



# newsletter

June 2014

of the Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

## 66th A.G.M.

### Cabaret?

Our 66<sup>th</sup> AGM was attended by 36 members and 1 visitor.

We must be getting good at this because the meeting ended early again- 45 minutes before the Lord Provost was due to arrive. On this occasion the time was passed on a number of minor topics – how the children enjoyed their Greyfriars' Bobby Tour, Scots and Doric words and even a poetry recital (4 lines).

### Committee Changes

There was only one change to the Committee. Bill Richardson retired after 9 years as a Committee Member and was replaced by Eric Melvin. I'm sure you will join with me in welcoming Eric and thanking Bill for his contribution to the Association especially his time as Training Co-ordinator.

George Laing was elected for a further three years as Secretary. Gladys Bain, Seonaid Martin and Betty Milton were elected for a further 3 years as Committee Members

### Words from The Lord Provost

In his speech from the lectern the Lord Provost said how grateful he was, on behalf of the City, for the time and effort given by our guides in promoting Edinburgh to visitors from all over the world. Our knowledge, he said, was second to none.

Colin replied, on behalf of the guides, by thanking the Lord Provost for attending and for granting us use of the room with a generous buffet. Colin also thanked the Lord Provost for providing premises in The City Chambers for our 2014 season.

Before asking the Lord Provost to present badges to our new guides, Colin invited Kate to present him with a boxed Guide Badge. The Lord Provost was quite delighted and obviously appreciated the gesture. Colin then asked the Lord Provost to present a Guide Badges to our new guide Jan Wallace. Regrettably, Lyndsey Rae, John Gorrie and Toby Williams were unable to attend but will be invited again next year.

The Lord Provost then joined the guides to enjoy the wine and buffet.

### Illustrated Talks Programme 2014

Four illustrated talks have been organised and these are detailed on our website [www.edinburghfestivalguides.org](http://www.edinburghfestivalguides.org). Doors open 7.00pm and talks start 7.30pm

Monday	4 August	Hamish Coghill	New Town, New Country
Tuesday	12 August	Eric Melvin	Edinburgh during the time of Mary Queen of Scots
Wednesday	20 August	Dorothy I Kidd	The National Museums Social History and the Royal Mile
Monday	25 August	Brian Wilkinson	Historical Edinburgh from the Air

Hamish and Eric are Festival Guides so do come along and support them. Remember that the talks are free and open to the public and because the speakers are giving of their own time to talk to us we should give as much support as we can so do invite your family and friends. It's a great way to see

### Festivals

Film Festival	18 – 29 Jun
Jazz and Blues Festival	18 – 27 Jul
Art Festival	1/7 - 31 Aug
Royal Military Tattoo	1 – 23 Aug
<b>Festival Guides</b>	<b>1 – 25 Aug</b>
Festival Fringe	1 – 25 Aug
International Festival	8 – 31 Aug
Book Festival	9 – 25 Aug

### tripadvisor



We are now listed on Trip Advisor. When you finish a tour please mention this to your

customers and ask them to submit an entry

### 2014 Season

#### City Chambers

We will again be using the City Chambers as our base. An updated Hints for Guides note will be issued to remind guides of the procedures.

#### Name Badges

Please remember to bring your name badge. If you don't yet have one, it will be waiting for when you arrive for your first tour.

#### Duty Rosters

At the time of writing, Duty Rosters are now being returned. Shortly after 5 July the 2014 the Guiding Schedule will be drawn up and the Rosters returned advising guides on which days they are expected to guide.

#### Castle Esplanade

As always, we have permission to take our customers on to The Castle Esplanade. As far as we know, we are the only Guides, apart from Blue Badge Guides, who are granted this privilege. We are however restricted to certain areas of the Esplanade and a plan showing this will be available in the Pendolino Room.

## GUIDE NEWS

### Death

I regret to inform you of the death of one of our Honorary Guides, Herbert Suslak who died peacefully, aged 91, on 20 June 2014. Herbert became a guide in 1992 and retired in 2006.

### Retirals

Sidney Caplan, Selby Graham, Laura McMurdo and Selwyn Shaw have joined the Honorary Guides. I'm sure that you will join me in thanking all four for their contribution to The Association.

### New Guides

We have three new guides - Val Baker, Bernard Heavie and Jan Wallace. They are most welcome additions to the team and we wish them many years of happy guiding.

### Training

We have 5 people under training. As always the Committee would like to record its appreciation and thanks to those guides who have willingly given up their time to be mentors and examiners to/for our trainee guides.

### EIGHTY SEVEN YEARS YOUNG - John Smith

An excerpt from the Edinburgh Evening News 4 June 2014.

*An 87-year-old badminton veteran is set to fly the flag for the Capital. Crowds are expected to line the streets to cheer on the city's team of proud Queen's Baton bearers when the pre-Commonwealth Games relay comes here on June 14. The relay will herald the start of the Queen's Baton tour of Scotland ahead of Glasgow 2014, with each of the carriers nominated for their contributions to sport, community and youth projects*

*Among them will be John Smith of Findlay Grove, who was a tank transport driver with the Royal Army Service Corps during the Second World War and is "overwhelmed" to have been chosen.*

*At 87, he would be forgiven for starting to take things easy - but John refuses to slow down. A volunteer guide at St Giles' Cathedral, he also plays badminton, does aqua-aerobics and is part of a walking group. More than 30 years ago he started a community badminton club that is still going strong today - as well as a youth badminton club.*

*He said: "You can sit at home and watch TV or do the garden, but there is more to life than that. I still play badminton. I get around the court but I'm not as fast as I used to be.*

*He will carry the baton down the Royal Mile from Brodie's Close to Parliament Square after being nominated by adoring grand-daughter Lucy Walker, 25.*

*John, who used to work in the motor industry, said. "She thinks her grandfather is wonderful but this was a complete surprise. I am really over the moon. This is such an honour. My friends and family are going to come and see me. I still can't believe it it will be a once in a lifetime experience"*

I know, they didn't report that John was a Festival Guide. At least with that experience he wouldn't get lost on his way down The Royal Mile and he might even give the spectators a running commentary.

Here are a few of photos of John in and out of action. I'm sorry this paper doesn't allow a good quality print.



Courtesy of Edinburgh Evening News



Courtesy of Ann Dewar



Courtesy of John Smith

# newsletter of the Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

## New Tours

We have expanded our repertoire of tours and are now offering, in addition to The Royal Mile, tours of The Grassmarket, Greyfriars Kirkyard and the New Town. A few guides have already led tours in these areas as part of our Out-of-Season offerings.

These tours are out-of-season ONLY

They will NOT be part of our August programme of free tours from the City Chambers.

In due course, a second series of sample tours of these areas will be arranged. If you would like to take part, watch out for the notification.

## Educational Visits

We have recently had a guided tour of Greyfriars Kirkyard by Margaret Marr - reported as brilliant - and a return trip to 24 Learmonth Terrace.

**The City Chambers Tour and Tea Party** organised for a maximum of 20 on 3 October is fully booked and there is a waiting list.

Our thanks once again to Colin for organising these top-class visits. We have a few more in our plans and these will be advertised in due course.

## Out-of-Season Tours

At the time of writing we have led 10 out-of-season tours, 5 in the Royal Mile, 3 in Greyfriars, 1 in the Grassmarket and 1 in the New Town.

If you would like to lead tours out-of-season, please contact the Secretary, if you have not already done so, with a note of any foreign languages in which you are fluent.

## Presentations by Guides

A number of our guides already give Slideshow or Powerpoint presentations of Old Edinburgh to various social groups. We are considering advertising this and providing presentations to such groups in return for a donation. We have already tried this in a small way in Riddle's Court. If we can source the equipment we are also considering giving such presentations in addition to or instead of our guided tours e.g. on a wet day when no-one wants to go out.

**If you are interested in taking part in this experiment, please contact the Secretary.**

## Edinburgh World Heritage

We made our second donation of £100 around 1 May. There is no information yet re. the Twelve Closes Project.



## Christmas

I am delighted to report that our 2014 Christmas Party will again be held in Riddle's Court

## Riddle's Court

Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) kindly provided copies of Historical Research on the Court, carried out by Strathclyde University, together with a 'History of the Banquet' by Sir Michael Pearce.

We were given an excellent talk on the House, based on this research, by Audrey Dakin of SHBT. This talk was intended to provide EFVGA guides with enough information to allow us to take our own customers into McMorran's House. For various reasons this didn't get off the ground as intended but we will try again after the Riddle's Court refurbishment. Likewise we were unable to give our short presentations followed by a Royal Mile Tour to Riddle's Court customers during their Open Days but again this will be picked up after refurbishment.

## EFVGA Website

Have you had a look at our website yet?

[www.edinburghfestivalguides.org](http://www.edinburghfestivalguides.org)

If you are having problems opening it, feel free to contact George.

The Guides Only page, which is password protected, currently shows Archie's Notes 1 – 22 (full set), the last 2 Newsletters and a paper on the History of Theatre.

We will in due course add AGM Minutes, Tour Précis, Reading List, Hints for Guides and Selected Illustrations. These you may download and print and use in your tours.

Is there anything else you would like to see? If there is please contact George.

## Contact Details

The use of email for correspondence is so much easier, faster and cheaper and it will allow me to keep you up to date with current events rather than having to wait until the next Newsletter.

If you have an email address of which I am not aware, I would be grateful if I could have a note of it. Remember, please, to let me know if you change your postal or email address or your telephone number.