

# Chinese New Year celebrations at The Mound

**The Year of the Dragon officially begins on Saturday 10 February, but on Sunday it was all about dancing and music at The Mound to herald the beginning of a week long celebration.**

Sadly the weather was a bit dreich, but it did not dim the enthusiasm with which Scottish dancers showed off the Gay Gordons, and Chinese musicians entertained the crowd to their version of Scotland the Brave.

A Chinese New Year cultural and artistic display took place on The Mound outside the Scottish National Gallery with a Scottish twist. The Mound Chinese New Year Celebration is organised by the Edinburgh Chinese Arts Association and is supported by Heriot-Watt University. It included Lion Dances, Chinese New Year folk dances, Hanfu stories, the celebrated waist drums and the magnificent Long Fan Dance as well as children's activities and ceilidh dancing.

The Dragon is significant in Chinese culture as an auspicious and extraordinary creature, symbolising power, nobleness, honour, luck and success. 2024 is therefore forecasted to bring about opportunities, changes and challenges. Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Festival, generously supported by Heriot-Watt University and Hainan Airlines and co-ordinated by Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG) as part of its China Ready initiative, has become the largest celebration of its kind in

Scotland since its inception in 2019.

Rob Lang, Chair of the ETAG China Ready Initiative, said "We're delighted to be working with businesses across the city to welcome The Year of the Dragon by creating a unique and inspiring celebration of Scottish and Chinese culture. Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Festival creates an excellent opportunity to both re-affirm Scotland's capital city as a welcoming destination for overseas visitors and also enable people of the city to learn more about Chinese history and culture. With more direct flights to China we are expecting significantly more Chinese visitors in 2024 and hope many Scots also take the opportunity to visit China too."

Edinburgh Castle will be lit up in red on Saturday 10 February, and the Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra will be joined by a host of special guests to perform a ground-breaking programme of Scottish and Chinese music and song in The Chinese New Year Concert at the Usher Hall that evening. This year the Concert will also present spirited Highland dancing, the show-stopping Peking Opera and will be preceded by Lion and Dragon Dances outside the venue.

**Johnnie Walker Princes Street is putting on two special Journey of Flavour tours, hosted in Mandarin, on Friday 9 and Sunday 11 February. Two Bilingual Ceilidhs welcome all comers this year- the first hosted by the University of Edinburgh at City Art Centre on Sunday 11 February and the second at St Cecilia's Hall on Tuesday 13 February. The Bilingual Ceilidh's bring the joy and breathless wonder of the traditional Scottish ceilidh with a Mandarin speaking ceilidh caller making the Strip the Willow, Gay Gordons and Dashing White Sergeant fully accessible to Mandarin-speaking visitors, students and residents.**

**The Joyful Dragon For A Happy Chinese New Year at the**

**Assembly Rooms on 13 February offers a cultural extravaganza of vibrant performances, martial arts and traditional festivities including performances from Peking Opera and Folk Chinese Orchestral Ensemble. Heriot-Watt University's Scottish Confucius Institute for Business & Communication hosts a Chinese New Year Concert featuring musicians from Tianjin University of Finance & Economics at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on Friday 16 February.**

Chinese Consul General Zhang Biao said "Chinese New Year is the most important traditional holiday in China, a significant occasion for families to gather together with relatives and friends. People reflect on the achievements of the past year, offering mutual blessings and expectations for the future. I'm delighted to see that Edinburgh, and other cities in Scotland, actively support and organise celebrations for the Chinese New Year Festival. This promotes mutual understanding between China and Scotland and deepens the friendship between us. We welcome more and more Scottish people join us in sharing the joy of the Chinese New Year Festival. Moreover, we sincerely invite them to experience the unique and wonderful festivities in China during Chinese New Year."



Mr. Zhang Biao, Chinese Consul General in Edinburgh with Depute Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh Lezley Marion Cameron smiling despite the rain PHOTO ©2024 The Edinburgh Reporter

Other events in the programme include Lion Dances at St James Quarter on Saturday 10 February, Chinese Calligraphy and Paper Cutting Artists at Strathberry on Multrees Walk, Tai Chi Taster Sessions at the Tai Chi Centre on Bryson Road and [Paper Cutting](#) and [Lantern Making Workshops](#) and a [Family Trail](#) at St Cecilia's Hall. Camera Obscura & World of Illusions will be lighting up and decorating some of their exhibits, and Harvey Nichols is hosting Lunar New Year Tarot Card Reading with Kalem, Scotland's leading palmist. Shops and businesses around Edinburgh are participating in the Festival with a range of specially themed Year of the Dragon offers.

Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Festival brings together communities across Edinburgh to celebrate Chinese Culture and offers Chinese residents and students a range of activities to help them celebrate. The Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge said: "Chinese New Year is just

around the corner and preparations are well underway here in Edinburgh for this year's programme. Year on year our Chinese New Year celebrations in Edinburgh continue to grow, fostering cultural cooperation, learning, understanding and mutual respect between the people of Scotland and China. I'd encourage everyone in the Capital to get down and join in with the wide range of events and activities that are on offer.

"2024 is the Year of the Dragon which represents power, nobleness, honour, luck, and success – and it is our hope that these admirable qualities will grace our city, and indeed the wider world, throughout the year ahead."

Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Festival 2024 is supported by Heriot Watt University and, for the first time, Hainan Airlines.

Professor Ian Baxter, Heriot-Watt University, said: "We are once again delighted to support the Chinese New Year celebrations which are for everyone to enjoy, enabling the sharing of cultural traditions, friendship and a chance to experience something different or new. As a University with an international outlook we want to enable everyone whether student, resident or visitor to have the opportunity to positively share diverse cultural and educational opportunities."

Peter Han, regional Director of Hainan Airlines in UK & Ireland, said, "Hainan Airlines is proud to support the Edinburgh Chinese New Year Festival. It is an important event for the Chinese community in Scotland as well as showcasing Chinese Culture to the residents of the city. From 17 May Hainan Airlines are increasing our services on the Edinburgh-Beijing route to four flights per week offering people in Scotland more opportunities to experience China and increase the potential for closer working and investment prospects for businesses both at home and abroad."

Details of all events and activities across Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Festival can be found at [www.chinesenewyear.scot](http://www.chinesenewyear.scot).



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Mr. Zhang Biao, Chinese Consul General in Edinburgh with  
Depute Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh Marion Cameron  
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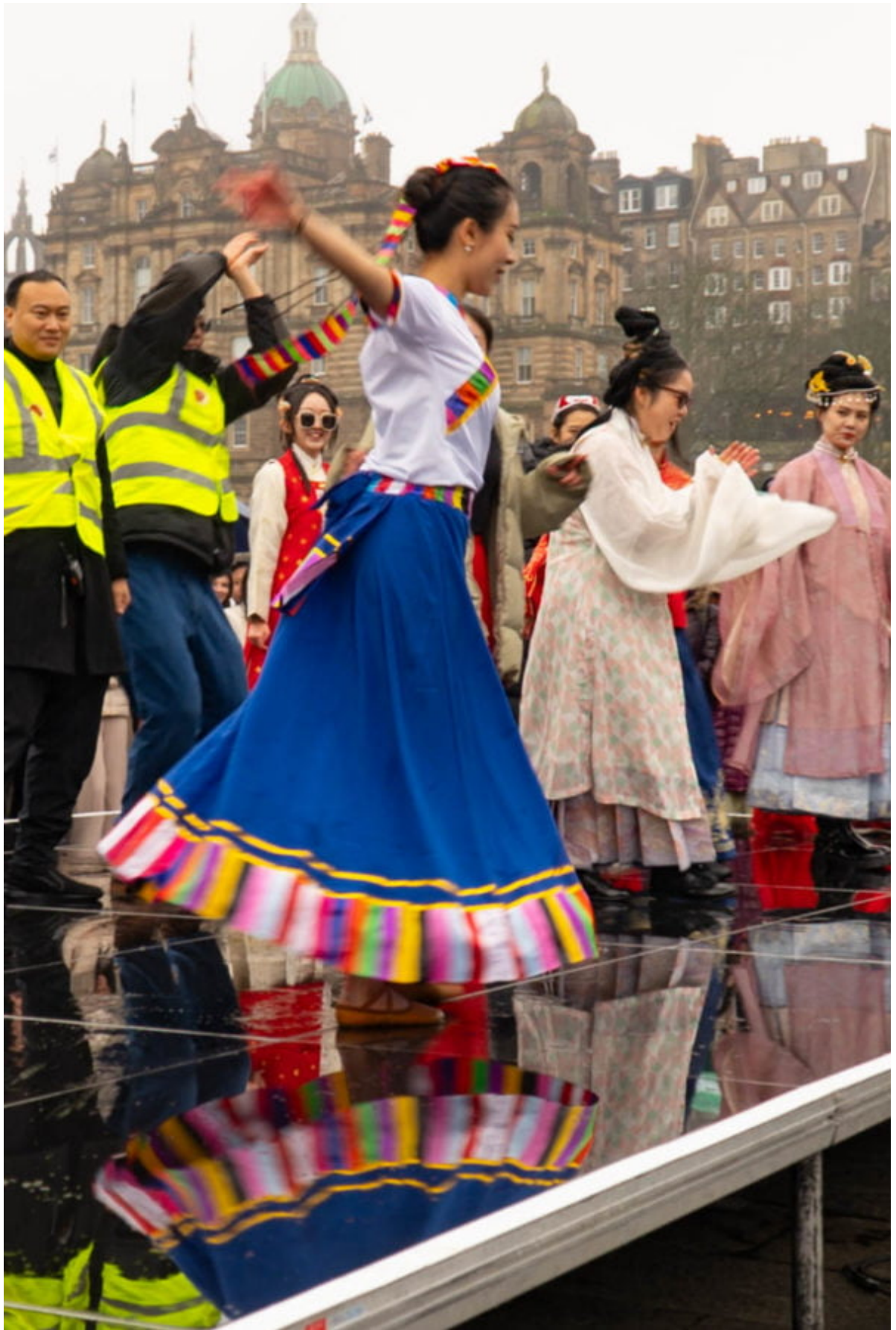


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