



**History of  
Science Society**

Edinburgh's community of historians of science are excited to present this proposal  
to host jointly the

*12th Conference of the European Society for  
the History of Science*

and the

*2026 Annual Meeting of the History of  
Science Society,*

with the support of the

*British Society for the History of Science,*

from 13-16 July 2026 in Edinburgh, Scotland.



**BSHS**



**THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH**

# Location

Edinburgh is Scotland's vibrant capital city, home of the famous Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe and the aspiring "data capital of Europe."

## History

Already a well-connected hub of European science in the early modern period, Edinburgh flourished from the Scottish Enlightenment as a centre of science, technology, and medicine, as well as the humanistic and philosophical investigation of these.

The city's scientific history pervades our field, representing the entanglements of science, industry, and empire; epoch-making evolutionary theories of biology and geology; the institutionalisation of surgical education and its associated histories of phrenology, body-snatching, and scientific racism; electronic computing and artificial intelligence; and genetics and cloning (Dolly the sheep turns 30 in 2026 and can be visited at the National Museum).

Edinburgh has also featured in centuries of science historiography, from early modern antiquarians through University of Edinburgh Principal David Brewster's studies of Newton and the Edinburgh School in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, to today's broad range of scholarship across the University, Museum and beyond.

Visitors are encouraged to explore the local history of science with walking tours on the free Curious Edinburgh website and app, developed by Professor Niki Vermeulen and building on the walking tours of Professor Emeritus John Henry.

## Arrival

Edinburgh has Scotland's busiest airport, well-served by major and low-cost airlines to 150 destinations including key European hubs. We are linked to Europe by train via a direct connection to the Eurostar in London, and by ferry via Newcastle or Hull.

## Sites

The meeting will be based primarily at the George Square buildings at the heart of the University of Edinburgh's city centre campus. A bustling hive of activity in July, with summer graduations and jazz and food festivals ahead of August's Festival Fringe, George Square places participants in the heart of Edinburgh, with easy access to a diverse array of options for meals and refreshments outside of conference sessions.

To accommodate the large number of expected participants, we have identified capacity for 20 rooms x 4 days x 4 session slots, which should

permit upwards of 1000 daytime presentations, in addition to space for registration, catering, and exhibits.

For evening plenaries, participants will take a relaxed walk of just under a mile (also well connected by buses and taxis) across the early modern city centre of the Royal Mile and into the city's Enlightenment-era "New Town" to the Assembly Rooms, a social hall from the 1780s in the middle of a busy commercial and dining district. We also aim to host a reception and entertainment for an evening at the Grand Gallery of the National Museum of Scotland, near to George Square.

## Surrounds

For historians keen to scout local collections, the University's capacious Centre for Research Collections sits at the top of the Main Library at one corner of George Square; the National Museum of Scotland and Surgeons' Hall can be reached on foot in under five minutes, the National Library in five minutes further, and the National Records, Royal Observatory (with its unique Crawford Collection), and Botanic Gardens are each a short bus ride or a more leisurely walk away.

Visitors in mid-July enjoy upwards of 17 hours of daylight, perfect for early starts and relaxed evenings with colleagues.



Nimmo, R. H.  
Facsimile of a plan of the siege of the castle of  
Edinburgh, May 1573 / (R.H. Nimmo's lithog.).  
Edinburgh, [ca. 1830]

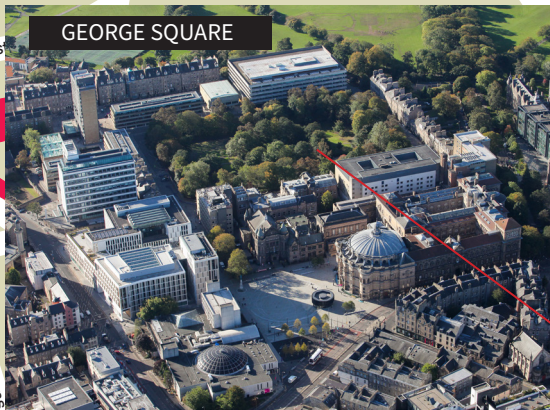
Reproduced with the permission of the  
National Library of Scotland



ASSEMBLY ROOMS



NATIONAL MUSEUM



GEORGE SQUARE

MAIN LIBRARY

- Daytime venues
- Other university buildings



# Accommodation

Participants will have access to affordably priced university dormitory rooms (estimated prices from £65/night with shared facilities or from £105/night ensuite) near the foot of Arthur's Seat, a dormant volcano overlooking the city centre, a reasonable walk or bus ride from George Square. The university also has

available a range of hotel-style accommodation starting from £175/night (including breakfast). There is also, of course, a full spectrum of accommodation options at every price point, from youth hostels (beds as low as £30/night) to 5-star hotels, expected of an international festival city.

# Catering

Morning and afternoon coffee breaks will be catered during the daytime sessions, supplemented by excellent nearby options for meals and refreshment.

The National Museum of Scotland evening event will feature a standing reception and ceilidh (Scottish social dancing), and we also aim (budget and facilities permitting) to host a light opening reception on the first night.

We expect participants will be keen to take advantage in self-organised groups of the great diversity of dining options near the meeting venues, in a city bursting with local and international food traditions.

Substantial lunches in a variety of genres and cuisines can be found within a few blocks of George Square for under £10, and many good restaurant dinners near the conference cost between £10 and £20. A steaming bung of traditional or vegetarian haggis feeds two and costs about £5 from a neighbourhood butcher.

# Partnerships

The proposed meeting will be held jointly between the ESHS and the History of Science Society, with UK logistical support (including support for visas for participants who require them) from the British Society for the History of Science. HSS will provide a well-tested and professionally maintained platform for submissions and registrations.

A combined programme committee of the ESHS and HSS will ensure that the programming interests and priorities of both societies are represented in what is expected to be a high-demand meeting.

The local organizing committee will seek sponsorship and support from relevant local, UK, and international groups, as well as interested exhibitors.

# Local Team

From University of Edinburgh: Michael Barany (lead), Niki Vermeulen, Jenny Bangham, Lukas Engelmann, Richard Oosterhoff, Agnes Arnold-Forster, Miguel Garcia-Sancho, Karine Chemla, and others to be confirmed, supported by relevant staff of the School of Social and Political Science and the university's Conferences and Events team.

From National Museum of Scotland: Rebekah Higgitt (lead) together with Edinburgh-based members of the Science & Technology team.

# Theme

The official theme will be jointly decided by the ESHS and HSS. There are many apt and inclusive options, such as: **A Festival of History of Science** or **Science from the Fringe**, referring to the Edinburgh's many festivals and August's Fringe, its largest; or

**A Kaleidoscope of Science**, referring to an optical instrument first constructed and exhibited in Edinburgh in 1816 that has become a metaphor for the splendour of multiplicities of perspectives.

# Fees and Costs

As is customary, keeping fees as affordable as possible is an important priority in our planning. Accounting for fixed hosting and facilities costs as well as per-person catering and expenses (including ESHS membership income that supplies the society's budget between conferences), we anticipate a full registration fee of about €300 per participant, which in turn allows us to subsidise students and make available discounted low-income registrations. This does not account for donations, sponsorships, or other offsetting income or in-kind support, which we will actively solicit in order to reduce fees.

As the relationship between conference registration and society membership is somewhat different for HSS and ESHS, the registration scheme will also need to account for the fact that standalone HSS membership is cross-subsidising some conference costs.

Recognising that the expected registration cost is somewhat higher than the Brussels and Barcelona fees, we are aiming to keep the overall cost of attendance as affordable as possible through attention to non-registration costs, especially accommodation (see above).

Precise cost and income agreements will need to be established between ESHS and HSS so that deposits, risks, and possible deficits or surpluses are handled in a way that is satisfactory for both societies.

As BSHS is in a facilitator role, financially and otherwise, they do not expect to derive net income or expense. From preliminary planning conversations we anticipate the details will be straightforward to work out.

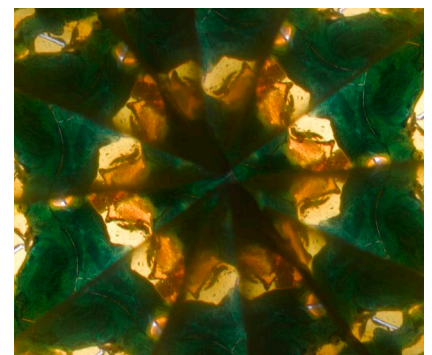
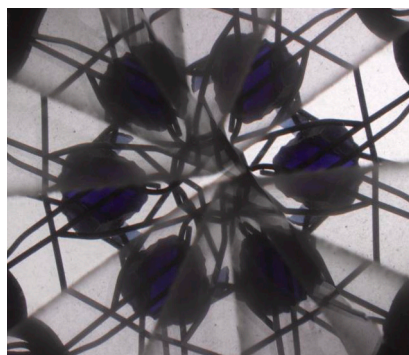
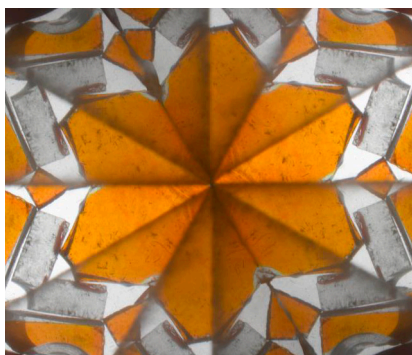
# Dates

We propose 13-16 July as the best balance of timing for academic and holiday calendars of expected participants and local availability constraints.

These dates are currently being held on a tentative basis by the University of Edinburgh and the evening venues.

The final submission and programme timings will be determined by the joint programme committee, with registration timelines adapted accordingly. Indicative timings can be estimated as:

Call for papers/proposals	August 2025
Session proposals	November 2025
Individual papers	December 2025
Draft programme	February 2026
Final registration	April 2026
Final programme	April-May 2026
<b>The conference!</b>	<b>13-16 July 2026</b>



Science Museum Group Collection © The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum  
Kaleidoscope, Brewster's patent, silver plated brass, painted/shellaced tube covering, by Philip Carpenter, Birmingham, England, c.1820

Presented by Michael Barany, University of Edinburgh