

Edinburgh's Hogmanay – Torchlight Procession begins three day festival

Before the iconic river of fire that is the Torchlight Procession flows down Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile, we met members Scotland's pioneering Celtic Fire Theatre company, PyroCeltica and the Harbinger Drum Crew who this year lead the procession down the Royal Mile to Holyrood Park.

Set on the Edinburgh Castle (washed in blue) esplanade, an eclectic selection of PyroCeltica and Harbinger Drum Crew performers in full Highland Warrior costume showcased their fire skills featuring fire fans, huge flaming claymores and fire staffs, set to the booming beats of the Harbinger Drummers complete with flaming drums and mohawks set ablaze!









Then at the party halfway down the Royal Mile at The Scottish Storytelling Centre, the gathered VIPs heard from the Rt Hon Lord Provost, Ben Macpherson Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development and Ed Bartlam of Underbelly.

The Lord Provost said that this is a great draw for people

from all over the world and he is very proud that Underbelly decided that the event supports his charity – the OneCity Trust which supports inclusion in the city. 50p from each torch sold goes to the charity.

Lord Provost said : “Last year Underbelly through its various fundraising efforts for the OneCity Trust raised £29,000 for the charity. Thank you very much for that!”



Mr Macpherson said that the gathering allows us to demonstrate our shared values of inclusivity, internationalism, inclusion and fairness. He admitted that 2019 has been a tumultuous year

politically, quite significant with two elections and huge upheaval. It is important that at times like this that we are together, and that the values of inclusion and togetherness and internationalism are those that we can share as one. He referred to the ongoing public debate and said : “Whether our opinions on political matters or indeed in relation to this festival differ or not, let us be united in thanking everyone who makes the event possible.”

Mr Bartlam also referred openly to the debate which has mostly taken place on social media when told the assembled audience : “It is up to the stakeholders and key people in the city to go out and spread that positive message of what this Festival is about – nothing to do with Underbelly or whatever. It is Edinburgh’s amazing festival and we should all be proud and positive about that.”

The Lord Provost and his party then joined the procession towards Holyrood Park where a stage was set up close to the road. There a PA system allowed the MC to encourage the crowd to form the shape of two figures shaking hands.



Minister for Europe Ben Macpherson Migration and International Development



This couple were the first queue to join the procession – they

had been there since 5.00pm. The last of the torchbearers were still filing down the High Street at 9.30. This was after the torches had been used to form the shape of two figures shaking hands in friendly greeting. This was then photographed from a helicopter flying above.



The Torchlight Procession flows down Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile, with ten Pipe & Drum bands from across Scotland proudly led by Scotland's pioneering Celtic Fire Theatre company, PyroCeltica, and the Harbinger Drum Crew.
www.edinburghshogmanay.com