

Scottish Thistle Awards for Edinburgh businesses

Two Edinburgh tourism businesses won at the VisitScotland Central and East Thistle Awards.

Camera Obscura & World of Illusions won Best Visitor Attraction and the Innovation in Tourism Award.

Katie Scott from The Real Mary King's Close was named Tourism Individual of the Year.

The Real Mary King's Close is celebrating success as Operations Manager, Katie Scott, was honoured at the 2023 Scottish Thistle Awards this week.

Katie was awarded Tourism Individual of the Year for the Central and East Regional category. Katie joined The Real Mary King's Close as a Tour Guide in 2016 and has since moved her way up the ranks, most recently becoming Operations Manager in January 2023 overseeing all on-site activity at the celebrated attraction. The Real Mary King's Close is one of the UK's Top Ten visitor attractions, according to the number of positive reviews received by Trip Advisor in 2023.



Johnstons of Elgin Managing Director of Retail, George McNeil with Katie Scott from Real Mary King's Close and presenter Zara Janjua PHOTO Connor Mollison

Katie is an integral part of the company, responsible for every new experience that has been launched at the attraction over the past four years.

A spokesperson for The Real Mary King's Close said that Katie is "passionate about community and inclusivity, which has been demonstrated through the development of special tours that interrogate lesser-known or less often studied narratives from Edinburgh's past, such as the 'Herstory' tours and Pride History tours. These initiatives have not only helped to promote diversity but forge meaningful partnerships with organisations like Edinburgh's Strut Safe and LGBT Youth Scotland, making The Real Mary King's Close a welcoming space for all".

Katie said: "I am delighted to have won the Tourism Individual of the Year award, something I would never have imagined when I started as a Tour Guide at The Real Mary King's Close in

2016. I am incredibly grateful that my dedication to developing the attraction and creating a welcoming and creative workplace culture that supports inclusivity within the industry has been recognised”.





Left to right VisitScotland Regional Director Neil Christison, Ross Boon and Andrew Johnson and Irena Navrocka from Camera Obscura & World of Illusions and presenter Zara Janjua.