

# Gold Brothers fined for Health and Safety breach

✘ OWNERS OF EDINBURGH GIFT SHOP FINED FOR ACCIDENT

Edinburgh traders, Gold Brothers, were fined £16,000 today at Edinburgh Sheriff Court after pleading guilty to a charge under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

The fine was issued in connection with an accident at their shop at 515 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh on 10 October 2009 when a customer fell through an open hatch in the shop floor and suffered a badly broken ankle which required surgery.

The prosecution followed an investigation by Environmental Health Officers from City of Edinburgh Council.

At the time of the incident, the shop was known as The Auld Christmas Shop. Gold Brothers had acquired the shop earlier in 2009 and had altered access to a staircase leading to the basement installing hatch covers in the shop floor.

The hatch covers had been left open to allow staff to access stockrooms in the basement, exposing the staircase that led downstairs. The area at the top of the staircase was unguarded and without any precautions to alert customers to the hazard it presented. The customer, while browsing in the shop, fell into the open stairwell and trapped her ankle between treads in the stairs.

Convener of Environmental Health, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: "This incident shows the potential dangers when hatches are used to gain access to basements or cellars.

"It was wholly avoidable and totally unacceptable. Businesses must carry out suitable risk assessments to ensure there is a safe means of accessing cellars and to protect workers and

customers.”