

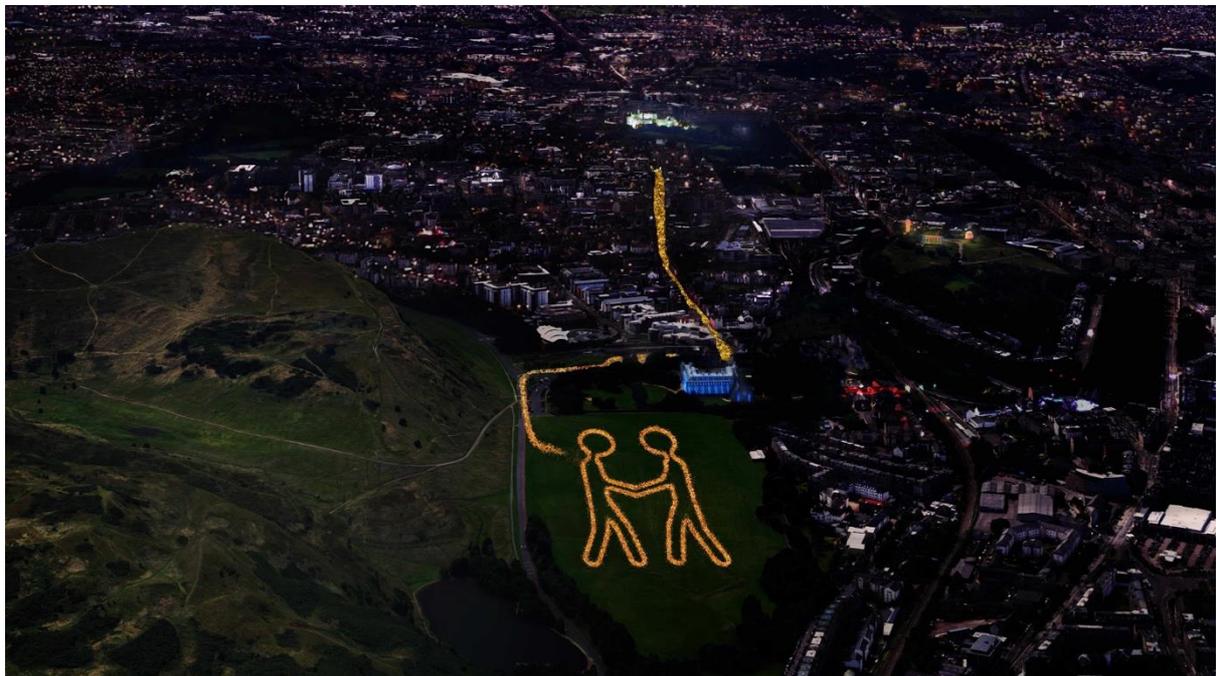
EDINBURGH'S HOGMANAY 19

Press release for immediate use

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
- Auld Lang Syne

**New details revealed for the iconic opening of
Edinburgh's Hogmanay, the Torchlight
Procession in partnership with VisitScotland**

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- Thousands of torchbearers to create 'Be Together' symbol of two people reaching out a hand in friendship in huge fire art in Holyrood Park
- Scotland's pioneering Celtic Fire Theatre company, PyroCeltica lead the Procession with Edinburgh's Harbinger Drum Crew

- **Clanadonia and The Torches to entertain the audience at the procession end in Holyrood Park**
- **Ten Pipe & Drum bands from across Scotland join cast of thousands set to blaze a river of fire through Edinburgh's historic heart for the iconic Torchlight Procession**
- **Torchlight Procession, in partnership with VisitScotland, marks the start of the global Hogmanay celebrations with all eyes on Edinburgh as the city welcomes visitors from around the world**
- **50p from each ticket sold is donated to OneCity Trust**

On behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, Underbelly today revealed details of the Torchlight Procession.

On 30th December, the historic streets at the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town will flow with a flaming river of light as thousands gather for the magical Torchlight Procession in partnership with VisitScotland, providing a spectacular start to Edinburgh's Hogmanay.

Reminiscent of the ancient customs of Hogmanay in Scotland hundreds of years ago when festivities would include the lighting of bonfires, rolling blazing tar barrels down hills and tossing torches, fire has long been considered a symbol of rebirth and new beginnings and is at the heart of the opening of Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations.

At Holyrood Park where the procession culminates, torchbearers will make the shape of two people reaching out a hand in friendship representing the theme of this year's Edinburgh's Hogmanay, Be Together. The image will be captured from the air creating an image to be shared with the world – Scotland's message of welcome and friendship against the backdrop of its capital city.

Leading the procession from just East of St Giles' Cathedral down the Royal Mile and into Holyrood Park, is a 40 strong cast from Scotland's pioneering Celtic Fire Theatre company, **PyroCeltica** who's Highland Warriors showcase a dazzling array of fire skills featuring fire fans, huge flaming claymores and fire staffs, set to the booming beats of **Edinburgh's Harbinger Drum Crew**.



There are still some tickets available to join the families, friends, residents and visitors and to take part in the procession joining pipe, drum and dance bands from across Scotland, including **Bigger RBL (Royal British Legion) Pipe Band, Cockenzie & Port Seton RBL Pipes & Drums, Scottish Borders Pipe Band, The Edinburgh Samba School, Hawick Scout Pipe Band, Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia Pipe Band, Glencorse Pipe Band, Preston Lodge High School Pipe Band, Edinburgh Postal Pipe Band and Pulse of the Place** bringing a range of traditional and contemporary styles to keep the procession moving to an eclectic Scottish beat

The event's house band, **The Torches**, and guest artists **Clanadonia** whose music features in *Outlander* and who have played major events from T in the Park to the Opening Ceremony of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, will then take to the stage in Holyrood Park to entertain everybody until the event comes to a finish with sparkling fireworks lifting from Calton Hill at 9pm.

Tickets are £3, or £14 for those who'd like to carry a torch, with 50p from each ticket donated to **OneCity Trust**. Through initiating and funding various projects in Edinburgh, the Trust aims to fight social exclusion in the Scottish capital. Only last year, 50p donations from tickets to the Torchlight Procession and Silent Light at Edinburgh's Christmas raised a total of almost £30,000 for OneCity Trust.

The Torchlight Procession is being delivered in partnership with VisitScotland and its EventScotland team, who have been a long-term supporter of the event, which this year is estimated to attract 40,000 people to take part.

Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam, directors of Edinburgh's Hogmanay said:

“The Torchlight Procession is Edinburgh’s Hogmanay’s iconic opening event. A moment in the year when people come together at the start of Hogmanay and celebrate the end of one year and the start of a new, and this year a new decade too. The culmination will be thousands of people forming the image of two people reaching out their hands in friendship. An image to be proud of, of warmth, welcome and friendship set against the beautiful backdrop of Edinburgh.”

“We’re expecting tens of thousands on the procession with each person taking part contributing to the work of Edinburgh’s OneCity Trust. We look forward to welcoming everyone to the opening of Edinburgh’s Hogmanay celebrations.”

The Lord Provost Frank Ross is Patron of the OneCity Trust which works to fight inequality and exclusion in the City of Edinburgh. He said: “Once again, the sight of the Torchlight Procession will provide a breath-taking start to Edinburgh’s Hogmanay! It’s a real privilege to lead the 40,000-strong procession along the Royal Mile to the beat of pipes and drums, ending with a fireworks finale in Holyrood Park. Last year’s event resulted in an incredible donation of £30,000 to the OneCity Trust and I’m hoping we can look forward to even more funds being raised this winter.”

Paul Bush OBE, VisitScotland’s Director of Events, said: “We are delighted to be supporting this year’s Torchlight Processions, kicking off three-days of fantastic Hogmanay celebrations across Edinburgh and building on EventScotland’s long-term support of the event.

“Scotland is the perfect stage for events and the Torchlight Processions offers both locals and visitors the chance to take part in a uniquely Scottish tradition that also marks the start of the global New Year celebrations. It is truly a spectacle not to be missed.”

Edinburgh’s Hogmanay is supported by City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland through the Scottish Government’s Festivals Expo Fund.

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Tickets on sale now at edinburghshogmanay.com and (+44) 131 510 0395

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Underbelly

Underbelly is a UK based live entertainment company. Their events and festivals division operates one of the largest operations at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, selling over 460,000 tickets for over 200 shows, in 22 venues over 25 days in 2018.

2018 was the sixth year Underbelly produced Edinburgh's Christmas for City of Edinburgh Council which saw 771,074 tickets sold to visitors from more than 40 countries, and the second year of producing Edinburgh's Hogmanay also on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, which welcomed 160,000 over 3 days.

2019 marks the eleventh year of Underbelly Festival on the Southbank - one of the biggest multi-arts offerings in London and London's original pop-up festival, with over 140 shows programmed over 6 months on the South Bank.

Underbelly also produces Christmas in Leicester Square, Udderbelly Festival in Hong Kong, West End Live in Trafalgar Square for Westminster City Council and the Society of London Theatre.

In 2018 Underbelly sold over 1.5 million tickets to their various events.

www.underbelly.co.uk

EventScotland

EventScotland is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors. For further information about EventScotland, its funding programmes and latest event news visit www.EventScotland.org. Follow EventScotland on Twitter [@EventScotNews](https://twitter.com/EventScotNews).

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, the national tourism organisation which markets Scotland as a tourism destination across the world, gives support to the tourism industry and brings sustainable tourism growth to Scotland. For more information about VisitScotland see www.visitscotland.org for consumer information on Scotland as a visitor destination see www.visitscotland.com.

Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2020

- Following an industry consultation, the Themed Years will now take place every second year to enable more time for planning and opportunities for collaboration.
- 2020 has been designated as a year in which Scotland's Coasts and Waters will be showcased and celebrated with a programme of activity designed to support the nation's tourism and events sectors.
- The year, led by VisitScotland will sustain and build upon the momentum of Scotland's preceding Themed Years to spotlight, celebrate and promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland's unrivalled Coasts and Waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors.
- A year-long programme of events, activities and ideas will shine a spotlight on the impact our waters have had on Scotland, from the formation of beautiful natural features to the creation of our national drink – whisky.
- The Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 is a Scottish Government initiative being led by VisitScotland, and supported by a variety of partners including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Historic Environment Scotland, Marine Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Sail Scotland, Scottish Canals, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Water and Scottish Tourism Alliance.
- Join the conversation using **#YCW2020**