

Capital Coffee – Arrivals and Departures

The coffee scene in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, is constantly in flux.

New places are opening all the time, while others depart. In particular, we have seen **Black Sheep Coffee** spread its tentacles throughout the city centre. New Black Sheep branches are due to open on Princes Street and Shandwick Place in the coming weeks, while another – at Haymarket – has just been announced. Will they start to overtake the more established chains? Certainly, their existing cafés all seem to be consistently busy – especially their new location opposite Waverley Station.

Close by, at Waverley Market, we see some of the difficulties faced by those in the specialty coffee sector. The unit at the top was previously the site of [a café run by Williams and Johnson](#) – an offshoot of their Leith base. More recently **Linton & Co** were based there, serving equally high quality coffee. The place was often a calm nook despite being in one of the busiest, tourist laden sections of the city. Linton & Co were forced to ‘leave abruptly’ due to ‘issues with the landlord’. They are now hoping to open a new location closer to their base – in Perthshire. Meanwhile, they continue to run their coffee van on the terrace of The Hub, near the top of the Royal Mile.



Several other cafés have come and gone. In recent weeks, **Gooseneck** on Grindlay Street has closed. Their business was hit by the long period in which the nearby Usher Hall and Lyceum Theatre were shut – the staff at these cultural centres provided a lot of custom. However, Gooseneck remains as an online bakery, delivering to addresses in Edinburgh & East Lothian. In similar fashion, **No. 33** on Deanhaugh Street in Stockbridge has closed after almost a decade in business. Cheese 'N' Toasted has taken over but also serves specialty coffee, using beans from **Williams and Johnson**. Nearby in St. Stephen Street, the **Kilted Donut** recently announced the 'sad' news they were closing their cosy Stockbridge shop. However, their Grassmarket shop remains open and they 'hope to be back in Stockbridge soon'.



One pleasing aspect of the coffee scene is how quickly cafés can take over dormant locations. Liverpool based indy chain **92 Degrees** opened their first Edinburgh café in May. 92 Degrees opened its first roastery in 2014 and then its first café the next year. The Edinburgh café is part of a big expansion – they hope to have 30 locations in the UK by the end of 2023. 92 Degrees have taken over what was the deli section of vegetarian pioneers Hendersons – on Hanover Street. The café is minimalist, cool and spacious. As the summer heats up and the city becomes busier, this will surely become a popular spot. The original salad bar in the basement below is, sadly, still empty. A tattered remnant of an Edinburgh institution (though Henderson's name does live on, through the new

restaurant on Barclay Place in Bruntsfield). This Hanover Street basement site is apparently going to be the new home of Cherrybank Dental Spa, as they move from Centrum House on Dundas Street.



Other new locations for specialty coffee include the excellent **Beatnik** (on Brougham Place), and Fortitude's upcoming new café in Abbeyhill, on Abbey Mount – a couple of doors down from the Regent Bar. The commercial design company SPLINTR are in charge of the refit. Abbeyhill is an increasingly fashionable area in the city with a lot of new businesses starting in recent years. No surprise given how central it is, only a few minutes walk from the foot of the Royal Mile – and also the east end of Princes Street. It also provides great access to

Holyrood Park, Calton Hill and Arthur Seat.



Fortitude, York Place

Fortitude has built a substantial reputation since starting off in their small café on York Place next to the Stand Comedy Club. The original café soon became a coffee hotspot. When the Abbeyhill branch opens they will have four cafés, including their very popular Stockbridge branch on Hamilton Place. Based in Abbeyhill they will also be close to one of Scotland's other leading roasters, Obadiah – whose coffee is used by a variety of specialty cafés in the city including **Little Fitzroy**, one of the very best in the city. Other specialty coffee locations in the area include The Alibi Café and Red Kite Café.

The proliferation of specialty coffee in the area symbolises a changing Abbeyhill.