

Holyrood

The Scottish Government is now in recess until 5 September. The first full week of business in the new session will start on Monday 6 September.

At Holyrood although you will not be able to see any debating in the chamber you can see some nice exhibitions.

There is a Festival of Politics from 17 to 21 August. You can read more about it [here](#).

Holyrood is also home to the World Press Photo exhibition for the month of August. Over 100,000 photos were entered for the competition.

Edinburgh's campaign

Marketing

Featuring a mix of real-life Edinburgh residents – from a B-boy dancer, to a Warhol-inspired model – the This Is My Edinburgh campaign sees Scotland's Capital focus on its contemporary side for the first time in a bid to attract a younger, modern audience.



Including insider tips on the coolest places to go and behind-the-scenes access to its countless cultural happenings, www.thisismyedinburgh.com will also feature a Foursquare trail (a first for a UK city), as well as video interviews, a photography competition and a comprehensive what's on guide. Developed by Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA),

the campaign has targeted quality London-based media, such as Cosmopolitan, to highlight the city's short-break appeal from July to September. The drive will also pay particular attention to the Central Belt in an attempt to increase day-trips to the city. This is My Edinburgh 'real' people to be featured in the campaign include Anna Freemantle, a high-fashion runway model who has now launched a Andy Warhol-style creative hub and club night Noir!; John Kielty, an actor and playwright who draws inspiration from Edinburgh's "dark underbelly", Diane Henderson, Deputy Artistic Director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Sophie Higenyi, a law student at The University of Edinburgh, Seth Kirk, from cool new boutique Goodsted and Tony Mills, dancer and MOBO choreographer. Sophie Higenyi (24) who features in the campaign's advertising said: "Edinburgh is absolutely stunning during summer-time. It's creative and really buzzing with energy. Those who spend a bit of time here quickly realise that it's full of hidden gems – from secret gardens to little boutiques. There's nowhere else like it in the world and I'm really excited to be promoting the place I live in and love." Kenneth Wardrop, Chief Executive of Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance said: "Through 'This is My Edinburgh' we want to emphasise Edinburgh's credentials as one of the world's most happening and cosmopolitan hotspots. Using residents to front the campaign brings a different side to the city to life, challenging traditional expectations and giving a voice to the fact it's packed with interesting, creative people and things to do. "There's much to discover here besides our beautiful Castle and architecture. For a younger, culturally-savvy audience, Edinburgh is the perfect place to go off-the-beaten track and find hidden gems, be it music venues in alley-ways, or rooftop galleries. Through our summer marketing, our aim is to entice more people to find out what their unique Edinburgh experience is." The campaign will also feature outdoor advertising in London's Gatwick and Stansted airports, King's Cross station, Newcastle's Metro centre, Edinburgh's Waverley Station, Scotrail services throughout

Private landlords reminded to register

The City of Edinburgh Council is launching a campaign to remind landlords they need to renew on time to ensure they avoid any financial penalties.

Nearly 30,000 applications from landlords have been successfully processed by the Council since the launch of the Scottish Government's Landlord Registration scheme in 2006.

Landlords are required to renew their registration every three years which means over 12,000 of Edinburgh's applications are due to be renewed in 2010.

Several other local authorities in Scotland have already started renewing registrations and early evidence is that a third of landlords are failing to renew on time.

While the Council will issue a reminder, some landlords have not kept their contact details up to date and so should not rely on receiving a notification.

Landlords can register online to gain a 10% discount on their fees, or they can fill out a paper application form. A team of experts at the Council are also on hand to give out advice and to help landlords with the renewal process.

With nearly 30,000 landlords on the public register it also means it is now much easier for neighbours to contact a landlord if they need to discuss issues such as common repairs, or if there are concerns about antisocial behaviour.

Councillor Paul Edie, Housing Leader for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "It's important we get the message across to all landlords that they need to renew their registration or they are letting their property illegally. Any landlords who haven't registered yet should take this opportunity to do so now."

UNESCO City of Literature

Along with Melbourne and Iowa City the capital has been chosen for this honour. An independent charity has been set up to administer the project and you can find out more by accessing the website [here](#). One of the rather nice things they are doing is to promote places in Edinburgh which are mentioned in books. Where can you think of? The Oxford Bar, Heriot Row, the 44 Scotland Street trail..... As well as the walking trails there are some podcasts on the [Literary City](#) part of the site. Each one features a part of the city which has particular literary interest.

The Carry a Poem campaign is part of it as was the Poetry on the Rocks display in February. We reported on that [previously](#).

We are all eagerly awaiting the [Book Festival](#) in August too. Booking has already started on 26th June. If you're quick you might get some tickets!

As part of the City of Literature events Blackwells is running a Book Quiz tonight at Cafe Nero in the Bookshop at 53-62 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1YS. It starts at 6pm. Further information from [James Anderson](#)

Exhibition at Filmhouse

In Scotland, stroke is currently the third most common cause of death and there are around 13,000 strokes each year.

The effects of stroke can be more than just loss of movement in a hand or leg, people may change their role or status and the condition can also damage their self-esteem and confidence.

Rehabilitation is often the key to helping people recover – and with this in mind a special art project has been running at the Firhill Centre in Edinburgh over the last two years. This scheme is part of the Edinburgh Community Stroke Service.

A group of individuals have been meeting up every Monday and expressing their life experiences through a series of drawings, paintings and sculptures.

Now, after 24 months of work, the patient's collection of artwork is due to go on public display.

The special project was organised in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS) and NHS Lothian's Stroke Managed Clinical Network.

Councillor Paul Edie Health and Social Care Leader for Edinburgh, said: "This was a fantastic project – not only did the service users receive rehabilitation, but they also gained a great deal of enjoyment from creating their own artwork.

"Over the past 24 months, the project has been a lifeline and has helped patients build up their confidence and self-worth again. I am very much looking forward to seeing all the paintings and drawings for myself at this very unique and

exciting exhibition.”

Buses

Getting on the Airlink coach on Saturday morning The Reporter was impressed by the cleanliness and the helpfulness of the driver.



The Airlink travels regularly between Waverley Bridge and the airport. But on Saturday the bus had to take a detour. It did not proceed along Princes Street as normal but headed off to the airy heights of George Street before joining Princes Street again at the West End.

We should of course have read [The Broughton Spurtle](#) which had advance warning!

The excuse is.....oh you can read it for yourself – or guess – yes you got it!

Edinburgh's Farmers Market

Situated in the shadow of the Castle every Saturday morning it has become an Edinburgh institution.

But the subject of the moment for the Farmers' Market is free parking and whether you should just walk or cycle has already been debated on the [Guardian Edinburgh](#) blog.

Today there is a very comprehensive article in [The Scotsman](#) about the 10th anniversary of the Farmers' Market.

Hogs at the zoo

Keepers at Edinburgh Zoo are celebrating the birth of three male red river hog piglets.

Born on 6 June 2010, red river hogs have been at Edinburgh Zoo since 2004 and this is the second year they have bred successfully.



The piglets named Ellis, Moses and Nelson after stadiums in South Africa featured in the FIFA World Cup 2010 (Ellis Park, Moses Mabhida and Nelson Mandela), were born to proud parents Belle and Hamish. Currently the piglets have yellow and brown stripy coats but when they mature they will look very different. Adult red river hogs have a shaggy red coat, with a tufted white stripe running the length of their back. They also have long black and white tassels of hair hanging from each ear.

Sue Gaffing, Head Keeper of Hoofstock at Edinburgh Zoo, said: "We are delighted that for a second year our adult pair has produced piglets. At almost a month old they are really playful and have been chasing each other around their enclosure. At this age they are particularly cute so it's a really good to see them."

Red river hogs can be found throughout western and central Africa, living in wet habitats like swamps and marshes. In the wild, they are hunted by leopards, lions, hyenas and pythons. Humans also hunt them for bush meat, leading to a declining

population.

Independence Day

On American Independence Day, External Affairs Minister Fiona Hyslop has published the Scottish Government's Plan for Engagement in the USA. The Plan spells out Scotland's three strategic objectives in the USA, which are to:

Bring a sharper economic growth focus to the promotion of Scotland in the USA

Create the conditions for people to live, learn, visit, work, and invest in Scotland

Manage Scotland's reputation as a distinctive global identity

Recognising the need and value in a co-ordinated and focused approach, the Plan will rely on close collaboration between the Scottish Government and its agencies to ensure the objectives are realised in the USA.

Minister for Culture and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop said: "Scotland already has extensive historical, economic and cultural links with the USA. This plan builds on those links to further strengthen our relationship, and ensure that Scotland maximises the economic opportunities offered by the US market, via tourism, inward investment and exports.

"Over the last two years, this Government has worked hard to ensure our engagement with the US is more strategic and business focussed, and this refreshed Plan will bring an even sharper economic focus to our work.

"Closer collaboration between the Scottish Government, its agencies and partners in the USA, focusing on the three strategic objectives, is key to creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish."

US Principal Officer Dana Linnet said:

“We warmly welcome the Scottish Government’s renewed plan to engage positively with the United States. Scotland remains a strong friend and partner to the United States. The Plan seeks to further strengthen our strong ancestral, historical, cultural, and commercial ties in ways that will benefit our friendship and cooperation in years to come.”

Congressman Mike McIntyre, Co-chair, Friends of Scotland Caucus, US House of Representatives said:

“I am pleased to know that the Scottish Government continues to strive to build on what is already a strong and deep bond between our two nations. Scotland’s friendship remains important to America, and this new plan lays out objectives that stand to be mutually beneficial.”

Congressman John Duncan, Co-chair, Friends of Scotland Caucus, US House of Representatives said:

“I, and my colleagues in the Friends of Scotland Congressional Caucus look forward to continuing to celebrate the longstanding friendship between Scotland and the United States. The Caucus has grown from just a few members a few years ago in the House of Representatives, to more than fifty now in the House and now the US Senate. This new plan published by the Scottish Government will help strengthen and build on that special relationship.”

High Earners Salaries Released

The Cabinet Office’s new list updates a previous list published in June of 171 senior civil servants who earn £150,000 or more.

The updated list adds high earners in NDPBs who also fall into this category. It takes the number at UK level up to 328.

The Scottish list includes nine individuals in Scottish NDPBs and Public Corporations – Scotland also has three SG civil servants who earn more than £150,000 and these are included in the UK list (as pay for the Senior Civil Service is reserved).

A Scottish Government spokesman said:

“This information is being published in the same place for the first time in Scotland – however most of it is already publicly available. Those appearing in this list who work for the Scottish Government or Scottish NDPBs is only around 3 per cent of the total across the UK.

“It also should be noted that the majority of Scottish employees at NDPBs are at Scottish Water – the equivalent of which south of the Border is in the private sector, so earners in this area will not appear on the UK-wide list.

“We are facing a period of real financial constraint, which is why every effort is being made to ensure that pay – especially for the highest paid people in the public sector – is affordable and sustainable.

“Scottish Government Ministers have already shown a lead in pay issues by taking a pay freeze both last year and this.

“Our Public Sector Pay Policy for Senior Appointments, which covers Chief Executives of NDPBs, Public Corporations and, for the first time, NHS Executives and Senior Managers, states there will be no basic award in 2010-11, reflecting the decision by Scottish Ministers to impose a pay freeze.

“And Finance Secretary John Swinney has written to NDPB and Public Corporation Chief Executives, who may have earned a bonus in respect of exceptional performance in 2009-10, asking them to consider waiving some or all of the payment.”

You can download the list [here](#).

Government grants

Government grants are available for 30 per cent of the cost, up to a maximum of £4,000, for heating technologies like wood fuel boilers, heat pumps or solar thermal water heating.

Due to unprecedented demand, people are being encouraged to apply for an Energy Saving Scotland home renewables grant before the scheme ends.

Energy Minister Jim Mather said:

“The Energy Saving Scotland home renewables grant scheme has been extremely successful in helping householders to generate their own green energy, cut carbon and stimulate the market for small scale renewables technologies.

“Since this Government trebled the budget for microgeneration in 2007, 2,900 householders have been helped to cut their fuel bills with Government grants worth around £7.4 million. Those grants have brought a total investment of over £21 million, a welcome boost for an embryonic, low carbon industry.

“The uptake of small scale renewables among householders is now unprecedented and the home renewables grants funding is facing pressure. The grants scheme will stay open to new applications until the remaining cash is allocated, which at the current rate I expect will be in around three weeks time. In an extremely tight financial climate we will now look to see what further support we can give to small scale renewables.”

The Energy Saving Scotland home renewables scheme is managed by the Energy Saving Trust in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Creative Scotland Established

Announcing formal establishment of the new organisation, Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop said:-“Today marks a truly momentous change in the way we nurture and support Scotland’s reputation as a cradle and cultivator of talent across all art forms. A single, national body for the arts, culture and the creative industries in Scotland is what this Government promised and this is what we are now delivering.

“The route to Creative Scotland has taken many twists and turns. This Government has actively engaged with the artistic and creative community to ensure their views and needs were understood and taken on board. As a result the vision and shape of the new body are much improved.

“Today Creative Scotland officially starts its vitally important work – to support artists and creative practitioners of all kinds, to encourage enjoyment, appreciation and participation in the arts and to promote the value and benefits of the arts and cultural sector.

“I have high expectations of Sir Sandy Crombie and his board, working with Andrew Dixon and his management team. They are set to take on the challenge of ensuring that our creative communities continue to flourish. With many partners across the cultural spectrum, Creative Scotland will give our world-class artists and creative practitioners the profile they truly deserve, in this country and across the globe.”

Creative Scotland Chief Executive Andrew Dixon said:

“Creative Scotland is here. This is Scotland’s chance to develop its key strengths in the sector and bring together in a more unified way. We have a well-respected Chair, a board and a strong senior team.

I am delighted to be launching Creative Scotland at Edinburgh Printmakers – a place which has for over 40 years acted as a

creative space for artists. It also participates in the Own Art scheme supported by the Creative Scotland Innovation Fund, which helps make contemporary art accessible to all."

Creative Scotland Chair Sir Sandy Crombie said:

"I am excited about getting Creative Scotland underway and am looking forward to working with Andrew Dixon and the board to build on the good work of the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen. Our early work will be on identifying the immediate priorities for Creative Scotland."

Creative Scotland is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). Its role is to:

Identify, support and develop quality and excellence in the arts and culture

Promote understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts and culture

Encourage as many people as possible to access and participate in the arts and culture

Realise the value and benefits of the arts and culture

Encourage and support creative endeavours that contribute to an understanding of Scotland's national culture

Promote and support commercial activity focused on the application of creative skills

Creative Scotland will be the first Scottish public body to have equal legal status for its Gaelic and English names. This is a further demonstration of the Government's strong commitment to the principle of according equal respect to Gaelic and English languages.

Creative Scotland's Gaelic name will be Alba Chruthachail.

Edinburgh Printmakers was established in 1967 as the first open access studio dedicated to the promotion of contemporary printmaking practice. It achieves this by providing, maintaining and staffing an entrance free gallery and inexpensive, open access print studio, where artists and members of the public can use equipment and source technical expertise in order to develop their hands on printmaking skills. As a not for profit organisation that is also a registered charity, Edinburgh Printmakers receives

approximately 50 per cent of it's funding through revenue and project funding from the Scottish Arts Council as well as support from the City of Edinburgh Council. This enables the organisation to highly subsidise the cost of using the print studio, making access to creative facilities affordable to a wide range of people. This includes professional artists, students, community groups and members of the public, who wish to develop new or existing skills.

Edinburgh Printmakers participates in the Own Art Scheme which is supported by the Creative Scotland Innovation Fund. The Own Art scheme is designed to make it easy and affordable for everyone to buy contemporary works of art and craft including paintings, photography, sculpture, glassware and furniture. It enables people to spread the cost of their purchase with an interest free loan, from as little as £100 to £2,000.

The Creative Scotland Innovation Fund was announced in 2009 as an innovative package of projects to support Scotland's artists and practitioners during the tough economic times. Own Art will benefit from £250,000 of the £5 million Innovation Fund investment which over the next two years will support a new strategy for galleries to develop online sales and promotion. There will also be new marketing campaigns that raise awareness of the accessibility of the Own Art scheme and the rewards of art collecting generally

Gaga v Obama

in getting to 10 million Facebook fans before Barack Obama. Michael Jackson still has 15 million but it is testament to her dedication to a meteoric rise to fame that she is now so popular.

More on [Mashable.](#)

We wonder who in Edinburgh has most Facebook fans or Twitter followers – do you know?

Edinburgh soldier

Cpl Jamie Kirkpatrick lived in Wales but was born in Edinburgh. He died in a firefight in Helmand Province last Sunday.

Man arrested over attack on Edinburgh teenager

He will appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Monday.

Lothian and Borders Police praised the public response following an appeal for information into the assault.

The attack happened on a footpath near the red bridge in the Crewe Toll area of the city around 10pm on Wednesday 30th June. An appeal for witnesses was launched with officers particularly keen to speak to a man in his 60s who was walking a black dog and passed the suspect and the victim. The man contacted police and helped officers with their investigation. Before the arrest was made, Detective Inspector Grant Dougall, who is leading the investigation thanked the local community for their assistance and urged anyone who may still have information to come forward. He said: 'I am delighted that, as a result of our appeal, the man who was walking his dog in the

area has been in touch and we are now carrying out various lines of enquiry to trace the individual responsible for this attack. 'We will continue to engage with the public and have high-visibility patrols deployed throughout the area to speak with, and reassure the public as to any concerns they may have. 'I would again stress that crimes of this nature remain extremely rare, but it is imperative that when they occur, we work closely with our communities to bring those responsible to justice. 'Anyone who may still have information but has yet to contact police is urged to do so immediately.'

Next of kin sought

John Stevenson was found dead at his home in Gracemount Drive on Wednesday (June 30). There are no suspicious circumstances, and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal. The 77-year-old lived alone in Gracemount Drive for the past year and a half. A police spokesperson said: 'We are asking anyone who might know, or know of, Mr Stevenson and his family, to contact us as soon as possible.'

Bag snatching in Pennywell Road

The first incident happened in Pennywell Road around 11.20pm on Monday 28th June. A woman who had just left a chip shop noticed a group of youths who had gathered outside. A male from the group then approached her and snatched at the

shopping bag she was carrying. A struggle ensued before he was able to wrestle the bag from her grasp and make off from the area. The victim sustained a sore hand during the incident but did not require medical attention. The suspect is described as being aged 16 – 17 years, 5'7' tall wearing a grey hooded top and tracksuit bottoms. During the second incident, which also happened in Pennywell Road a woman was robbed of her handbag as she made her way home. The theft took place around 12.10am yesterday (30th June). The woman was walking along the lane that connects Muirhouse Avenue North to Pennywell Road. Upon entering the lane, the woman noticed two males within who began to follow her before struggling with her for her handbag and making off with the bag towards Muirhouse Avenue North. The woman suffered minor injuries. The first suspect is described as white, 20s, 5ft 6ins tall with a skinny build and acne on his face. He was wearing a dark beanie hat, dark long coat and blue denim jeans. The second suspect is described as white, 5ft 4ins tall with a skinny build and wearing a dark-coloured hoody. Police are now appealing for anyone who can help trace those responsible for these incidents to come forward. A police spokesman said: 'At this time we do not believe either theft to be linked, but we are keen to speak to anyone who may be able to assist with our enquiries. 'If you were in the Pennywell Road area around 11.20pm on Monday night or around 12.10am this morning and saw anything suspicious we would ask that you contact police immediately.'

Hair grooming dangers

An East Lothian safety organisation is encouraging county households to take extra precautions to prevent young children becoming accidentally burned or scalded at home. The advice comes during National Child Home Safety Week (21-27 June

2010).

The East Lothian Home and Fire Safety Group is issuing five top tips to help county households recognise the risks in an average home. Young children are particularly susceptible to burns and scalds as their skin is 15 times thinner than an adults. While many people are aware of the dangers posed by equipment such as cookers and irons there are other potential hazards – including hair straighteners.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust found that hair straighteners can reach 220C and some can still be hot enough to burn a young child eight minutes after they have been unplugged.

Hair straightener burns are mostly seen in very young children (0-3) and are caused either from picking up, sitting on or standing on straighteners – injuries range from superficial to more severe burns. Apart from the risk from burns, hair straighteners have also been known to cause house fires if they are left switched on.

Claire Goodwin from the Home and Fire Safety Group said: “Young children may pick up hair straighteners in an attempt to copy an older sibling or parent. Unfortunately they remain very hot after use and can cause painful burns and scalds to delicate young skin. The key message is to treat hair straighteners as you would an iron and keep them well away from small children.

“We’re keen to encourage everyone to think about home safety. Accidents often occur when visiting grandparents, other relatives or friends whose homes may not be as child friendly. A few simple changes can avoid a painful burn occurring. ”

To raise awareness of the issue, the East Lothian Home and Fire Safety Group is running a competition to win one of 20 thermal hair straightener bags.

The bags can accommodate unplugged straighteners while they are hot to prevent painful accidents. Simply answer the following question: “How long after use do straighteners stay hot enough to burn a child?”

Email your answer along with your name, home address and phone

number to cgoodwin@eastlothian.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 9 July 2010 to be in with a chance of winning. Only one entry per person will be accepted.

The first 20 entries chosen at random from the hat after the closing date will win a thermal hair straightener bag and a home safety pack.

Scrap the Scrum!

You can read more on the [STV](#) website.

The call has been rejected by Mike Burton who is a former England and Lions prop. You can read what he says on the [BBC](#)

Cupcakes

Well Lizzie's Tea Party will show you how. The business makes cakes for parties and weddings but also offers tuition. To find out more you should contact them via the [website](#).

Glitterary Lunches in the

autumn



If you are looking for an enjoyable and stimulating event at which to entertain clients, or to get together with like minded friends, save the following dates in your diary. The girls will be back in touch in August with the line-up of authors:

Edinburgh: 7TH October – Caledonian Hotel

Leeds: 14TH October – tbc

Aberdeen: 1ST October – tbc

York: 11TH November – The Dean Court Hotel

Newcastle: 18TH November – The Northern Counties Club

Glasgow: 25TH November – The Oran Mor

You can find them on the web. www.gliterarylunches.co.uk

David Nicholls

The first few lines refer to Rankeillor Street in Edinburgh – which somehow smacks a little of Rebus....

Anyway the NYT is kind enough to give you the first chapter which may be enough to whet your appetite.

Swimming

There are eleven swimming pools in Edinburgh run by the City Council but many more in hotels and in some people's back gardens.

The Council has just finished renovating Warrender swimming baths and also the swimming pool at Glenogle.



Warrender Baths courtesy of City of Edinburgh Council

It is a long time since the Reporter has been to Glenogle Baths but we are now looking forward to a return trip sometime very soon!

You can find details about all the pools run by the Council on [their website](#).

You can see some lovely photos of the reopening on the [Council Flickr site](#).

Scottish Opera

Using different opera styles, new formats and collaborations, and creating a wider variety of events and experiences, the Company's new season is designed to allow people to find their own way to discover and enjoy opera.

General Director Alex Reedijk said, 'We've had some great successes this past season with both the repertoire we've offered audiences and the way in which we've done it. Strategies such as teaming up with the Scottish Sun for a reader offer and performing free mini operas have allowed us

to reach out to people who may not ever have considered opera. We're also utilising different venues, locations, scales and partnerships to reach out. We're trying to open up the world of opera, in all its forms, to everyone in Scotland.'

The season begins with a return to the Edinburgh International Festival with a concert performance of Puccini's rarely performed *La Fanciulla del West*, conducted by Music Director Francesco Corti and featuring Susan Bullock in the title role. A new production of *Carmen* opens at the Citizen's Theatre in Glasgow in September before touring to 22 venues across Scotland with both chamber orchestra and piano-accompanied performances. This new translation of Bizet's biggest hit is directed by Ashley Dean in a production set in Franco's Spain. Next up is the ever-popular *The Marriage of Figaro*, from the same creative team behind 2007's critically acclaimed *Il barbiere di Siviglia*: director Sir Thomas Allen and designer Simon Higlett. Francesco Corti conducts and Thomas Oliemans returns after his charismatic performance as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

This carefully curated season also presents two operas that have not been performed by Scottish Opera for a quarter of a century: Handel's passionate and character-driven *Orlando*, directed by Harry Fehr; and Strauss's entertaining *Intermezzo*, conducted by Music Director Francesco Corti. *Intermezzo* marks the return of Scottish Opera to German repertoire for the first time since 2006. Verdi's *Rigoletto* has all the elements of the composer's genius. Opening in Spring 2011, the production will see the return of conductor Tobias Ringborg (2009's *Così fan tutte*) and tenor Edgaras Montvidas (*Nemorino* in 2009's *The Elixir of Love*), as well as the debut of English baritone Eddie Wade in the role of *Rigoletto*.

A new family double bill follows the success of recent seasons of specially-commissioned productions for young people such as *Baby 0*, *Aunty Janet Saves the Planet*, and *The Undersea World of Bubble McBea*. Produced in partnership with the Citizens' Theatre, features the world premiere of Dr Ferret's *Bad Medicine Roadshow* and the Scottish premiere of *On The Rim of*

the World, which was commissioned and created in partnership with the UK's other major opera companies.

In an innovative and fun collaboration, Scottish Opera teams up with Club Noir, the world's biggest burlesque club to present a glamorous evening of burlesque, cabaret, and opera at the HMV Picturehouse as part of this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The Company's partnership with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama goes from strength to strength with a revival of David Pountney's acclaimed Scottish Opera production of Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Music Theatre Wales and Scottish Opera, in collaboration with the Traverse Theatre, present the Scottish premiere of Philip Glass' *In the Penal Colony*, a contemporary opera based on the short story by Franz Kafka.

Scottish Opera's Emerging Artists programme enters its second year with singers Michel de Souza, Rebecca Afonwy-Jones and Marie Claire Breen joining the Company. All three studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, with all three performing in the critically acclaimed collaboration *War and Peace* earlier this year. Nadine Livingston continues for a second season as an Emerging Artist and can be seen as Susannah in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Gilda in *Rigoletto*.

Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland takes a break to develop a number of longer length operas for the 2011/12 season to coincide with the Company's 50th anniversary.

The Glasshouse Hotel

It is part of the Eton Group which has hotels elsewhere in England.

The luxury hotel has the largest roof terrace in Edinburgh,

and although it has spectacular rooms and public areas there is no restaurant or bar for non-residents.

KPMG are running the hotel until they can assess the position.

Trams & Forth Ports

The body owns Leith Docks, Rosyth dockyard and Grangemouth docks in Scotland along with other commercial interests. Their website explains that they also own 400 acres of land available for development which forms the major part of Edinburgh's waterfront, just 10 minutes from the city centre."

The company was valued at around £640m on the latest offer by shareholders to take over the business.

The offer was however rejected by the board headed by Charles Hammond on the basis that it fell short of the true value of the company.

So the question is that if the company is worth so much then why can they only offer £3.2m towards the cost of the trams instead of the £34m which was apparently a condition of their redevelopment of Leith Docks?

It is partly due to this that the price of the trams may have to be funded by additional borrowing of around £45m or of course the tramline will not extend to Leith at all....will it?

Youth Issues Forum

by Ali George

The aim of the event was to engage with young people in the south of Edinburgh and find out about their quality of life. Groups from Gracemount High School, Liberton Kirk, Moredun Library and the Liberton/Gilmerton Youth Forum presented videos to an audience of adults who can help effect change in the area.

A lot of young people felt that they have a bad reputation because of the way they are portrayed in the media. Nobody wants to cover stories about the youth group helping out at a church coffee morning, or Gracemount High School loving the Channel 4 show Glee so much that they have started their own Glee club. Instead adults have a perception of young people hanging around drinking and smoking and committing petty crimes.

"I like wearing a hoody," said one member of the pupil council at Gracemount High School, "it's comfy and it keeps my neck warm. But the head teacher banned us from wearing them because of the negative image they've been given by the media."

Meanwhile young people from Moredun wanted to get fit and have fun by organizing monthly visits from a mobile roller disco, but are being told by community centres that they won't be allowed in case they damage the floors. Even though mobile companies bring their own floor with them.

It seemed that whilst young people present had lots of good ideas, they were hampered by the fact that the event was aimed at adults. Some younger people commented they did not understand all the words used, and the way that adults would talk for ten minutes and then say 'and what do you think' almost as an afterthought was condescending at best.

It didn't help either that the only councilor present, Tom Buchanan, opened proceedings by announcing his intention to leave straight away for a more important meeting in the city. This speech gave the impression that the event was more of a box-ticking effort by the council than a genuine commitment to effecting change in the South.

Hopefully the pledge cards everyone was required to fill out at the end of the event will remind those in charge of all the positive themes that came out of the discussion.

Gravity

Gravity is the tale of a German banker (Fabian Hinricks) facially similar to Jimmy Carr, who is deeply dissatisfied with his lot. He is still in love with an ex from seven years ago, he has no real friends, and his job is so crap that when a client shoots himself right in front of Frederick's face, nobody even asks him if he's OK.

He therefore embarks upon a crime spree in order to spice things up a bit, enlisting the help of an ex-con he knew at school. This gives him a greater sense of self-confidence, in a very intense and brooding kind of way. But all he really wants is for someone to go see psychobilly band The Electric Snakes with him.

These forays into the underworld of crime take their toll, and eventually our anti-hero is close to unraveling completely. You should definitely go and see it to find out how that resolves itself. Beautifully shot, and with lots of laugh-out-loud moments, this is one of my picks of the festival.

The Good Heart

That said, it's not designed to be a pant-wetting, nail-biting thriller. This is more of a character study, where the focus lies not on the plot or its sense of inevitability, but in seeing how the actors reach their final destination. And it's an engrossing journey.

The screening was briefly introduced by one of its stars, Brian Cox. He described it as "An Icelandic interpretation of a downtown New York bar... so it's a little eccentric to say the least! But I think it's really a very interesting movie."

This is a fair assessment. What Cox neglected to say is that a huge part of what make it interesting is the fact he plays a blinder. He is by turns bitter, angry, inappropriate, paternal and hilarious. Supporting actor Paul Dano is brilliant too, with his awkward mannerisms and total warmth tinged with underlying sadness. But the slightly unhinged, coffee loving curmudgeon who brings his Alsatian to hospital with him is the one to watch.

Huge

As a fan of the Armstrong and Miller shows, I was interested to see Ben Miller's first film, Huge, which is about a pair of comedians trying to make it. If nothing else the director/co-writer has the research under his belt.

Unfortunately, the film is a little bit flat. The main problem

is that there is no evidence that the comedians, Warren (Johnny Harris) and Clark (Noel Clarke) are funny. In any way. We hear the same three lines of their material over and over again, which is of symbolic relevance in terms of different stages of their relationship – but the bit isn't that funny and certainly doesn't stand up to constant repetition.

For some reason Warren and Clark think they are hilarious. Whilst Russell Tovey is brilliant as Clark's horrible manager, and Thandie Newton does a hilarious coke-addled talent agent, and nice guy Darren (Oliver Chris) is very funny when he finally stops being nice, the so-called comedians are just a bit sad. If anything, having so many very strong moments courtesy of the supporting cast adds to the feeling of unfulfilled potential of the main protagonists.

If we found out more about Warren's wristbands, or saw a conclusion to Clark's unrequited love, maybe there would have been some emotional resonance. If we had seen some more of their material, maybe we'd have got behind them more in the knowledge that they genuinely deserved to be huge.

Instead this was a film about two fairly average blokes, both of whom are desperate to escape the drudgery of daily life. They might be funny or they might not, it's hard to tell. And they argue a lot, which is probably realistic if nothing else. It's not terrible by any means, but neither is it the one thing you need to rush out and buy tickets for before the festival ends. Do watch it when it comes on telly, if only for the numerous cameos, but don't expect the likes of the RAF Airmen sketch, because Warren and Clark are no Armstrong and Miller.