

# Jim Haynes – The Father of Social Networking

Unless you were there, it is hard to imagine what post-war Edinburgh was like in the early 1960s. A profoundly middle-class city, it was dominated by an almost unimaginable veneer of propriety and professional respectability – at least on the surface. There was one licensed restaurant. The pubs, such as they were, closed at 10pm. The only place to go to on a Sunday was the Kirk.

Before the stone cleaning began in earnest in the 1970s, the buildings of Scotland's Capital were soot black.



Edinburgh Napier University Honorary Graduate  
Jim Haynes  
Individual ceremony at The Rivers Suite at  
Craiglockhart, 25 June 2018

But in the closes and vennels of the Old Town, something stirred. Fuelled by the constraints of their environment, a band of young subversives launched an avant garde theatre club which would only produce new plays.

The group, all ironically destined to later become pillars of the Establishment, comprised Nicholas Fairbairn, Michael Shea, Richard Demarco and John Calder.

And then there was Jim Haynes, an American from Louisiana who had arrived the year before to open Britain's first paperback bookshop on Charles Street, near the University.

That bookshop subsequently achieved its own level of notoriety when an elderly Edinburgh matriarch purchased a copy of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and set fire to it on the pavement outside as a protest

In 1962, the same young American collaborated with the publisher John Calder to launch the International Writers' Conference, attended by the greatest names in 20th century literature. It put Scotland's capital on the global cultural map, but again Edinburgh's puritanical heart was outraged when a naked lady was wheeled across the balcony of the McEwan Hall in a wheelbarrow

In 1966, Jim moved to London where with Barry Miles, he co-founded the underground newspaper *International Times*. Then he set up the Drury Lane Arts Lab where John and Yoko, and Bowie used to hang out. In 1969, he relocated to Paris where, for thirty years, he taught media studies and sexual politics. His memoir *Thanks for Coming!* was first published in 1984 and dedicated to his 5,000 closest friends.

However, it was the open-house dinner parties in Paris that truly made him a legend, especially after they featured in an international television advertisement for After Eight mints.

Among those who came to dinner in Paris were three young girls who did not know each other.

"They decided to make a film about me, " says Jim. The outcome was *Meeting Jim*, directed by Ece Ger and which premiered at the 2018 Edinburgh Film Festival over the weekend.



Jim Haynes after the graduation ceremony, with Ricky Demarco in the background taking a photo. PHOTO Roddy Martine

Earlier today, Napier University awarded Jim an Honorary Arts Degree in recognition of his contribution to the arts not only in Edinburgh, but nationally and internationally.

It is hard to imagine such a gentle and caring bear of a man as Jim, now aged 84, being such an agent provocateur throughout his life. Nevertheless, it was he and his generation, for better or worse, who paved the way for the openness, liberation and sexual enlightenment that followed in the decades ahead. And believe it or not, all of this began with dear old Edinburgh as the back-drop!

Jim's philosophy is simple. Be happy. Make friends. Introduce people to one another. Enjoy life to the full. Not for nothing is he called the Father of Social Networking. he is never happier than when he is dancing and singing.

"My father used to say to me that if you do something kind for somebody, forget it immediately. If somebody does something kind for you, never forget it."

Jim said : "I am deeply honoured to be recognised by Edinburgh Napier and hope to make a positive contribution to the students' experience, the life of the university and my beloved city of Edinburgh in the years to come."

Professor Andrea Nolan, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University, said : "We are delighted to honour a man who has made such a significant contribution to the arts, not only in Edinburgh but nationally and internationally."



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