

The Woman who Thought Too Much

by Ali George

The woman speaking is poet Joanne Limburg. She looks like a Cambridge academic ought to:- slim, with glasses and mousy brown hair and nervous. Some might describe it as neurotic.

Limburg has just written a book on her twenty-year struggle to overcome Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and she is at the Edinburgh Science Festival to talk about her experience of the illness.

In spite of the fact that, in gender terms at least, sufferers are fairly evenly split, the audience of around sixty is predominantly women. Some are sufferers, some are carers of sufferers and some are just interested.

She opens with a thought experiment.

“Say in your head, I wish ‘insert name of a loved one here’ would die in a terrible accident. Not pleasant, is it?”

Some members of the audience are visibly distressed.

Limburg explains that this is the kind of trigger that can overcome an OCD sufferer with anxiety. Despite the rational knowledge that thinking something does not make it happen, the brain goes into overdrive and the person then feels compelled to go through a series of steps to make the anxiety go away. This may consist of tapping three times on the desk, or phoning the loved one for reassurance that they definitely have not died in a terrible accident. Several times.

Another aspect of the condition manifests itself in perfectionism, which stems from a need for absolute certainty in all things. If you are a perfectionist, you might take ages

over something and be frustrated or angry when you can't get it right. If you suffer from OCD, it's more likely you'll be so anxious about getting it wrong that you won't even start.

This tendency to overthink meant that Limburg struggled at university, failing to write anything down in case it was wrong. Writing poetry removes this element of stress, because there is no right way to do it.

"And I've always liked mucking about with words," she smiles. "Writing a poem is like being in a word sandpit."

All in all an interesting glimpse into the world of someone who has learned to live with a complex brain disorder.

Joanne Limburg's new book, *The Woman Who Thought Too Much: A Memoir* is out now.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

The classic novel is a great read whether you know Edinburgh or not, and also whether or not you have read the book before. It has survived the test of time and is as relevant today as it ever was. The girls are pupils at the Marcia Blaine School for Girls in Edinburgh in the 1930s and are part of 'The Brodie Set'. Miss Jean Brodie is their teacher and at the same time is an ardent supporter of the Fascist movement in Italy where she holidays.

The best-known lines from the book are that the girls in the set are (according to their teacher) *la creme de la creme*... Also Miss Brodie often advises them that 'Speech is silver but silence is golden.'

It was written by Spark in 1961. She was a Scottish author

born in Edinburgh in 1918, and had published several other novels before this one was published. Ultimately Muriel Spark settled in Italy so whether this is a quasi autobiographical novel is open to conjecture.

The book was made into a film in 1968 starring Maggie Smith in the lead role. She was marvellous!

Private education is one of the main themes in the book and remains the way that a large percentage of children in the Capital are educated.

The New York Times carries an excerpt from Martin Stannard's biography of Muriel Spark [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#), clearly demonstrating how important an author they consider her to have been.

Ian Rankin

The author read it for the first time on 4th March 2010 at Edinburgh's Caledonian Brewery when an auction of exclusive Rankin items and a raffle raised over £9,000 for the charity.

You can read the story now by clicking this [link](#).



Edinburgh Photographer's work is subject in GCSE exams!



by Kate Donnelly

Kevin Wilson (35), of Stockbridge, creates surrealist photographs inspired by his dreams. And his art is now being used by hundreds of students as part of the AQA GCSE Art and Design 2010 coursework and exam.



The young people are studying his pictures under the subject 'Fantastic Forms' where they choose an artist or photographer to study and reproduce work in that style.

He said:-“I initially found out that I was included in the GCSE exam when teachers and students started contacting me through my website and the traffic to my site increased dramatically.

“They have been leaving comments and asking for information.”

Kevin held his first exhibition in 2003 and is currently looking for a venue for another show. He added: “My original inspiration came from surrealist films and painting, especially the films of Luis Bunuel.

“In terms of photographers Duane Michals and Ralph Gibson inspired me initially, and they are probably the reason I still take the type of photographs I do and not landscapes.

It all began when I started writing down my dreams in a journal, and then took up photography in 2001 in order to recreate some of the scenes and ideas from the dreams I was transcribing.



"I am trying to recreate intangible events which may or may not have existed, so they can only ever be approximations of the actual event and will never be exact so the use of text helps to tell the story or get across the idea or feel of the dream."

His photos normally follow a sequence and he also uses text to come up with the best way to change his idea or dream into an image.

Kevin's dreams are also being used in a study to discover what influence environmental factors (geomagnetic activity) have on dreams.

For more information, log on to his website or e-mail mailinglist@insomnium.co.uk.

The Printmaker's Art

By Andrew Moir

"The Printmaker's Art" showcases works from some of the best known artists of the past 500 years. Artists featured in the exhibition include Toulouse-Lautrec, Blake and Goya.

The Printmaker's Art features 30 master prints and reveals the inspiration and craft of the world's greatest artists up until the beginning of the 20th century," said Senior Curator of Prints & Drawings, Valerie Hunter who assisted in compiling the display which has been curated by Hannah Brocklehurst.

There are many highlights to be seen including Rembrandt's etching, The Three Crosses, showing Christ dying on the cross at Golgotha but Hunter favours another biblical work. "One of the stars of the show is Durer's Adam and Eve (1504) showing the couple in the Garden of Eden, just before Adam eats the fruit of knowledge."

The technique of making prints involves drawing onto a surface such as a woodblock, metal plate or lithographic stone. The image can then be transferred onto paper in a variety of ways. Printmaking has produced some powerful and iconic artworks from the great artists. This exhibition has artworks dating back from 1480 right up to 1927.

With great depth and variety across the thirty pieces on display it is a great opportunity to view some works often kept secret by the gallery. Hunter would encourage any art lover to view this exhibition saying “[it’s] a lively insight into some works rarely on public display. Admission is free!”

The Printmaker’s Art exhibition will be on display at The National Gallery Complex on The Mound until the 23rd of May 2010.

The National Galleries

There are other exhibitions for which you have to pay, although you can get round that by becoming a member. There are more details about that on the [website](#). One of the best parts of any gallery visit is the shop, which in the case of The National Gallery is fabulous, and the other is food. The Scottish Cafe at The National Gallery has recently been taken over by Victor Contini of Centotre fame. This cafe is not only in a beautiful location, but the food is delicious – and they have free wifi – something The Reporter loves.

We have already highlighted the exhibition about the Printmaker’s Art, and Ali George reviews the Diane Arbus exhibition below.

Other exhibitions include Dance which runs from 24 April to 6

June, and is a celebration of dance in different styles and media. There is a Degas and a Picasso....

Elsewhere in the city The Portrait Gallery is undergoing major renovation works which will not be complete for another two years. If you want to know how that is progressing then read the Heads Up blog at <http://portraitnation.wordpress.com>

At The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art which is on Belford Road there is a great opportunity to see some of the Scottish Colourists' work, such as Peploe (one of The Reporter's favourites!) and Ian Hamilton Finlay's Sailing Dinghy. There is a separate exhibition of Finlay's work with his collaborator Pamela Champion, in the Keiller Library at the Dean Gallery opening on 25 April and running till 13 June.

Introducing art to the very young is often a slow process, but the National Galleries have devised a Family Trail to encourage this, involving the characters Katie and Sylvia the Dragon.

One of the up and coming events is the Adult Learners' Week from 15-21 May when free tours of the Artists Rooms can be arranged for groups.

More details of what is on can be found on the [website](#)

Details of how to use the number 13 bus service which links all the galleries is on the [bus website](#).

Diane Arbus

by Ali George

Visiting the Dean Gallery today (or indeed any day up until

June 13th) you will be able to see an exhibition of work by the New York photographer Diane Arbus.

Arbus is known for her interest in taking pictures of people at the edges of society. Some of the work in this exhibition is quite challenging, particularly considered in the social context of 1950s and 1960s America.

One room, for instance, is dedicated to the 'Untitled' collection, which depicts people with additional support needs. An information placard states that it took Arbus several years to obtain permission to photograph them. Other sections have intimate portraits of people on the margins of society, including immigrants, mixed race and same sex couples, and transvestites.

The information placards are a little hard to read due to dim lighting (presumably this protects the pictures) and small text. You have to stand quite close to read them, and then you get in people's way. As a result, some of the steady stream of visitors aren't getting a lot of context to the pictures. I heard one person say, "I guess she's American, is that right...?"

Notwithstanding the practical difficulties in viewing the exhibition, the photographs stand alone as striking images without knowing their origins. The controversial Child With A Hand Grenade in Central Park is part of the collection, as is Patriotic Young Man With A Flag. Both of these images have modern resonance in spite of being almost fifty years old, and are definitely worth a look.



So head over to the Dean for another interesting and free exhibition. But get there early if you want a fruit scone in the café, because they go fast!

Ghost Signs



(c) Alan Wilson and reproduced by permission of Hatads.

It is one of the old advertising signs which in its faded glory is now known as a Ghost Sign.

These are seen by the advertising industry to be so important that they have created an archive of photos to showcase them. You can find the History of Advertising Trust website here which is sponsored by Rank Hovis

These are adverts painted directly onto the brick walls of buildings around many cities in the UK, and Edinburgh boasts a few fine examples. Can you imagine the industry required in scaling a ladder with the paint brush to accomplish this? And then of course it had to be designed and somehow laid out first! Apparently each signwriter had their own unique style – a far cry from the printed billboards of today.

Sam Roberts is the man behind the archive. Roberts has been researching, writing and speaking about Ghostsigns since 2006. He currently splits his time between project management roles at The Work Foundation and The History of Advertising Trust (voluntary) and a number of visiting lecturer posts at UK universities. Prior to this he worked within the advertising industry, holding positions at the IPA, Lowe, D&AD and iris. He holds both a BA (Philosophy & Mathematics) and an MSc (Human Resources).

Sam manages the leading website on the subject of Ghostsigns, www.ghostsigns.co.uk, and has appeared in numerous features in press, TV and radio. He is a guest speaker on the subject at

conferences and universities and has also written a number of articles for academic and specialist publications.

Given the lack of archival materials, Sam has also become the primary reference point on this subject for bodies such as the Museum of Brands & Advertising and The History of Advertising Trust, working with the latter to lead the establishment of the first online photographic archive of ghostsigns photography. He has also assisted numerous students and academics in their research projects as a result of referrals from these institutions.

You can listen to him making a speech about the signs by [clicking here](#)

Where are the others in the city.....? Well, for example this one is on.....aha! – do you know where it is? You can send us your replies via The Editor's Blog where the photo is also on display.....and do let us know about any others you find!



(c) Ann Biddle and reproduced with permission of Hatads.

The Open Eye Gallery in May 2010

Chris Bushe was born in Aberfeldy in 1958 and graduated from Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen in 1984. His landscapes of Mediterranean scenes have been the backbone of his work till recently. Now he has returned to Scotland to apply his use of intense light and colour to something closer to home.



Simon Laurie is a Glasgow School of Art graduate and often exhibits at Aberdeen Art Gallery.



Clementina van der Walt is a South African ceramicist.



In June there will be work from Diana Hope, Peter Thomson, Heather Nevay, Helen Flockhart, Andrew Restall, Diana Rendle, Miranda Sharpe, John Higgins and Sophie Cook.

THE OPEN EYE GALLERY

34 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh EH3 6QE

Tel 0131 557 1020

Opening Hours Mon-Fri 10am-6pm Sat 10am-4pm

mail@openeyegallery.co.uk

www.openeyegallery.co.uk

Edinburgh as a Film Venue

The Reporter spotted David Tennant the other day outside The Caledonian Hotel being filmed for A Single Man.

Proof then that Edinburgh and all its historic and beautiful buildings is an attraction for the TV and film industry.

You can see the latest Historic Scotland ad [here](#). Part of this was shot in the cold dawn hours of an April morning at Edinburgh Castle.

As a location for shooting movies and TV productions, last year was the best-ever for Edinburgh – in terms of money spent

and the number of days it was 'in action'.

Says the capital's film and TV location bureau, Edinburgh Film Focus, some £4.2 million was directly spent by film and TV productions in the city and its environs – up 34 per cent on the previous year – and the number of 'filming days' rose to 1100, up ten per cent on 2008.

Last year, Edinburgh was the location for some parts of the BBC Scotland 'History of Scotland'; the movie, Outcast; and the TV drama, Garrow's Law. Plus a TV ad for electrical goods manufacturers, LG.

Says Ros Davis, Film Commissioner for Edinburgh: "Competition for filming locations around the UK is fierce but with the quality package of the 'Edinburgh City Region' locations and our experience of filmmaking requirements we were able to attract big European productions such as the French feature film, Imogène, and the German TV drama, White Out, to film in the 'Edinburgh City Region'."

Adds Tom Buchanan, the City's Economic Development leader: "Edinburgh Film Focus does a great job in marketing the region to filmmakers and, together with the Council and Lothian & Borders Police, has been working hard to ensure that Edinburgh remains a quality, film-friendly location. These figures indicate just how successful their efforts have been and show that Edinburgh punches well above its weight as a filming destination."

EFF was set up by Edinburgh District Council and Lothian Regional Council 20 years ago and is funded by City of Edinburgh Council Economic Development, East Lothian, West Lothian and Scottish Borders councils.

Last year, it handled over 500 enquiries, with 339 productions deciding to film in the 'Edinburgh City Region', including the following:

Feature films

Outcast

Imogene

Cosi

The Wicker Tree

TV drama

Whiteout

Dani's House

Garrow's Law

TV documentary

History of Scotland

Vet School

TV commercials

LG

T-mobile

Light TV entertainment

Antiques Roadshow – Hopetoun

Antiques Roadshow – Abbotsford

Celebrity Ghost Hunt

Come Dine With Me

Got to Dance

Source:AllmediaScotland

The Botanics



According to their website The Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh were 'Founded in the 17th century as a physic garden....'

Physic means the science of healing and the purpose of such gardens was therefore (in the words of the Chelsea Physic Garden website) 'to research the properties, origins and conservation of over 5000 plant species.'

It is a lovely space to have within the city boundary. The Botanic Gardens extend to about 70 acres and are just a mile from the heart of the capital and within sight of Edinburgh Castle. It is a great place for children and adults alike to explore. The endless lawns are a great place for sunbathing and picnicking, the hothouses are a delight on a cold day and the new John Hope Gateway is a lovely resource with a shop, restaurant and wifi! (Great for The Reporter!) The plants are beautiful and well-tended and are all very photogenic...



Visitor numbers at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh have hit record highs since the opening of the John Hope Gateway in October 2009.

More than 65,000 people have toured the £15.7m visitor centre since it opened on Wednesday 7 October. The weekend following the opening was the busiest in the Garden's history, with a total of 8,386 visitors to the Gateway over the two day period.

Figures show that the number of people who visited the Garden and John Hope Gateway in October totalled 69,557. That compares with 35,108 visitors to the Garden over the same

period last year.

The state-of-the-art building boasts temporary and permanent exhibitions, a Real Life Science studio, Botanics Shop with many exclusive ranges, an outdoor plant sales area and Gateway Restaurant which serves breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea.

The eco-friendly building, which is a model of sustainability, is helping the Botanic Gardens engage with visitors and enlighten them about the important role the internationally-renowned organisation plays in research and conservation.

The Botanics are open between 10.00 and 7.00pm from April to September and from 10.00 till sunset in other months.

But even on a sunny day at The Botanics there is the ever-present traffic warden....So watch where you park!



Billy Elliot

The Reporter was lucky enough to go and see Billy Elliot last year in London.

But now we have a different kind of show here in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Gang Show and The Manor School of Ballet present Billy Elliot The Musical at the Festival Theatre on 4th and 5th June 2010



It is fabulous and at the same time sobering to realise that these are very young actors and dancers who are appearing on stage. The acrobatics have to be seen to be believed!

To celebrate five years in the West End, the producers of Billy Elliot The Musical have launched Billy Youth Theatre, an exciting new initiative providing schools and youth groups

around the country with the opportunity to perform their own version of this internationally award-winning show. Billy Elliot writer Lee Hall, together with Martin Koch (Musical Supervision and Orchestrations), have adapted their original script and orchestrations for groups staging local productions as part of Billy Youth Theatre. With 115 separate shows being staged across the country, and seven in Scotland, Billy Youth Theatre is a nationwide event and Edinburgh Gang Show with The Manor School of Ballet are delighted to announce that they will be taking part with their production planned for 4th and 5th June at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh and at the same time raising funds for Radio Forth's Cash for Kids. As part of Billy Youth Theatre, selected productions of Billy Elliot from around the country will be invited to perform at showcases held in major regional theatres between April and June 2010. This will culminate with some groups being offered the opportunity to follow in the steps of Billy and perform at the BYT West End Gala at the Victoria Palace Theatre, Billy's London home, on the 18th July 2010. Lee Hall, who originally conceived the idea behind Billy Youth Theatre, said: "I am delighted that young people around the country will have the opportunity to bring the story of Billy Elliot to life in their local communities". Billy Elliot director, Stephen Daldry said: "It is very exciting that we are able to offer young people around the country a chance to pour their energy and creativity into local productions of Billy Elliot. We are looking forward to seeing their ideas brought to life."

The boy who will play Billy in Edinburgh, 13 year-old Matthew Hall, is hugely excited about playing this iconic role. He said: "It's awesome to be able to say that I'm Billy. I've loved learning to dance and be part of this amazing opportunity – and I get to perform on the massive stage of the Festival Theatre!" Billy Youth Theatre is open to schools and established youth groups in England, Scotland and Wales, and to performers aged 10-19.

The Edinburgh Gang Show is the largest annual show at the King's Theatre and features over 200 young people from Scouting and Girlguiding and is currently celebrating 50 years of entertaining in the capital and this is the first time it has undertaken such a project.

The Manor School of Ballet is one of Scotland's most established and respected Ballet Schools with branches across Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders. Billy Elliot The Musical will be directed by Andy Johnston. The Musical Director will be John Duncan with choreography by Claire Smith and Jacqueline Casey. The show will feature a cast of over 90 young people, a large orchestra and approximately 60 adult helpers behind the scenes.

The Gang Show will take place as normal in November

Edinburgh Science Festival

So The Edinburgh Reporter went to The Science Festival....

It seemed appropriate (and necessary) to bring along great-nephew Craig who is 10. So the choice of what to do was his, and he decided that we should go along to Robotaster in Adam House on Chambers Street. Not exactly the most exciting or eye-catching venue inside, it is part of The Edinburgh University estate.

The second year Computer Science students from Edinburgh University were all very enthusiastic about the activities and this enthusiasm was passed on to the group of children who presented themselves at 11 am for two hours of programming the little Lego robot. First, Craig and his partner Matthew learned how to program the little wheeled device to go

forwards and backwards, turn on itself and turn corners. This was accomplished by working out the movements on the computer first and then downloading these to the device. Certainly there was plenty of space for trying it out.



Then they moved on to embellish the little robot a little with a light sensor and a sensor that made it turn when approaching a solid object. (Yes there will be some fancy name for this but The Reporter is no scientist!) The light sensor made it look a little bit more like Wall-E and so it became a bit more likeable all of a sudden. It started whizzing around and ran up a ramp to make contact with a pad which then turned a wheel....Watch the movie here.....soon!



The whole thing was based on Lego Mindstorms Education Pack 9797 which is probably only available to schools or universities, but would be great fun for all you robot geeks out there. Or indeed for the family whose mother decided that she could actually do it all much better than the children she had with her (presumably her own) and major-generalled the whole two hours.



2 hours £3 – good value and great fun.

Afterwards, we went to The Museum further along Chambers Street to 'Meet the Medics and Vets' where we met all the furry toys which are used for visualising blood cells or penicillin... Craig and The Reporter both did an IQ test which was standard for 11 year-olds in 1936 and thankfully both passed! The drop-in activities were a little bit more daunting and perhaps harder just to join in with than the organised event had been.

We were also a little hungry by then, so dashed up to the roof just for a look at The Castle and then went off for a much-

needed rest and lunch at the ever-wonderful cafe under St Giles. Good day out!



The Science Festival finishes on 17 April.

Peter Pan

The National Theatre of Scotland brings Peter Pan to the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh from Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 June, presenting a brand new version of one of the most influential and magical stories ever told by a Scottish writer, in what will be the 150th anniversary of the birth of JM Barrie.

Directed by the National Theatre of Scotland's own Olivier Award-winning John Tiffany and written by multi award-winning Scottish playwright David Greig (The Bacchae, Midsummer, Yellow Moon) this Peter Pan re-imagines the Darling family in Victorian Edinburgh, with Mr Darling working as an engineer on the construction of the Forth Bridge.

John Tiffany will be reunited with Laura Hopkins (Designer), Gareth Fry (Sound Designer) and Davey Anderson (Composer) from Black Watch, and with Guy Hoare (Lighting Designer) from Be Near Me. Vicki Amedumue joins the creative team as Aerial Choreographer.

The production will feature sword fights, flying sequences, acrobats, illusions, the usual ticking crocodile and one great big hook.

Peter Pan is presented by arrangement with the Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and Samuel French Limited.

The National Theatre of Scotland is delighted to be entering into their first media partnership with Sky Arts. As part of this partnership, a thirty minute documentary about the making of the National Theatre of Scotland's production of Peter Pan will premiere in high definition on Sky Arts 2/HD and Sky Arts 1/HD from the beginning of May, throughout the production's tour, until 19 June. This exclusive behind-the-scenes documentary will feature footage from the final stages of the production, interviews with the creative team and look into the world and legacy of JM Barrie, one of Scotland's most famous writers. An eight minute online version of the documentary will be available at www.skyarts.co.uk/NationalTheatreofScotland

Festival Theatre, Edinburgh
Tuesday 8 – Saturday 12 June

Musselburgh Races

The signs are that Musselburgh Ladies Day is heading for a fourth successive sell out.

The switch to a Friday race day from the traditional Saturday is proving to be a hit, with the East Lothian course reporting more advance ticket sales than at this time in 2009.

Already all grandstand hospitality, sponsorship and restaurant packages are sold out. The Champers and Hampers and Picnic Party tickets have also been snapped up and are sold out, leaving only general admission tickets and some trackside marquee hospitality packages available.

General admission ticket sales for the glamorous event on Friday June 18, are currently sitting at more than 4000 with daily ticket sales averaging 100.

Ladies Day at Musselburgh is firmly established as Scotland's most popular race day and has attracted capacity crowds in each of the last three years.

A mixture of top quality flat racing, high fashion and competitions sponsored by leading brand Jenners has brought the crowds flocking to Musselburgh and this year is looking to be no exception.

Musselburgh Racecourse commercial manager, Sarah Montgomery, said: "We are delighted with the level of advance sales which is exceeding last year and shows Ladies Day has bags of staying power.

"All the indicators are that our Friday fashion extravaganza is heading for a sell out but we know from experience that this brings its own problems as we have to deal with hundreds of disappointed race goers who haven't managed to secure tickets.

"My advice is don't put it off, if you want to make sure you are at Edinburgh's premier summer fashion event, book your tickets now. We are constantly looking at ways to improve Ladies Day to keep it fresh and exciting and this year we are confident we have come up with another winner and are looking forward to welcoming another capacity crowd at Musselburgh."

The racecourse recently appointed former Miss Scotland and Miss UK, Nicola Jolly, as its "ambassador" for Ladies Day and she will lead be leading from the front as the Face of Ladies Day, welcoming VIP guests and assisting in the judging of the main Fashion in the Field events.

For more information and to book tickets, visit www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk

Girls Night Out

Girls' Night Out is a brand new production of Dave Simpson's phenomenally successful play.

It appears at [The Festival Theatre, Edinburgh](#) from Tuesday 25 to Saturday 29 May, bringing a night of fun entertainment to women of all ages during our troubled times.

This is a revival of the very successful play that toured the UK ten years ago, now in a brand new production, rewritten for our times.

Girls' Night Out is a story of love, laughter and men in thongs, together with a great pop soundtrack that will have you dancing in the aisles. Jane is preparing for the biggest day of her life and that wouldn't be complete without a traditional hen night with the girls. Meanwhile Tony and the boys are putting together the final touches of their make or break ladies only show. Both funny and touching, we follow the boys from rehearsals to performance, as they prepare for the forthcoming 'Feast of Flesh' contest, which could turn them from has-beens to heroes overnight.

The production features a cast of talented young actors and is produced by the team behind such hits as Lazy Town Live!, Peppa Pig's Party and Sing-a-long-a Abba.

The actors are Amanda Bellamy, Harry Capehorn, Danielle Corlass, Shirley Darroch, Rachael McGuinness, Joe Ransom, Ian Sharp, Bethany Turner, Mark Willshire and Owen Woodgate.

A drunk man looks at the thistle

Scotland's most inimitable contemporary musical virtuosos Red Note Ensemble are once again going on a lyrical tour of Scotland.

Dedicated to developing and performing interesting and significant contemporary music, co-directors John Harris and Robert Irvine have collaborated with multi award winning Glasgow composer Bill Sweeney to create a vibrant adaptation of Hugh MacDiarmid's epic poem 'A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle'.



In the picture are John Harris and Robert Irvine, the directors of the Red Note Ensemble, and actor Crawford Logan, the narrator for the Ensemble's production

Originally written in Scots and published in 1926, it's infamously thrown narrator explores the state of Scotland from an emotionally and intellectually charged perspective. Its prose ranges from the comic to the serious and examines a wide range of cultural, sexual, political, scientific, existential, metaphysical and cosmic themes. Bill, with his background in the European avant-garde, and a love of traditional Scottish folk music and jazz, is perfectly placed to capture the many sides of MacDiarmid: modernist and traditionalist, nationalist and internationalist. Bill Sweeney was originally commissioned to write his version of A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle by Glasgow's MayFest in 1992.

Bill said: "When I was finishing this piece in 1992, there was a General Election on and given that outcome, I'm a bit nervous about this year's! Going back to the piece to prepare this edition, I was struck again just how MacDiarmid's

portrayal of the Scottish psyche – should be plural and mutually contradictory, of course – is still so relevant: we achieve a parliament and revile the members we elect to it, erect a parliament building and ridicule it, complaining about the cost, and the whole tartan hoots-mon-ery self-inflicted caricature still stirs what passes for our souls! 1926 – 1992 – 2010....is there hope? MacDiarmid himself, from 'Lourd on My Hert':

Nae wonder if I think I see A lichtner shadow than the neist
I'm fain to cry: 'The dawn, the dawn! I see it brakin' in the
East.' But ah – It's juist mair snaw!"

As the Contemporary Ensemble-in-Residence at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music Drama in Glasgow, and an Associate Company of the Traverse Theatre, Red Note develop the work of new and established composers internationally and in Scotland, particularly at Glasgow University and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. The Ensemble's name was dreamt up when John Harris and Robert Irvine saw how compositional software would turn unplayable or out of range notes red, rising to Bill's challenge, they told one newspaper, "Red Note will be the group that will play the unplayable".

John Harris said: "It's true as professional virtuosos we love to play the difficult music that other music groups might think twice about attempting, but we also know that our first job is to entertain and give the audience a good night out! Bill's version of A Drunk Man is perfect for us: it's a fun, thought-provoking, musical romp for the audience – and it's also fearsomely difficult to play. Perfect!"

They will be conducted on this tour by rising star Jessica Cottis. At only 29, she is already established as a highly sensitive and experienced professional conductor, working with superstar maestro Donald Runnicles at the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, who describes her as his "extra ears". As a recipient of numerous prizes, Jessica has given recitals

across North America, Europe and Australasia, recorded for the SSLSO label and has been broadcast on ABC and BBC Radio 3.

The ensemble for this tour is made of 9 players, including a jazz clarinetist and trombonist, 4 singers, and much-loved Scottish actor Crawford Logan in the title role of the famously thrown narrator. You can expect an evening of humour, inebriation, beauty, politically-charged comment and virtuoso musical and literary invention!

Wednesday 9th June: Traverse Theatre, Cambridge Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2ED

Tickets & Information: 0131 228 1404 / www.traverse.co.uk

National Museums Scotland

History's at the heart of 2010 with an exciting line up of new exhibitions at Scotland's five National Museums.

The Lewis Chessmen, the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Bell Rock Lighthouse and the women of the Land Army and Timber Corps are just a few of the highlights of National Museums Scotland's 2010 exhibition programme.

The year began with Meet Your Maker, opening on 29 January at the National Museum of Scotland and a great opportunity to view the works and practice of nine of Scotland's leading makers. Working in situ, the makers provide a fantastic insight into the processes behind the craft. Some pieces will also be available to purchase.

Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director, National Museums Scotland said:- 'National Museums Scotland enters a new decade with a strong programme including a landmark tour of the Lewis Chessmen in collaboration with the British Museum. The exhibitions across

our five museums highlight the diversity of our collections from the best of Scottish contemporary craft to the development of lighthouse technology and the key role played by Scots within this. Building on last year's success at the National Museum of Flight, which saw a 25% increase in visitor numbers, we will be opening further new displays in the Spring.'

On 26 February, an exhibition at the National War Museum, honouring the Women's Land Army and their crucial work during the Second World War opened. The exhibition focuses on the diverse real life experiences of women who helped keep the country on its feet.



The Jet Age, the new permanent exhibition focussing on a Boeing 707 cabin opens to the public at the National Museum of Flight on 1 April. This exhibition features the reminiscences of former cabin crew and passengers from the heyday of commercial travel. Visitors can revel in the glory of 1960s air travel, when photographing celebrities at the airport was still a novelty! In addition, another historic building, the Parachute Store, will be atmospherically restored to its original state. This building was where a team of women worked to check and safely pack the parachutes which were so essential to the aircrew stationed at East Fortune Airfield.

For romantics, the National Museum of Costume presents a new exhibition of wedding dresses from television and film, open since 9 April. Gowns worn by Joely Richardson, Helena Bonham-Carter and Meryl Streep feature alongside a glittering array of wedding accessories.

On 21 May, the National Museum of Scotland opens an exhibition of 30 Lewis Chessmen from the collections of National Museums Scotland and the British Museum. The exhibition will explore the enduring mystery and intrigue of these intriguing characters by drawing on significant new research undertaken by Dr David Caldwell, National Museums Scotland. This major

exhibition will tour to the Aberdeen Art Gallery, the Shetland Museum and Archives and Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway.

1 February 2011 marks the 200th anniversary of the completion and lighting of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, which took four years to complete. This fantastic feat of engineering by Robert Stevenson will be celebrated as the central part of an exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland opening in October 2010. It highlights the personal stories of the people who designed, built and operated lighthouses in such treacherous conditions. Displays will chart the role of lighthouses and the key role played by Scots in the development of this technology.

As the redevelopment of the Royal Museum building continues apace, Treasured showcases the wonder and diversity of the nation's world class collections, casting fresh light on some of the best-loved from the Royal Museum displays. Spanning 500 million years, with objects from all five continents, view insects in amber, samurai swords and Martian meteorite at the National Museum of Scotland.

Over and above exhibitions, National Museums Scotland runs a packed schedule of events and activities across all sites, from workshops, live interpretation events and school visits to major days out such as the National Museum of Flight's Airshow, which will take place on 24 July 2010.

National Museums Scotland

The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked National Museum of Scotland 21 May – Sun 19 Sept Special Exhibitions gallery, Level 3 Free
Featuring chessmen drawn from the collections of National Museums Scotland and the British Museum, The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked is the most comprehensive exhibition on the chessmen

for over a decade. The exhibition will look at the mystery and intrigue surrounding the chessmen, explore the stories surrounding their discovery and show how the characters reflected society at the time they were made. It will draw upon new research by National Museums Scotland on their craftsmanship, origins and historical context to provide visitors with a new and vibrant perspective on the chessmen. The National Museum of Scotland is the first venue for the exhibition, which will later travel to Aberdeen Art Gallery, Shetland Museum & Archives and Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway. The exhibition and tour has been made possible with funding from the Scottish Government.

The Jet Age National Museum of Flight New permanent exhibition Included in museum admission Take a look at the UK's only Boeing 707 cockpit and cabin as we launch The Jet Age. The exhibition features the reminiscences of former cabin crew and passengers from the heyday of commercial travel. Visitors can revel in the glory of 1960s air travel, when photographing celebrities at the airport was still a novelty! Discover how the aircraft was made and watch interviews of passengers and crew. Uniforms, baggage trolleys, airline jet engines and an airport fire engine all help tell the story of the airline that ushered in the 'Jet Age'. Parachute Store National Museum of Flight New permanent exhibition Included in museum admission Experience an evocative glimpse into life at East Fortune in the Second World War. Newly restored to its original appearance, the Parachute Store is where parachutes were hung from the ceiling to dry and repacked ready for use. Marriage in the Movies National Museum of Costume Fri 9 April – Sun 31 October Entrance included in Museum admission

Marriage in the Movies presents some of the most memorable wedding moments captured on film as we showcase gowns and accessories from the big (and small) screens. The exhibition features wedding dresses worn by Keira Knightley, Helena Bonham-Carter and Meryl Streep, examines the iconic work of Oscar-winning costume designers, and explores the history of the wedding gown from its symbolism and tradition to fashion

and style. While all the wedding gowns on display were made especially for the screen, they also represent the story and the style of the time – from the 1770s in *Frankenstein* and the late eighteenth century in *The Duchess*, to the early 1900s in *Howard's End*. Exhibitions

Land Girls and Lumber Jills National War Museum 26 February 2010 – February 2011 Included in Edinburgh Castle admission This new exhibition tells the important story of the Women's Land Army (WLA) and Women's Timber Corps (WTC) in Scotland. From roots in the First World War, these Land Girls and Lumber Jills played a vital role in feeding the nation and providing timber. Objects include a formal uniform from the 1940s right up to the 2008 medal awarded to all surviving members of both the WLA and WTC. 'Land girls' took on all types of agricultural work from sowing to harvesting, calving to shearing, whilst the Women's Timber Corps supplied the wood. Some volunteered but others were conscripted as by 1941 all women under the age of 60, without children under 14, could be called up for essential war work. Public recognition of the vital hard work and commitment from these women arrived in 2008 when they were issued with a medal which incorporated the designs from both the Land Army badge and that of the Timber Corps, along with a certificate of thanks from the Prime Minister.

Garden Detectives National Museum of Rural Life Free with museum admission What lurks at the bottom of your garden? See the natural world through the eyes of a detective. Delve into hedges, take a peek in our shed and unearth wonders from our flower beds and pond. Explore habitats, study food chains, track animals and discover what they get up to while you're asleep! Inspired by the work of Charles Darwin to mark his 200th birthday, Garden Detectives turns the ordinary into the extraordinary. Take a larger-than-life look at plants and flowers, learn fascinating facts about nature and experience all the sounds and smells of a real garden, without getting your hands dirty. Darwin200 is a national programme of events celebrating Charles Darwin's scientific ideas and their impact on society.

Treasured: Wonderful Things, Amazing Stories National Museum of Scotland Until 2011 Free This exhibition offers the chance to discover some of the most extraordinary treasures in the care of National Museums Scotland. Featuring over 300 objects drawn from the four corners of the globe and spanning across centuries, Treasured: Wonderful Things, Amazing Stories celebrates the wonder and diversity of the National Museums' world-class collections. From a Sumatran tiger to a Victorian corset, Treasured is an eclectic mix of the spectacular, extraordinary, precious and personal. The exhibition provides a link to the Royal Museum collections during closure, casting new light on familiar objects and also giving a first glimpse of some of the objects which will feature in the redeveloped National Museum of Scotland when it re-opens in 2011.

Events/activities

National Museum of Scotland Talks and lectures

Curator's Choice: Scottish Clocks Fri 11 June Dunfermline Room 14:00 (1hr) £5 / £4 / Members free Book now on 0131 225 7534
begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 225 7534
end_of_the_skype_highlighting Join Assistant Curator Lyndsay McGill and Clock Conservator Darren Cox for an insight into National Museums Scotland's Scottish clock collection. Learn more about long-case clocks from the 17th–19th centuries, as well as the more unusual examples on display.

The Lewis Chessmen Wed 23 June Early People gallery 19:00 (1hr) £5 / £4 / Members free Booking now on 0131 225 7534
begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 225 7534
end_of_the_skype_highlighting New research has revealed that there is a lot more to be said about how, when and where these gaming pieces were buried. We can even speculate about who might have owned them. Find out more with Dr David Caldwell, Keeper of Scotland and Europe.

Special events Meet the Author: The Chess Piece Magician Sun 30 May Visit www.nms.ac.uk for times and booking details Free Inspired by the Lewis Chessmen, The Chess Piece Magician is a fantasy adventure set on the Isle of Lewis. Come and meet the

author, Douglas Bruton, and create your own island adventure!
Giant Lewis Chessmen Sun 11 July Hawthornden Court 12:00 – 16:00 (Drop-in) Free Join artist Karen Clulow to make your own giant paper chessman. Make your own queen, king or popular berserker and try out their moves on a giant chess board!

Summer events Summer Science Weekdays Mon 12 – Fri 30 July
Connect gallery 11:00 – 13:00/ 14:00 – 16:00 Age 5+ Free (Drop-in) Join in our three-week programme of science fun, featuring scientists and astronomers from the Edinburgh Royal Observatory and the University of Edinburgh. We have everything from Huge Telescopes to Build a Superbug workshops! Check www.nms.ac.uk/events for details.

Weekend events Connect Super Science Shows Connect gallery Every Sat and Sun 12:15/13:15/14:15/15:15 (20mins) Age 5+ Limited space (seating for 20) Free Come along to our free events every weekend in Connect. Find out about science in the real world at our Meet the Scientist events or enjoy a Super Science Show!

Free Tours: Scottish Collections Tours leave from the Hawthornden Court meeting point:

Highlights Tour (1hr) Daily 11:30/13:30

Themed Tour (1hr) Daily 14:30

Family Tour (15mins) Sat 14:00

Treasured: Wonderful Things, Amazing Stories Tour (1hr) Tue 15:00/Fri 12:00

Information about topics for themed and family tours can be found on the museum's information screens and on our website www.nms.ac.uk/tours.

National War Museum

Special events

Clan Warriors Sat 19 – Sun 20 June 9:45 – 16:00 Events are included in Castle admission The courtyard rings with the clash of steel as our master-at-arms puts his pupils through their paces. Will the full plaid and array of weapons give our volunteer the courage to take part in the Highland Charge?

National Museum of Flight

Special events

Into the Future Sat 19 – Sun 20 June 10:00 – 17:00 Adult £10, Conc £8, Child 12 and under free, National Museums Scotland members free. Parking £4. Group discounts available – please call 0131 247 4238 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 247 4238 end_of_the_skype_highlighting for more information. Join Robots Live! as they bring their show to Scotland for the very first time. See machines from television's Robot Wars fight live in the arena and watch amazing boxing robots battle. Talk to a scientist, try on a pair of anti-gravity boots, or take a UFO or extraterrestrial picture to fool the nation!

National Museum of Rural Life

Special events Grow it, Cook it, Eat it Sun 6 June 10:00 – 17:00 Adult £7, Conc £6, Child 12 and under free, National Museums Scotland members free Where does food come from? Enjoy a guided wild food walk. Find out how to make butter and grow your own vegetables. Meet local brewers, whiskey distillers and food producers and take home some country flavour!

Go Wild in the Country Fri 25 June – Mon 23 August 11:30/14:00 (2hrs) Booking essential on 0131 247 4369 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 247 4369 end_of_the_skype_highlighting Enjoy country activities including den-making, ranger skills, photography and our Garden Detectives exhibition. Make a day of it with a picnic and trips on our Farm Explorer.

Museum addresses: National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF National War Museum, Edinburgh Castle, Edinburgh, EH1 2NG National Museum of Flight, East Fortune Airfield, East Lothian EH39 5LF National Museum of Costume, Shambellie House, New Abbey, Dumfries, DG2 8HQ National Museum of Rural Life, Wester Kittochside, Philipshill Road, East Kilbride, G76 9HR

Comedy Double Bill

18th May 2010 at the Cameo – for one night only!



With Carl's laidback storytelling and Pete's sharp, inspired observations, you're guaranteed a great show.

PETE JOHANSSON

"This is the funniest first hour I have ever seen from a comic here in Edinburgh." – The Scotsman

Canadian Pete Johansson, the son of a professional hockey player, arrived in the UK in 2008 and rapidly become a favourite at London's renowned Comedy Store.

He's been invited onto Radio 4's Loose Ends as well as other radio and TV programmes, performed alongside the likes of Stephen Merchant, Stewart Lee and Simon Amstell as part of charity Alert's peace benefit at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London, and bagged a starring role opposite Ed Byrne in BBC4's Sex Bombs.

His 2009 Edinburgh show Naked Pictures of My Life, an examination of his embarrassing experiences, garnered rave reviews and won him a nomination for one of the most coveted awards in comedy.

CARL DONNELLY

"The highest rated emerging star on the UK circuit. Hilarious." – The Guardian

Carl started performing stand-up regularly in 2005 and quickly established himself as one of the most exciting new comics climbing the comedy ladder.

His conversational style and silly sense of humour have seen him win a host of awards and become a regular act and MC at clubs all over the country. He has also performed in France,

Germany, Singapore, The Netherlands, Oman, Dubai, Ireland and probably some other countries he can't remember!

His instantly likeable brand of silliness has seen him appear on BBC3's Russell Howard's Good News, ITV's Comedy Cuts and Comedy Central's Grouchy Young Men.

EIFF

Launching at Edinburgh International Film Festival in June 2010, 'Features Scotland' will provide producers with a range of training, market knowledge, promotional and networking opportunities that will enhance their understanding of the market and significantly advance their projects. Participants will work with EIFF and a dedicated Development Advisor to design a development plan personal to them and their project that will cover the duration of the initiative.

Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop said: "The Edinburgh International Film Festival champions creativity and provides vital opportunities for emerging talent. The Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund has helped Scottish filmmakers to develop their skills and ambitions. The 2010 Expo project, 'Features Scotland', will continue this work and will showcase Scottish filmmaking on a local, national and international stage. I wish every success to the participants of this exciting project."



EIFF Artistic Director Hannah McGill said: 'We are immensely grateful to the Scottish Government for their continued support of EIFF and Scottish filmmakers through the Expo fund. This investment will enable us to aid a dynamic group of

individuals in making their way confidently into the international film market, and promoting their projects worldwide. We look forward immensely to seeing the scheme bear creative fruit in the near future.'

Industry consultant, Mia Bays, has been appointed as the 'Features Scotland' Development Advisor and said: "EIFF and Scottish Screen's support for their up and coming producers and the commitment to take them to four of the world's major film festivals is invaluable as it involves not just sending them and showing them the ropes, but also putting them in front of really key people and tailoring the experience to each individual producer. I wish I'd have had the same such platform when I started out instead of learning the hard way!"

Masterclasses, workshops and meetings with Industry professionals will be led by guests that include writing and directing talent, financiers, executive producers, sales agents, media lawyers and distributors with the aim of developing and market testing their project within a supported environment. In addition to EIFF, producers will travel to the upcoming Toronto, London and Berlin film festivals.

The Expo Fund provides a global platform to showcase emerging Scottish filmmakers. Phil Robertson, a previous recipient of funding in 2009 has consequently been signed by LA talent agency, Montana Artists and commented: "Without the Scottish Government support for EIFF Expo, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet with US agents in the relaxed environment of my home town film festival."

The 2010 'Feature Scotland' participants, who will be formally announced at the Scottish Screen and EIFF event in Cannes tomorrow, are: Wendy Griffin, Carolynne Sinclair Kidd, Micky MacPherson, Suzanne Reid, Andy Green, Ciara Barry.

St George's West Shandwick Place

Anyone who visited the venue at St George's West in Shandwick Place last year will recall how difficult it was to get there because of the roadworks – even walking along the pavement was tricky!

The show staged there last year was about the Malawian child, Mercy, being adopted by Madonna. The show was not only entertaining but rather controversial too, particularly as the audience was asked to vote on the child's fate when the story had been told. It was a good show typical of the Fringe – an overseas drama group bringing a story to Edinburgh which we might otherwise not have heard.

The [BBC news website](#) and [The Scotsman](#) relate the story about the former church which has been kept afloat as an important venue in the past with donations from Kylie Minogue and the actor Brian Cox.

Has this venue now fallen victim to the tramworks? Or are the costs of Edinburgh Fringe venues simply too high in this economic climate?

Other venues have their own problems. It was only in March this year that [The Scotsman](#) ran the story of The Assembly Rooms which faces a lack of cash for refurbishment after being turned down for National Lottery funding. The Assembly Rooms is the biggest venue during the three week period when the Fringe hits town. The ballroom could not be used last year as it needed emergency works. In the 2010/11 City of Edinburgh Council Budget the sum of £2million has been set aside for refurbishment of The Assembly Rooms. It is not yet known when

the works will begin.

It is reported elsewhere that if a Fringe show breaks even it is thought to be doing well. Ricky Gervais played to 3,000 people at a single performance last year, whilst some shows struggle to half-fill their venues unless they do really attractive flyers or employ some neat marketing.

It is well known among Edinburgh people that you can let city flats out during August for a weekly rent of about the same as you would get for a month, so accommodation charges for performers are hefty too. (No I will never forget the day I phoned some friends only to find that they really had let their flat to Tony Blair for a week or two.....or was it Clinton.....no actually it was Rory Bremner!)

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival runs from 6th to 30th August 2010, come what may.

Silver Surfers

If someone you know is keen to learn about computers and the internet, but doesn't know quite where to start, why not sign them up for one of these events:

Learn how to set up a free email account

Piershill Library (Friday 21 May, 2-4pm): To book a place call 0131 529 5685 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 529 5685 end_of_the_skype_highlighting or email piershill.library@edinburgh.gov.uk

Your Library online

Oxgangs library (Friday 21 May, 10.30am – 12 noon) A world of information at your fingertips. Borrow an E-Book, discover your online personal library, or chat with a Librarian 24/7.

To book a place call 0131 529 5549
begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0131 529 5549
end_of_the_skype_highlighting or email:
oxgangs.library@edinburgh.gov.uk



Silver Surfers Day Drop-In!

Complete beginners especially welcome! A chance to move from 'station to station' tasting all the exciting benefits of computers, with supportive and friendly tutors available all the time. Have a go at using a mouse, get on the web, see the endless possibilities of shopping online and discover what the council website and your local library can offer you! Refreshments available. No need to book- just come along and enjoy!

Fountainbridge Library, Friday 21 May, 10.30am – 1pm

McDonald Road Library, Friday 21 May, 2 – 4pm

Central Library Learning Centre, Saturday 22nd May, 10am – 12.30pm



Flaubert Gallery 14-25 May 2010



Flaubert is on the main street leading down to Stockbridge. The Gallery promises an eclectic mix of original art from painting, drawing and sculpture to wood-engraving and etchings.

The gallery regularly has work from around 40 artists on show.

Flaubert Gallery, 26 North West Circus Place, Stockbridge,
Edinburgh, EH3 6TP

Tel: 0131 225 5007 Email: sales@flaubertlimited.com

Regular Gallery Opening Times:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday to Friday: 10am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: 11am – 5pm

Street Fighter and Mega Man

Unlike both feature length live action realisations of the Street Fighter series, this short sticks to the heart of the games: fighting, with moves choreographed to emulate the style of the in-game characters.

Street Fighter: Legacy is a 3 minute short film directed by Owen Trevor, whose work can usually be seen on episodes of Top Gear. Much care and attention has been given to this film, with great cinematography and well performed fighting. The only down side to this whole production is its length, with a run time that's shorter than a single episode of the now classic Street Fighter: The Later Years.

For those of you looking for something with more substance to it then I highly recommend checking out the 90 minute MegaMan: The Movie. It might not have the production value of Legacy, but it makes up for it in plot, something that the aforementioned short barely hints at.

Although the acting may not be stellar and the occasional special effect missing the mark, for an action movie shot on

location in New York City for what one must imagine was a very limited budget it wears its heart on its sleeve as you can tell the love that was poured into this project. The care and attention in the costume design does not shy away from its 8 Bit origins and if you were able to cope with the visual flair of a television show like Power Rangers then this is of similar quality.

For the record I am not well versed in MegaMan, so those that have grown up with the character may have differing opinions, but I felt the script was well written and that the characters were realised affectionately.

Keeping to the topic of Capcom fans I just wanted to share a bit of late but no less awesome news that you rarely hear from mainstream news outlets. Tragedy recently befell the family of well known Street Fighter tournament player, Chris Hu. His family, along with 50 others, sadly lost their New York home to a [fire](#) where they lost all their possessions and savings. However the tournament community over at SRK came to their aid, spending a week putting in donations to a fund to help Chris and his family. The community managed to raise an astounding \$20,894 in a week.

Stories such as these rarely make headlines, but I think that it is important to note how compassionate and creative the gaming community can be.

The Blind Side



We all know that it is not cheap to go to the cinema – but £7.55 for a film seems just a little hefty somehow. Which is

probably a lot to do with the fact that the cinema was practically empty. Cinema companies may have to adopt a Ryanair approach to business yet, if they do not want to fall foul of straitened economic times. Would it not be better arithmetic to have all the seats filled at £2 each rather than 8 people in the cinema at £7.55 each? And then there's the price of popcorn....

It was a pity because the film was very good. It is a true story, something which had escaped the Reporter's notice till the end when photos of the real family came up on screen.

A real feel-good movie for a Sunday, it showcases Sandra Bullock's mighty talents yet again. It also shows that there are some marriages made in heaven, where one partner is happy to give room and respect for the other. So take heart if that is not you in your relationship, there are some good people out there, you may just not have met them yet! Only a little point, but it seemed unusual that in a house the size we were shown on screen you would think they might have had more than one guest bedroom....

[Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film guide website, gives this film 67%, which must only reflect the fact that the slightly sentimental bent is probably not for everyone.

An Obituary and a Warning

The post I planned on bringing you has been put on hold due to a personal tragedy. Yesterday evening, upon return from work, my Nintendo Wii was pronounced dead.

When I started to formulate this piece it was intended to be a warning about backing up your saved games, something I had

neglected to do as this is the first console I've ever had die on me. This dawned upon me while chatting to a nice guy on Nintendo's helpline and my heart immediately sank. All those hours I'd put into various games, all were lost like tears in the rain (to paraphrase Blade Runner). On the plus side, if such a tragedy should ever befall you at least any games you might have bought from the Nintendo Shop Channel can be re-downloaded, even if your Wii has to be replaced.

After my conversation with technical support (it looks like it will be repaired for a nominal fee, far fairer than I was expecting) I sat down to contemplate the loss and this post. With little hope I once again powered on the Wii, and to my shock it booted up – something that it had refused to do since this morning. Now was my chance! I flicked through the menus and went to copy all my save games onto my SD card before sitting down to write about this turn of fortune. However another twist was yet to come.

It turns out that some games don't let you copy the save data to SD card, and my elation once again turned to despair. As I sit here typing this, I find myself distracted with the thought of how I'm going to break it to my girlfriend when she returns home that our combined 60 hours spent on Animal Crossing are irrecoverable. The 21 hours spent completing Endless Ocean are almost worse than the 25 hours of Raving Rabbid madness we have lost due to the nature of the game. My personal frustration is the thought of having to unlock all the additional characters and special features of Tatsunoko VS Capcom. As easy as it will be for me to play it for another 35 hours, the idea of getting back to the stage I am now doesn't fill me with the greatest of joys.

Out of the 139 save game files I have on the Wii 42 of them cannot be backed up and a dozen or so others warn that not all the information will necessarily be retained.

After this last gasp, the Wii has returned to its eternal

slumber and left me with mixed feelings. The most positive thing is Nintendo's tech support, they were friendly, helpful and able to answer all questions asked. The message to take from this is to back up all the saves that you can, but beware those that you can't and remember that all the time you spend on them might need to be repeated in the future. But what has annoyed me more than the console itself dying is that even if I had the foresight to backup those files earlier on, for some games such a task is impossible.

I shall keep you posted with updates on the situation, so hopefully this can at least benefit the rest of you.

Forbidden Planet

On my way to work a couple of weeks ago I found myself waiting for a bus on South Bridge Street in the rain as the bus shelter was already over capacity.

Getting bored of being attacked by umbrellas I decided to pop into Forbidden Planet and have a look around as there was still 10 minutes or so until the bus was to arrive. And I'm glad I did, as it opened my eyes to something I did not realised existed, at least outside of Japan. Whilst browsing through the manga section my eyes fell on a series of books based on one of my favourite game franchises of all time. What I'm referring to is a series of manga adaptations of the Legend of Zelda games.

For the uninitiated, these games follow the adventures of a young man by the name of Link and his attempts to thwart evil from the land. These games are epic and most will take well over 30 hours to play through. If you find yourself short on time but enjoy the adventures of Link, you could do a lot

worse than take a look at these books as they will take you a much shorter time to complete than even the easiest of the games.

Despite the brevity of these titles they do an excellent job of translating these games into images and dialogue and each tale speeds along, not allowing you to tire of the shenanigans.

This is the first time I set eyes on this (still growing) series of books and haven't noticed them in the comic section of any other book shop I have been into, however I'm sure most would be more than happy to order them in if you asked. At the time of writing Forbidden Planet have a 3 for 2 sale on all manga, so if you want to stock up then now may be the time!

Expect reviews in the coming weeks!

Tatsunoko VS Capcom

Filmhouse ended the first day of their three day FabFest on Friday with a late night screening of Takashi Miike's crazy but fun superhero movie Yatterman.



Why do I mention that here you ask? Well it seemed like a good excuse to go back and review a game that was released a few months back and deserves all the publicity it can get.

Tatsunoko VS Capcom

Developer/Publisher: 8ing/Capcom

Review copy: Wii

Link: http://tatsunoko.vscapcom.com/home_uk.html

Do you wish Street Fighter IV had been released for the Wii? Well, you're not the only one, and Capcom has not forgotten you. But rather than just port over last years awesome beat-em-up revival they have given you something much more special; a Wii exclusive that wasn't even supposed to be released outside of Japan.

Tatsunoko VS Capcom is the latest game in Capcom's VS series (some of you may have fond memories of Marvel VS Capcom or Capcom VS SNK, among others) and this time around they have teamed up with anime powerhouse Tatsunoko Productions. For those that haven't heard of Tatsunoko before, you may have heard of one or two of their creations such as Speed Racer, Casshan (both of which have been transformed into live action movies in recent years) or Battle of the Planets. The company itself is the Japanese equivalent of Hanna-Barbera, since they have been making cartoons for television since 1962, and have plenty of characters to lend to this game. Capcom on the other hand is a games developer and this title borrows from some of their older games such as Mega Man to their latest offerings like Lost Planet and Dead Rising. For those of you who haven't heard of these, other popular games they have made are Resident Evil and the aforementioned Street Fighter series.



With introductions over let's talk about the game itself. An explosion of bright colours and over the top special moves, you choose two characters to play as and take on the others in a tag team battle to the end. The only exception to this is that there are a couple of massive robot characters that can be chosen that give you an advantage in power and size, but doesn't give you a secondary character to rely on.

Although Street Fighter IV was designed with beginners in mind, Tatsunoko VS Capcom is far more accessible from the get

go, allowing you various different control schemes to play the game. If you chose to use just the Wii remote or the remote and nunchuk combo the controls are simplified, allowing even a first time player to pull off the special moves without much more skill than button mashing, but for those more experienced players you might prefer one of the other control options, such as the classic controller, Gamecube pad or even an arcade stick if you can afford such a luxury.

If you've never played a fighting game before then do not worry, you can either just jump into the game and mash buttons or, if you prefer to know what you are getting yourself into, there is a training mode that will allow you to try out your moves.

The game is enjoyable in single player mode, allowing you to unlock additional characters, artwork and more. However the real fun in any beat-em-up comes from multiplayer and this game has it in two different modes. You can either play with the person sitting next to you or go online and play against others across the globe. Playing the game with a friend is great fun and if WiiSpeak support had been added online play would have been even better, but as it is it plays pretty solidly so long as you have a good internet connection. Even then I would recommend sticking to the European server as going wider than that can lead to games that lag a little easier and as any pro will tell you lag in a fighting game is unacceptable.

Graphically this game is also excellent, with great character models that complement one another well. Some of the backgrounds can be a little bland but others, such as Yatterman's workshop, more than make up for this. Most of the special moves, especially the Hyper Combos, have phenomenal graphical flair and when an animation routine for one of these starts up and you are on the receiving end it will have you shouting at the screen until damage has stopped being dealt to your character.



Variety is what this game is all about and anyone that picks it up will find favourite characters, even if they are ones you had never heard of prior to booting up the disc. If you take a shine to some of them it is well worth digging into the history of ones you like. Many of the classic Capcom titles can be found on the Wii Shop Channel and it's worth at least typing the name of a favourite character into Google just to learn a little of their background. On the Tatsunoko side, as previously mentioned, several films have recently been released based on their franchises and are well worth checking out if you want to give some context to this game. It certainly helped me understand some of the crazy special moves the characters from Yatterman pull off and why Casshan has a dog help him out.

Despite being such a bizarre release, it is not that difficult to find in the wild. At the time of writing a walk along Princes Street revealed it in most shops that stock games, so there is no excuse for you not to pick it up!

I am a great believer that above anything else games should be fun and there aren't many more enjoyable experiences than the madness that is Tatsunoko VS Capcom. It's one of those titles that is easy to pick up but difficult to master and has more depth than its bubble gum stylings might suggest.

Another World

The age old debate continues, thanks to Roger Ebert returning to his meditation on whether games are art (spoiler: he thinks they're not) and I can think of no better time than to review one of the latest games added to the Good Old Games website.



Another World was originally released back in 1991 and created by designer Eric Chahi. It tells the story of a scientist named Lester (although only referred to as Professor in-game) who due to a freak accident during an experiment is transported, as the title suggests, to another world.

Playing almost like a silent movie, the only dialogue spoken in the game is in an alien tongue. All clues to your survival are in the visuals and soundscape, the latter contributed by Jean-Francois Freitas. Your empathy for Lester comes from the feelings you get from his body language, expression and surroundings.

The graphics were created using flat shaded polygons, giving the game a very particular style and its silky smooth animation and cinematic presentation can leave the player (I speak from personal experience here) uncertain as to where a cut scene ends and the game itself begins, years before the much lauded Metal Gear Solid.

You are thrown into a hostile alien world with only your wits to guide you, at least at the start, but assistance comes later in the form of a fellow prisoner and you will be helping one another throughout the story if you wish to make it out alive.

So, what can a game now nearly 20 years old bring to a 21st century audience? In its latest incarnation it delivers an immersive, cinematic narrative with challenging puzzles and level design, brought together with a haunting score, beautifully re-mastered graphics and artwork, and that's just the game. Included in this increasingly wrongly titled 15th Anniversary Edition is a fascinating 20 minute long Making Of... documentary and scans of Chahi's development diary, technical handbook and mp3 soundtrack. Oh, and with all the pictures we

now see on the news and in films such as Angels and Demons you would swear that Lester works at the Large Hadron Collider!

It must be said that it is a game of its time and new players be warned, you WILL die a lot, however this version has many additional save points and you no longer have to deal with the passwords of old. Once you know what you are doing the game isn't especially long and can probably be completed inside of half an hour. Some may see this negatively, however I would argue that this makes it much more replayable in much the same way a favourite film or TV show is rewatchable and the new save points make it as easy to skip through as chapters of a DVD.

Now, why do I believe it can be seen as a work of art as much as it can a game? For a start, this was a very personal project for Chahi, not created by a team of designers, with Freitas being the only other person to work on it. This can be seen in the final product; isolation is a key theme to the piece and while it might not be the first game to lean towards filmic, I cannot think of an earlier work that has as much heart. The tale of exile and friendship is almost as linear as a novel and not completing it is no different from putting down a book without reading to its final page. In fact, this for me was the computer equivalent of a compulsive page-turner, dragging me into its world, the flat polygons giving an illusion of mass to the creatures that lurked around each corner. Some could argue that being a game it lacks pace, especially if or rather, when the player dies. My defence of this would be comparing the player to the conductor of an orchestra, the player being in control of how the piece plays out. This is, of course subjective, so let me now focus upon the artistic craft found in the game. The once monochrome backgrounds that were each sketched on paper before being transferred to the computer now have true depth and texture to them thanks to the fact that the polygonal landscape has now been painted and it compliments the original style perfectly.

The title screen alone, which uses high resolution scans of the original box art painted by Chahi, has phenomenal texture and running the game full screen on a bright, high resolution monitor will have you believing you could reach out and touch the canvas. Then there is the sound design, I hesitate to call it a soundtrack as there is really only music in the introduction and ending, however Freitas and Chahi have created an emotive aural experience with excellent digitised sounds creating real depth to the alien landscape giving it the sort of attention rarely seen outside of a production by David Lynch.

Whether you see games as art is in fact irrelevant. Another World is an experience not to be missed and we can thank its existence for the creation of more contemporary titles, such as Ico and Killer 7. It looks gorgeous, plays better than ever and will hook you until its gripping conclusion. The brevity of this title can be made up for by its replayability and incredible amount of additional material.

Another World

15th Anniversary Edition

Developer/Publisher: Eric Chahi/MC2

Review copy: PC (via <http://www.gog.com>)

Link: http://www.anotherworld.fr/anotherworld_uk/