

OUR STORIES YOUR CITY



Impact Report Year One; April 2022 - 23



Mercat Tours



EDINBURGH
CASTLE



NATIONAL
TRUST for
SCOTLAND



National
Museum of
Scotland



EVAN'S



grassmarket
community project



ROYAL
COLLECTION
TRUST



grassmarket
community project

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Foreword

This story was borne in three chapters;

- **2012;** Mercat Tours and Grassmarket Community partnership established.
- **2017;** Mercat Tours team refreshed our 'WHY', what bonds our work and our team -
'to make meaningful connections through storytelling'
- **2020;** the profound experience forced on us all by the COVID 19 pandemic gave a far deeper understanding of 'exclusion' - from life, choices, opportunities and connections.

This led to an innovative idea! That Mercat Storytellers can reconnect vulnerable communities with their city through storytelling tours to beat exclusion - paid for by visitors' donations and supporting local Living Wage jobs in the process.

With the hard work of our exceptional team it was made possible through Scottish Government funding - our project launched in April 22.

Emerging from the pandemic into war in Europe and a cost of living crisis made it very difficult to know what to expect.

1 year on, the results show that our partnership and belief in storytelling inspires visitors to donate to reconnect the disconnected in a dignified, human way where all receive a 5 star experience equally.

GCP, Donors, Partners, Mercat Team - thank you.

Kat Brogan, MD Mercat Tours, April 2023

Reconnecting the Disconnected

***Stories can help people heal,
can rebuild confidence and pride,
restoring a sense of 'home'***

Stories are powerful. They make connections between people, places and the past. With this project, we are helping reconnect people isolated and cut off from their city and culture.

Through an innovative new digital function, visitors will buy their own 5 star tour and donate money to enable the most isolated in Edinburgh to enjoy the exact same experience. GCP Members are supported to explore their city's attractions on equal terms - building their confidence and self-respect through Mercat's storytelling.

We believe that - through our work and visitors' buy-in - we can break down barriers, promote respect and equity, reduce harm, and improve social wellbeing through ethical, responsible tourism.

This project creates a deep lasting bond between visitors, Edinburgh and GCP members through sharing and owning stories of Edinburgh. It supports Living Wage jobs in 5 star attractions recovering from the pandemic. It proves the power of storytelling, culture and tourism to create and/or restore connections with heritage and sense of self.

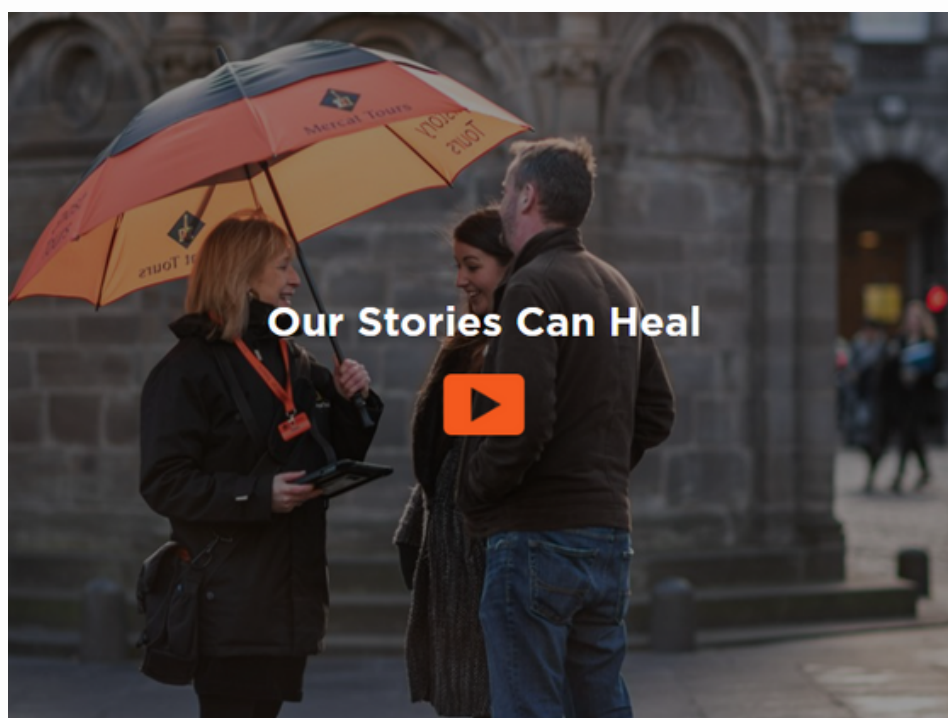
This demonstrates that tourism and culture is inclusive and responsible – a force for good.

Our Goals

- 1) Develop **new digital function to 'pay forward'** a walking tour and heritage attraction visit to benefit local vulnerable community as equals
- 2) Offer unique value-add proposition to **attract sales** to benefit attractions in recovery
- 3) Promote **responsible, sustainable, inclusive tourism** to benefit all
- 4) Deliver **high quality 5 star experience** to benefit visitors, GCP members and reputation of destination
- 5) Grow **digital visibility of city** through audience development
- 6) Support **local Living Wage jobs and upskilling** to benefit retention and future recruitment
- 7) Align with VisitScotland & STA **'Tourism is a Force for Good'** and **'Year of Stories'** campaigns

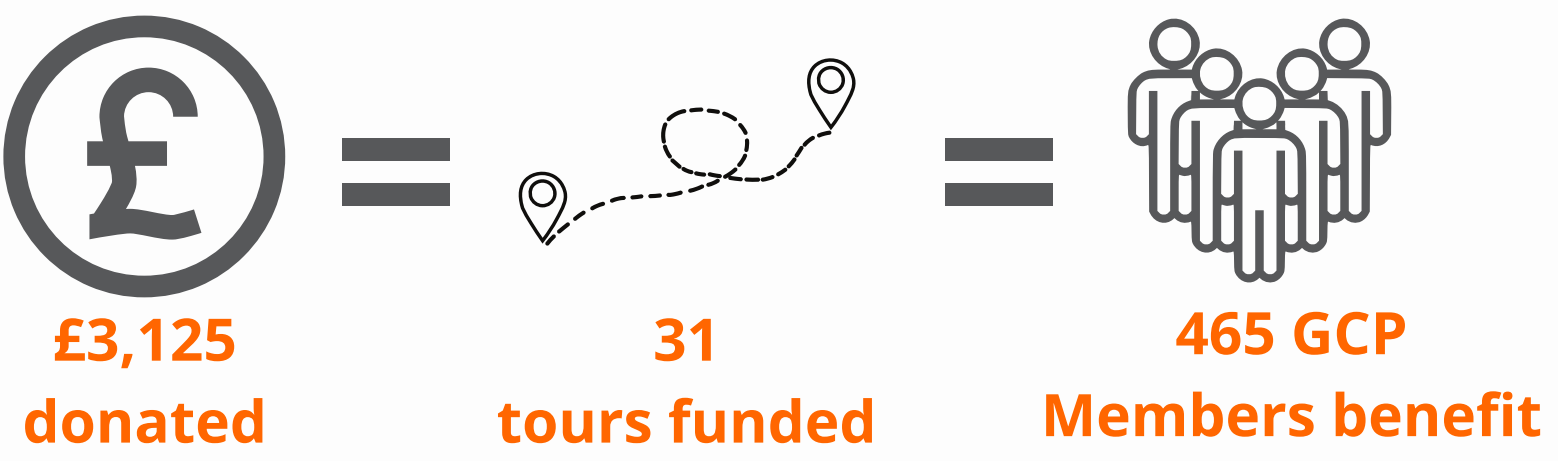
Our Values; Evidence

Quality	Responsible/ Fair Work	Sustainability	Inclusivity
Walking tours promote wellbeing	Living Wage employers only	Low-carbon impact walking tours	GCP members receive 'pay forward' experience/donation on equal terms
VisitScotland accredited 5star attractions only	'Good to Go' accredited attractions	Green Tourism 'Gold' accredited attractions only	Tourtalk audio devices to support hearing impaired
CV-19 compliant small group experience	Grows sales to secure LW jobs and further recovery	'Pay it forward' benefit to GCP members	Euan's Guide provide accessibility audit and advice for attractions
Award-winning storytellers delivering experience	Grows income to allow investment in CPD/upskilling	Spread footfall beyond city 'hot spots' to avoid overcrowding	Accessible tour routes to support physical needs




*Click to
watch
campaign
video*

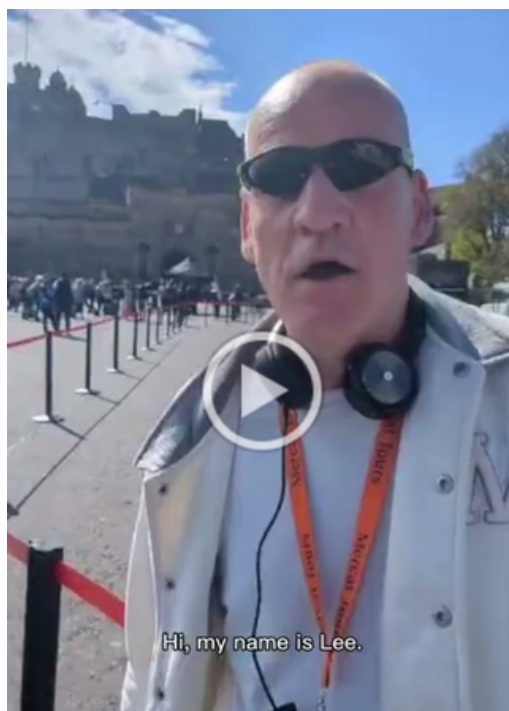
Year One Impact; Headline Results



GCP Members

	Value of Donations (£)	Number of Donations (#)	Retail Sales at MT (£)
	£3,125	525	£1,005

Our 1st Birthday!



Click to watch Perry & Lee (GCP) and Linda (Mercat) reflecting on our 1st birthday, 2023



GCP & Mercat Pals Celebrate!!



Our Impact; People

100% of GCP members agreed
'the experience was inclusive and my needs were met'



£1,005 GCP retail sales in new pop-up shop at Mercat Tours



First OSYC tour including Edinburgh Castle with Mercat Storyteller Margaret-Ann, 1st July 2022

'In 4 years of guiding thousands of visitors, this audience has to be the most important - it was a privilege
Margaret-Ann, Mercat Tours Storyteller

"I cannot thank Mercat enough. It blew my mind."
Sean, GCP Member



First OSYC tour including Palace of Holyroodhouse with Mercat Storyteller Charles, 14th July 2022

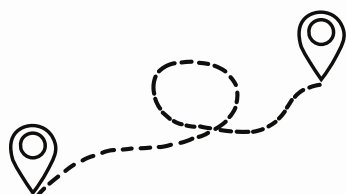


Perry GCP Support Worker, (click for video), 1st July 2022

Our Impact; Partners



**£30,127
income**



**1,200
tickets**



**Living Wage jobs
supported**

Observations;






- **£5.09** average donation; *max £100, min £1.*
- **96%** of donations were in combination with a tour ticket purchase.
> *Visitors and GCP share the same 5 star tour, on equal terms*
- **40%** of donations made in combo with history tour ticket purchase
- 58 donations in combo Edinburgh Castle tickets
- **100%** donations made direct via webpage
- **highest value donations** made as one-off amounts
- **£1,005 sales** of GCP retail, launched in Mercat Tours reception

Actions;

- continue to collect GCP & Storyteller tour feedback survey and action
- track GCP sales and cross-donations via QR codes in MT reception
- monitor and maximise online subscription
- encourage Storytellers' to promote QR codes to donate
- nurture '*couthie fowks*' comms to grow audience and donations
- use tours to evidence impact and generate buy-in and more donations
- increase cross-partner activity across social channels where possible
- further analyse data; *does project inspire ticket purchase or the reverse?*

Our Impact; Mar Comms

Audience Development & Engagement

	Impressions/ Reach / Opens	Engagements / Likes	Reel Plays / Video Views
	12.3k	524	155
	14.9k	479	4.9k
	38.9k	970	2.9k
	3.7k	1.7%	348 views - 8hrs watch time
	36% avg open rate, 1.5% avg click rate	5 Couthie Fowk newsletters	-
	78.9k	1.9k	8.2k

PR

(breakdown on following page)

Pieces of Coverage	Estimated Views	Audience	Engagements	Avg domain Authority	OTS	Avg Listeners per wk
8	12.8k	4M	31	76	750K	322k



Our Impact; Awards

 **Tiqets**
Remarkable
Venue Awards

— WINNER —
Most Innovative Venue

United Kingdom 2022

 **Tiqets**
Remarkable
Venue Awards

WINNER – UK & Ireland 2022
MOST INNOVATIVE VENUE



UKINBOUND
2022 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
INDIVIDUAL ATTRACTION OF THE YEAR



Our Impact; Platforms

Scottish Tourism Industry Conference 2022, EICC Edinburgh Nov 22; 500 delegates



Kat Brogan explains that while @MercatToursLtd had worked with the @GCP_Edinburgh for 10+ years, the pandemic highlighted what it was like to be excluded. In line with @MercatToursLtd 'why' to tell inspirational stories, the 'Our stories, your city' initiative began.

ST Alliance @st_alliance · Nov 9

Delighted to welcome Scott McArdle, Kat Brogan & @JonnyKinross for the final panel discussion on day one of #STIC22!



Jonny Kinross explains the impact on the initiative - it has given some of the most marginalised of society a helping hand to connect with attractions, that they may have felt anxious and excluded from before.



KAT BROGAN
Managing Director, Mercat Tours

**SCOTLAND'S
TOURISM
INDUSTRY
CONFERENCE
2022**



Our Impact; PR

Title	URL	Description	Published
The Herald - Monday Interview		Monday interview - business page	06/06/2022
STV News		This was broadcast on STV News, Edinburgh which there are no public broadcasting figures for. STV News at 6 has 725,000 viewers.	30/04/2022
Radio Forth - Forth One			29/04/2022
Mercat Tours Launches Social Impact Project 'Our Stories, Your City' - video Dailymotion	https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8adhpd	<p>Mercat Tours Launches Social Impact Project Which Supports Vulnerable People in Edinburgh Through Storytelling 'Our Stories, Your City' which is a new, unique collaboration of visitor attractions in the capital which will offer Edinburgh visitors a five-star walking tour, whilst supporting some of the city's most vulnerable people.</p> <p>Visitors on selected Mercat Tours will be able to make a donation when booking their own tour and this will pay for those more vulnerable in Edinburgh to enjoy the same tour helping them reconnect with their stories and their city. This project makes connections, removes barriers and invites visitors to gift five-star cultural experiences to Edinburgh's vulnerable community, all through the human craft of storytelling.</p>	27/04/2022
ASVA E-ZINE	https://www.attractionsmanagement.com/ASVA/index.cfm		
STA Weekly News Update - 29 April	https://mailchi.mp/stalliance/staupdate29-apr-6071606?e=a85142732f		
Edinburgh tourists donate history tours to city residents	https://news.stv.tv/east-central/edinburgh-visitors-donate-city-history-tours-to-local-people	New project aims to ensure local people at risk of being excluded are given the chance to explore their city.	03/05/2022
Edinburgh tour firm helping community by telling stories	https://www.heraldscotland.com/business_hq/20187172.edinburgh-tour-firm-helping-community-telling-stories/	By Scott Wright	06/06/2022



What's Next?

Reconnecting the Disconnected 2023; SCHOOLS

We believe in the power of shared cultural experiences to enhance wellbeing. Storytelling can make human connections between people, their past and their home which are crucial to understanding our environment and sense of identity. We believe that this should be accessible to all.

Now, we see the grip that both the pandemic and cost of living are having on the budgets of schools and households. This creates barriers between young people making these connections with their city and stories.

Costs prevent students from accessing off-campus activities, and their development, life-experience, learning and connection with their city all suffer.

Mercat Tours and our visitors have a plan to help.

The success of 'Our Stories, Your City' demonstrates that our visitors share the same belief in storytelling. This project, launched in Jan 2023, will support young people most likely to suffer from lack of opportunity in Edinburgh.

Visitor donations will fund:

1hr history tour
linking with curriculum subjects;
history, social subjects, drama

**The educational experience will be free of charge
to the school and students.**



What's Next?

Skills and Ambition

'Not only will it provide an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful cultural sites which 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.'

James Campbell, Senior Development Officer

Click to watch campaign video



Inclusion and Equity

'The 'Our Stories, Your City' 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.

**Joan Daly,
HT Holy Rood High School**

Click to read and apply for OSYC Schools



- [Social media assets \(click\)](#)
- [Stakeholder Toolkit \(click\)](#)
- [Project video \(click\)](#)
- [Project press images \(click\)](#)

Edinburgh Castle is one of the most exciting historic sites in Western Europe. It is alive with exciting tales of its time as a military fortress, royal residence and prison of war. When you climb Castle Hill, you will walk in the footsteps of soldiers, kings and queens – and even the odd pirate or two. <https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/>

National Museum of Scotland is the UK's most popular attraction outside of London. It works with other museums and communities across Scotland which allows it to share the National Collections widely.

It achieves this through loans, touring exhibitions, learning, outreach and digital programmes as well as offering advice, acquisition funding and training programmes to other museums. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/>

The Palace of Holyroodhouse, is the official residence of the Monarchy in Scotland. Founded as a monastery in 1128 at the end of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, the Palace of Holyroodhouse has a close association with the History of Scotland. Today, the Palace is a close focus for national celebrations and events in Scotland, most notably The Queen's 'Holyrood Week', which usually runs from the end of June to the beginning of July every year. <https://www.royal.uk/royal-residences-palace-holyroodhouse>

Gladstone's Land has been a commercial and social hub for more than 500 years. It has witnessed momentous social and political change as well as war, fire and disease. It hosts a new immersive visitor experience that takes you through three centuries of Gladstone's Land history. <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/gladstones-land>

The Georgian House was built in the Georgian era, which produced some of Scotland's most distinctive architecture. In the late 1700s, this grand townhouse was at the heart of Edinburgh's New Town development. The house was designed by acclaimed architect Robert Adam and was a true statement of luxury in an era of enlightenment, for those who could afford it. It cost the first owner John Lamont (18th Chief of the Clan Lamont) £1,800 in 1796. The house has been magnificently restored to show a typical Edinburgh New Town house of the late 18th and early 19th century. The fine collections of period furniture, porcelain, silver and glass reflect the Lamonts' lifestyle, including lavish entertainment for guests, as well as the social and economic context of the time. <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/georgian-house>

OUR STORIES YOUR CITY

