

[Press release: UK Armed Forces star in global show](#)

Returning for a 68th season, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a thrilling display of music, dance, and military entertainment from around the world, rooted firmly in Scottish culture and history. It will take place on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle from 4-26 August 2017.

In recognition of this being the Year of the Royal Navy, and Scotland's unique role in building UK warships, the finale will see the Esplanade transformed into an aircraft carrier flight deck, featuring a Lynx Mk III maritime aircraft, and a CGI projection onto the Castle walls of an aircraft taking off from the deck. As the audience arrives they will also walk under a life-sized model of the new F-35B fighter, with Royal Navy personnel providing a warm welcome too.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo represents all that is best in the UK's Armed Forces – talented, professional, and engaging internationally with our global allies.

This Tattoo helps showcase our Armed Forces and has raised over £10m through its Charitable Trust, and it contributes £77m a year to the Scottish economy.

Celebrating the theme 'Splash of Tartan', these Armed Forces musicians will make up a cast of 1,200 artists performing to a live audience of 220,000, and a global TV audience of more than 100 million.

Performers from 48 countries have taken part in the extravaganza with this year's top international acts including the United States Naval Forces Europe Band and the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force Central Band.

Royal Navy involvement

- The Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines (Portsmouth, Scotland, and Commando Training Centre)
- There will be a 24 strong Royal Navy Guard of Honour welcoming the audience every night
- The 90 strong Royal Navy and Royal Marines Tattoo Support Group have taken the lead in making the arrangements for the involvement of the UK Armed Forces this year
- Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset will berth in Leith for the last week of the Tattoo and host a number of capability demonstrations

Army involvement

- The Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- The Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards
- The Pipes and Drums of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- A contingent from 154 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps (Army Reserves)
- Pipes and Drum of the combined Scottish Universities Officer Training Corps

RAF involvement

- The Royal Air Force Regiment Band
- Royal Air Force Queen's Colour Squadron
- Flypasts by RAF aircraft (weather dependent)

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo facts:

- The Tattoo was first conceived in 1949 with the 1st performance in 1950
- 25 performances over August to a live audience of 8,800 each evening – 220,000 across the season
- HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, is the Patron of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- It has a VIP capacity of 148 each performance (3,700 including nightly salute takers)
- Now into its 68th season, it has sold out for 18 years consecutively
- Over 50 countries have taken part
- The Show has been seen live by more than 14m people over the years
- Filmed by the BBC in 'High Definition' for 59 and 90 minute programmes
- Peak TV viewing figures of 5.3m in the UK and 100 – 300m globally
- One of 11 Edinburgh Festivals delivering £280m to the City of Edinburgh and £313m to the national economy

[Press release: Highways England 'suited and booted' for hazardous concrete repairs at Spaghetti Junction](#)

As part of the £4.7m vital repairs to damaged concrete and waterproofing, Highways England is using high-performance jet washers that break up parts of existing concrete. The technique is known as hydrodemolition.

"Safety is always our top priority so our repair crews are wearing special body suits to protect them from flying debris which when it breaks off, can actually travel faster than a bullet," explains Highways England project manager Jessica Kenny.

“In fact, the water is so highly pressurised that operatives have to lean forward to about 45 degrees to counter the effects of the water jetting otherwise it would knock them off their feet.

“To put it into context, if you imagine the pressure washers that you use to clean the patio at home and multiply that by about ten times, you’re still not even close to the water pressure we’re using in this instance to complete this vital work.”

As well as wearing the protective suits, those operating the machinery also need to work inside a special green cage which is designed to contain flying debris to a confined space.

Last weekend saw more than 356 people and 100 vehicles work on the 45-year-old structure that carries more than 220,000 vehicles a day.

Motorists travelling into Birmingham are still being reminded that key link roads will remain closed until 4 September.

For the duration of the scheme there is no access to the A38(M) from Gravelly Hill or Tyburn Road, with local diversions in place.

The M6 itself remains fully open during the work.

Local routes into the city centre are likely to be busier than usual. Drivers are advised to plan their journey and allow extra time.

Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available at @HighwaysWMIDS

Traffic management

Weekday restrictions:

- repairs to the inter-city route will be undertaken from Monday through to early Friday evening
- there will be traffic management on the A38(M) Aston Expressway – the tidal flow lane will be closed for the duration of the work
- three narrow lanes on A38(M) out of city with a 30mph speed limit for safety reasons
- 24/7 closure of the Gravelly Hill and Tyburn Road approaches to the A38(M) into city carriageway – diversions will be in place
- Park Circus on-slip will remain open
- Salford Circus will remain open
- free recovery will be available

Weekend restrictions:

We also need to fully close the A38(M) Aston Expressway and the exit slips at M6 junction 6 each weekend until 25 August. The closures will be in place from 8pm on Friday to 6am on Monday.

No traffic will be able to access the Expressway to either enter or leave Birmingham during these closures.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Minister for Europe statement on Bulgaria-Macedonia Friendship Treaty](#)

On recent visits to Bulgaria and Macedonia I saw a strong commitment to improving relations between the two countries. I welcome the signing of the Bulgaria-Macedonia Friendship Treaty as a step in the right direction. Good neighbourly relations between Bulgaria and Macedonia are crucial to securing the stability of the region.

The UK fully supports the new Government in Macedonia as it introduces much-needed domestic reforms, and resets and improves its relationship with its neighbours. The UK and Bulgaria also share a deep friendship and we look forward to its Presidency of the European Council in 2018.

I hope that both Parliaments will now ratify the Friendship Treaty, to make the most of this opportunity for progress.

[Notice: LN8 3PU, Old Chicken Farm Limited: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Old Chicken Farm Limited
 - Installation name: Old Chicken Farm
 - Permit number: EPR/UP3436DL
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[News story: Sellafield incident report – powder spillage \(14 June 2017\)](#)

While carrying out analysis work in a Sellafield site laboratory, a worker spilled approximately 1kg of depleted uranium trioxide powder while moving a container.

The material is not harmful unless ingested or inhaled.

The correct safety procedures were followed and the immediate area was evacuated before returning to normal service on the same day.

Health checks confirmed the worker suffered no ill effects.

An internal investigation is being carried out.

The event has been rated 1 (anomaly) on the [International Nuclear Events Scale](#)

Sellafield is regulated by the [Office for Nuclear Regulation](#) and the [Environment Agency](#)

[See details of incidents at Sellafield before 1 August 2017](#)