

More locals than ever before flocked to enjoy Edinburgh's Christmas with their 20% discount and Edinburgh's Christmas 2018 raised more money for charity than ever before donating a fantastic £44,000 to support Scottish charities!

- EH postcode holders snapped up 186,799 tickets using their 20% discount, a 31% increase compared to 2017.
- 2018 season saw Edinburgh's Christmas raising £44,000 and giving out 28,000 free tickets to Edinburgh and Scotland-wide charities:
 - almost £20,000 raised for OneCity Trust through Silent Light ticket sales; 16,013 Silent Light tickets given away to 36 Edinburgh and Scottish charities;
 - as part of St Andrew's Fair Saturday, £11,807 raised for 3 Scottish charities working with deaf, blind and deafblind people; £1000 raised for The Trussell Trust food banks in Edinburgh and 12,000 free tickets given away to their users plus hundreds of kilograms of donations collected at the Christmas Market's food bank collection point;
 - £12,044 raised for Edinburgh's Christmas charity partner NSPCC through box office and charity collections.



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2018 marked the sixth year of Underbelly producing Edinburgh's Christmas on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council.

EH postcode holders took advantage of their 20% ticket discount by snapping up 186,799 tickets, a 31% increase on 2017.

This special year saw Edinburgh's Christmas giving away 28,000 free tickets and raising a whopping £44,000 in support of Edinburgh and Scotland-wide charities.

50p from every ticket sold for Silent Light, a unique silent disco party underneath the beautiful structure of archways festooned with 60,000 lightbulbs, went to support One City Trust. Almost £20,000 was raised this way and will help the charity's work fighting inequality and exclusion in Edinburgh.

A further 16,013 free Silent Light tickets were given away with 36 local charities benefiting, such as Aid and Abet who work with people leaving prison to help them in recovery and to avoid homelessness, Edinburgh Young Carers dedicated to working with and supporting young carers, North Edinburgh Childcare who provide flexible and affordable childcare enabling parents to access training and education, Barnardo's Edinburgh who care for vulnerable children and young people and Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre

On 1 December, Edinburgh's Christmas took part in St Andrew's Fair Saturday, a mass celebration of the benefits of arts and culture whilst supporting social causes. Scotland was the first country to celebrate it as a nation-wide festival in 2018. This pilot edition was a partnership between the Scottish Government and the Fair Saturday Foundation. On that day, all proceeds from Silent Light went to support three charities: Deafblind Scotland, National Deaf Children Society and Royal National Institute of Blind People. With over 3,200 people attending Silent Light that day, Edinburgh's Christmas raised £11,807 for the charities!

Every year, Edinburgh's Christmas works very closely with The Trussell Trust food banks around the city, encouraging residents to donate non-perishables, toiletries and unwanted Christmas gifts to a food bank donation point located at the Christmas Market in Princes Street Gardens. On top of hundreds of kilograms of donations this year, Edinburgh's Christmas raised just under £1,000 in financial donations for the food banks and gave 12,000 free tickets to their users.

Edinburgh's Christmas 2018 charity partner was NSPCC who work with children who've been abused to rebuild their lives, protect children at risk, and find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening. Voluntary donations, make up around 90 per cent of their funding to help this great cause. Through Box Office and charity collections on Edinburgh streets - including the official start of the festive season in the city, Light Night - Edinburgh's Christmas raised £12,044 for NSPCC.

771,074 tickets were sold to Edinburgh's Christmas rides, attractions and shows, including a fantastic 186,799 tickets booked by EH postcode holders who took advantage of their 20% discount, up by almost one-third (31.24%) on 2017's number.

Edinburgh's Christmas visitors enjoyed the varied offer of the six weeks long festive celebrations in the city: everything from the Scottish and international food and gifts offer of the **Christmas Market** in East Princes Street Gardens, including **Johnnie Walker Bothy Bar on the Mound**, the UK's only outdoor elliptical ice rink in **St Andrew Square** wrapped around **Rekorderlig Cider Lodge** to the **Festival Square Spiegeltent** shows, *You Choose* and *Baby Loves Disco* for children and *La Clique Noël – Part Deux* for adults!

This year's big new attraction, **Silent Light**, drew thousands of locals and visitors as it got people of all ages dancing in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town! This brand-new, spectacular show was a global first to which Underbelly invited the team behind the Fringe 2018 hit, *Silent Adventures*, to collaborate. The result was a huge hit!

Winter Windows popped up around town again, this time representing the **theme of kindness**. With 37 beautiful Windows spread across Edinburgh - Great Michael Rise in Newhaven, Ratho's North Street, Royston Wardieburn Community Centre in Pilton and St Patrick Square just off Clerk Street - this unique project conceived by Underbelly in 2014 has given a showcase opportunity to hundreds of young budding artists throughout the years.

Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam, Directors of Underbelly and Edinburgh's Christmas said: "We are immensely proud of Edinburgh's Christmas events raising a whopping £44,000 to support Edinburgh and Scotland-wide charities and we would like to thank all those who made this happen, if you popped a pound in one of the charity buckets, added a donation when you bought a ticket or came and bopped along to *Silent Light* - it really adds up to a huge difference to the charities. In our sixth year of producing Edinburgh's Christmas we are also delighted to see almost one-third increase in tickets bought with the 20% discount for EH postcode holders which clearly shows Edinburgh residents enjoy the city's Christmas celebrations.

"We can't wait to share Edinburgh's Christmas 2019 programme with you later this year!"

The Lord Provost, Frank Ross, said: "Every year, Edinburgh's Christmas is enjoyed by thousands of citizens and visitors alike but never has the event proved to be as inclusive as it has been this winter.

"Underbelly's donation of 28,000 free tickets to almost 40 charities at Christmas has allowed as many residents as possible in Edinburgh and the Lothians to take part in our celebrations. This collaboration also provided much-needed support for the Capital's official charity, the OneCity Trust.

"The amounts raised are incredible and the generous donation of £20,000 towards the Trust will help to fight inequality and exclusion throughout the city. By supporting the OneCity Trust, fans of Edinburgh's Christmas are giving back to those in our communities who need our support. Thank you."

John Donnelly, Chief Executive at Marketing Edinburgh, said: "Edinburgh's Christmas is continuously raising the bar when it comes to our world leading winter celebrations: not just with the introduction of exciting new attractions, but

in its ongoing support for the community and charities across the country.

It's particularly encouraging that this year's 20% resident discount has been well utilised, with a 31% increase on uptake. It's always important to strike the balance between visitors and residents, but it's clear to see that Edinburgh's Christmas is here to be enjoyed by all."

Roddy Smith, Chief Executive at Essential Edinburgh, said: "We were delighted to support Silent Light, and it helped attract tens of thousands to the west end of the city centre, helping drive footfall at a key time of year.

"Edinburgh's Christmas is a major boost to our winter economy, adding to the city's international reputation as the festival capital of the world. The numbers show how valuable it is to our hospitality and retail sectors.

"It's also good to see that so many local people took part in the events and activities."

Paul Cockram, NSPCC Scotland Head of Fundraising, said: "We are so grateful for the amazing generosity of the public in raising this money which will go towards preventing abuse and helping children in Scotland who need this vital support.

"It has been a fantastic experience to continue our relationship with Underbelly and Edinburgh's Christmas. This support enables us to continue our work to ensure that we can support more children and families."

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Notes to editors:

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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 (2017/18 saw a record breaking 781,520 tickets issued to visitors from 47 different countries), and the second year of producing Edinburgh's Hogmanay also on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, which in 2017-18 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 - with over 100 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.

Underbelly Productions is the theatrical arm of Underbelly, presenting, producing and promoting a diverse programme of international work. In 2017, in association with Cameron Mackintosh, they produced a major revival of the classic musical Five Guys Named Moe, which ran for 30 weeks at the purpose built Marble Arch Theatre. This scorching production garnered rave reviews and was nominated for 3 WhatsOnStage Awards (including Best Musical Revival) and as Best Entertainment and Family at the 2018 Olivier Awards. In 2017 they were also Associate Producers on the UK Premiere of the musical Big Fish starring Kelsey Grammar, which enjoyed a sold-out Christmas run at The Other Palace. As part of the 2018 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Don't Tell Me Not to Fly a one-woman cabaret featuring a revolving cast of some of the West End's favourite leading ladies premiered in the 900 seater McEwan Hall.

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

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