

Chief Executive of the Tattoo underlines the need to be “fresh but familiar”

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is set for fresh thinking while retaining the familiarity it's known and loved for to deliver on exciting new plans for growth.

Speaking on the Tattoo's new [podcast](#) Piping Up, Chief Executive, Jason Barrett, said that the brand will tread a fine line between modernity, authenticity, and heritage as it looks to its future and ensures it reaches new and broader audiences.

He said: “Getting the balance right is important and I think we've done a really good job of that in recent years. We've stretched ourselves in some areas with new things, for example our new twists on the bagpipes with the electro pipes.

“However, we certainly don't want people to come to the Tattoo and say that it's not what they remember it to be. That being said, the best compliment I've heard in the past couple of years was from a couple who'd been to many shows who told me it was amazing and the best combination of something fresh yet familiar and we just want to strike that balance.

“You're either moving forwards or you're moving backwards, you're never standing still so we choose to progress what we do and make it as entertaining as possible.”

While the Tattoo will never lose sight of the tradition it's known and loved for, its continued growth and innovation will help it to increase its charitable giving.

Speaking about the strategy for the Tattoo brand, Jason added: “We want and need to be more commercial as the Tattoo and I know that's new to people and they might not necessarily know

what that means.

“We are a charity and it’s with that, that we’re basing our measure of success around how much money we can give to charity. Therefore, if we do not make money, if we’re not profitable and if we’re not good businesspeople, then we fail on that endeavour.

“In Edinburgh, the Show is incredibly successful but that being said, we’re still trying to be as forward-leaning as possible to understand our challenges in the current model and then ask ourselves, what more can we do?”

As the brand innovates and invests, it seeks to understand more about audience experience through research and asking questions. In the podcast discussion, Jason said: “Therefore, innovation and research is something we’re putting even more of a focus on so when someone looks at the Tattoo and what it is, we have our core that we wouldn’t ever want to change like the Massed Pipes and Drums or our lone piper or relationship with the military.

“But the question for us is how we can continue to make the event more compelling and more immersive for our audience and examples can be found with our investment in projection, lighting, and sound in recent years, just to make it a better experience.

“Further exploration will also come in the customer experience in the venue itself. It’s incredible we can build a 9,000-person arena in a matter of weeks. But with the unpredictable Scottish weather, the question is what more can we do for our audience to improve, right through to the hospitality experience.”

As well as the constant search to improve the Tattoo experience for audiences and the benefit the brand delivers for many charities, Jason also touched on the potential for further international touring or diversifying performance types, by saying: “We’re beginning to think about taking the Tattoo abroad which allows us to do things a little differently and open up creative options.

“Could we do a bit of a tour and tap into new audiences? For example, could we go to North America and bring that Scottishness and the Tattoo and its connection to another market? I think that would be a measure of our success and effectiveness.”

Tickets for this summer's Show Journeys are on sale now and can be purchased at edintattoo.co.uk/tickets or on the phone, 0131 225 1188. The Show will run from 2-24 August 2024, with Presenting Partner, Innis & Gunn, offering a bar service at the event.



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The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo