

City Council honours Professor Peter Higgs

✘ The fifth person to be honoured by the people of Edinburgh with a special award for making an outstanding contribution to the city will receive his accolade at the City Chambers tonight.

Professor Peter Higgs, 82, renowned theoretical physicist and retired Professor Emeritus at the University of Edinburgh, was announced last month as the recipient of the Edinburgh Award 2011.

Tonight's event will see the Lord Provost present Professor Higgs with the engraved Loving Cup. It will also mark the unveiling of his handprints in the City Chambers quadrangle, where they have been engraved in Caithness stone alongside those of previous Edinburgh Award recipients George Kerr, Ian Rankin, JK Rowling and Sir Chris Hoy.

The Edinburgh Award enables the people of Edinburgh to pay a lasting tribute to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the city through their work or achievements in recent years.

The Rt Hon George Grubb, Lord Lieutenant and Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, said:-"I am delighted to present Professor Peter Higgs with the Edinburgh Award on behalf of the people of Edinburgh. His proposal of what has now become known as the Higgs Boson has not only significantly advanced our knowledge of particle physics, culminating in the Standard Model, but has also given him a huge international reputation.

"Professor Higgs' work with the University of Edinburgh has put this city on an international stage and as such he is undoubtedly a most deserved recipient of one of Edinburgh's most prestigious civic awards."

The accolade comes following the announcement in December 2011 from CERN that two independent experiments at the Large Hadron Collider have seen "tantalising hints" of the existence of the Higgs boson. It is widely anticipated that if the existence of the Higgs boson is confirmed, it is likely that Professor Higgs would be awarded the Nobel prize.

Professor Peter Higgs said: "It is a great honour to receive this award from the city that I fell in love with and is now my adopted home."

Speaking at the Award, Professor Richard Kenway said: "Discovery of the Higgs boson would be the culmination of 20th century theoretical physics; its absence would mark the most massive deception ever perpetrated by Nature!"

Also speaking at the ceremony, Alan Walker, Honary Fellow of the University of Edinburgh and a member of the Particle Physics Experiment Group (PPE) said "We are very proud to have been colleagues of Peter for many years. This award is richly deserved, not only for the work that has led to worldwide acclaim, but for his inspiration of students, many of whom have gone on to do great things. Indeed, some are currently involved in the searches at the ATLAS detector for the Higgs boson. This is indeed a very proud day for both the University and the City of Edinburgh."