

Five things you need to know today



- Today at the Edinburgh International Book Festival
- Art in the Park
- American visitor retraces grandfather's footsteps
- Final performances of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo tonight
- Edinburgh World Heritage to help restore Syrian urban heritage

A discussion today at 2.00pm will try to decide why Shakespeare has been so influential. These two authors Andrew Dickson who produced The Globe Guide to Shakespeare and his co-editor Stanley Wells might be able to provide some answers.

Otherwise on a nice sunny day this is a lovely place to be! Much recommended hang out for anyone who has an hour or so to spare today.

[Tickets here.](#)



Over 100 years since his grandfather last crossed over the threshold at 2A Baxter's Place, an American visitor to the capital took the four hour window of opportunity he had from when the cruise liner he was on docked at Leith to get a glimpse of where John Duncan McKenzie once lived.

It was the first time John McKenzie, 69, from Florida who is

named after his grandfather, had been to Edinburgh and was keen to see where his grandfather previously resided before crossing the Atlantic and settling down in America in 1903.

John who works as a Landscape Lighting Contractor, was on a 12 day cruise of the British Isles with his wife Cindy said:

“When I saw from the itinerary the cruise liner would be docking in Edinburgh, I knew that I wanted to spend my time off the ship seeing where my grandfather once lived, walking along the same cobbles and seeing the same sights as he did.

“It did not disappoint. In fact, coming to Edinburgh was the highlight of the cruise. It’s such a wonderful city, steeped in history coupled with stunning architecture, that we’re already planning our next trip back so we can spend a lot longer than four hours taking it in.”

2A Baxter’s Place, next to the Playhouse, had lain derelict along with numbers 1 and 3 for years until they were acquired by the Chris Stewart Group (CSG), best known for its award-winning Advocates Close, and are currently being given a new lease of life as hotel.

Opening this autumn will be the Courtyard Edinburgh – the second Courtyard offering in Scotland by Marriott International – a four star 240 room hotel for business and leisure travellers to the city.

The hotel comprises a series of three adjoining Georgian townhouses, one of which was home to John Duncan McKenzie, and another belonging to Robert Stevenson, the famous Scottish lighthouse engineer and the grandfather of ‘Treasure Island’ author Robert Louis Stevenson.

Douglas Winfield, General Manager of the Courtyard Edinburgh, said: “We received an email from John outlining he was going to be in the city for a short window and would it be possible to see Baxter’s Place. Naturally, we were delighted to show

him round and he has been one of the first people to be given a hard hat tour so he could see what's in store for his grandfather's former home."

John added : "It is wonderful when buildings are given the chance to shine again especially when they have been empty for a very long time. I am very much looking forward to coming back to Edinburgh and staying at the hotel – I'll be hoping for a room that was part of my grandfather's home."



Two members of the New Zealand Army Band have a seat in the stand after the exertions of their Haka!

Tonight is the last night of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. For the last night there are two performances, one at 7.30 and one at 10.30pm with an extended fireworks display to round off the month of performances. This year's programme has celebrated The Tunes of Glory to mark the rich history of military music.

The cast of over 1200 performers with over 250 pipes and drummers have entertained live audiences all month. Over 220,000 people have been to the Tattoo this year, some braving weather conditions which were less than ideal. But in true showbiz tradition the show must go on, and go on it did.

The 25 performances have been sold out and you would be very lucky to get a ticket for tonight's performances (not impossible however!).

Ahead of the first performance Chair of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh Donald Wilson, said: "The Tattoo is so much more than a show; it lies at the heart of Scotland's event culture. It's an amazing treat to have it situated right in the heart of the

capital and year-on-year, the Tattoo showcases the City of Edinburgh to the whole world. It brings people together, no matter where you are from or what language you speak, while celebrating global cultures and traditions. This year's spectacle will travel through time back to the Great Arab Revolt; across seasons with a magical Mount Everest snowfall; and through space with a Star Wars motorcycle display. I can't wait for Scotland and the world to enjoy what the Tattoo has in store this year."



Edinburgh Castle reflected in the tuba played by a member of the US Europe Army Band



Responding to a call from Prof Maamoun Abdulkarim, Director-General of Antiquities and Museums, Arab Republic of Syria, Edinburgh World Heritage has offered to provide support towards the restoration of several of Syria's World Heritage sites, including the ancient cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Bosra. Support will be provided in the form of on-the-ground expertise and knowledge exchange in urban heritage conservation and restoration as soon as hostilities have ceased.

In addition to the well-publicised damage to the ancient site of Palmyra, many of Syria's urban World Heritage sites have also been damaged through shelling, looting and military occupation. Syria is home to several of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities which form a unique record of the development of human civilisation. In many cases, these World Heritage sites formed the backdrop to the daily lives of the Syrian people before the havoc caused by the conflict.

Edinburgh World Heritage, through its international programme, has provided support and consultancy to over 20 cities around the world over the past 10 years including Warsaw and the

Latin American Cities Network, while also bringing its learning from these places back to Edinburgh.

The announcement was made at an Edinburgh World Heritage lecture on Thursday night in which Professor Abdulkarim talked about the appalling destruction of priceless monuments in many parts of the country as well as the efforts led by his team to conceal important museum collections across Syria from harm. He called upon the international community to redouble its efforts to help Syria protect, and in places rebuild, its heritage for the benefit of all humanity.

Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage commented: 'Syria is home to some of the world's most important archaeology, monuments and ancient cities which bear rich testimony to the development of human civilisation. Edinburgh leads the world in community-based heritage conservation within dynamic urban environments, and stands ready to help the communities of Syria conserve and restore its urban heritage'.

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