

# Five things you need to know today



**Free tickets for St Andrew's Day – Edinburgh College winning awards – Art Exhibition – Bryan Ferry – Appeal for gardening tools**

Thousands of tickets to Scotland's top attractions up for grabs to celebrate St. Andrew's Day! Free tickets available for historic sites in Edinburgh and the Lothians

Some of Scotland's best-loved heritage attractions will be giving away thousands of free tickets to people who pre-register online as part of this year's St. Andrew's Day celebrations.

Blackness Castle, Craigmillar Castle, Dirleton Castle, Edinburgh Castle, Linlithgow Palace and Tantallon Castle are among the 35 participating Historic Scotland properties which will be offering the opportunity to apply for tickets to gain entry for up to two adults and three children through a pre-registration process.

A special [website](#) is now live, offering people the chance to apply for tickets to some of Scotland's most iconic heritage sites. It will remain open until 5pm on Friday, 29th November.

People can apply for tickets for either Saturday 30th November or Sunday 1st December. In order to ensure a quality experience for visitors, the number of pre-registered tickets will be capped at each site. This includes 7,000 per day at Edinburgh Castle and 3,500 per day at Stirling Castle.

There is no limit to how many sites can be applied for, although visitors are being urged to be quick to register so they don't miss out on the chance to visit a great historic property for free.

Stephen Duncan, Director of Commercial and Tourism at Historic Scotland said:- "The Ticket Giveaway is a fantastic way to celebrate the St. Andrew's Day weekend.

"There is a huge array of different sites to visit and with visitors able to pre-register for tickets for up to two adults and three children in a single transaction, it's a great opportunity to enjoy many of Scotland's historic properties for free."

"The tickets won't be around for long though, so we'd encourage people to be quick to register so they don't miss out on the chance to visit their favourite property of choice."

The Ticket Giveaway is part of the Scottish Government's Winter Festivals programme, which celebrates three of the country's most distinctive festivals; St. Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns Night.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop said:-“Scotland has some of the most diverse heritage in the world – from global icons, such as Scotland’s number one paid-for tourist attraction, Edinburgh Castle, through to island abbeys such as Iona.

“Each site has a fascinating story to tell, from Stirling Castle which was home to many of the most famous Stewart Kings and Queens through to Skara Brae in Orkney, one of the best preserved prehistoric villages in Europe. Meanwhile, our countryside – from the Blackhouse in the Western Isles to the magnificent Borders abbeys – is dotted with reminders of Scotland’s past.

“The Ticket Giveaway is a great opportunity for people to enjoy the heritage on their doorstep, or venture further afield, as part of the wider St. Andrew’s Day celebrations.”

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Edinburgh College has won two prestigious prizes at a national education awards ceremony, recognising its strong links with industry and outstanding achievements in innovation.

At the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Star Awards, the East Lothian Hospitality and Tourism Academy – a partnership between Edinburgh College, Queen Margaret University and East Lothian Council – won a Highly Commended Award in the Partnership category. The college also won a Highly Commended Award in the Innovation category for a scheme providing industry mentors for students.

The annual SQA Star Awards honour inspirational achievements and commitment from colleges, schools and training organisations across the country.

The East Lothian Hospitality & Tourism Academy caught the judges' attention because of its close links with industry partners and the benefits these relationships can bring to young people. The academy has benefited from vital support from large hotel groups such as Marriott, Jurys Inn, Novotel, Mercure and Macdonald hotels and resorts, as well as Edinburgh's own luxury hotel Prestonfield and the Royal Mile's Fraser Suites.

The initiative, which is now in its second year, exposes young people to the wealth of jobs in hospitality and tourism industries by giving 16-18 year olds the chance to train at college, university and in industry. The success of its first year attracted government funding of £4.6m, which has seen the initiative expand to many more schools across Edinburgh and East and Midlothian, and the Scottish Borders and include other areas such as health and social care and creative industries. Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College are partners in all the new academies.

Ray McCowan, vice principal at Edinburgh College, said: "We are thrilled to have been recognised by the SQA Star Awards. The academy is a pioneering project and has been a great success.

"The academy represents partnership working at its very best.

It brings together the vision of two educational organisations and a local council, as well as harnessing industry expertise. The college realises the vital importance of strong links with industry and it's partnerships like these that give our students the vital experience and skills to succeed in a highly competitive industry."

In its first year, 30 out of 34 students successfully completed the academy. Of the 30 successful students, 18 continued to study the HNC in sixth year, four moved to Edinburgh College to study the SVQ2 in Professional Cookery and eight took up employment in the industry. There are now 163 students across all of the academies in Edinburgh and the Lothians in the fields of creative industries, health and social care, cookery and food science and nutrition, with a new academy planned for engineering.

The college has a number of successful graduates within the field of hospitality and tourism, including James Thomson OBE, owner of Prestonfield.

Celebrating Edinburgh College's other honour, Visual Communication lecturer Helena Good said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won the Highly Commended Award at the SQA Star Awards. Our mentoring programme was established to develop a strong working relationship between our students and industry and it's brilliant that it has been recognised in this way.

"Before the mentoring programme was introduced, the first contact that students had with industry wasn't until their end-of-year exhibitions. Now we are introducing our students to the key players in leading design agencies from an early

stage. This gives them an invaluable experience in working with professionals throughout their course and an insight into how the industry works.”

Helena added: “Since the mentoring programme began, we have won more than a dozen national and international awards including the Scottish Marketing Student of the Year for a second year in a row and four D&AD (*Design and Art Direction*) nominations, the creative industry’s flagship awards. One of our student’s work was also commissioned by the music brand Goji and is now being sold on high streets across the UK.

“As the initiative gains success, it has attracted more interest from industry. Our work placement programme has become much easier to manage because so many of our recent graduates have secured good agency positions and are a testament to the employability of the students we produce.”

SQA chief executive, Dr Janet Brown, said: “Once again I have been overwhelmed by the quality our finalists’ achievements. Some have overcome challenging personal circumstances and defied expectations while others have shown incredible initiative and commitment to succeed in their chosen disciplines.

“More than ever, qualifications are an essential component of an individual’s successful progress from education and training into further study and employment. Our Star Awards ceremony is an opportunity to congratulate learners on their achievements but also acknowledge the fantastic work of our centres – schools, colleges, training providers and employers who deliver our qualifications – and the people who give learners the guidance and encouragement they need to realise their potential.”



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There is an art exhibition at Adam House which is a fundraiser for Cancer Research UK. The majority of paintings come from Edinburgh and Lothians but artwork also comes from Yorkshire, the Borders and the West of Scotland, and from abroad.

This year's art exhibition will take place from Tuesday 12th to Saturday 16th November and will be open from 10:30am to 5:30pm (4.00pm on the Saturday).

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Succinct review of Bryan Ferry at The Usher Hall yesterday evening? Ferry is the epitome of coolness, and continues to reinvent himself. Now appearing alongside the Bryan Ferry Orchestra (who provided the music for the film *The Great Gatsby* earlier in the year) he can still play his mouth organ with a supreme air of sophistication.

The second half contained more recognisable numbers than the first which had the Usher Hall crowd on their feet and storming the stage (knocking the odd walking stick out of the way...) He left them calling for more, but just had time for one encore.

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The charity Fresh Start has issued an appeal for gardening tools on their [website](#). They have an allotment but nothing to dig it up with. Can you help?

*HELP! We're due to start work on the new Fresh Start allotment – but we've got no tools!*

*The allotment at the Food Station at Harrison Place will help to provide us with food for our new cooking classes.*

*But we need to get it ship shape first and with the cold snap still to come we're keen to get going.*

*We desperately need: digging spades and forks; shovels and rakes; shears; hand tools (forks/trowels/divers); wheelbarrows; lawn mower; and a water hose.*

*We're also keen for anyone's donations of old boots and wellies of different sizes, gardening gloves and large umbrellas!*

