

Edinburgh Castle has bumper year

 *Edinburgh Castle reports best summer on record*

Historic Scotland has reported a bumper summer of visitor numbers to its sites in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

From June – August 2013, the organisation, which is Scotland's biggest operator of visitor attractions, reported 686,900 visitors to ticketed sites in the area, an increase of 25.1% on the same period last year.

Records were broken at flagship site Edinburgh Castle – up 26% on 2012 for the period June – August. August alone saw 229,940 visitors go through the doors of the castle, an increase of 35.8%, more than any single month ever recorded.

Other record breakers included Linlithgow Palace – the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots, which welcomed over 37,548 visitors. Tantallon Castle also performed particularly well, welcoming 17,678 visitors during the summer period, an increase of 17%.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop said:-“These figures illustrate the important role that heritage plays for modern day Scotland.

“The benefits are many – in terms of highlighting our diverse culture both at home and abroad – but also in terms of supporting and driving economic growth.

“All of the income generated is invested back into our rich historic environment in order to continue to provide world-class attractions for Scots and overseas visitors alike.

“As the custodians of Scotland's rich heritage, it is important that we continue to engage with both Scots and

visitors from around the world as we look forward to Scotland welcoming the world in 2014.”

Throughout the summer period, a number of trends were evident across Historic Scotland’s portfolio of properties. This included a very strong performance by the travel trade sector, which saw income up 41% year-on-year. In July alone, Edinburgh Castle saw an increase of 69% in travel trade visits on the previous year.

In terms of visitor origin, there were increases in visitors coming from the emerging tourism markets of China and Russia, whilst Scots saw the biggest increase in visits to attractions out with the big three of Edinburgh, Stirling and Urquhart castles.

Membership also continued to attract domestic visitors, at an all-time high, up 7% on the same period last year.

Stephen Duncan, Director of Commercial and Tourism for Historic Scotland said:-“Last year saw a flattening out of visitors due to a combination of severe weather and displacement of the travel trade.

“We had always expected 2013 to see a return to previous levels, but the summer performance has surpassed all expectations.

“We’ve broken a number of records including the highest ever visitor numbers for July and August on record for Edinburgh Castle.

“It’s particularly encouraging to see patterns at Edinburgh, Scotland’s number one paid for tourism attraction, replicated at many of our other properties across our estate who enjoyed record breaking summers and substantial increases in visitors.

“As an organisation we are continuing to evolve our offering to visitors – be that through our retail, e-commerce and

membership products, or investing in areas such as our award winning events programme to make history an accessible, fun and enjoyable part of people's lives."

Under-fives go free but the ticket prices for others to visit Edinburgh Castle are as follows:-

CATEGORY	April 2013 – March 2014
Adult (16-59yrs)	£16.00
Child (5-15yrs)	£9.60
Concession (60yrs+ and unemployed)	£12.80