

# Interview : Jack's back in Edinburgh

Jack Docherty is well-known to many particularly in Edinburgh; those who are in the Absolutely fan club, and those who love him in the Comedy Unit's Scot Squad. Whichever camp you fall into the show he is bringing to the Fringe this year should be on your must see list.



Jack Doherty as Chief Commissioner Cameron Miekelson

His career began squarely in Edinburgh at the Fringe alongside his school chums Moray Hunter, Gordon Kennedy and Pete Baikie. If you [click here](#) you will see the youthful foursome who both wrote and appeared in the show [Bodgers](#)

As Docherty was at pains to point out he was much younger than the rest and a few years below them at George Watson's...but they all went on to great things which have graced our small

screens over the years. Bodgers was the crucible where they honed their craft and developed some characters who would come to prominence later. Bodgers ran from 1980 to 1985 at Calton Studios, Infirmary Street Primary School and Bruntsfield Primary School and Docherty said that they were among the first shows at The Pleasance.

What are the audiences to expect from the longest serving chief police officer in Scotland? Docherty has now been 'in office' for five years, and in between filming the next series he is writing the Fringe show and then appearing here for a month. He told The Edinburgh Reporter that he is very much looking forward to living in Edinburgh during August which he has not done for about thirty years. Docherty explained the format of the show.

He said : "Well, people are going to get some of the Chief Commissioner. The show is essentially a keynote lecture by Cameron Miekelson **Tomorrow's Force Today. Where we've been we here we are and where we're going in policing.**

"So it's all sorts of nonsense really around his character. Basically people who know Scot Squad will know what to expect. Those who don't will be very confused!

"I will be doing about two thirds of him and then in the middle we have McGlashan the rabid Scottish Nationalist from Absolutely is making an appearance and there will be about twenty minutes of him."



Scot Squad filming at Euro Central  
Jack Docherty  
Photograph by Martin Shields

Docherty is penning the material for the Fringe along with four or five others including the creator of Scot Squad Joe Hullait and Noddy Davidson who is the director of the TV programme and producer Rab Christie. ("Yes, he'll be writing stuff as well.")

The show will include new and old material adapted from the TV show with some of the greatest hits such as the Bamnesty. Here Miekelson explains his pre-Bam policy....

If you don't already know him, then what you need to know about McGlashan is that he blames the English for everything and will probably burst in halfway through to deliver his manifesto of where Scotland is going.

I suggested that might be quite timely and Docherty agreed that the discourse will include Independence and Brexit but his overarching problem that he has to get round is allowing for two costume changes in the hour with some audiovisual inserts.

He laughed : "It's a multimedia experience this show!"

The show takes place in the auditorium at the Museum since it is a 'proper lecture theatre' and is thus befitting a keynote speech by the man who leads the unified police force. But there is a wee drawback. "It seems we have to bring our own lectern! But it has all the integrated screens that we need, and of course it's comfortable which is good for a man of my age.

"Hopefully the audience will be made up of lots of young people but it has comfy seats and it's air conditioned."



Scot Squad filming at Euro Central  
Jack Docherty  
Photograph by Martin Shields

Docherty did return to the Fringe a while back : “Moray and I did a double act in 1987 or so as a kind of forerunner to Mr Don and Mr George and then after Absolutely we did one more show in 1992 so I probably come here about once every quarter century.” (He says he is not sure about the next Fringe appearance....!)

“Now I appear on radio and TV shows and I did one night at Glasgow Comedy Festival two years ago.” That appearance included a version of Miekelson’s lecture which will be developed for the Fringe with minimal rewriting as Jack cheekily quips that ‘nothing much has changed!’.

**[tweet\_box design="default"]The Edinburgh Reporter recommends : Jack Doherty is back on the Fringe – if there is anything you should mark in your Fringe diary then this show is it.[/tweet\_box]**

With six children of the ‘step and biological variety’ Docherty lives in London, but is taking up residence with his sister and brother in law during August (We do hope they don’t learn that from us and that they have been forewarned of the

imminent visit!).

His is a small family, but he expects that his mother will come to see him ('probably more than once') And just in case I was going to ask, the answer is yes his mother will be made to pay for a ticket, no apparent police corruption here!

As for political material McGlashan is likely to have some key personalities on his mind : "The former First Minister may get a mention a few times. I believe McGlashan may be attacking Salmond for being a sell-out... McGlashan is obviously a bit more extreme then Nicola Sturgeon and Alex Salmond and all that lot.

"Really Nicola is not extreme enough for him. They have failed as we are not getting away from England fast enough. So they have failed in their mission. They are being wishy-washy in deciding to be a party of government.

"But he sees their job is to remove all Englishmen from the country – basically McGlashan is a fascist!"





Jack Docherty as the long serving Chief Commissioner

## **SPITTING IMAGE**

I hesitated to ask the question since it has been asked so many times before but Docherty and his Absolutely chums wrote for Spitting Image and in these turbulent political times it seems that we need satire more than ever.

Docherty humours the question however saying : "I suppose it would be the perfect time.

"What a gift Trump, Farage and Jacob Rees-Mogg are. They would



make fantastic puppets. But everybody points out what do you do in the time of Trump it is difficult to satirise.

"When we were writing in the eighties it was all Reagan and the President's brain is missing and all those kind of sketches. We thought you can't go much beyond Reagan in terms of a befuddled, idiotic president and yet he now seems like an incredible statesman like Lincoln compared to Trump.

"Trump appears insane in comparison. It is astonishing, what's happening!

"It is almost as if he is testing this statement he made on the campaign trail when he said that he could go and shoot somebody on Fifth Avenue and not lose a vote. The Republican Party are standing behind him to such a ludicrous degree that it is worryingly laughable that he could do anything to attack America while standing beside Putin and some just thought that was all fine. But then, he is going to lower billionaires' taxes."

But Miekelson appears to be in a bit of a compromising position where Trump is concerned. Docherty explained the dilemma : "Miekelson is trying to distance himself, as it has come out that he had a couple of rounds of golf with the boy in the past at Turnberry. Trump shot 170 and carded a 72.

"So yes, Trump will come up at some point definitely. But you can't write it too early because whatever ridiculous things happen today will have been forgotten about by the next ridiculous thing that happens tomorrow. In three weeks there will be something else."

The process of writing the show and performing it is something that does not phase Docherty who will have notes as a prop but says this lecture will be firmly committed to memory

Jack continued : "It is always best to know it well rather than taking any chances. The process is now that I am writing

it – hoping to finish it this week! Then I am on schedule to write and record a song for McGlashan with Pete Baikie that may form part of it. This will be the new Scottish national anthem.

“Then I will pop up to Glasgow for a couple of days to rehearse it with some of the guys from Scot Squad – a bit complicated by the fact that we are filming Series Five at the moment so not everyone is available.

“I did all my filming a week or two ago but there will be some people available to help run it through. As a solo show I can then just keep running it through my mind all the time.”

Then the move to Edinburgh where happily one of the ‘surrogate daughters’ has a flat in Edinburgh for the new academic year which he can use.

It is however only Docherty who appears in the show and right now he is looking for people to go out socialising with the Chief after it. He did confess that it might not be every night : “Now that I am in my fifties maybe I shouldn’t be going out late- night clubbing...I will just jump on my bicycle and cycle home.”

But if the Chief is going out after the show he has a few places to choose from. Clearly he will be looking for Ian Rankin at the Oxford Bar and he also hopes that Rankin will come to the show. They met recently at the Cromarty Crime Festival where they screened the episode of Scot Squad that Ian Rankin appears in and did a Q and A afterwards.

But it is some time since Docherty lived in Edinburgh and admits his knowledge has faded in the thirty years since he lived here. He hopes to reacquaint the Chief with Mathers (not the Diggers as he is a Hibs fan), The Barony Bar and The Cumberland where there’s a bit of ‘wood and brass like a real pub’.

Readers perhaps we might suggest some others – Grant Stott might be the perfect Identikit after show companion? Any other suggestions? Please add them below!

Some of the others on Scot Squad might be in Edinburgh anyway in other shows and of course if they are then the Chief expects them to pitch up to explain themselves.

If they do, then the improvisation skills which are so evident in the show may be brought to bear on them. If you are in the audience then watch out. He might be on the lookout for you too.



**Jack Docherty: Miekelson and McGlashan – Serious Men**

1–12, 14–19, 21–27 August

21:00 – 22:00

Fresh from filming the fifth series of hit BBC1 show Scot Squad, Edinburgh's Jack Docherty returns to the Fringe for the first time in 25 years with an exciting show uniting two of his best loved creations: Scot Squad's Chief Commissioner Cameron Miekelson and the fiercely patriotic McGlashan from the critically acclaimed, award-winning Channel 4 shows Absolutely and Scotland in a Day.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/jack-docherty-miekelson-and-mcglashan-serious-men>