

GROUP TRAVEL ORGANISERS GUIDE 2010

THE REAL MARY KING'S CLOSE

A totally unique and historic site, The Real Mary King's Close is a dark, underground time capsule of four streets that contain the remains of original town houses and rooms that date back to the 1600's. The many fascinating stories behind it come to life as you are guided round by one of several characters, based on the true inhabitants of these once thriving homes and businesses.

Intriguing facts disclose the fascinating twists and turns of past lives, giving a glimpse of life from the 16th century, including the plague-ridden 17th century, through to the 18th and 19th centuries. Visitors are taken back in time to experience the home of a grave digger whose family were struck down by the 'black death', the workshop of the saw-maker who became the last resident to leave the street, and the home of the famous Close's namesake, a woman called Mary King.

So if you're looking for a world-class visitor attraction with history and heritage, some family fun and an unforgettable city experience, there's no better place to find it but by taking a trip to one of the UK's most historically significant sites – Edinburgh's The Real Mary King's Close.

This guide will help you find your way to The Real Mary King's Close, explain what will happen when you get there and let you know what to expect during your visit. We'll also give you advice on what else to do in the city.

For more information please call us on +44 (0) 845 070 6255 or email us on groups@continuum-group.com and we'll do our best to help.

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ABOUT THE ATTRACTION

Opening Times

The Real Mary King's Close is open every day apart from Christmas Day. Tours run every 20 minutes throughout the day.

	Open	Last Tour	Close
March – July	10.00am	21.00pm	22.00pm
August	09.00am	21.00pm	22.00pm
September – November	10.00am	21.00pm	22.00pm
November – March	10.00am	17.00pm	18.00pm
November – March *	10.00am	21.00pm	22.00pm

* Saturday's only

Prices

Pre-booked groups of more than 15 people are eligible to receive discounted group rates**.

We will give you 1 free adult ticket for every 10 Children / Students that visit.

RATES VALID 01.02.10 -31.01.11		Group Rate	Restrictions
Adult		£9.00	
Child	(Aged 5 – 15)	£5.50	
Student	(Aged 16 +)	£8.00	
Senior	(Aged 65 +)	£8.00	
UK Schools	(Aged 5 – 16)	£5.15	UK based schools only
Language Schools		£5.25	UK based schools only

All of our rates include VAT at the current rate. ** Restrictions apply.

Facilities and Accessibility

The Real Mary King's Close has onsite customer toilets located in the admissions area, a gift shop and an outside cafe. Unfortunately we do not have anywhere for groups to eat packed lunches.

We welcome disabled visitors:

- Unfortunately, due to the historic nature of the site, we are unable to accommodate wheelchairs, wheelchairs or children under the age of 5 on the tour.
- Visitors with walking difficulties are advised to call in advance to check the suitability of the attraction.
- The underground site has uneven surfaces and steep inclines, sturdy footwear is recommended.
- The site is underground and as such is quite dark, lit only by low atmospheric lighting. Groups are advised to inform all participants of this in advance of their tour.

What to do when you arrive

Please arrive at least 10 minutes before your tour time to ensure your tour can leave as scheduled. When you arrive make your way to our admissions area to register your group. Your tour guide will collect you from the admissions area to start your tour.

Your visit

Each tour is fully guided and will last 1 hour.

We have audio guides in French, German, Italian and Spanish. Hire of the audio guides is included in the entrance cost. Audio guides should be pre-booked by calling +44 (0) 845 070 6255.

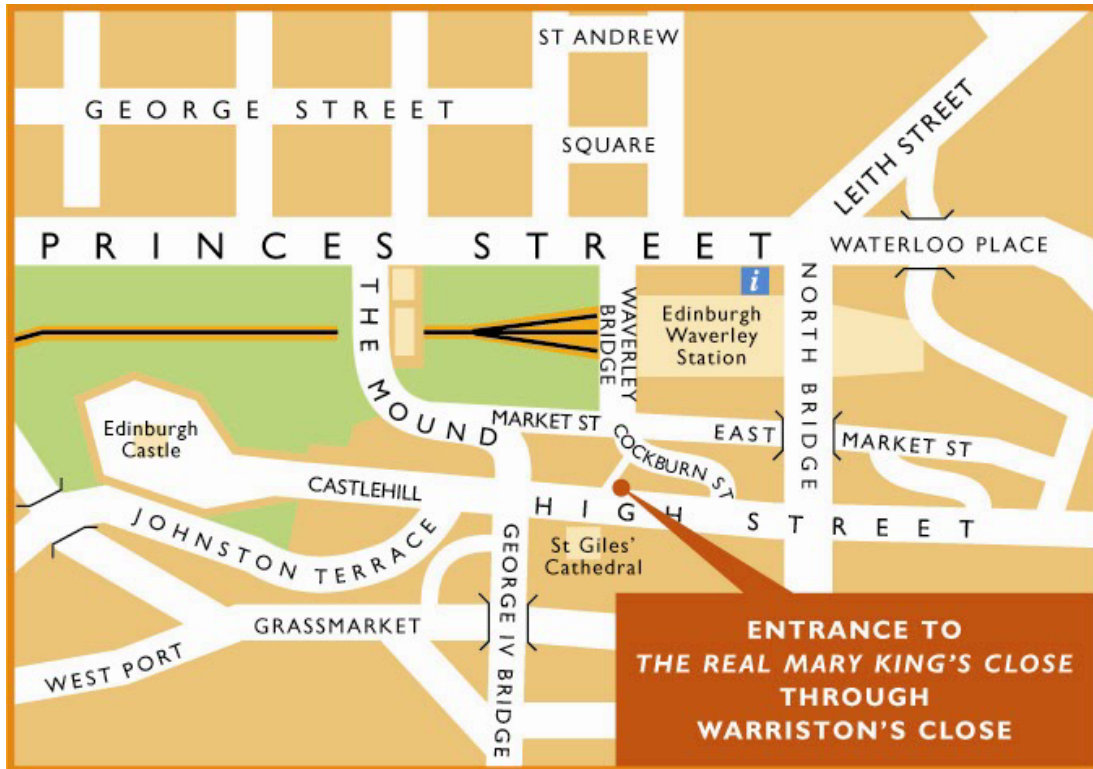
Each tour starts and finishes in our admissions area which can be accessed from the High Street.

Health and Safety

A risk assessment can be found on Page 5.

HOW TO GET THERE

Map



Transport / Parking Information

Coach

Pick Up / Drop Off

Coaches dropping off or picking up passengers visiting the centre of Edinburgh should do so at the area designated for such activity on Waterloo Place. 15 minutes is allowed for both dropping off and picking up. After dropping off their passenger's coaches can then park at either the coach park, detailed below, or on-street on Regent Road which is extremely convenient for later pick up of passengers.

Parking

Regent Road parking costs £1.60 per hour for up to 10 hours and is available Monday to Saturday from 08.30am-18.30pm. Coach bays are also provided on Johnston Terrace from April to September these cost from £1.60 per hour up to a maximum of 10 hours on Mondays to Saturdays 08.30am to 18.30pm.

Car

Parking spaces are very limited in the Old Town of Edinburgh. The nearest car parks are Niddry Street (beneath the SAS Radisson Hotel) or Castle Terrace; however, please note that access by car to the Royal Mile is limited.

Train

Trains servicing Edinburgh Waverley are run by National Express, Virgin Trains, Transpennine, Cross-Country and First ScotRail.

From Waverley Railway Station: exit via Waverley Bridge exit, and turn left. Walk along Waverley Bridge until you reach a junction with a mini-roundabout, then cross to other side of road, into Cockburn Street. Walk up Cockburn Street until you reach the foot of Warriston's Close. This Close is one long stone staircase (over 100 steps to the top), and if you walk up them, they will take you to our entrance. However, an alternative route that avoids stairs is to continue up Cockburn Street, until you meet the junction with the High Street (part of the Royal Mile). Here, take a right turn and walk up the High Street until you reach St. Giles' Cathedral (the large building with a crown-shaped roof, not a pointed spire!). We are situated in Warriston's Close directly opposite.

EDUCATION

Curriculum

Edinburgh grew up around its castle. The huddle of huts which first clustered around the castle rock gradually spread eastwards. By the late 17th century, Edinburgh was by far the most populated place in Scotland.

The High Street was Edinburgh's one major - and exceptionally fine -thoroughfare, with the Grassmarket and Cowgate roughly parallel below it. But elsewhere, it was a maze of narrow closes. By modern standards, 17th century towns were horribly dirty and smelly. There was no sanitation. Waste was just thrown onto the street, where it built up...and ran down! So, on this crowded spine of land, where the buildings grew upwards - often by as many as eight storeys - society was organised vertically, the wealthy close to the top above all the filth and the poor at the bottom in the midst of it.

Here, all classes or trades lived and worked. The great townhouses of nobles, churchmen and merchants with all their servants and retainers, nestled cheek-by-jowl with the vast mass of the toiling poor. And though some people enjoyed extravagant luxuries, life for most was basic, noisy, dirty, precarious, and short.

In the low (laigh) houses the walls are smoke stained and the floors are made of dirt. A family would have lived in a single large room. Because of the lack of hygiene, diseases such as typhus, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, cholera and often the plague were rife. The Close was and is lit by bowatts, a lantern with a tallow candle, and crusic, a homemade lamp usually fuelled by fish oil and animal fat. The Close would have probably exaggerated any sound and certainly would be echoing. In the high (haigh) houses above, life would certainly been more genteel and, with windows, more light would enter. These houses were also above most of the smell and crush of people.

You will experience the vibrant sense of place and time, and of the lives of the people who lived, worked and died in the closes: of Alison Rough, who was to prove as troublesome after her death as she had done in life; of the Craig family who lived at the bottom of Mary King's Close before the 'pestilence' destroyed their lives; and indeed of the widow Mary King herself who lived near the top of the close with her four children.

Meet the Foul Clengers, identifiable by their grey tunics marked with a white saltire, who cleansed plague ridden houses. Or you may encounter a merchant, one of the wealthier members of Edinburgh's society, like Thomas Paterstone. Or Euphame and Jonet, Mary King's own daughters. Or even a lowly servant girl who will tell of life in the close.

As the children climb down the steps into Mary Kings Close their world changes. The visit itself is a very exciting experience and they have to look, listen, smell and feel. They will be moving from the daylight in the High Street down a steep close with little light getting in. The twilight of the Closes creates atmosphere and sets the scene but is not conducive to filling out worksheets or note-taking. Therefore our education pack contains pre and post visit materials.

Whilst the tour starts at the top of the Close, it drops as it proceeds across the closes where the children will discover 'Close life' three floor levels down. As they climb back up the sharp slope of Mary Kings Close, the children will see the main central gutter which ran with waste and made the ground very slippery. The waste came from the houses and was tipped into the street with a shout of 'Garde Loo', sounding like the French for 'mind the water'. A strong smell would have enveloped the close from the Nor Loch which is Princes Street Gardens today and where the Close's waste flowed into.

Inside the buildings the children may meet Alison Rough, wee Johnnie Craig, Mr. Chesney and of course Mary King herself. There is a strong emphasis on the living conditions with low doorways and uneven floor surfaces and although softly lit, there is a level of lighting that ensures safety and comfort without being intrusive.

Where does 'The Real Mary King's Close' experience fit into the curriculum?

1. As part of an established class topic.
2. As a programme of study.

How can we help?

1. We will provide you free of charge with a copy of our Education Pack created in co-ordination with Careers Scotland.
2. We will give you 1 free ticket for a teacher for every 10 children / students you bring to visit.
3. We will offer you* group rates if you bring over 15 people.
4. We will ensure your group has priority admission and does not need to queue.

* Subject to availability and restrictions.

Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who is at risk	Likelihood	Severity	Control measures
Slipping, tripping, falling in darkness	All	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors told by Group Leader to walk throughout site Even surfaces and suitable flooring where possible Any uneven flooring or steps are lit
Flashing lighting, resembling strobe lighting.	All	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Leader to inform visitors before tour Regular Health and Safety warnings
Dusty atmosphere	All	Low	Low/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Health and Safety warnings Daily checks performed by attraction staff
Low beams / doorways	All	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors told of hazards throughout tour
Some steep inclines and uneven surfaces	All	Medium	Low/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors told by Group Leader to walk throughout site Even surfaces and suitable flooring where possible Any uneven flooring or steps are lit
Some stairways do not have handrails	All	Medium	Low/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors told by Group Leader to walk throughout site Any uneven flooring or steps are lit Painted outline on stairs
Fire	All	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Leader to ensure visitors are aware of need to respond to site staff requests appropriately Staff regularly trained Fully maintained fire fighting equipment on-site Regular, full evacuation drills undertaken
Separation from group	All	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Leader to arrange meeting point and set time period for tour Group Leader to tell visitors to find easily identifiable member of site staff Staff supervision
First aid	All	Low	Low/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully qualified first aider on-site at all times

LOCAL AREA

Attractions

Edinburgh is a beautiful city and a fantastic location for a day trip, with something for everyone. Below are some ideas of what else you could do whilst you're in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Castle

Castle Hill, Edinburgh, EH1 2NG
Tel: 0131 2259846

This most famous of Scottish castles has a complex building history. The oldest part, St Margaret's Chapel, dates from the 12th century; the Great Hall was erected by James IV around 1510; the Half Moon Battery by the Regent Morton in the late 16th century; and the Scottish National War Memorial after the First World War.

Scotch Whiskey Experience

354 Castle Hill, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 2NE

The Scotch Whiskey Experience, beside Edinburgh Castle, reveals the history, mystery and romance of Scotch Whiskey making. Find out how the water of life is produced and then one of their experienced Tour Guides will take guests through the amazing difference between whiskies from the Highlands, Lowlands, Speyside and Islands.

Our Dynamic Earth

Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AS
Tel: 0131 5507800

Our Dynamic Earth - it's the Mother Earth of all adventures! Explore our planet's past present and future. You'll be shaken by volcanoes, fly over glaciers, feel the chill of polar ice, and even get caught in a tropical rainstorm. Discover Scotland's geological heritage in their brand new free external gallery Earthscape Scotland. You can also take your crew seat in the all new FutureDome to travel forward in time to debate our planet's future.

Camera Obscura and World of Illusions

Castle hill, Edinburgh, EH1 2ND
Tel: 0131 2263709

Enjoy the fascinating Camera Obscura Show, fantastic views of Edinburgh, and three galleries packed full of an amazing range of optical experiences which have been amusing visitors of all ages and nationalities since 1853!

Palace Of Holyroodhouse

Canongate, Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH8 8DX
Tel: 0131 5565100

The Palace of Holyroodhouse, Her Majesty The Queen's official residence in Scotland, stands at the end of Edinburgh's Royal Mile against the spectacular backdrop of Arthur's Seat. The Royal Apartments, where The Queen hosts State ceremonies and other official occasions, are infused with centuries of history and have witnessed many important events in Scotland's rich history. The Palace is perhaps best known as the home of Mary, Queen of Scots and as the setting for the most dramatic episodes in her reign, culminating in the murder of her secretary Rizzio.

Shopping

Spend an afternoon exploring the city at your leisure whilst browsing some of Edinburgh's beautiful shops.

Other Information

Edinburgh and Scotland Information Centre

3 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2QP
Tel: 0845 2255121

Websites

www.edinburgh.org

For more information on Edinburgh including what to do, where to stay and where to eat.

www.visitscotland.com

For information on Scotland

www.visitbritain.com

Information from Visit Britain

BOOKING

How to book

Pre-booking is essential for all groups. Groups should be pre-booked at least 48 hours in advance of the visit.

Pre-booked groups receive many benefits:

- Discounted rates
- Priority admission
- Free admission for the coach driver
- Free familiarisation visit for the group organiser
- One free adult ticket for every 10 visiting children / students
- Free audio guides
- Free Education Pack

To pre-book:

Our group bookings office is open from 9am until 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Call +44 (0) 845 070 6255

Fax +44 (0) 1904 527701

Email groups@continuum-group.com

Web www.realmarykingsclose.com/groups/group-bookings-form.htm

After booking:

After you have made your booking a letter will be sent out to you detailing your booking and our full terms and conditions. If you have pre-paid you will also be sent a receipt for your payment.

Payment

Pre-payment is essential for all groups. Pre-payment can be made upon booking or anytime up until 48 hours before the visit.

We accept:

- Cheques
- Visa
- MasterCard
- Maestro
- BACS payments

We only accept payment in Pound Sterling

A receipt will be sent out after payment has been made.

For groups wishing to pay by invoice after the visit, credit facilities are available but they must be agreed in advance with the Group Bookings Office. Groups who have made arrangements to be invoiced do not need to pay in advance. These groups must pay any invoice within 30 days of the invoice date. Failure to do so may result in pre-payment being required on future visits.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Any person booking and/or visiting The Real Mary King's Close, Edinburgh does so subject to the following conditions.

Booking:

- To qualify for Group Discounts and benefits groups must comprise of at least 15 persons and must pre-book their visit. Group discounts are not always available during May, August and October, please call 0845 070 6255 for further information. Groups who reduce their numbers to less than 15 will be charged the standard rates and not receive any discounts or group benefits.
- All bookings remain provisional until full payment has been received.
- Companies who are being invoiced after the visit date must return a signed 'Provisional Booking' letter to confirm their booking.
- Once full payment has been received your booking will be confirmed to you in writing.
- All provisional bookings will be released 48 hours prior to the arrival date.
- To amend your booking please call 0845 070 6255 or email groups@continuum-group.com.
- The Real Mary King's Close reserves the right to charge for any amendments made within the 48 hour period prior to arrival.
- Cancellations must be made at least 48 hours in advance of your arrival time. For full information see 'General Information' below.

Payment:

- Full pre-payment must be made at least 48 hours in advance of your visit. Please contact us if you are having problems making payment for your group.
- Failure to pay for your visit will result in your booking being released 48 hours before your expected arrival time.
- Groups who have made arrangements to be invoiced do not need to pay in advance. All invoices must be paid within 30 days of the invoice date. Failure to do so may result in pre-payment being required on future visits.
- Cheques must be made payable to The Continuum Group Ltd and sent to Continuum, St Edmund's House, Margaret Street, York, YO10 4UX. Please ensure your Reservation Number is noted on the back of your cheque.
- Credit card payments should be made by calling the Group Bookings Office on 0845 070 6255.

General Information:

- Cancellations. Cancellations must be made at least 48 hours in advance of your arrival time. The Real Mary King's Close retains absolute discretion as to whether late cancellations will be charged. Standard fees for late cancellation are 100% of the booking. To cancel your booking please call 08702 411414
- No-shows. The Real Mary King's Close retains absolute discretion as to whether groups who do not arrive for their tour will be charged. Standard fees for no-shows are 100% of the booking.
- Refunds. The Real Mary King's Close retains absolute discretion as to whether refunds will be given.
- Tours. All our tours have 20 spaces. If your group is less than 20 people we may let other people join your tour. The only way to ensure a private tour is to pay for all available 20 spaces.
- Translators. Any groups wishing to bring a translator will be required to book a private tour.
- Audio guides. Audio guides should be ordered in advance, we cannot guarantee audio guides will be available if they are not pre-booked.

On the day of the visit:

- We ask all groups to arrive at least 10 minutes before their scheduled tour time. The Real Mary King's Close reserves the right to refuse entry to any group arriving after their scheduled tour time. The Real Mary King's Close retains absolute discretion as to whether late arriving groups / people will be charged for their tour. Standard fees for late arrival will be 100% of the booking.
- To notify the attraction of the group's late arrival please call 0845 070 6244.
- The attraction is located at 2 Warriston's Close, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1PG.
- Groups arriving with less people than originally booked will be charged for all pre-ordered tickets.
- The Real Mary King's Close reserves the right to refuse entry on to a tour or remove any person who:
 - Arrives late for their tour.
 - Is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - Does not respect the historical nature of the attraction.
 - Behaves in a manner which is disruptive to the enjoyment of other visitors.
 - Behaves in a manner which compromises the safety of other visitors or staff.
 - Uses verbal or physical threats or insults toward any member of staff.
- Photography is not allowed during any tour at Mary King's Close.
- You will be added to Continuum's mailing list following your visit so we can contact you with information on our special offers and events. If you do not wish to receive any further communication from us following your visit please notify us by calling 0845 070 6255 or emailing groups@continuum-group.com