

# Neatebox app will show you round the Old Town

✘ A new way to step back in time and discover the hidden corners of Edinburgh's Old Town will be possible thanks to an app that embraces the latest 'beacon technology', launched this week.

We introduced you to Gavin Neate's first app which allows blind people to find and activate pedestrian crossings from their phones a while back. Now he has developed something new in collaboration with the City of Edinburgh Council.

*Edinburgh Up Close: Footsteps Through Time* from Leith-based [Neatebox](#), is available to download for free from the Apple Store now.

Initially launched for Apple IOS devices, the guide enables residents and visitors to choose their own walking tour through the warren of closes connected to the famous Royal Mile. Users will be able to trace the history linked to these streets to hear engaging stories about the alleyways and learn about the surrounding buildings and their famous or infamous residents.

Without the need for a Wi-Fi connection, visitors to the High Street will be alerted when they reach a number of historical landmarks including Chessels Court, the exact site of Deacon Brodie's last burglary and his capture. As they reach the spot, images depicting Brodie, his comrades and his life and death will pop up on users' phones while local award-winning storyteller Fiona Herbert tells the tale of Brodie's burglar past.

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Courtesy of Capital Collections

Tapping into Bluetooth signals mapped along the Royal Mile to 'push' snippets of history to users' devices, the design of *Edinburgh Up Close* makes it accessible to all ages, abilities, and sight and hearing impaired users. This is believed to be the first time such technology is being harnessed by a visitor attraction in the UK to provide an alternative to the traditional 'audio guide' and can be used alone, or as a way to extend the [Museum of Edinburgh](#) visitor experience outside.

Councillor Richard Lewis, Edinburgh's Culture and Sport Convener, said: "Neatebox was the winner of the Council's [Edinburgh Apps competition](#) last year and it is fantastic to see their ideas take shape and come to life. The end result is a really intuitive and fun app that embraces state-of-the-art technology to tell the story of Edinburgh's High Street and lesser known closes, courts and wynds.

"Once downloaded, the 'beacon technology' means on-the-go internet is not needed which will be appealing to international visitors. Launched in time for Edinburgh's busy festival months, the app will undoubtedly help us to tell Edinburgh's story to countless tourists but I think residents themselves will also enjoy rediscovering the Old Town – so much of the city's history took place off the main High Street.

"Ultimately, it is hoped the project will help promote our museums and provide opportunities for visitors to explore all of our wonderful collections in the Canongate and further up the Royal Mile."

Gavin Neate, CEO of Neatebox Ltd, said: "We are really breaking the mould with *Edinburgh Up Close*. Most mobile tour guides are audio only or simple picture guides, meaning those with disabilities often miss out. What we've managed to achieve is the creation of an app that tells the story of the Royal Mile in different formats to suit different ages, tastes

and needs – including disabled and visually and hearing impaired users.

“It’s been great fun working with the Council’s museums team to uncover the history of the Royal Mile and I’m so excited to see it launch. We’re not the first to use beacon technology, but we’re certainly the first to use it in this way.”

The app is free and available to download with Wi-Fi connection from the Apple App Store for Apple IOS devices only. Download it [here](#) .

Last month the City of Edinburgh Council and Insurgent Studios announced the launch of two new interactive exhibits at the [Museum of Edinburgh](#) on the Royal Mile.

*Photo courtesy of Capital Collections*