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October 2014 No.109

# Scotland in UNISON

scottish council activists bulletin ..... Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

**'We will continue to press for a just and fairer Scotland'**

# Uniting against austerity

UNISON's Scottish secretary Mike Kirby has called for the union to work to bring Scotland together after the referendum, backing a major demonstration on 18 October for a just and fairer Scotland.



**'We will expect that the promises of more powers will be delivered... but the real question is how powers are to be used for the benefit of working people'** Mike Kirby

Branches are being urged to work for a huge turnout for the march and rally in Glasgow. There will be parallel 'Britain Needs a Pay Rise' events in London and Northern Ireland.

The STUC and the Poverty Alliance will also hold a conference on 15 October as part of Challenge Poverty Week.

And on 4 October, The People's Assembly Scotland will hold its AGM bringing together unions, political parties and campaigning groups for a united and broad based campaign against austerity.

In a statement issued just after the referendum, Mike Kirby said:

"Our key concerns were the role public services play in improving the quality of lives for ordinary people, and the levers for the economy and how they are used to create decent jobs, tackle low pay and end poverty.

"The future of public services was debated across the media, local communities and families in Scotland. It clearly weighed on the minds of most as they cast their vote in this referendum.

"Their message has been clear. People value public services; they want more investment not more cuts; they reject privatisation and they

demand that public services remain in public hands. They also want a new fairer more equal society."

Turning to the referendum itself, Mike said: "This independence referendum has been extraordinary. The turnout alone (84%) - the highest for any election in over 60 years - tells you how seriously voters took their responsibility.

"It is a truly humbling experience to see the power of democracy at times like this."

UNISON is the biggest trade union in Scotland and Mike said it took its role to ensure that the



debate, about Scotland's constitutional future delivered concrete benefits for working people, very seriously too.

membership through the formal processes at UNISON Scottish Council and a series of area consultations.

"We engaged our

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## Momentum builds for action on pay and cuts

by John Stevenson  
SIU editor

**As we went to print, the result of the pay ballot of Scotland's council workers was about to be announced.**

Action in councils in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was already under way with their strike on 10 July to be followed by another on 14 October.

**NHS workers in England will strike on 13 October** against the government refusal to implement the pay review body recommendations (they were implemented in Scotland).

Meat Hygiene workers across the UK were out on strike twice in August over a miserly 0.75% pay offer.

Health members in Wales and academy



Scottish Meat Hygiene workers on strike on 26 August in Bridge of Allen

school members in England were also being balloted as we went to print.

**Glasgow** branch members demonstrated in the run up to referendum day against plans to outsource assessment for home care services to council-owned Cordia, with a remit for 10% in cuts by 2016.

"Home care services are already being reduced through shortened visits and this is just a further attack on services for the most vulnerable people in the city.

"It also threatens Cordia workers' jobs, wages and conditions", said Glasgow branch secretary Brian Smith.

"We want Glasgow City Council to put people first by calling a halt to these changes and focus instead on investing in home care services and those who provide them."

**In Edinburgh**, a successful ballot of home care staff brought an end to a controversial electronic monitoring pilot with joint talks agreed on meeting Care Inspectorate expectations on service monitoring.

## Interested in communications?

Branch activists interested in communications are welcome at the Comms and Campaigns Committee's activists' open days.

Topics covered have included social media, blogging, a support surgery, campaigning, writing etc. It's a great way to learn and the best sessions have been when branches have shared their experience and successes in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

**The next activists' day is 12.30 - 4pm on 19 November in Edinburgh. Look out for details.**

## Ali Syed

1934 - 2014

There will be a memorial service on 11 October at 3pm at Bearsden Town Hall for veteran UNISON campaigner Dr Ali Syed MBE who died on 25 August.



Ali carried the Commonwealth Baton earlier in the year.

Ali was a trade union activist for many years holding a range of posts in UNISON health branches and in Glasgow Trades Council.

Other branches will remember his many contributions to debates at Scottish Council. His trade union values shone through in all his work, including the many causes he took up - not least the plight of the Palestinian people.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scottish Organiser, said in a message to branches: "Ali was also a stalwart of Socialist Health Association Scotland for many years, serving as Chair and then in retirement as Vice-Chair. He also served on the SHA UK Central Council. This followed an outstanding NHS career in cancer care, latterly at the Beatson Centre in Glasgow. He was Labour to the core and made many contributions at Scottish Labour Party conferences.

"He will be sadly missed by all his comrades and the very many people he helped. Our thoughts are of course with his family."

## Tony Benn's life and work to be marked in Glasgow

A major Scottish celebration of the life of Tony Benn will be held in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall on 30 November.

A spoken word event and workshops in the afternoon will culminate in a concert featuring Rab Noakes, Chris Difford of Squeeze, folk legend Roy Bailey, Karen Matheson, Donald Shaw, James Grant, Arthur Johnstone, and Alastair McDonald. Tickets - [www.glasgowconcerthalls.com](http://www.glasgowconcerthalls.com). Further Information contact Chris Bartter - 07715 583 729 Stephen Wright 07734 350 247

## We will continue to press for a just and fairer Scotland

From page 1

"The extent of the engagement amongst our members was reflected in what we have seen across community and town halls throughout Scotland", said Mike.

The views and reflections of UNISON members were articulated in two documents *A Fairer Scotland* and *Fairer Scotland and Devolution*.

"I am grateful that we received the full support of UNISON at a UK level as expressed in a resolution at the national 2014 delegate conference which urged

UNISON members in Scotland to engage in the debate and to press for commitments from all parties along the lines of UNISON's Fairer Scotland proposals", he added.

Mike thanked UNISON members for the role they have played in this whole process, and "to recognise the humour and respect with which this debate has been conducted within UNISON.

"I think this has been reflected in the debate across Scotland more generally."

"UNISON, as Scotland's biggest trade union, takes its

responsibility to support constructive debate very seriously", said Mike.

"We will work to continue the extraordinary political engagement we have seen, to press our agenda to build better public services that improve the quality of all our lives and to build the just and fairer society that so many of us are calling for.

"Our role now is to work with other trade unions and civic society to help bring Scotland together. We will expect that the promises of more powers made by the main parties in Better

Together will be delivered.

"However as we stated at the beginning of the referendum campaign the real question is how new or indeed existing powers are to be used for the benefit of working people.

"This work continues on 15 and 18 October when UNISON will join the STUC and Poverty Alliance conference and rally as part of the Challenge Poverty Week, when trade union members from across Scotland are coming together to say it's now time to create a just and fairer Scotland."

## Dig deep and support the Care UK strikers

**UNISON's Scottish Local Government Conference gave a huge pledge of support to Doncaster's Care UK strikers on 5 September.**

Branches heard an update from Doncaster steward Andy Squires (pictured) on the campaign that has seen around 60 days of strikes.

Doncaster living services for vulnerable people had historically always been provided by the NHS. However it was tendered out by Doncaster Council. The tender was bid for and won by a private company.

Andy told the meeting that UNISON members in Doncaster had overwhelmingly voted for strike action and are fighting an employer intent on slashing wages to below the living wage in order to make their profits.

Andy said: "We are on strike for a fair living wage. Staff are now in danger of losing their homes dues to wages being slashed by up to 40%. One in five are living below the poverty line. We all need a pay rise."

So awful has been the actions of Care UK that the strikers have won support in the national media, in particular the Observer.

On 10 August, Will Hutton



**Good on the union. They deserve all our support'**

Will Hutton, *The Observer*

wrote about "privatisation by stealth" as the root cause of the exploitation of former NHS care workers and endorsed the long running strike: "Good on them,

and these are words you don't read often, good on the union. They deserve all our support"

UNISON Scotland asked Andy to thank UNISON members in Doncaster for "standing up to further privatisation NHS and for getting national media coverage highlighting many of the privatisation, low pay and

employment law issues we are fighting here in Scotland too."

Donations should go to Doncaster, District And Bassetlaw Health Branch 20511 and be sent to the UNISON office, Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5GJ

For more information on the dispute, see the branch website [www.unison-dab.org.uk/](http://www.unison-dab.org.uk/)

## Holiday pay court ruling - seek advice now

**Workers who are paid less when they are on holiday than they are when they are working may be entitled to increased holiday pay.**

The Court of Justice of the European Union, in what has been called the Lock case, has ruled that a worker's statutory annual leave pay should include supplements (such as commission payments or bonuses) if these routinely make up part of their pay.

Mike Kirby, UNISON's Scottish Secretary, said: "UNISON is pleased to have taken this case to the European Court. It will make a big difference to our members and the workforce more generally, particularly low-paid workers who rely on shift work, over-time, overnight stays, bonuses and

commission to make ends meet.

"We want to work constructively with employers to scope out the impact of this ruling. Employers will need to look at the terms and conditions of their staff and realise that current business models of under-contracting, running on overtime and the inappropriate use of zero hours contracts are no longer an option."

Branches are writing to all employers where we have members and asking what they intend to do in relation to unpaid holiday pay in respect of additional payments during working time.

On a national level, UNISON is collating responses from employers and will then decide a strategy on how best to pursue them.

**What to do if you think you might have a claim**

- Contact your local branch as soon as possible. They will be able to keep you up to date on your employer's response and on UNISON's claim strategy.
- Ensure your contact details are up to date. The easiest and quickest means of contact is through email.
- Contact the branch immediately if your employer stops making the payments for commission, other supplements, bonuses or overtime pay; or if your employer starts paying any unpaid commission, other supplements, bonuses or overtime pay during annual leave.
- For more information please contact your local branch office.

### The Lock case

On 22 May 2014, UNISON member Joe Lock was successful in his claim, *Lock v British Gas*. Mr Lock was employed by British Gas as a Sales Consultant. He was paid basic pay and commission on sales, with commission comprising about 60% of his total remuneration. When he took annual leave, Mr Lock received his basic pay together with commission earned on past sales. But he was not paid any sum in respect of commission he would have generated if not on annual leave.

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) found that a worker's 20 days statutory annual leave pay should include commission payments if these were part of normal pay. The case has been sent back to the Employment Tribunal to decide how UK law will now be interpreted in light of this decision. In short, the court has said employers need to assess normal pay for their workers (including commission, bonuses, sleepovers and overtime) when they are calculating holiday pay.

## Young members lend a hand to recruit 200

by Katrina Rankin  
Scottish Young Members Cttee

**The Scottish Young Members Committee recently enjoyed helping Lothian Health branch at their Student Nurse recruitment days.**

Ryan Boyle, William

Johnstone, Katrina Rankin and Carri Wight along with staff support Wendy Hudson and Lyndsey Wallace attended Napier University, Edinburgh for a day of recruiting as well as making students aware of what the Scottish Young Members Committee do to give young people a voice

within the union.

Young members had their own stall in the recruitment fair where they had the chance to give out a lot of young member materials including their Young Members Housing Guide which was created as part of their ongoing "Gies A Hoose" housing campaign; for

details see [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/youngmembers](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/youngmembers)

Over the two days Lothian Health branch managed to recruit around 200 new members.

The young members enjoyed their day and would like to thank Lothian Health branch for letting them come along to help.

## Cleaners in public sector are struggling to maintain hygiene

**UNISON Scotland's 'Dishing the Dirt' report, paints a bleak picture of cleaning staff who are**

**struggling to keep hospitals, local government and other offices clean.**

They feel undervalued by their managers and are asked to clean more, with less staff and cheaper less effective cleaning materials.

The report is based on interviews with cleaners across NHS Scotland, local council offices, colleges and elsewhere in both public and contracted out services.

Those surveyed claimed they are trapped in an endless cycle of work. They are badly paid but their pay is going down in real terms, and they rarely consulted about their views at work. They are an undervalued, isolated sector.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scotland's Head of Bargaining and Campaigns, said: "Cleaners provide a vital service across our public services, but they tell us how the cuts mean they are struggling to keep up hygiene standards. And they worry about it."

The report also highlights poor pay and conditions in the sector. Almost one in five of those not in the pension scheme had to drop out because they could no longer afford the contributions. Cleaners struggle to pay their rent and bills and many complain about constant stress because they are in debt.

"We urgently need to look at how we value cleaning staff throughout the public sector", added Dave.

See the full report on the website.



## Fun day and food for thought

by Jane Aitchison  
Comms & Campaigns Cttee

**Closing the New Lanark Family Fun Day on 31 August, Glen Williams, Chair of UNISON's Local Government Service Group Executive, slammed the continued public pay restraint, contrasted against the plans for 11% rises for MPs and obscene increases for cabinet advisers - in one case 36%. Yet there is no money for the public sector workers to get a decent rise.**

It would cost £1bn for a 5% pay rise, whilst Trident costs £32bn.

"There is money, it's just what you choose to spend it on. This is robbery. It's not a recession", he said.

He acknowledged that the living wage in local government in Scotland did mean that things were a bit better here than in England and Wales, where local government members will be taking their next day of industrial action in October.

However, we have all been suffering from under inflation pay rises for years.



**"This is a robbery, not a recession"**  
Glen Williams

Moreover, it's not just about pay explained Glen, but about the refusal to negotiate. In essence our employers might as well be tearing up our collective agreements.

"It is time for us all to draw the line in the sand", he said.

It was a very stimulating end to the New Lanark Family Fun Day - food for thought.

On a lighter note, over the course of the day, we had some great music from Alastair McDonald, Pauline Bradley, Liam Toner and Hilary McFarlane, with a variety of songs from the three acts from You Can't Throw your Piece



UNISON Scotland convener Lilian Macer with some very young members at the fun day

off a Twenty Storey Flat, right through to Black Sabbath's Paranoid.

There were plenty of other activities including birds of

prey, and Indian Head Massages, and for the kids - the bouncy castle, balloon modelling, and face painting.

Another sunny funny day.

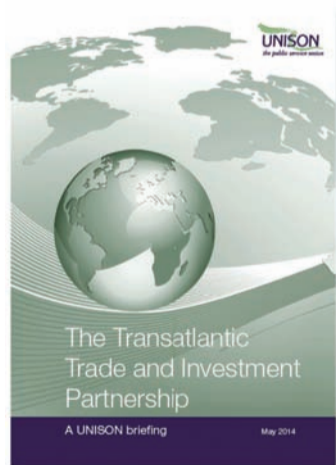
## TTIP threat to services and democracy

**A joint UNISON region international seminar at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester brought together 50 UNISON activists from Northern, North West and Scotland.**

Building on a session in Glasgow in 2013, the event heard a keynote presentation on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) from Polly Jones of the World Development Movement.

Following workshops an action plan was agreed to step up campaigning/lobbying on the proposed trade deal which will open up public services to US corporations and undermine democracy.

TTIP is a proposed deal between the USA and the EU which will allow big corporations to sue governments before secretive arbitration panels composed of corporate lawyers, which bypass domestic courts and override the will of parliaments.



This is perhaps the most worrying element within TTIP as it seeks to grant foreign investors a new right to sue sovereign governments for potential losses of profits resulting from public policy decisions.

TTIP is therefore correctly understood not as a negotiation between two competing trading partners, but as an attempt by transnational corporations to prise open and deregulate markets on both sides of the Atlantic.

- **TTIP will open up public services to US corporations**
- **Companies appeal to secret panels to bypass courts**
- **Overriding the will of parliaments**
- **European Day of Action on TTIP, Mound, Edinburgh, 11 October.**

The TUC has called for the exclusion of all public services, including education and health, public procurement, public utilities and public transport (whether in public or private ownership) from the negotiations which are largely being conducted in secret between the EU and US Government.

Despite the government's vague promises that the NHS will be excluded there is no provision with TTIP to do this.

It opens up all public services and government procurement contracts to competition from transactional corporations, introducing a wave of privatisation in key sectors such as health and education.

Following on from the TUC, UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis headed to Washington DC joining forces with other public sector trade unions from Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and Latin America to lobby against international trade agreements as part of Public Services International's Global Trade Summit 2014.

As an action from the joint international seminar, branches in Scotland will be issued with a model letter to send to MEPs, MPs, MSPs and elected council members seeking support for full transparency on the TTIP negotiations - to protect democracy, public services and the environment by opposing this aggressive new trade deal.

## International seminar in brief...

### Bhopal disaster

Scotland's Sam McCartney and Eurig Scandrett reported on an upcoming UNISON Scotland delegation to Bhopal, India, stressing the importance of stepping up the campaign in solidarity with survivors in the 30th anniversary year of the Bhopal industrial catastrophe caused by corporate negligence.

### Palestine

Komal Adris briefed delegates on a union led initiative in Ramallah, West Bank, to establish an Institute of Knowledge and Socialist Thought for Palestinian workers. Phil Lenton reported on the UNISON supported work of Jafra, a Palestinian youth centre in the Yarmouk Refugee Camp in Damascus where tens of thousands of refugees are living under siege and without electricity and water.

### Colombia

Northern's Clare Williams and Conor McArdle reported on several projects promoted by UNISON Northern Region in Colombia supporting communities facing military repression and promoting women's self organisation and community leadership.

For the full report see [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/international](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/international).

## Fire service cuts hit UNISON members

The Fire Brigades Union 'Ring of Fire' tour of Great Britain arrived in Glasgow recently to highlight the £19 million cuts to our fire service

UNISON Scottish secretary, Mike Kirby, spoke on behalf of UNISON members in the fire service at an event in St Enoch Square.

"On Saturday 24 May, the day after the devastating fire at GSA I was walking across the front of Central Station past the statue of the Citizen Firefighter, that permanent memorial to courage and service.

"The statue was hung with a placard around the neck. In Mackintosh script it said simply 'Thank You'.

"That iconic image summarised the acknowledgement, appreciation and respect of the public and was a message to all of the value of the service. A message to politicians that you cannot put a price on the service", said Mike.

He also stressed that the men and women firefighters were the first to say that they could not do their difficult jobs without the specialised support team around them

All fire fighting teams need fleet and hydrant mechanics, administrative officers and payroll workers, cleaners and caterers, community safety advocates, training and education departments, store men and women, ICT, drivers, communications experts and technicians.

UNISON members in the fire service face a very uncertain future. The headquarters of the former Fife and Central Fire and Rescue Boards are earmarked for closure, meaning these local communities are losing the economic benefits of these facilities.

### Compensation for retired member after holiday fall

UNISON retired member Elizabeth Douglas (74) has won a large settlement after the union and Thompsons stepped in to help. See the next issue for the full story.



Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Lothian will also lose sites employing support staff. Many support staff roles are being drawn into the central belt, again impacting on local economies across Scotland.

Staff are waiting for decisions about

redeployment, some are being relocated and their pay is being reviewed. The impact of the £19 million budget cut is being felt by all support staff.

Finally Mike sent a message to all politicians, telling them: "The respect and appreciation for the service is not measured by cost, it is measured in the security and safety of our people, at work and in their communities. Fire fighters need to know when they look over their shoulder their support staff are right there with them."

## Support the Miners' Gala



Durham Miners' Gala, or the Big Meeting, celebrated the 30th anniversary of the miners' strike in July.

A large contingent of UNISON branches attended, many from Scotland including Stirling Branch which has particular connections to mining.

"Stirling has always supported the miners and we have many ex miners and their wives as members", said branch treasurer Andy Douglas who is from a mining family himself and was born in a 'miners row'.

Branch chair Lesley Russell (pictured) was part of the women's support group movement during the strike. She said: "It was a fantastic day

full of colour and music with lots of colliery bands and banners on display.

"Our branch was delighted to show our support for this fantastic gala which has been going for 100 years."

Stirling's previous secretary James Douglas and Labourlink officer Jimmy Morton were both miners.

International officer Tony Caleary's mum lost her job in the pit canteen for refusing to serve contractors who were brought in through the strike.

Branch secretary Lorraine Thomson said: "This was a fantastic experience and hopefully UNISON can support the gala for many years to come." See [www.durhamminers.org](http://www.durhamminers.org) for how to support the gala.

## Direct action against Gaza slaughter

Every Saturday, week in week out, Aberdeen TUC and UNISON members have been demonstrating along with the Scottish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) against the slaughter in Gaza.

Recently they have focussed on gathering at Barclays Bank which is a major shareholder in Elbit Systems, an Israeli arms manufacturer, to highlight the demand for global divestment from Israeli arms companies.

Demonstrations have been held in Edinburgh and more recently Glasgow Housing Branch took part in SPSC's successful direct action against Kedem, an Israeli cosmetics organisation that profits directly from theft of Palestinian resources by violating international law

"As part of UNISON's affiliation to SPSC, we are kept up to date on the latest developments and also how members and stewards can get involved in the campaign", said UNISON's Dougie Brown.

"Glasgow Housing branch stewards have been listening to these messages and are now actively attending and participating in the rallies and demonstrations SPSC are having.

**"Even better, they are having successes at these protests."**

In Scotland, Kedem had stalls in St Enoch Centre, Glasgow, Silverburn Centre, Braehead, and Edinburgh's Ocean Terminal.

Glasgow Housing branch activists attended the recent protest at the St Enoch Centre and were part of a noisy demonstration. Whilst noisy, the protest was peaceful and led to the other shops in the St Enoch Centre complaining to the centre management and the police about the effect Kedem's presence was having on their business

### The result?

"The people working on the Kedem stall packed up, disappeared and haven't been seen since in the St Enoch Centre. It goes without saying our union's stewards will now be at the Silverburn Centre and Ocean Terminal protesting for the same result", added Dougie.

"Direct action works - the UNISON Glasgow Housing branch activists have proven this. The next time you see a flyer for a demonstration or a protest for something you feel strongly about; get involved - you can and will make a difference."

## Let's turn the tide on recruitment with new campaign

September to December 2014 will see UNISON's biggest ever publicity campaign through STV, the Metro and online advertising.

As part of this organising push, the majority of UNISON's 2014 'Fighting Fund' organisers took up their posts in September, working with branches across the country.

The Fighting Fund, in conjunction with branch resources, allows UNISON Scotland to target strategically important organising targets.

John Gallacher, Scottish Organiser for the West Team said: "Every Branch now has a plan in place to organise and recruit in 2014. Let's see every branch now put these into effect and build what is already Scotland's premier trade union.

"Let's turn the tide and see membership figures on the up across all sectors."



Fighting Fund Organisers Joe Pearce, Dougie Brownlie, Billy Dick, Audrey Galliard, Irene McAlpine.

Reporting on the recruitment figures, John said:

"A common theme this year is Health and Social Care Integration and, in particular, the role of the third sector (charity and private providers).

"There will be a growth in this sector which already controls 67% of housing management and

47% of social contracts from local authorities."

Recruitment statistics so far this year show us that:

- Scotland has fewer leavers in year to June 2014 (than 2013/2012) and fewer leavers in the month of June 2014 compared to 2013 and 2012
- We have a much greater

number of joiners in the year to June 2014 than 2012, but slightly less than 2013.

- Local Government continues to see the higher percentage of leavers as job cuts bite.
- NHS has its lowest deficit in last three years
- Higher Education is in surplus
- Notable surplus in Community, which is enjoying its best year to June in the last three years
- Deficit is shrinking in Utilities over last three years
- Young Members best year to June in last three years
- Online joining grows year on year and is now over 50%

The Fighting Fund team will assist branches across Scotland to bolster the recruitment of members and stewards and hopefully leave a solid legacy in growing and strengthening UNISON Scotland.

This year's projects cover Inverclyde/East Ayrshire (Joe); Housing (Dougie); Cordia (Billy); South Lanarkshire (Irene); Tayside (Audrey G) as well as Highland (Lorcan Mullen); Fife (Angela Kerr) and Lothian.

The best Branch for recruitment results is consistently the Greater Glasgow & CVS Branch. This is not because of its size, but because it has an enduring culture that recruitment is vital to the branch's effectiveness.

Wendy Hudson, local organiser, says there are a number of key reasons for the branch's success: "High visibility, regular communication, systemic application across shifts and sites and throughout the year, exploiting local issues are the keys to effective recruitment and, of course, the odd gimmick helps - St.Patrick's, Valentine's, Easter, etc."

### We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488, [webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk)