



newsletter

October 2014

of the Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

Hello Everyone

I do hope you had an enjoyable time leading our customers through the Old Town. I didn't think the Royal Mile was quite so busy as usual but perhaps I wasn't out at the right (or wrong) times. At least the weather was kind to us this year and none of our tours was rained off.

Another season is behind us and Christmas is creeping up rather quickly. On that subject, information about our Christmas Soirée is given below. By the look of the reindeer, it promises to be a cool party!

With Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2015

George

COOL CHRISTMAS



You and your partner or a friend are cordially invited to the
Festival Guides 2014 Christmas Soirée
in the Orwell Room, Riddle's Court
on Friday 28 November from 6.00 pm until 9.00 pm.

Again there is **no charge**
as we have a healthy bank account.

If you would like to attend, please send your name(s) to Kate
0131 669 3365
katedick51@gmail.com
31 Durham Road, EH15 1PB

We are limited to 60 people so if you book
and then find that you have to cancel,
please, please let Kate know
so that someone else can attend in your place.

Please note that the Orwell Room and toilets are at ground floor level.

tripadvisor



As you know,
we are now
listed on
TripAdvisor
and have had

five entries all of which have
been given 5 stars. However, I
think you will find them rather
meaningless as the name
Edinburgh Festival Voluntary
Guides is not mentioned once
and only one of the entries
refers (vaguely) to a walking
tour.

We plan to give our customers,
at the end of their tour, a hand-
out asking them to comment on
TripAdvisor and Facebook. etc.

EFVGA Website

Have you had a look at our
website yet?

www.edinburghfestivalguides.org

The Guides Only page, which is
password protected, continues to
be updated.

If you are having problems
opening it, or if there is anything
else you would like to see on our
website, please contact George.

Your Newsletter

This is **your** newsletter. If you
have any articles which you
would like to share with your
fellow guides, please pass them
to me. I will be delighted to
publish them in future
newsletters.

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GUIDE NEWS

Retiral

John Hackland, who joined the Association in February 1995, has decided to retire to the Honorary Guides. I'm sure that you will join me in thanking John for nearly 20 years of sterling service and wish him a happy retirement.

New Guide

Since the last newsletter we have one new guide – Mike Lewis. Mike is a most welcome addition to the team with an August season already behind him and we wish him many years of happy guiding.

Training Co-ordinator

Regrettably, due to illness, Gordon Stewart has been forced to resign his role as Training Co-ordinator. For the time being Seonaid Martin has agreed to take over. We would like to thank Gordon for all his work in this area and send him our good wishes.

Training

We currently have 3 people under training with a few more who have indicated interest.

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 trainees.

Educational Visits

We have had a guided Architectural Tour of the Canongate Kirkyard by Edinburgh World Heritage and a tour of Parliament Hall is scheduled for Monday 24 November.

As seen on TV?

On 21 August, one of Murray Carmichael's tours was filmed for TV and was shown nationwide during the last week in September - in South Korea!. Can we say "as seen on TV" for next year's programme?

Just as useful as George being interviewed for Latvian television a few years ago!

2014 SEASON POST MORTEM

Now that our second year of guiding from the City Chambers is behind us, we have identified new problems and are considering how we might improve things.

On occasion, the Pendolino Room and corridor were very congested and we suspect that in sending customers outside to wait for their tour to start, we lost a few to other operators.

The huge 'image' of the City Chambers hanging in front of the building during renovations was perhaps a little off-putting to the public. As a bonus, though, we were able to hang our notices from the crush barriers which had been left lying around by the builders. This is almost certainly a one-off situation and we are unlikely to face this again in the near future.

Our Venue Number 199 was difficult to see from the High Street despite its relatively prominent position on the barrier. Because we are not allowed to fix it to the CC building facing the street, we plan to also show the number on the Press Gang poles. They're getting more like Roman Standards every year!

The Fringe Office and Visit Scotland staff appeared not to know about us. We will rectify this for 2015.

On the positive side, being allowed to use the toilets resulted in many more comfortable guides and customers. We are grateful to Frank Donoghue for allowing us to take our customers into the maze which is the City Chambers although it was difficult to manage when several people wanted to use them at the same time.

Our numbers were down by a little more than 13% (from 1152 to 1001) compared with 2013 and analysis shows that the loss is mostly in the afternoon sessions.

Was it the competition, which has increased considerably? Was it the weather? Was it the knock-on effect of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow? We'll never know.

Tea for Twenty

On 3 October around 20 guides were treated to tea and home baking followed by a tour of the City Chambers. We were privileged to be guided personally by The Lord Provost who showed us objects not normally on view to the public, including the City's Minton Dinner Service and the Royal Scots' Battle Honours.

We were not allowed to use the Minton Dinner Service for tea and this was just a tad disappointing. The tour was then completed by Jim, one of the City Officers, who related the stories behind the paintings in the European Room

I'm thinking about trying to recruit both of these gentlemen.



Photographs courtesy of Kenny Law

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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.

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

Presentations by Guides

A few of our guides have already given Slideshow or Powerpoint presentations of Old Edinburgh to various social groups and we are now planning to advertise this in return for a donation.

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, 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.



Memory Lane - A Blast from the Past

Here are a couple of photos which I've unearthed from a small suitcase full of old papers.

The top one is from The Edinburgh Evening News issued 5 September 1947.

The lower was taken 1 September 1970.

In this photograph are Lord Provost McKay, the Lady Provost, Miss Henderson, Mrs Hogg, Mr Cavaye, Mr Roberts, Mrs Hunter (Chair), Mrs Peter Duncan.

Can anyone tie the names to faces?

Tips for guiding c1930

I came across a very old school jotter and thought you might like to read the back page tips. Anyone remember them?

DO ask a policeman or someone else to take you across a busy road

DO walk on the pavement when there is one

DO move aside to let others pass you on the pavement

DO play with your hoop, ball, scooter or marbles in a safe place (Colin, please note!!)

DO help to keep the pavement clear of orange peel or banana skin

DO wait until the tram or bus stops before you jump off

