

Book review – Only in Edinburgh

Only In Edinburgh – A Guide to Unique Locations, Hidden Corners and Unusual Objects by Duncan J. D. Smith

As a former tour guide I consider myself quite well acquainted with most of Edinburgh's popular tourist attractions, all of which are, of course, covered in this publication.

However, the charm of this book is that it takes one away from the – inevitably overcrowded – traditional sites and into some of the more esoteric and delightful often just a sideways step away from the main thoroughfares.

For example, Scotland's oldest concert hall, St Cecilia's, tucked away at the foot of Niddry Street, between the Royal Mile and the Cowgate. which contains a world-class collection of musical instruments. Or stroll around the elegance of The New Town, pop into the Royal Bank of Scotland branch on St Andrew's Square and see the stunning domed cupola ceiling.

A little tip – when walking around Edinburgh, look up at the cornices of the buildings to see some magnificent statues and carvings, so often missed by people walking along, eyes glued to their mobile phones !

The layout of the book is easy to follow, with short chapters devoted to each entry, and copiously cross-referenced (even to the extent of one extreme example of self-cross-referencing in chapter 72 where the third paragraph includes "(see no. 72" !)

A very welcome inclusion is a list of bus routes to each venue (buy a day-ticket to get the best value for this).

Essentially, this book caters for everyone, from casual shoppers to fervent historians, from bibliophiles to imbibers, and is lavishly illustrated with some stunning photographs.

This is the home of Sherlock Holmes, Inspector Rebus, Harry Potter and Trainspotting, Gin at the Dick Vet, and Cock Fights and (until recently) Jamie Oliver, Deep-Fried Haggis and Irn Bru. But probably the most thumbed chapter will be 62 – An Historic Pub Crawl: an open invitation to participate in a popular game – The Rose Street Challenge ? What does this entail ?

Well, buy the book and find out !

Price £16.95

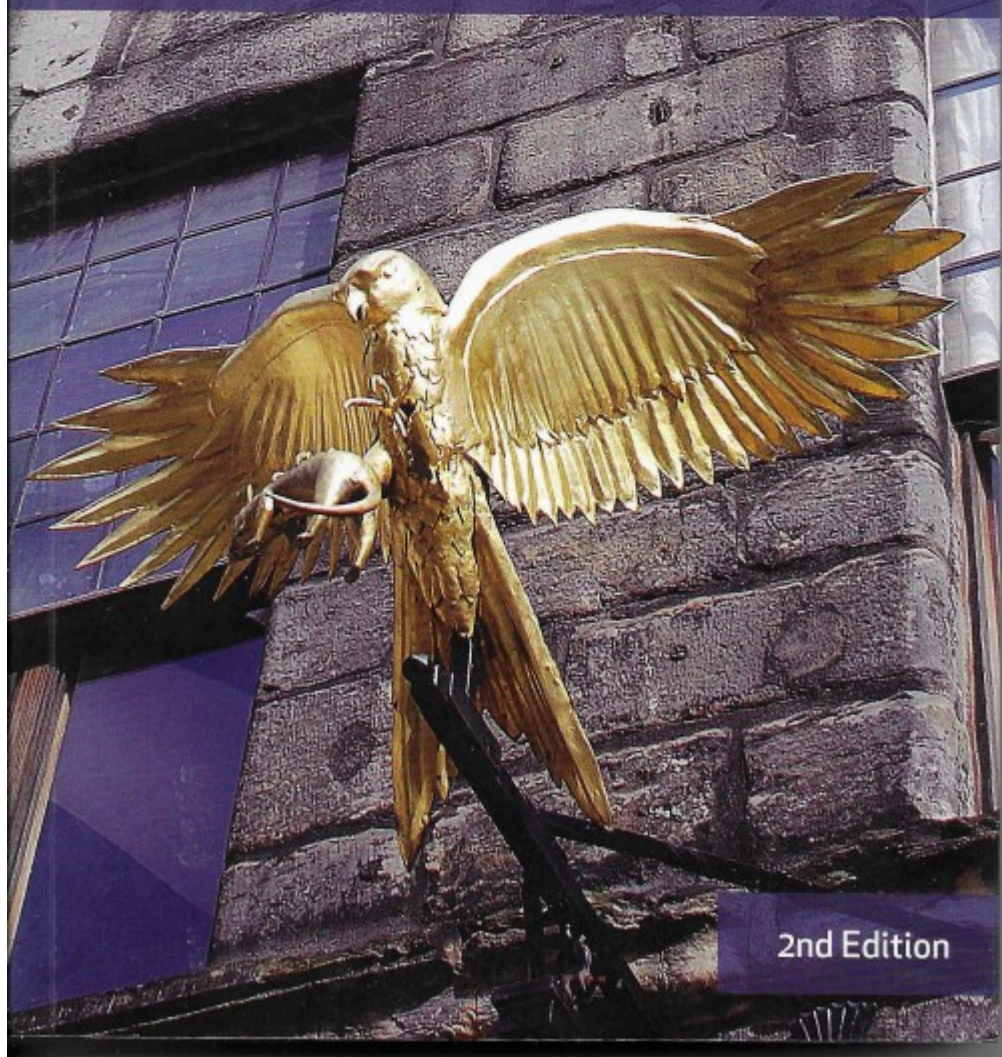
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