

# New app explores Literary Edinburgh – Review

Independent television and digital media production company [purpleTV](#) this week launched a smartphone app celebrating Edinburgh's status as [UNESCO City of Literature](#).

The Edinburgh Book app is one of a suite of [purpleTrails](#) City Adventure Apps combining digital technology and creative content to celebrate cultural and sporting heritage.

[Margot McCuaig](#), Director of purpleTV and a shortlisted author in the [Dundee International Book Prize 2012](#), said,

*“Edinburgh is a magical city. We have striven to create a fun and informative app that celebrates its unique literary place in the world. We're sure users will be surprised, even amazed, at the remarkable narratives we've uncovered in our trails, and will enjoy the opportunity to leave their own literary legacy in the interactive game trail.”*

We had a look to see whether it matched up to that description!

This review originally appeared on [12 Books in 12 Months.com](#)



purpleTrails directors Allan MacDonald and Margot McCuaig

## **So, what are we talking about?**

The Edinburgh Book Trails app, which you can download onto any iProduct to help you explore the Edinburgh literary scene.

## **What can you do with it?**

Explore literary Edinburgh by geographical location, historical or modern Edinburgh, crime fiction, attraction, or

writers and poets. Follow interactive literary trails, including a mystery game. Watch interviews with authors including [Christopher Brookmyre](#), [Joan Lingard](#), [David Nicholls](#), [Sara Sheridan](#) and more.

### **Who is it for?**

Literature fans, tourists, writers, explorers, pub quizzers (there are some pretty interesting facts in there), people who want to find out more about Edinburgh, families who want to do something interactive – in particular I think the literature mystery trail led by crime author Pearl Littsbur ([Julia Sutherland](#)) could be completed with a bit of joint effort across the generations! Assuming people take me up on that, keep an eye out for bickering families gathered round their iPads on the [Grassmarket](#) this summer...

### **Where did it come from?**

[purpleTrails](#), which is the digital arm of independent television and digital media production company [purpleTV](#) and one of the main sponsors of this year's [Edinburgh International Book Festival](#). They also had support from the [City of Literature Trust](#) and [Scottish Enterprise](#).

### **Anything else I need to know?**

It's well designed, intuitive to use and a good mixture of visual, audio and information.

### **Where can I get it?**

[The app store](#), for £5.99.

### **£5.99? I'm a bit of a skinflint, is it worth it?**

Short version: Yes.

Longer version: I'll level with you – I don't normally pay much more than about £1.50 for apps. I'm a [tight fisted hand at the grindstone](#), me – on which subject, did you know that the idea for Ebenezer Scrooge came from a wander Dickens took in the [Canongate Kirkyard](#)? I didn't, until I tested this

app... Anyway, the reason for my stinginess is that I once paid £3.99 for an interactive book that DIDN'T BLOOMIN' WORK. Apparently, at the tender age of two, my iPhone was too elderly to cope. So y'know, I've been burned.

Saying that, I've also been burned for touristy trips that don't really give me information I couldn't get from [Lonely Planet](#). We've all done those bus trips round foreign cities, listening to facts and figures on headphones and retaining them for approximately ten seconds – but although a good way to get your bearings, they're quite expensive and don't necessarily give you a sense of what makes a city special. You're more likely to get that from wandering around and exploring – but the trouble with that is that you do miss things. What I genuinely like about this app is that it gives a real sense of Edinburgh's unique literary place in the world, along with the support to wander round and discover for yourself exactly why the city is like it is. A lot of work has gone into giving users enough information to see Edinburgh through the eyes of different writers, and it shows.

Find out more about the app and purpleTrails on their [website](#), or say hello on Twitter [@purpletrailsTV](#).