

HES sites across Scotland set to reopen as Covid restrictions ease

As Edinburgh Castle gets ready to open its doors to visitors once more, the Honours of Scotland are set to go on public display again.

The Honours, which includes the Crown and Sceptre of Scotland, were first used to crown Mary, Queen of Scots and were famously hidden after the Act of Union in 1707, until they were rediscovered many years later by the author Walter Scott.

The Honours will be able to be viewed socially distanced with a new queuing system implemented in Crown Square to manage access. This follows other innovations at the site, including the introduction of painted circles around the world famous one o'clock gun as well as the use of QR codes and new audio guides to continue to tell the story of one of Scotland's most iconic sites.



Linlithgow Palace

The castle is one of over 20 ticketed sites [Historic Environment Scotland \(HES\)](#) is opening across Scotland today (Friday, 30th April), after covid protection measures have been eased in mainland Scotland, with tickets going on sale on a pre-booked basis to the public earlier this month.

This includes some of Scotland's most iconic heritage sites including Stirling Castle, Linlithgow Palace, Urquhart Castle,

St Andrews Castle, Melrose Abbey, and Skara Brae * as 5,000 years of history opens up once more.

This will see 70% of Historic Environment Scotland's sites, which operate under the Historic Scotland brand, open up to the public, including ticketed and over 200 free to access sites. Further ticketed sites are due to reopen on a rolling basis over the upcoming months.



Edinburgh Castle

Alex Paterson, Chief Executive of HES, visited Edinburgh Castle yesterday (Thursday, 29th April), for a preview ahead of the official reopening to the public. He said;

“Our heritage sites are home to over 5,000 years of history and we can't wait to welcome visitors back once more, so they can once again experience Scotland's history.

“As before, there will be measures in place to facilitate social distancing, as well as new innovations to the visitor experience including new audio tours and digital content.

“We know how much people enjoy being able to access heritage sites, and we've worked hard to provide a mix of sites across the country, with over 70% of our sites opening up on the 30th and many others on a phased basis over the next few months.

“On the eve of what is a historic reopening, it's been great to be at the castle to see all the hard work of the teams coming to fruition as we get ready to welcome visitors once more.”



Dunfermline Abbey

As before, safety measures will be in place, with visitors wearing face coverings in indoor spaces and some enclosed spaces, where social distancing can't be easily maintained, not accessible. There will also be an initial capacity

management on numbers, one-way systems will be in place in some locations and visitors being asked to use contactless payment where possible.

All sites will follow the [HES minimum operating standards](#), which were developed to set a benchmark for the safe reopening of historic sites and resumption of operational activities.

Tickets should be booked online in advance from the HES website. To book tickets and for more information on further HES sites reopening visit: restarthistory.scot