

# Edinburgh attractions on shortlist for tourism awards

## Local industry champions compete for Scottish Thistles honours

A number of leading tourism attractions and businesses in Edinburgh and The Lothians have been shortlisted in the regional finals of the Scottish Thistle Awards – the annual competition celebrating industry champions which have gone the extra mile to offer an outstanding visitor experience.

**Edinburgh International Science Festival** and **Unique Events Edinburgh's Hogmanay** have both been named as central South East finalists in the Best Event or Festival category, competing against Historic Scotland's Linlithgow Palace Spectacular Jousting event.

In the Best Visitor Attraction category, **The Real Mary King's Close, Edinburgh** and **Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway** are both finalists, vying in the regional heats against St Andrews Aquarium in the regional heats.

Three of Edinburgh's top dining establishments, **The Kitchin**, **Kyloe** and **Wedgwood** are all competing for the honour of winning the Best Restaurant Experience title for the region. And in the Best Informal Eating Experience, two more city-based businesses, **Mimi's Bakehouse** and **Roseleaf Bar Café** are shortlisted with The Real Food Café Tyndrum.

In the Friendliest Pub/Bar category **The Bridge Inn at Ratho**, Edinburgh and **Mercat Grill** of Musselburgh, East Lothian are competing in the regional heats with The Boudingait of Cupar. The Bridge Inn at Ratho is also shortlisted in the Most Hospitable B & B category, up against Kingsmuir House, Peebles and Fauhope House of Melrose.

Contesting for Best Holiday Accommodation in the regional finals are Edinburgh's **Pilrig House Apartments** and **Crosswoodhill Farm Holiday Cottages** and **Williamsraig Holiday Cottages**, both of West Lothian.

✘ East Lothian firm **Foxlake Adventures** is a regional finalist in the Best Outdoor/Adventure Experience category, up against St Andrews-based Blown Away Jedburgh-based The Big Tree Society.

Edinburgh tour firms **Afternoon Tea Tours** and **Rabbie's Small Group Tours** are both shortlisted in the Discovering Scotland category. And competing for the Our Warmest Welcome title are Edinburgh-based businesses – **Cruise Forth**, **Cranachan and Crowdie** and **HAGGiS Adventures**.

The Central South East regional winners will be announced on 5<sup>th</sup> November at The Royal College of Physicians. They will then progress to the Scottish Thistles glittering national final at the Crowne Plaza in Glasgow on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the closing night of Scottish Tourism Week.

Now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, the Scottish Thistle Awards are organised and delivered by VisitScotland but, as announced earlier this year, they are now led by several organisations, including VisitScotland, the Hospitality Industry Trust Scotland, Scottish Tourism Alliance, Highlands & Islands Tourism Awards and the Scottish Licensed Trade Association.

With a particular focus on customer service, this year for the very first time, members of the public were invited to nominate their tourism champions for the Scottish Thistle Awards 2014. Entries were made across a range of different categories including Friendliest Pub, Most Hospitable Hotel, and Our Warmest Welcome.

A panel, comprising of some of the most senior figures in

Scottish tourism as well as tourism ambassadors such as Nick Nairn, Martin Wishart, television presenter Kaye Adams and the man behind T in the Park, Geoff Ellis, will be responsible for determining the national winners in each category.

**Stephen Carter OBE, VisitScotland Board Member and Chair of the Scottish Thistle Awards Industry Panel, said:**

*“Edinburgh and The Lothians is home to a wealth of tourism talent of the highest calibre and my congratulations go to all the attractions and businesses in the region which have been shortlisted as Thistle Awards regional finalists; I wish them the best of luck in the next stages of the competition. These awards provide us with a perfect opportunity to celebrate and reward the hard work, dedication and innovation taking place within the tourism sector throughout the country during what has been an exceptional year for the industry in Scotland.”*

Central South East Regional Finalists are listed below. For full details of finalists in other regions please visit: [www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk](http://www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk)

### **CENTRAL SOUTH EAST REGIONAL FINALISTS**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SHORTLISTED</b>
Best Event or Festival	Edinburgh International Science Festival Historic Scotland – Linlithgow Palace Spectacular Jousting Unique Events – Edinburgh’s Hogmanay
Our Warmest Welcome	Cranachan and Crowdie Cruise Forth HAGGiS Adventures

Most Hospitable Hotel	No 11 BrunswickPrestonfield Roxburghe Hotel & Golf Course
Best Outdoor/Adventure Experience	Blown AwayFoxlake Adventures The Big Tree Society
Best Visitor Attraction	Bo'ness and Kinneil RailwaySt Andrews Aquarium The Real Mary King's Close
Most Hospitable B&B/Guest House	Fauhope HouseKingsmuir House The Bridge Inn at Ratho
Best Holiday Accommodation	Crosswoodhill Farm Holiday CottagesPilrig House Apartments Williamsraig Holiday Cottages
Best Informal Eating Experience	Mimi's BakehouseRoseleaf Bar Café The Real Food Café
Friendliest Pub/Bar	BoudingateMercat Grill The Bridge Inn at Ratho
Best Restaurant Experience	KyloeThe Kitchin Wedgwood