

School pupils join Mercat Tours' birthday celebrations

Mercat Tours has launched its 40th-anniversary celebrations with a transformative programme designed to inspire the next generation of local storytellers and tourism professionals. The inaugural event in a packed year-long calendar of birthday events, "A Day in Edinburgh", involved Mercat Tours and seven of their partners welcoming 90 second-year pupils from Holy Rood RC High School.

The event was attended by the Minister for Business, Richard Lochhead MSP, who joined the pupils to explore Edinburgh's rich cultural heritage and learn about the career opportunities within its thriving tourism sector. The initiative highlighted the collaborative efforts of eight award-winning partners, including Mercat Tours, Edinburgh Castle, Royal Yacht Britannia, Edinburgh Zoo, Camera Obscura, Rabbie's Small Group Tours, Dovecot Studios, and Holyrood Distillery.

Launched in 2016 as the brainchild of Managing Director Kat Brogan, "A Day in Edinburgh" has grown into a powerful initiative, providing over 685 pupils and 120 staff with memorable, confidence-building experiences. Working alongside leading tourism institutions, the programme connects young people to Edinburgh's stories, while giving pupils the opportunity to meet passionate industry professionals, who share insights into their careers, demonstrating how tourism can offer a dynamic, fulfilling career path. Survey results show 95% of students leave the programme with a stronger connection to their city and a greater appreciation for its vibrant history and cultural offerings.

Kat Brogan, Managing Director of Mercat Tours, said: "As we celebrate 40 years of giving Edinburgh's history 'a damn good telling,' it's fitting to kick-off our anniversary year by investing in the future. 'A Day in Edinburgh' is more than an educational day out—it's about igniting pride, ambition, and curiosity in young people while showcasing the vibrant, rewarding and diverse careers available in tourism. This initiative embodies what Mercat Tours stands for: connecting people to their past while inspiring their future."

Business Minister Richard Lochhead said: "We know that careers in tourism are fulfilling and integral to communities across Scotland. Which is why I find this programme, which seeks to inspire future generations to consider a career in this vibrant sector, admirable and valuable."

"Of course, we want there to be even more jobs for tomorrow's generation. That's why the Scottish Government is committed to helping the tourism sector to grow, allocating an additional £2 million to VisitScotland in our draft Scottish Budget to continue attracting visitors which supports the economy."

Joan Daly, Head Teacher at Holy Rood High School, said: "This initiative provides an opportunity for our pupils to enjoy the rich cultural experiences our city has to offer with no cost barriers to consider. This provides a real sense of equity for accessing school excursions, making them accessible for all."

James Campbell, Acting Depute, Holy Rood High School, added: "Not only will it provide an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful cultural sites our city has, but we feel it will go some way in raising their aspirations and developing the skills and confidence to become engaged in society as the new young workforce of the future."

One participating pupil from Holy Rood High School expressed a newfound aspiration to "be an architect who restructures old buildings like the Georgian House or write about animals for

the zoo.” While another noted the valuable skills they learned: “You have to be friendly, good at socialising, patient, and energetic – a people person, know languages and be polite.”

“A Day in Edinburgh” sets the stage for Mercat Tours’ broader anniversary programme which will feature a packed series of initiatives, events, and a few surprises throughout 2025, with a warm invitation to all to join the celebrations. The local family business has designed a programme to honour its legacy while thanking the local community, Edinburgh’s tourism industry and its visitors from around the globe for their support over the last four decades. Further details will be revealed soon.

As the UK’s first and only Certified B Corporation™ visitor attraction and a Living Hours Employer, Mercat Tours exemplifies the ethos that “good business does good.” Passionate advocates that history should be accessible to everyone, visitors and locals alike, programmes like *A Day in Edinburgh*, demonstrate Mercat’s investment in its community, ensuring Edinburgh’s stories endure while inspiring young people to help shape the city’s future to benefit all, equally.

To find out more about Mercat Tours planned 40th celebrations and “A Day in Edinburgh” programme visit: www.mercattours.com



Mercat Tours directors (L to R) Mike Brogan, Des Brogan, founder, and Kat Brogan, Managing Director, celebrate the 40th launch with local artist and longstanding Mercat friend Alasdair MacLauchlan, whose hand-painted illustration of the Mercat Cross will be the centrepiece of the company's brand identity for 2025.