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## **CITY LEADERS GATHER TO GO 'BACK TO THE FLOOR' AT THE REAL MARY KING'S CLOSE!**

The leader of Edinburgh City Council, Jenny Dawe, and Continuum's Deputy Chief Executive, Juliana Delaney along with Mary King's management team went back to the shop floor to work on the coal face in celebration of the award winning attractions success.

Mary King's Close participated in Pride and Passion's Back to the Floor Day as their management team went 'Back To The Floor' working behind the admissions desk and street leafleting. The Pride & Passion initiative challenged tourism executives whose usual habitat is behind a desk and in front of a screen to roll up their sleeves and go back to the floor, shoulder to shoulder with front line staff. The event provided an opportunity for the executives to place themselves at the sharper end of their businesses, experiencing customer reactions first hand.

Gillian Stirton, Project Manager with Pride & Passion said, "It's a great way for managers and owners of tourism businesses to get back to the coal face and see first hand, how their business is delivering customer service. Getting the customer experience right is critical to visitors having a great time and wanting to come back again and again to Scotland. Back to the floor focuses on what we are all working towards – happy visitors"

Jenny Dawe commented "The Real Mary King's Close is a superb tourist attraction; enjoyed by many thousands of locals and tourists throughout the year. Excellent customer care is critical to the visitor experience and I am sure that the time spent on the shop floor by the managers will reinforce to them just how important this really is, and what a sterling job their own frontline staff perform day in and day out."

The Real Mary King's Close itself can now also demonstrate its own importance to the tourism industry in Edinburgh and Scotland as visitor figures have soared past 650,000. Since opening back in April 2003, Mary King's Close has smashed its projected targets of 60,000 visitors, year on year and 2007 saw almost 170,000 visitors join the award winning underground tours. 2008 also sees the return of the award winning Mary King's Ghost Fest, a Edinburgh-wide festival of the paranormal involving many tourism and paranormal partners and funded by the attraction.

The Real Mary King's Close is a strange dark underground street, a time capsule of town houses and rooms situated off four main closes or streets, which date back to the 1600's. Character guides reveal the fascinating and emotional stories of the closes former residents as visitors wander through this important historic site.

Open daily from 10am tours every 20mins. For more information or to book a tour call 08702 430160 or visit [www.realmarykingsclose.com](http://www.realmarykingsclose.com) Prices are £9.50 for adults, £6 for children and £8.50 for concessions.

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**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:** Mary King's Close consists of a number of underground Closes which would have originally been very narrow walkways with houses on either side stretching up to 7 storeys high and dating back several centuries. In 1753 the Burgh authorities decided to develop a grand new building, the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers). The houses at the top of the Closes were knocked down and part of the lower sections were kept and used as the foundations for the new building, leaving a number of dark and mysterious underground Closes and ancient dwellings steeped in mystery.

Due to the historical nature of this underground facility, access may prove difficult to people with certain disabilities. Ramped access is provided to the information and retail outlet. Please call for further detail. We regret that for Health and Safety reasons we cannot permit any children under the age of 5. Sensible shoes are essential! (duration of underground tour 1hr+).

**For further press information, images or to media visits please contact:**

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