

VisitScotland Update for the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group Meeting, Wednesday 14th December 2011

1. Marketing

Edinburgh Sparkles

As part of the national Surprise Yourself campaign phase two, VisitScotland has partnered with Marketing Edinburgh to deliver a winter marketing campaign 'Edinburgh Sparkles' to promote short breaks to Edinburgh during the festive winter period.



The Edinburgh Sparkles campaign aims to inspire and inform visitors about the many exciting things to see and do in Edinburgh at this magical time of year. This campaign focuses on Edinburgh's Christmas, Edinburgh's Hogmanay, and shopping as well as food and drink and attractions.

Media activity includes outdoor posters, radio advertising, newspaper adverts and Facebook advertising, which started on 17 October and will run until 13 November 2011.

All campaign activity drives visitors to the Edinburgh Sparkles website - www.edinburghsparkles.com which links to www.visitscotland.com/surprise providing visitors the opportunity to enter a free prize draw to win the chance to launch Edinburgh's Hogmanay fireworks, and 'download' money-saving offers.

Winter Ancestral Marketing

Also as part of the autumn/winter phase of Surprise Yourself, VisitScotland planned activity promoting the ancestral theme to the Scotland audience linked to St Andrews Day on 30 November. Capitalising on the increasing popularity of programmes such as 'Who do you think you are', this encourages prospective visitors to research their family tree.



Visitors have been encouraged to re-visit family roots/visit family lands and take advantage of over 300 offers through www.visitscotland.com/surpriseoffers.

See below some highlights of activity:

A new section on the **Surprise Yourself website** tabbed 'Ancestral' which includes information in Edinburgh & Lothians on - Clan background, How to research your roots, Traditional Scottish celebrations and festivals and Walking in the footsteps of your ancestors (clan tours/itineraries).



VisitScotland have been promoting ancestral Scotland within national newspapers, ancestral themed e-blasts to the daily record database, an ancestral themed home page takeover on www.dailyrecord.co.uk in November (average daily visits - 58,000). Plus a total of 5 ad slots to include links to Surprise Yourself ancestral content, prize draw as above, events and e-zine sign up message.

In November on air trailers were featured with Bauer Radio, reaching 1.7m listeners per week. Online content on station websites featured - bespoke VS Surprise Yourself pages.



Snowdrop Festival



As part of the Surprise Yourself campaign, the Snowdrop festival will be running again for the sixth year and promoted as one of the key things to see and do during the winter season to a predominantly Scottish visitors.

This year's festival will take place from 4th February-18 March 2012 and over 50 gardens have been recruited to take part.

The Festival aims to extend the season for Scotland's historic houses and gardens to beyond their peak period of summer and spring. Consumers are encouraged to experience the beauty of the Snowdrops as well as other surprising things to see and do in the area.

Activity this year will include:

Snowdrop festival leaflets, media activity within national newspapers, dedicated section within the Surprise Yourself national website, PR activity and promotion within VisitScotland consumer newsletters.

Consumer ezines

Edinburgh & Lothians has featured heavily throughout the VisitScotland programme of Consumer ezines, the most recent 'Surprise Yourself' themed ezines were sent out to over 600,000 warm contacts on VisitScotland's database.



Scottish Snowsports Festival
Ski and snowboard in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens and watch Europe's best perform in two exciting competitions.
[Find out more >>](#)

Winter Wonders Ranger Walk, Musselburgh
4 December 2011
Escape the bustle of town with a surprising nature walk through the grounds of Newhailes House. Discover the shell grotto hidden in the trees and see the beautiful water garden. Meet Santa in the Stables Courtyard and enjoy fun crafts and seasonal treats in the Stables Cafe. [Head along to Newhailes](#)

Visit a castle perched on an extinct volcano...
Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Sparkles
24 November 2011 - 3 January 2012
Enjoy six weeks of amazing winter events with delicious treats at the German Market, the astonishing spectacle of hundreds of Santas sprinting through Princes Street Gardens and of course Edinburgh's world famous Hogmanay celebrations. [Get festive in the capital](#)

Hopetoun's Christmas Shopping Fair
25 - 27 November 2011
Indulge in some Christmas shopping with a difference amid the grand surroundings of Hopetoun House near Edinburgh. With over 60 fabulous stands to browse, you are sure to find some unique and surprising Christmas gifts. [Head for the fair at Hopetoun](#)

Nowhere sparkles like Edinburgh at Christmas >>
Experience Edinburgh's Christmas and New Year, voted the best in the UK! Surprises include a treasure hunt on the streets of the capital and the sight of hundreds of Santas sprinting through Princes Street Gardens.

Things to See & Do | **Offers**

National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

voucher to spend on goodies.

[Enter now >>](#)

Surprise yourself!

This month's UK & Ireland featured a competition prize you win a fantastic break in Edinburgh which included a two-night stay at the Apex International, a trip to the National Museum of Scotland with lunch and a £50 voucher.

National Museums of Scotland, Hopetoun's Christmas Shopping Fair and the Winter Wonder Rangers Walk in Musselburgh all featured within recent newsletters issued.

This month's consumer ezines also featured an Edinburgh's Hogmanay banner ad - encouraging Visitors to book their Street party tickets.

Grab a Glen

VisitScotland launched its first ever **interactive diary this year**, designed to promote some of Scotland's best and well known as well as more surprising active pursuits.

VisitScotland enlisted the help of **top travel writer** Robin McKelvie to write about his travels including his recent visit to Edinburgh.



View over Edinburgh from Calton Hill



Skyline of Edinburgh from Arthur's Seat

Day one of Robin's adventure to Scotland's bustling capital city, suggests a trip up Arthur's Seat - a real oasis for walkers, runners and cyclists, a countryside within a city! For a less strenuous walk Robin also highly recommends Calton Hill. Edinburgh, as Robin states is a great city to get active in - with signposted routes along old railway lines and canal towpaths, you can cycle all the way from Edinburgh along the Union and then Forth & Clyde canals to the very heart of Glasgow! If that's not enough activity, Robin mentions the newly revamped National Museum of Scotland, with a multitude of exhibits it takes half a day of walking around and then there is the brilliant play area on the ground level. Something for all ages.



Taking his adventure to new heights, Robin set off to conker a climbing wall at **the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena**, for a taster session of climbing and abseiling.

After such an adrenaline packed afternoon, Robin cooled off with a with a relaxed cycle through **Hopetoun Estate** on the marked trail to their new farm shop and a ramble through **Dalmeny Estate**, where Robin stumbled upon a beach, pheasants, a castle and the rather stately Dalmeny House. With the Edinburgh skyline within view, all Robin's efforts were rewarded with a wee dram at **the pub at Cramond Brig**.



The online travel diary is central to VisitScotland's '**Grab a Glen**' campaign as part of **the year of Active Scotland**. Users can **share experiences, photographs and videos and influence Robin's trip** through **VisitScotland's Facebook sites**. Robin's travel diary also hosts hints, tips and maps of Scotland, as well a competition and money-saving vouchers.

Worth **in excess of £825 million** to the Scottish economy, active pursuits are a key part of the visitor experience. Latest statistics have shown that **more than 80% of visitors** said they took part in a walk of **more than three miles** and **more than a third (37%)** took part in some sort of **sporting activity**.

To read about Robin's full trip to Edinburgh visit www.visitscotland.com/grabaglen - **Why not visit the site and comment using Facebook and Twitter, you can 'like', 'share' and 'follow' Robins experiences!**

My Scotland

VisitScotland continues its partnership with the Daily Record which has a readership of 1.7million - offering the ideal opportunity to promote Scotland to our own residents. The new National Museum of Scotland was recently promoted within a **full-page feature placed in the travel section of the Daily Record**.



The main feature in the Daily Record **focused on a day out**, exploring all the new galleries and things to see and do at **the revamped National Museum of Scotland**. Smaller articles on the page included accommodation offers including **Acer Lodge Guest House** in **Midlothian** and promotion of the **Supersonic Science Show** at the **National Museum of Flight, East Lothian**.

2 for 1 Scottish Days Out

VisitScotland launched a new Days Out campaign to reach a larger number of locals and visitors in Scotland, aiming to grow the day trip market and encourage visitors to experience Scotland's visitor attractions. The campaign was launched late September and ran throughout October 2011 targeting, in particular, families looking for things to see and do during the school holidays.

VisitScotland worked in partnership with many paid-to-enter visitor attractions across Scotland and Edinburgh & Lothians including the Scottish Seabird Centre, National Museum of Flight, Linlithgow Palace and Tantallon Castle plus many of **Historic Scotland's paid-to-enter properties**.



The campaign launched the 2-for-1 Days Out offer with **The Scottish Sun**, supported by promotion on **Real Radio in Scotland**.

Work with The Scottish Sun included encouraging readers to buy The Sun to collect their cut-out voucher. The promotion included a full page feature with cut-out vouchers every Saturday throughout October. The sun website also included online banners.


Real Radio promoted the 2 of 1 offer on-air by encouraging listeners to buy The Scottish Sun to collect their cut-out 2-for-1 offer voucher from VisitScotland and ran a 5 day on-air competition, giving away free tickets to some of the participating attractions.



Promotional activity also included Facebook mentions and banners on **VisitScotland.com**. **All activity linked through to a dedicated webpage on the surprise yourself website where visitors could download offers.**


International e-newsletters

Edinburgh & Lothians have also been at large in communications to consumers and media in our international markets. Edinburgh's skyline is featured as the main banner images within recent e newsletters issued. (Below)




Official Scotland Website Event

Dear Laura




Nationale portretten van Schotland
In Edinburgh vindt u een overvloed aan culturele bezienswaardigheden en deze winter zien we de langverwachte heropening van de Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Dit fantastische museum, gehuisvest in een van de prachtigste gebouwen van de stad, presenteert in 17 nieuwe galeriën een unieke visuele geschiedenis van Schotland, met portretten van de Schotten die deze geschiedenis schreven.

[>Bezoek de Portrait Gallery](#)



See Edinburgh sparkle this Christmas
Set beneath Edinburgh Castle and by thousands of fairy lights, Scotland's capital bursts into life in winter for six weeks of festive celebrations. Warm up with a mug of glühwein at the German market or glide across the UK's largest outdoor ice rink at the iconic Winter Wonderland.

[Join the celebrations](#)



WIN a VIP trip to Scotland!
Be the first party goer in history to start Edinburgh's Hogmanay Midnight Fireworks which blaze from the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle above 80,000 revellers enjoying the world-famous street party. The event marks the start of the Year of Creative Scotland and its exciting and imaginative programme of special events.

[>Light up New Year today!](#)

VisitScotland's suite of monthly international consumer e-newsletters is sent to almost a million potential visitors around the world in nine languages. The opening of the National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh's German market and Edinburgh's Hogmanay all featured recently.

VisitScotland launches one stop website for travel trade

VisitScotland has launched VisitScotlandTravelTrade.com, offering the UK & Ireland and international travel industry a one-stop-shop for Scotland information, inspiration and deals. The site is designed to assist tour operators and agents to sell destination Scotland more effectively to clients.

Tour operators, group travel organisers and travel agents will find more than 25 downloadable itineraries, in addition to e-brochures and maps, making it as easy as possible to plan all types of client breaks and holidays in Scotland, from island adventures and special interest trips, to golf holidays, city breaks and much more besides!

The travel trade can also learn more about VisitScotland's marketing campaigns and opt-in to receive the specialised monthly travel trade e-newsletter, as well as download clips and images to help inspire clients to choose Scotland for their next holiday or short break.

The site also brings together a whole host of Scottish companies who have stepped forward and committed to special rates, discounts and commissions exclusively available for the travel trade in one comprehensive directory. Agents can search the database to complete a Scotland itinerary, browse for new ideas, or look for a contact within a couple of clicks

To view the website Visit: <https://traveltrade.visitscotland.org/>

2. Press and PR

The strength of achieving positive PR can never be underestimated. Our award winning corporate and consumer PR teams successfully achieve coverage within fantastic titles in order to reach wide audiences throughout the UK and beyond!

Brendan Vacations Fam Trip

Brendan, a major US tour operator, brought a group of twenty American Express travel agents on a fam trip to Scotland in November. VisitScotland sponsored dinner in Edinburgh for the group and informed them about the Year of Creative Scotland and the SCOTS Programme. Brendan is part of The Travel Corporation, whose brands include Trafalgar, Insight and Contiki.

Beijing News Coverage

Coverage in the Beijing News as a result of a press trip to Scotland in August 2011. The feature focuses on Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Miss China visiting Scotland

Online coverage was generated following a press release on Miss China visiting Scotland as part of the Miss World visit to Scotland in early November. Coverage shows Miss China at Edinburgh Castle.

Air China in flight magazine coverage

Coverage appeared in Air China in flight magazine, following a press visit to Scotland by two journalists in September 2011. The magazine 'Aviation News' is circulated through all of Air China's internal flights in mainland China. Coverage features Edinburgh.

Surprise Yourself phase one coverage

Surprise yourself phase two during the month on November coverage totals 30 items. Coverage of Edinburgh and Scotland wide includes:

Print:

- Darlington & Stockton Times (Durham & Cleveland versions) - Edinburgh Christmas market
- Coach World - must see in Edinburgh
- Redditch Advertiser - Christmas in Scotland
- Ride magazine - best rides across Scotland
- Daily Record - double page on ancestry of Fred MacAulay
- The Sunday Times - the alternative way of travelling to Scotland
- Sunday Post - Edinburgh Christmas market
- The Daily Telegraph -Year of Creative Scotland and Speed of Light

Online:

- msn.co.uk - Christmas market in Edinburgh
- Dailyrecord.co.uk - ancestry of Fred MacCaulay
- SundayTimes.co.uk - the alternative way of travelling to Scotland
- GoodToKnow.co.uk - Edinburgh Christmas break



Christmas German Market, Edinburgh

Edinburgh's Christmas German Market has one of the best settings of all – right below the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. From Friday 25th November until Christmas Eve on Saturday 24th December 2011, you can buy everything from beautifully decorated hand-blown baubles and unique jewellery to handcrafted wooden toys and stocking fillers. Plus you can warm up with spiced mulled wine as you shop and kids will love the gingerbread goods and other sweet treats on offer. You can find great-value hotel rooms on laterooms.com and train deals on redspottedhanky.com. Alternatively, newmarketholidays.co.uk have 2-day shopping trips to Edinburgh from £79.95 per person including coach pick-up from over 450 departure points, 1 night's B&B and a sightseeing tour.

Visit edinburghchristmas.com

Photo credit: VisitScotland/ScottishViewpoint

3. Partnerships

Partners team up to launch Midlothian Food and Drink brand



Working in Partnership, VisitScotland, Midlothian Council and Midlothian Tourism Forum were joined by businesses from the food and drink sector for the launch of the Midlothian Food and Drink brand at the National Mining Museum Scotland, this month.

Provost Montgomery welcomed 48 enthusiastic delegates, who heard from other successful food and drink initiatives; including the Fife Food network and Love 2 Eat and participated in workshops to generate ideas and suggestions on future activity

Interest was shown for the establishment of a food and drink steering group that will host their first meeting at the beginning of December, to drive the brand forward using all the information gathered from the workshop.

Progress will be highlighted on www.midlothianfood-drink.com

This project is part-financed by the Scottish Government, Midlothian Council and the European Community Tyne Esk Leader 2007-2013 Programme.

Refreshed Edinburgh & Lothians website launched



VisitScotland™

Edinburgh and the Lothians

Search

Things to See & Do
Attractions, Activities, Events

Accommodation
Search & Book

Places & Maps
Destinations & Maps

About the Region
History & Culture

Travel
To & around the region

Edinburgh and the Lothians

Roslin Glen and the River North Esk,
Midlothian

VisitScotland working in partnership with industry partners including Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), Marketing Edinburgh, Festivals Edinburgh, Capital Group, Edinburgh and Lothians Councils and Edinburgh Castle we have created a refreshed regional consumer website for the area in an effort to coordinate industry and public sector activity with a focus on growing tourism and the Edinburgh & Lothians economy.

The partnership has allowed for a cost effective, coordinated and sustainable approach, improving on what is available at the moment and making best use of existing resources.

The Edinburgh & Lothians regional website is the second in Scotland to be completed as part of the larger VisitScotland digital strategy and is now live giving the region's tourism industry an improved online platform to reach visitors. This site offers a definitive guide to Edinburgh & Lothians, inspiring visitors through a single information source on everything the region has to offer.

View the refreshed website here: www.edinburgh.org

The second phase of the project in March 2012 is part of the overall VisitScotland Digital and Media strategy and will mean the new website is designed to improve the consumer experience and give tourism businesses an enhanced opportunity to reach potential visitors - providing easy ways of inputting content and inspiring visitors, by giving recommendations on other things to see and do beyond their initial search.

Winning Years

The winning years - a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the face of tourism in Scotland

A message from our Chairman, Mike Cantlay:

“We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the face of tourism in Scotland and at VisitScotland we call this opportunity ‘The Winning Years’.

From the Year of Creative Scotland, the Olympics and Disney-Pixar’s film *Brave* in 2012 through to the Commonwealth Games, The Ryder Cup and Homecoming in 2014, VisitScotland will be targeting its marketing and events expertise to grow tourism through these world-class opportunities. By working together, we can bring economic growth to the country by focusing on tourism.”

VisitScotland stakeholder/Industry activity includes:

VisitScotland’s Parliamentary Reception in November this year and an industry event in partnership with Creative Scotland held at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Perthshire.

New look for Scottish Thistle Awards

Results of a widespread consultation exercise with the tourism industry have shown a need for an awards programme led by VisitScotland, celebrating excellence and satisfying the industry’s appetite for knowledge, advice and support whilst instilling self confidence amongst businesses to engage with the Scottish Thistle Awards.

We are delighted to announce major changes to the Scottish Thistle Awards including a new regional format, recognising tourism excellence across the country and delivering a year-round programme of industry-facing activity as well as revamping the final event format.

A programme of four localised Scottish Thistle Awards celebrations will take place between April and May 2012.



The four regional award areas will be: Highland and Islands, North East, South/Central, South/Central West with the winners of each progressing to represent the region at the final awards ceremony.

Entries have now opened, details of which can be found here - www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk

Year of Creative Scotland 2012: funding still available

Tourism and cultural organisations across Scotland are being urged to make the most of the unprecedented opportunities offered by the Year of Creative Scotland.

The year-long campaign, designed to spotlight, celebrate and promote Scotland's culture and creativity, will encourage these sectors to work closer together to enhance cultural tourism in Scotland. It is being supported with £1 million National Lottery Funding from Creative Scotland for collaborations between the culture, tourism and heritage sectors and organisations are being urged to submit applications before the second and final deadline of 31 January 2012.

The Year of Creative Scotland is a partnership between the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, VisitScotland, EventScotland and VOCAL and will promote Scotland as a dynamic, contemporary nation with a world class cultural offering.

Full details are available at the [Creative Scotland website](#).

London 2012 reveals Scottish communities on Olympic Torch Relay route



120 Scottish communities announced on the Olympic Torch Relay route

- **The Olympic Flame will be in Scotland between 8 and 14 June and will visit every Local Authority area**
- **The Scottish public are invited to start planning their welcome**

- **Over 95% of the UK population will be within 10 miles of the Olympic Flame**

The announcement of the 1,018 villages, towns and cities on the UK route means LOCOG has realised the aspiration of taking the Olympic Flame to within an hour's journey time of 95% of the population. The street by street detail of the route will be confirmed next year.

Not only does the Scotland route include villages, town and cities, the Olympic Torch Relay will also take in landmarks along the way and the Olympic Flame will be carried for sections of the route by different modes of transport.

A list of the host communities in Scotland and other highlights are available to download from [here](#). An Olympic Torch Relay animation film that gives a taste of the journey the Olympic Flame will make is available on request. People are invited to view the interactive map at www.london2012.com/olympictorchrelaymap to find their nearest community through which the Olympic Flame will be carried.

The Olympic Flame will be carried across the UK by 8,000 inspirational Torchbearers each of whom will have a story of personal achievement and/or contribution to the local community. In December this year, successful nominees will be contacted with a conditional offer and final Torchbearer places will start to be confirmed from February 2012 onwards.

For further information please visit the website at www.london2012.com.

AdviceLink - New advice materials for businesses

VisitScotland Partnership Communications have worked with colleagues from across the organisation to produce a new series of advice guides called VisitScotland AdviceLink.

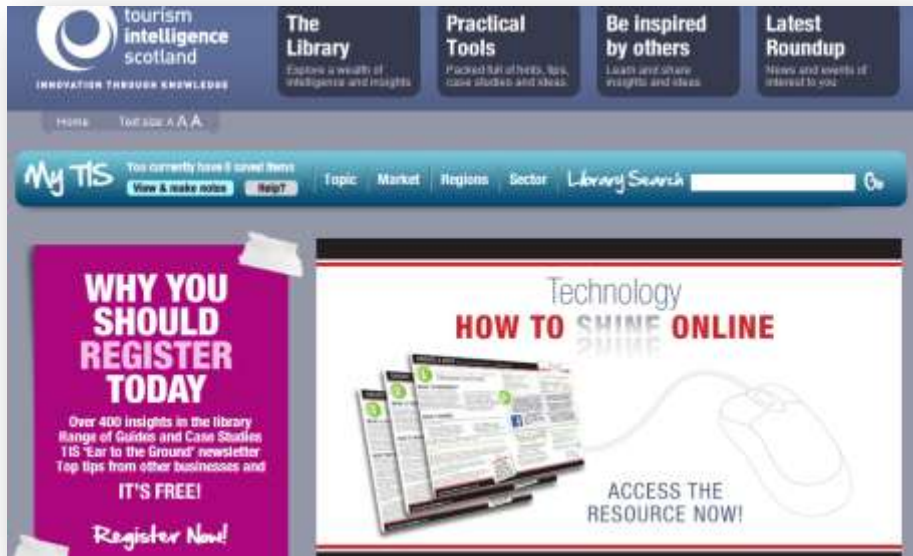
These new advice guides will be published on the Business Support section of our corporate website VisitScotland.org.

VisitScotland AdviceLink Series 1 aims to provide introductory support to businesses on a range of useful topics:

- **AdviceLink 'Introduction to working with the media'** - This guide offers businesses introductory information on working with journalists, writing and delivering a press release and maximising PR opportunities available through VisitScotland. It is now available on [VisitScotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org) as a printable PDF. Visit - http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/business_resources/how_to_work_with_the_media.aspx
- **VisitScotland AdviceLink 'Introduction to Online Marketing'** This guide will offer businesses advice on how to ensure they are easily found online and how to protect their reputation online. This will be available on VisitScotland.org as a printable PDF this week.
- **Year of Creative Scotland Toolkit**
VisitScotland has also produced a Year of Creative Scotland Toolkit for businesses, media and stakeholders, that will make it easy for everyone to get involved. The toolkit includes information, images, an events diary and more. [Browse the Year of Creative Scotland Toolkit at VisitScotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org).

How to Shine Online

New technology resource helps tourism businesses 'shine online'



Tourism businesses are being urged to grow their business through technology with a new online resource published by Tourism Intelligence Scotland (TIS), as part of its 'Opportunities for Growth' series.

'How to Shine Online' features practical 'how to' guides, hints, tips, ideas and case studies on making the most of the latest technology including social media.

Using step by step practical guides, operators will be able to find out how to create a buzz about their business, turn interest into bookings, enhance the visitor experience, build on their success and stay one step ahead.

A series of downloadable factsheets, all written in plain English and minus any 'tech-speak', will walk businesses through the technology and how it works, explaining how to keep in touch with customers through Facebook, communicate with their market using Twitter, tailor their website for their audience, get smarter with payment handling, build their online reputation with TripAdvisor, use the right 'netiquette' and get ready for future technologies including Web 3.0 and 4G.

Top tips include making a point of responding to customer reviews, using Google Alerts to keep track of your competition, using RSS feeds to make new content on your website available to your target audience, running competitions on Facebook to encourage interaction, and adding meaningful updates to Twitter that will engage and intrigue.

The guide is available to businesses who register at www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk.

Manuela Calchini
Regional Director - Edinburgh & Lothians