity and involvement increase, so does conflict with the institution's subtly repressive management.

Franceschild is good at pointing up blurred lines between sanity and insanity – in the alcoholism of the supposed level-headed Eddie, for example, or the barely suppressed violence of nurse Stuart. And she's keen to show the role that circumstance has played in the patients' conditions, for instance in the understandable reaction to abuse exhibited by the fragile Francine, played with tenderness by Helen Mallon.

But she also seems keen to cram as much as she can into what feels like quite a long two and a half hours. As more and more of the patients' back stories are revealed, Franceschild's narrative thread seems increasingly to lack focus – by the end, we have so many tales to take on board that a sudden tragedy goes all but unnoticed.

Nevertheless, it's a powerful, thoroughly entertaining evening, and Thomson draws exceptionally fine performances from his extremely strong cast. Without the slightest hint of voyeurism, it's as though we can only truly find order and meaning by staring into the chaos.

[Taking' Over the Asylum](#) continues at the **[Lyceum Theatre](#)** until **6 April**



Five things you need to know today



Finance Committee – Science Festival – Independence Day – Harlaw Hydro – John Byrne

The council's Finance committee meets this morning with a long agenda in front of them. We have a couple of articles about the former [North British Rubber factory](#) and the [proposed exchange of land in Moredun](#) at the Community Centre there.



[The Edinburgh International Science Festival](#) begins this weekend and in addition to all the events in the city there is some fun going on in Livingston to teach children about the wonders of science too.

The Edinburgh International Science Festival going to be in The Centre, Livingston to offer young shoppers the chance to test out their scientific ability. The educational charity will be turning the area outside H&M into a unique wind tunnel, to tantalise creative taste buds.

Families are invited to take part in a bumper drive of

workshops beginning this Saturday 23 March 2013 until Saturday 6 April. Children will be invited to design a bespoke construction and test it out in The Centre's very own wind tunnel.

The workshop will teach those between the ages of five and eight, about wind force, the potential for harnessing its energy and converting it into electricity. Not only will young shoppers have the chance to design their very own state-of-the-art turbine, they will also have the chance to build it and observe the effect of the position of the wind turbine.

James Bailey, centre director of The Centre, Livingston, said: "We're thrilled to invite the Edinburgh International Science Festival into The Centre.

"The science team will be on-hand to coach our young creators to produce some unique wind turbines whilst educating them about the importance of wind. This is a brilliant workshop for children during the Easter holidays.

"Meeting the needs of families and supporting them in The Centre is fundamental in the mall's on-going objectives. Last year, we invested a significant sum of money in a new baby feeding area for families to utilise during their time shopping in The Centre."

The Scottish Government is due to announce today the date when the Independence Referendum will take place next year. This will be as part of the Ministerial Statement at 2:00pm which [you can watch online by clicking here.](#)



The council is to agree to grant a new 50 year lease to Harlaw Hydro Limited when it meets later today. The company who are going to undertake the renewable energy scheme will have a meeting on 9 April 2013 in St Joseph's Hall when they will present their plans and launch the share offer. [The planning application](#) for the proposed hydro scheme was approved in 2012 and the community company will now try to raise the finance to proceed with it.

Harlaw Hydro Limited say:-“The plan is to install a 65Kw turbine at the base of Harlaw Dam and to take advantage of the government's Feed In Tariffs (FiT) for Renewable Energy to sell power to the National Grid.”

Something for Friday night. Artist, playwright and sculptor (among his many talents) John Byrne will be speaking at Summerhall on Friday. [Details of how to get tickets here.](#) Tickets are £5.

Edinburgh

International

Science Festival begins this weekend



The Edinburgh International Science Festival's flagship City Art Centre venue will open on Saturday with five floors transformed into a giant science playground packed full of exciting circuits, scary skeletons, racing robots and manic monsters. With workshops, hands-on activities, exhibitions and demonstrations galore, the City Art Centre offers a full day out for families and the perfect Easter Holiday adventure.

New activities for 2013 include the **Polyfloss Factory**, where kids can see the transformation of everyday plastic items into recyclable fibres in front of their own eyes, get hands-on with some plastic recycling techniques and explore some of the uses of plastic in everyday life. They will have the chance to use the innovative, artisan recycling Polyfloss machine – a converted candyfloss machine which turns plastic into a floss-like fibre which can then be melted and moulded into shape – and design and create their very own multi-coloured, funky recycled plastic ruler to take home. Funding and support from Zero Waste Scotland has enabled the Science Festival to bring Polyfloss Factory to the City Art Centre.

The Polyfloss team (Nicholas Paget, Emile De Visscher, Audrey Gaulard and Christophe Machet) met at the Design Interactions Course at the Royal College of Art. This innovative course brings artists, designers and engineers together to create novel and interesting new products. They assembled as a team because their skills were diverse, but their desires and passions are quite similar, they love cool machines, they love beautiful things and they hate waste. While Christoph and Emile approached the project from an engineering background, Nicholas explored the design implications and Audrey brought

her experience as a fashion designer.

Dr Simon Gage, Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival, said: "For two weeks we transform Edinburgh into one of the world's greatest playgrounds for the restlessly curious. Come and join us on a one way trip to Mars or look into the future of our food where we ask if we should be eating aliens or insects, help us explore the future of our cities and find out why play keeps us young. We invite you to explore literally hundreds of new ideas across the Festival."

Iain Gulland, Director, Zero Waste Scotland said: "Zero Waste Scotland is delighted to be able take part in this creative and engaging programme for this year's Edinburgh International Science Festival. Education is an important part of raising awareness and understanding of how what we previously thought as waste can be an important source of valuable materials and resources for our future. Our Festival event aimed at children will also be fun for adults and will look at plastics and how we can prevent, recycle and reduce the use of plastics."

"The Curriculum for Excellence also offers an opportunity to engage schools, and through this and our associated activities such as supporting recycling infrastructure, schools can put learning into practice by introducing facilities such as collection points and food waste collections to show how it all works together."

Also new to the City Art Centre this year is **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** where young detectives are asked to study the crime scene and decipher the clues left behind by finding fingerprints, identifying soil samples and investigating blood. Can they solve the mystery and help catch the criminal?

Other family-friendly events include **Expedition Botanics** at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, **The Secret Life of Coral** workshop at the National Museum of Scotland, **The Maths**

Olympics with Simon Pampena and **SciQuest** – a brand new downloadable app which takes families around the city solving clues and deciphering riddles.

The Edinburgh International Science Festival runs from Saturday 23 March to Sunday 7 April. Full details of the programme and all tickets can be found at www.sciencefestival.co.uk. Tickets can also be purchased by phone through the Science Festival Box Office on 0844 557 2686 or in person at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival shop, 180 High Street, Edinburgh (open 10.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 11.00am to 5.30pm Saturday).

Planned relocation of Edinburgh Printmakers to Fountainbridge



The council will discuss the proposed relocation of Edinburgh Printmakers at today's Finance and Budget Committee Meeting.

A Council report indicates the gallery has outgrown its current premises on Union Street and that an alternative site has been identified as the former North British Rubber Factory building in the Fountainbridge area of the city.



It is hoped that plans to turn the disused Category C listed building into a world class arts hub will be taken forward this morning with a request that the Director for Services for Communities enter into detailed and exclusive discussions with

Edinburgh Printmakers to agree the deal to buy the old factory building. Additional information will be made available for the next Finance and Budget Committee meeting on 6 June 2013.

The report claims that consultation with local community groups indicate that this would be a welcome amenity to the area.

Proposals to relocate the arts facility to a purpose-built development on Market Street were shelved earlier in the year due to financial shortfalls.



Our wonderful photographs today are reproduced here courtesy of Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) (Photographed by John R Hume) The aerial view is also from RCAHMS (Aerofilms Collection). These and other photographs can be viewed online at [RCAHMS website](#)

Here is a copy of the report which is just one of many on the long agenda to be considered this morning. The meeting is open to the public.

[Item No. 7.10 Former North British Rubber Company Building 1](#)

Napier Drama Society presents Carpe Jugulum – 26th-28th March 2013

Following the success of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Fantastic Mr Fox [last year](#), Napier University Drama Society (NUDS) Easter performance this year will be Carpe Jugulum by Terry Pratchett. Promising to take you to the 'magnificent

confusion' called Discworld, the play will be staged at The Scottish Storytelling Centre.

Brano Mizenko, Marketing Manager, said: "NUDS' production of Terry Pratchett's comic fantasy Carpe Jugulum will take you to the town of Lancre exploring the traditions of vampires and witches giving you a true cultural experience all thanks to fantastic cooperation between the directors, actors, and technical team.



"It is an amazing play offering lots of fun, vampires, witches and much more. The actors definitely enjoyed rehearsing for the play, even though it was very busy; they have had to meet regularly in order to make sure everything is well prepared. It's different to our previous shows as it much bigger in terms of the cast and duration."

Tickets are available to be purchased through the [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#), Edinburgh. Doors open at 7pm, with an estimated end time of 10pm. Price: £6/£5 conc. (inc. students).

Green MSP joins Cancer Care charity



Alison Johnstone MSP Joins Marie Curie Cancer Care at Scottish Parliament

Alison Johnstone MSP joined Marie Curie Cancer Care at the Scottish Parliament this week to learn more about the work carried out by the charity to provide free end of life care to people with terminal illnesses.

Sporting one of the charity's daffodil pins in support of the annual [Great Daffodil Appeal](#), Alison Johnstone spoke to Marie Curie nurses and staff about the free end of life care available to local communities across Scotland.

During the event, sponsored by Mary Scanlon MSP, Alison Johnstone was also informed about the importance of donations in helping Marie Curie nurses provide more free care to people with terminal illnesses in their own homes or one of the charity's hospices. **Every 5 minutes** someone in the UK dies without the care they need at the end of their life. Each donation received by Marie Curie helps look after more people at the end of their life in their place of choice.

People across Lothian can support Marie Curie Cancer Care by:

1. Raising awareness by making a donation and wearing a daffodil pin in March.
2. Leaving a gift in their will.
3. Taking part in one of Marie Curie's events – there is something to suit everyone from highland walks to skinny dips.
4. Joining a fundraising group and helping with fundraising in their local community.
5. Volunteering their time – from supporting Marie Curie's shops and hospices to helping at events.

Alison Johnstone MSP said: "It was a pleasure to meet with Marie Curie and learn more about the incredible care that they offer. Like many others, I've been wearing my daffodil with pride and I urge everyone to support them all year round

however they can.”

Commenting upon the importance of continued support for the charity, Emily Hogg, Legacy Adviser who organised the event for Marie Curie said: “Every March, people can support our Great Daffodil Appeal by making a donation and wearing one of our daffodil pins. However, there are many ways for people to support Marie Curie all year round. For example, we depend greatly on the donations left to us in Wills and every gift, whatever size, helps us to meet the challenges of providing free care for terminally ill patients. Currently Gifts left in Wills fund the equivalent of two in every three Marie Curie Nurses so are a vital income stream to the charity.”


To access a Marie Curie Nurse, speak to your GP or district nurse.

For more information on any of the above, please visit: www.mariecurie.org.uk.



Changes proposed for Moredun Community Centre



Proposals affecting land surrounding Moredun Community Centre and Moredun Park will be discussed at the council’s Finance and Budget Committee Meeting due to take place on Thursday 21 MArch 2013  .

City developers Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association (CRE) are seeking to build houses for older people on the former sites of St Barnabus Court and Craigour Care Home, and land currently attached to Moredun Park is being exchanged to form part of this development.

An area of ground presently forming part of Moredun Park Community Centre, and of the same size, is to be returned to the park, meaning the overall park area will not in fact change.

Consultation between the developers and the Moredun Community Centre Committee has taken place, although there will be further community consultation, including with the local church and primary school, as this project progresses. A planning application is yet to be submitted.

It is hoped that these changes, if made, will improve the way in which the park is used, and make it more accessible to the public. The council believe that security at the community centre will also improve as it is currently isolated following the demolition of the St Barnabus and Craigour Care Home sites.

Details of the proposed changes form part of a report which can be viewed via [Council Papers online](#), and are also copied for you below. There is a plan showing the land to be exchanged.

[Item No. 8.7 Moredun Community Centre Excambion of Land](#)

The Finance and Budget Committee meeting is to be held at 10am on Thursday 21 March 2013 in the Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, High Street. This is an open meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend.

The next Moredun Community Council meeting will take place on 2 April 2013 at 7pm, at Moredun Community Centre.

Five things you need to know today

 **Edinburgh MP comments on UK Budget – Cargo Networking – Festival on George Street – Johnston Press – Serious assault**

Local MP, Mark Lazarowicz is backing a call by Usdaw, the shop workers union, for the Coalition Government to stop squeezing family incomes by continuing to cut the help they get through tax credits and other benefits.

Mark said:-“The Coalition Government’s austerity policies have hit ordinary families hard and meant that many are struggling to meet basic bills for heating their home, food or clothing.”

“A recent report by the Child Poverty Action Group found that in Forth ward 29% and in Leith 28% of children are growing up in poverty.

“Across the UK as a whole almost two-thirds of children in poverty has at least one person in their home who is employed. With over 5,000 families in Edinburgh set to lose out when the bedroom tax comes into force, household incomes are set to be squeezed even tighter. It’s time for the Coalition Government to stop cutting and start listening to hard pressed families.”

Most USDAW members work in retail so they may also have been affected by families tightening their belts and cutting back on spending which obviously hits local shops.

Some of them may also have felt the impact of changes to the rules on working tax credits introduced last April which increased the number of hours that parents must work to

qualify for working tax credits at a time that many retailers were cutting back on employees' hours rather than being in a position to increase them.

A networking event is taking place at Cargo this Friday. Contact tjoyce@cargoedinburgh.co.uk to confirm your place. Further details here:-



At yesterday's Transport Committee meeting, the council agreed to allow the Spiegel Tent and the Spiegel Terrace to be sited outside the Assembly Rooms as they were last year, [despite objections](#) from George Street traders and Essential Edinburgh. The objectors led deputations to the meeting to make their views known.

Johnston Press which owns The Edinburgh Evening News and The Scotsman has cut 1300 jobs from its workforce in response to a 12% reduction in turnover according to the [Press Gazette](#). Many of these jobs are of course not in Edinburgh, and the editor of the Whitby Gazette has been made redundant.

Police in Edinburgh are appealing for information following a serious assault in the early hours of Saturday 16 March 2013.

The incident happened at around 1.30am near to the Village Pub on South Fort Street.

A 35-year-old man was walking home with a friend when they noticed a male standing on South Fort Street, shouting at

passers-by.

The victim turned onto Trafalgar Lane and a few seconds later the suspect assaulted him causing him to fall to the ground.

He was taken to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and treated for serious facial injuries.

The suspect is described as white, between 18 and 21-years-old, around 5ft 6ins tall with a stocky build and short brown hair. He was wearing a grey tracksuit top and grey bottoms.

Detective Constable Mark Seymour said: "This was a violent and unprovoked assault, which has left the victim badly injured.

"We would appeal to anyone who remembers seeing anything suspicious in South Fort Street on Saturday morning to contact police immediately.

"A woman in a pink dressing gown and another man are believed to have witnessed this attack and we would ask both of these individuals to come forward and assist with our enquiries.

"Similarly, anyone recognises the description of the suspect is also asked to get in touch."

Anyone with any information is asked to contact Lothian and Borders Police on 0131 311 3131 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Bootleg Film Festival Makes

Debut Edinburgh Appearance



Do you love movies? Are you looking for somewhere to go this weekend? If you answered yes to both of those questions, then here is the solution: the Bootleg Film Festival at Banshee Labyrinth. Now in its fifth year, the BFF is the maverick alternative to the more famous festivals like Cannes, Sundance and our very own Edinburgh International Film Festival. Bootleg was founded by London-born filmmaker Tom Wilton in the basement of a coffee shop in Glasgow in September 2008 and has since visited the USA, Canada and various cities across Europe, and become a fixture on the calendars of low- and no-budget filmmakers the world over.

The Creative Director here in Edinburgh is Neil Rolland, a screenwriter and teacher who is also behind the [Write-Shoot-Cut](#) website and the monthly short film night of the same name which has been packing them in at the Banshee Labyrinth for just over a year. Neil has been working with an international team since August last year to whittle over 200 submissions down to a programme of 67 features and short films from all over Europe and North America, and as far afield as Argentina, Australia and Hong Kong.

Neil was kind enough to take some time out of his very busy schedule to pick some of his personal favourites that are not to be missed:

Red, White, Black and Blue is a film Neil calls “almost too good for Bootleg”; a documentary about youth rugby teams from South Los Angeles travelling to New Zealand to pit their skills against the locals. James Brown’s film has already picked up awards at other festivals and is getting its European Premiere on Friday 22nd in the 4pm to 7pm block.

One for all you music fans, **Discoverdale** is a fly-on-the-wall

adventure following the cult comedy rock band (and Edinburgh Fringe stalwarts) Dead Cat Bounce as they try to unite lead singer Jim with the man he believes is his long-lost biological father: Whitesnake frontman David Coverdale. In the words of the guys themselves, "If you like musical, buddy road movies set in Scandinavia soundtracked by ass loads of Whitesnake, then this is the film for you". **Discoverdale** is screening on Saturday 23rd at 7:30.

Neil's picks from the short film selection include the dark Irish drama **Kara** (Sunday 24th in the 1pm to 4pm block) and **Liars**, a comedy about the awkward truth (showing on Saturday 23rd from 3:30).

Around 40 filmmakers will be attending the festival to show off their work, and taking part in various Q&A sessions and panel discussions over the weekend, and Neil and his team have laid on some great side events too, from a host of live bands on Saturday night to the awards ceremony and karaoke to cap the festival off in fine style on Sunday.

Bootleg represents a rare chance to see some great films from emerging talents with an audience of like-minded movie lovers, and all screenings and events are free. I'll be there reporting on the whole weekend as it happens, but you have no excuse for not coming along yourself.

The Bootleg Film Festival at The Banshee Labyrinth, Niddry Street. 22-24 March 2013 Doors open at 12:30 and the bar stays open until 3am.

For more info and a full programme, check out [the official Bootleg site](#).

Missing mobile phone... Can you help?

Hi Can you please post something for me about my missing mobile phone?

I was on a night out on Saturday 16 March 2013, and on the way home I left my mobile in the taxi. It contains about 2 years worth of pictures and videos of my two young kids and I would pay anything to get them back.

The taxi was picked up from the rank at the top of Leith Walk about 1am (Sunday morning), then dropped off at Balgreen Park around 1.20/ 1.30am

The phone was activated at 4am when it called my sister (no message) but again a couple of mins later called a friend. She said it sounded like someone had sat on the phone and dialled by accident. By the time I woke up at 8am and tried to call again the phone was switched off.

I have sent a few texts/ emails and called the phone repeatedly but it went straight to voicemail. I ended up calling my service provider later that day to block the phone.

Now that it's blocked its useless to whoever has it – unless they are planning to sell it on. Its a brand new samsung galaxy s3 so is probably worth money.

If I'm being positive then the cabbie found it and just hasn't had time to hand it in yet but I fear the worst and someone is (or already has) sold it on.

I am willing to pay them whatever they want just for the safe return of the memory card – I dont' care about the phone. I just want my pictures back.

I contacted Central Taxis who confirm they had no-one in that

area at the time so it wasn't their cab. Although they have put out a message to their cabbies.

I contacted com cabs who did not confirm whether it could have been one of theirs or not but did say they would put a message out to all the cabbies.

I contacted City Cabs but no response from them so far.

Anything you could do to help would be greatly appreciated, As I said I will offer any reward necessary to get my beloved pictures back.

thanks

Rachal

Submitted by [rachal narrie](#)