

Royal Highland Show 2013



The Royal Highland Show runs till tomorrow with something for everyone at what is billed as The Greatest Show on Earth. Whether or not that is the case is a matter of opinion, but there is something for the farmer and non-farmer alike.

We took a selection of photos during our visit and you can see them [on Flickr here](#). The new Flickr does not seem to allow slideshows to be embedded on a website any more. If you know different then please let us know as we are missing this greatly!

One rather important technical problem being reported by all of the stall holders and visitors we met was the lack of mobile phone coverage. It was well nigh impossible to use a phone to call, text or tweet. Was this due to the volume of visitors or was there some reason for the block? Some were speculating that it was due to the proximity to the airport. If we can have wifi benches in St Andrew Square then it would seem to be an easy answer just to get some of those installed in the showground.

If the show had still been an itinerant one rather than having a permanent home in Edinburgh then it would have been held in the Highlands this year. Mountain biking, a giant climbing wall, abseiling wall and musical entertainment will be just some of the offerings to entertain show goers today and tomorrow, and which will highlight the many attractions of visiting the north of the country.

The Highlands are home to the five ski and snowboard areas that make up the majority of Scotland's winter sports offering and Ski Scotland will be on hand to help visitors get involved. Walkers have long been coming to the region to explore and rangers from the Highland Council Ranger Service

will be at the show to share their expert knowledge of where to go and what to see. Wildlife tour operator Speyside Wildlife will be telling about the diverse and plentiful wildlife that inhabit or visit the region. History and heritage attract visitors from all over the world. Two properties of historic interest and natural beauty from The National Trust for Scotland will be featured, Culloden Battlefield and Inverewe Gardens. For many the Highlands & Islands is known for its fishing, shooting and stalking and the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group will tell visitors more, whether beginners or experts.

RHASS president, Jamie Williamson is already looking forward to the events.

“The Royal Highland is Scotland’s biggest rural affair so it makes sense to invite a full breadth of local organisations and rural businesses to play a role in promoting the attributes of this fantastic part of Scotland.”

He continued: “We will be looking to provide Royal Highland Show goers from all over the world a taste of life in the Highlands and Islands, and hoping to inspire new and returning visitors to the area.”

Highlands and Islands contribution to Scotland’s bountiful larder will also be celebrated with a major exhibition of well-known and artisan producers showcasing the area’s passion and expertise in food production including fine cheese, fresh and smoked fish, succulent beef, lamb, game and whisky within the Food Hall. Top chefs and restaurateurs will create a theatre for experimental cuisine in the Countryside Area as they prepare a selection of dishes using produce sourced direct from the region.

Foodies to feast

With already 100 exhibitors signed up to attend from over the country, visitors will be set to get their taste buds tickled

as the country's best producers and suppliers showcase the best is Scottish gastronomy in the Food Hall.

Managed and organised by Event Scotland and acclaimed food critic Wendy Barrie, the top attraction, the 120-seat Cookery Theatre – major sponsor The North Highland Initiative (NHI), will return with a rolling programme of more than 30 all-action demonstrations over the four-day event. This year the Cookery Theatre will be renamed the Natural Larder to pay homage to the Year of Natural Scotland celebrations.

Major sponsor the North Highland Initiative (NHI), patron HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, was formed in 2005 to bring together the farming community, local businesses and the tourism industry in Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-shire. The overall aim of the Initiative is to address the challenges facing rural communities in northern Scotland by creating a powerful identity for the numerous producers, farmers and tourism businesses in the area.

Whilst promoting the region, NHI also seeks to deliver a price premium and market differentiation for beef, lamb and food producers by promoting the provenance of using products from the unspoilt, North Highlands of Scotland. A premium of over £1.5M has been returned to Mey Selections beef and lamb farmers since its formation.

In sponsoring the Cookery Theatre, the NHI will aim to communicate with retailers, the hospitality industry and consumers the quality of produce for shelves, menus and plates.

Beautiful Blondes

The "Highland's" big attraction is no doubt the livestock – with more than 5,000 of the finest cattle, sheep, goats and horses, not to mention poultry heading for the showground over the four-day event.

In the cattle lines, much of the focus will be on the magnificent British Blonde with the show nominated as the British Blonde's National Show for 2013. As with last year, there is every expectation that the Cattle Hall will be full with almost 1,000 animals. A big welcome goes to exhibitors from Northern Ireland who this year, as a result of the lifting of restrictions, will be bringing along their animals when they make the short trip across the water.

Equestrian Excellence

The Royal Highland Show is the largest equestrian show in Scotland with classes for light and heavy horses, private driving, heavy horse turnouts, harness and grooming plus top class show-jumping – in all some 3,000 horses and ponies.

In 2013 a major innovation will be the Invitational 'Mini/Major' class whereby Scotland's top junior jumpers team with the older generation in a fast and furious team competition which is expected to be a real crowd pleaser.

A further addition for 2013's show will be the Championship Final for amateur riders who have not competed as a team member in any International Team and are out with the top 150 on the Riders Ranking List.

Farming Expertise

The Royal Highland Show is without doubt the best place to discover the latest farming know-how and with many business show visitors keen to understand the latest industry developments, it is not surprising that the vast majority of exhibitors return year after year.

Over the four days, visitors will get to see the complete range of modern farm equipment and machinery, techniques, advice and support. With the vast majority of manufacturers, dealers and specialists represented, the show offers a unique opportunity to review the latest releases and developments

across the industry. For 2013, there is a special emphasis on precision farming for improving efficiency, cutting costs and boosting margins.

Pulling Power

While many will be aware of the show's high standing in the agri business industry, few will realise the contribution the event makes to the Scottish economy, almost £100 million each year. The show's success in attracting leading political figures and industry leaders has increased year on year and will continue in 2013 with delegations from home and across the globe.

A playground for inquisitive minds

RHASS' education charity, The Royal Highland Education Trust, will again inspire around 23,000 youngsters from across Scotland.

With more activities and learning experiences to help young people develop food literacy, volunteers will take children on tours of key stalls and attractions in the showground to underline the links between consumers, farmers and producers. Interactive sessions within the Children's Discovery Centre include badge making with the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, learning how to make flour from corn with Edinburgh's Gorgie City Farm and the opportunity to milk Mabel – the show's life-sized fiberglass cow.

The Children's Discovery Centre will be open to members of the public throughout the four-day event between 9.00am-5pm.

Shopping Heaven

Bringing a taste of the High Street to the showground, a saunter into one of the many shopping arcades will offer everything from luxury fashions, homewares, arts, crafts and gardening. Show goers will have the chance to pick up the

latest country styles or take home a piece of rural life for their home.

This summer's most exciting event, The Royal Highland Show – major sponsor The Royal Bank of Scotland – takes place at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh from Thursday, June 20 to Sunday, June 23.

Becky takes the helm

Along with a host of new attractions, this year's show also has a new manager in the form of Becky Elvin who joins from the Royal County of Berkshire Show. Brimming with new ideas, Becky is keen to get 2013's show underway already meeting with the many hundreds of volunteers, partnership organisations, exhibitors, sponsors and suppliers who make this the 'Greatest Show on Earth'.

Not underestimating the job in hand, Becky is keen to reinforce the value the show brings in terms of being a remarkable day out for families.

Becky commented:

“When families are making the decision as to which of the many events to attend, we want to make sure the Royal Highland Show is up there on their 'must visit' list. We are working hard to market the diversity the show offers and are looking forward to rolling this plan out over the coming weeks. We are certainly not complacent, there is a lot of work to be done to attract new audiences and keep our loyal visitors returning.”

A bird's eye view

The Royal Highland Show has been selected as a venue to present a spectacular series of photographs of striking locations around Scotland as part of the Britain from the Air Exhibition. Providing a fascinating perspective on some of

Scotland's most inspiring sights, Stephen Hutt, RHASS' chief executive is delighted that the show was chosen to host the exhibition. Stephen said: "The Society has almost 15,000 members, many of whom are landowners and farmers responsible for the stewardship of Scotland's countryside. It is therefore highly appropriate for this exhibition to be a part of the 2013 show and I am sure it will be a welcome new addition to the show line-up."