

19 September 2016



**Awards recognise the role Edinburgh's academic and business leaders play in generating £900 million for local economy**



*Photo caption: Lesley William, Head of Business Tourism, Convention Edinburgh, Ambassador of the Year, Prof. James Garden, Elaine Miller, Ambassador & Association Bid Manager, Convention Edinburgh*

Representatives from Edinburgh's business, scientific and academic elite came together this week (Wednesday 14 September) to celebrate 20 successful years of the Edinburgh Ambassador Programme.

Marking the landmark achievement, new figures revealed by Convention Edinburgh confirm that over the last two decades, Convention Edinburgh, and their members and their local experts have generated a staggering £900 million for the local economy. Bringing 528,605 delegates to 1,348 events in the city.

**John Donnelly, Chief Executive, Marketing Edinburgh** said: "Thanks to their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication, our local ambassadors have made a significant contribution to our city, not only in raising the profile of Edinburgh as a global centre of excellence, but also in making a £900 million financial contribution to its local economy."

Taking place at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) the annual dinner was attended by world recognised leaders in their field, including the University of Edinburgh, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh Genome Foundry and Informatics Ventures.

Guests were served a memorable anniversary meal at the annual dinner, created and introduced by acclaimed Michelin Star Chef Tom Kitchin, in partnership with Leith's at the EICC, which celebrated the very best of Scottish fresh produce.

Marking its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the inaugural Ambassadors Awards, recognised the outstanding work and determination of just a few of those influential ambassadors, responsible for securing conferences and promoting Edinburgh as a business tourism destination on the global stage.

Winners celebrated on the evening included, the VisitScotland #ScotSpirit award, presented to Jessie Kennedy, Dean of Research & Innovation at Edinburgh Napier University; the In Conference Ltd Rising Star, awarded to Richard Reardon, Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery at The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary School and the Conference Legacy Award, sponsored by the EICC, which went to the Rehabilitation International Congress 2016.

The Convention Edinburgh's Ambassador of the Year Award, recognised the decades of work and support of hepatobiliary and pancreatic disease specialist, Prof. James Garden to bring multiple conferences and meetings to Edinburgh over the years.

**Elaine Miller, Ambassador & Association Bid Manager, Convention Edinburgh**, said: "Our ambassadors are some of the world's most innovative minds in science, medicine and technology. We're privileged to have such a high calibre of passionate advocates of Edinburgh in our Programme, each working tirelessly to bring influential global conferences to our city.

"This year's awards recognise the contribution of just a few of our members, but I want to extend our thanks to all our members, past and present. Edinburgh could not have achieved the success of the last 20 years without you."

**James Garden, winner of Ambassador of the Year**, said: "The Ambassador Programme is about making best use of this important network and contributing to that network.

"Edinburgh is a fantastic city and its success as host destination should never be taken for granted. When it comes to history, innovation, architecture and culture, I cannot think of any other city in the world that ticks all the boxes. The Ambassador Programme is the ideal way to showcase all that Edinburgh has to offer and it delights me to promote the city that I live in and love to be associated with."

Overseen by Convention Edinburgh, the business tourism arm of the city's official marketing agency, Marketing Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Ambassador Programme has over 500 members, working together to promote Edinburgh as a host destination for national and international conferences and events.

**Quotes from our sponsors:**

**Marshall Dallas, Chief Executive, Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC), sponsor of the Legacy Award** said: "Conferences leave behind a crucial legacy that stretches far beyond financial



## **About the Award winners:**

### **Ambassador of the Year, James Garden, The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh**

#### **Sponsored by Convention Edinburgh**

A Regius Professor of Clinical Surgery at the University of Edinburgh and an Honorary Consultant Surgeon in the field of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

An internationally renowned surgeon in his field, he is also a very active conference organiser, bringing conferences to the city since 2001. His most recent event was the International Surgical Group meeting in September.

### **Rising Star of the Year, Richard Reardon, The University of Edinburgh**

#### **Sponsored by In Conference Ltd**

Richard is a Senior Lecturer in the Equine Surgery at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. In 2017

Richard is bringing the Annual Scientific Meeting of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons to Edinburgh for 800 delegates.

### **Legacy of the Year, Rehabilitation International World Congress**

#### **Sponsored by the EICC**

Andrew Parkins is the Programme Director of the Rehabilitation International World Congress 2016 at the Shaw Trust. Taking place 24-28 October 2016, Rehabilitation International is a global organisation with members in over 100 countries. It consists of disabled people, government, academics and service providers, all working towards improving the quality of life of disabled and disadvantaged people. The conference will be bringing approximately 1,000 delegates to the city.

### **#ScotSpirit Award Jessie Kennedy, Edinburgh Napier University**

#### **Sponsored by VisitScotland**

Kennedy is Dean of Research and Innovation at Edinburgh Napier University. She was Director of the Institute for Informatics and Digital Innovation from 2010-2014 and a recognised expert in information visualisation and data modelling. Part of the original advisory board that set up the Ambassador Programme, over the years she has championed Edinburgh, and been involved in the organisation of many international conferences.