

# **What to see at the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches on Sunday**

**On Sunday 15 September the spectacle of the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches with hundreds of riders on horseback will attract crowds to the Royal Mile. There are however other vantage points from which members of the public are encouraged to cheer the riders on.**

The event dates back five hundred years and is a reenactment of checking the city boundaries on horseback. Riders from the 29 Common Riding Towns of Scotland will also take part this year.



The Edinburgh Riding of the Marches took place on 10 September 2023. The Rt Hon Lord Provost jumped back on his horse to allow us to take this photo. PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter

– **The Riding Route:** The route starts at 9.30am. Around 280 riders will congregate on the outskirts of the city and they will reenact the riding of the boundaries or “marches” of the city.

This will include several thrilling gallops and canters, and the riders will then make their way past landmarks such as Craigmillar Castle Park and Holyrood Park, before finally riding up the historic Royal Mile.

**Spectators are encouraged to line the ride route to cheer the horses on as they pass by, with key viewing points and timings as follows:**

The ride starts from ‘The Caravan Park’ 642 Old Dalkeith Rd, EH16 4SL within Drum Estate. Please note: only equine vehicles may park within ‘The Caravan Park’.

- 0930hrs sharp, ride starts.
- Drum Estate Canters can be viewed from Gilmerton Road near Bernard Hunter's Yard between 0930hrs and 0950hrs.
- 1000hrs Ride proceeds North on Lasswade Road.
- 1020hrs to 1025hrs Ride proceeds along Captains Road – this is a good opportunity to view the full cavalcade
- Ride enters Mortonhall Estate at 1100hrs and exits at 1125hrs. Canters can be viewed from the cottages at Broomhills Road.
- Final Drum Estate Canters can be viewed between 1200hrs and 1215hrs within the Estate.
- Lunch stop takes place at 'The Caravan Park' between 1215hrs and 1335hrs, after which the ride exits the Drum onto Old Dalkeith Road.
- If you wish to see the ride on the Royal Mile, you should make your way there around this stage.
- 1230hrs Entertainment begins on the Royal Mile.
- 1430hrs Ride enters Craigmillar Castle Park. This section takes place between 1432hrs and 1440hrs and is an excellent viewing point. Please note: vehicles cannot stop on Craigmillar Castle Road.
- 1505hrs Ride approaches Duddingston at Old Church Lane.
- 1515hrs George Watsons Pipe Band forms-up at Broad Pavement Carpark and awaits the cavalcade of horses.
- 1540hrs Ride falls-in behind George Watsons.
- Cavalcade begins to travel up the Royal Mile to the Mercat Cross from 1545hrs to 1555hrs.

– 1556hrs The Cavalcade halts at the Mercat Cross. Captain and Lass take part in the return of the flag ceremony before the Rt Hon Lord Provost, riders and spectators. This should take approximately ten minutes before the ride then moves off up the Royal Mile then in to Johnston Terrace, Lady Lawson Street, West Port & into the Grassmarket where the ride concludes on King's Stables Road at 1644hrs.



Alasdair Blair from the 94th at History Matters Ltd at the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches in 2023 © 2023 Martin McAdam

## – Royal Mile Entertainment

Families, residents and visitors are all invited to join the celebration and enjoy the free entertainment from 1230hrs, taking place on the Royal Mile between North Bridge and South Bridge. This year's acts showcase Scotland's vibrant cultural traditions and include The Jacobites Ceilidh Band who will be attempting another Record-Breaking Ceilidh on the Royal Mile with audience participation, St Ronan's Silver Band, Erskine

Stewart Melville School Pipe Band, George Heriot's School Pipe Band, George Watson's College Pipe Band, History Matters Re-enactment Team and Wild Knights Jousting & Tournaments who will be performing a Border Reiver act for audiences, bringing the story of the lawless clans who dominated the land bordering Scotland and England between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

## **– The Procession:**

The grand procession will make its way up the Royal Mile, the most historic road in Edinburgh, with 280 riders taking part. Dressed in traditional attire of the Scottish Common Riding Towns, the riders will be wearing sashes representing the various Towns, whose own Marches and festivals run each year from April through to the final event of the year in Scotland's capital city. Leading the cavalcade of horses will be the 2024 Edinburgh Captain Robbie Houstoun carrying the Edinburgh City Banner accompanied by Lass Kirsty Symon. Ahead of the horses will be the mounted members of Scotland's Cavalry, The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, High Constables of Edinburgh, Members of the Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh all bearing the flags of the Trades and the ancient Blue Blanket, said to have been the battle flag at the Battle of Flodden, The Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh and Members of the Edinburgh Exiles Society.

Key ceremonial moments include the presentation of the "City of Edinburgh Banner" to the Lord Provost, a symbol declaring that the Marches of Edinburgh have been inspected and all is well, harking back to the protection and freedoms so fiercely upheld during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries.





The Edinburgh Riding of the Marches took place on 10 September 2023. Council Leader Cammy Day rekindled his love of horses for the event. PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter

The Rt Hon Lord Provost Robert Aldridge will once again be taking part in this historic event on horseback, for the second year running, reflecting the ancient custom when the inspection of the City's boundaries would be ordered and led by the Lord Provost of the day. He will be joined by Lord Provost Consort Colin Cunningham, Council Leader Cammy Day as well as Norma Melville Executive Assistant to the Lord Provost and Clerk to the Lieutenancy, all of whom also took part ilast year. They have been having riding lessons again over the past few weeks to get ready for the event.

The Lord Provost said: "I've very much looked forward to the historic Edinburgh Riding of the Marches on the streets of Edinburgh. "Much more than a colourful re-enactment of an ancient tradition, the Riding is about appreciating the history of the city we live in and celebrating being a citizen of Scotland's great capital city."

Sam Lockhart, Press Officer for the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches said:"This year's Edinburgh Riding of the Marches is particularly special as we continue to expand and include more of the Edinburgh community in this historical event. We're excited to see new faces and welcome back old friends as we ride through the city."

"The Edinburgh Riding of the Marches is a free event, open to all. Whether a lifelong resident or a visitor to the city, this is a unique opportunity to witness one of Scotland's lesser known storied traditions and become part of Edinburgh's living history."

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10/09/2023 Picture Alan Simpson The Edinburgh Riding of The Marches.