

Your King's Update

Spring Issue 2026

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Uncovering the King's

See what's been happening on-site over the past few months

The King's redevelopment has moved into its final stages, and what once looked like a demolition site is now becoming a sight to behold. In view of the exciting and many recent updates to the theatre, we are sharing never-before-seen images to show you the amazing work that has taken place across all areas of the King's Theatre.

You may have seen when passing the venue, or in the media, that the front of the King's is now free from scaffolding and site cabins have been moved to Tarvit Street. Revealing the theatre's distinctive red sandstone façade was a wonderful moment for the team and a reminder of the building's character. With the front area cleared, the pavement levelling could be completed, allowing step-free access to the front doors for the first time.

Inside the King's, the auditorium is starting to look like a theatre once again with the seats put back in place. Plasterwork has been delicately restored and

painted along the front of the dress and upper circle, and new flooring and timber wall panelling have been installed on each level, bringing warmth and detail back into the space.

The new café extension is also taking shape, with the walls and roof now complete, skylights installed and the new circular window fitted. As a visitor to the King's Café, you will be able to enjoy an abundance of natural light and a nose-onto Stage Door Lane where performers will make their way along to their dressing rooms.

Back-of-house, the new rigging and fly-system have now been fully installed, and we are ready to welcome modern productions like never before. The performer spaces have also been improved with upgraded facilities, improved lighting, and new dressing room tables and carpet which all make the backstage areas more welcoming to our local, national and international visiting companies.

What was once the cloakroom is now a new ticketing area. In the coming months, this space will bring the history of the King's to life through displays and story-telling. On re-opening the King's Theatre box office will be open during the day, along with the new n-street cafe, as it is at the Festival Theatre.

Across all floors of the theatre, our new bars are nearly ready to welcome audiences back. Electrical work is continuing, banquette seating is being reinstated and restored bar counters are in place. In fact, if you look closely upon your return to the King's, you might spot a familiar feature; the bar counter from the former Tudor Bar has been carefully restored and has found its home in the new bar to serve the stalls.

As construction continues, attention will soon turn to the final decorative details that will bring all these spaces together. Each week brings the King's one step closer to reopening, and we look forward to welcoming you back as the project reaches the finish line. Until then, we are delighted to share

recent photos from all areas of the King's and hope you enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at the amazing progress that has been taking place in recent months, thanks to the generosity of all our supporters.



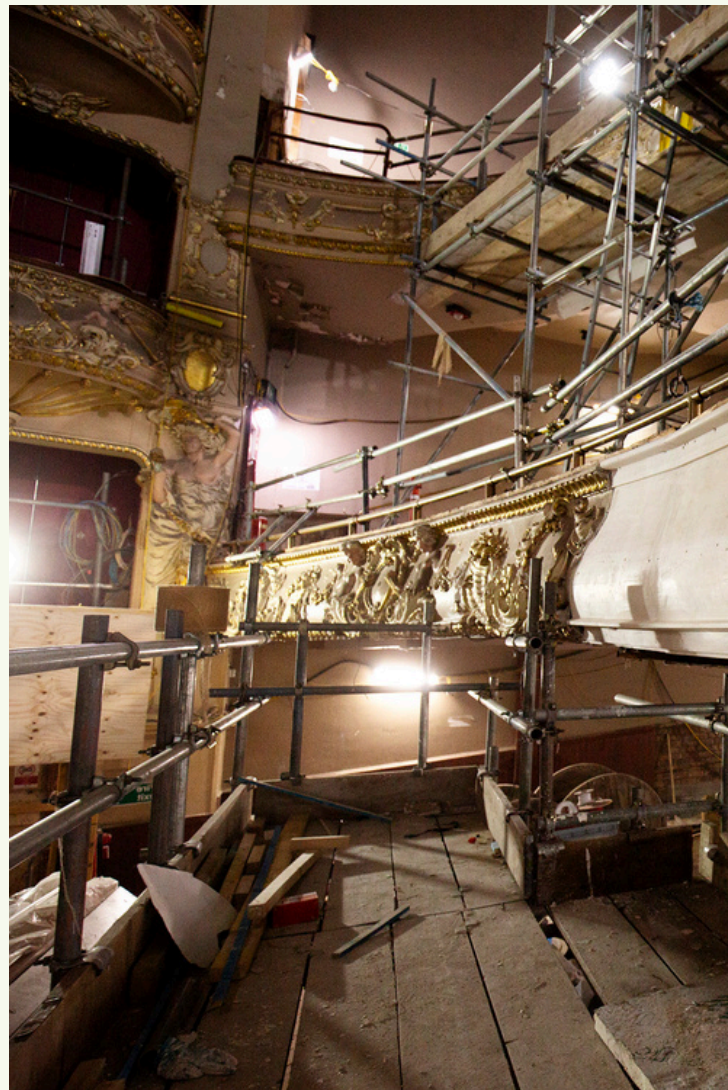
Creating a new level-access into the main foyer. © John Robb



Newly installed seats in the Upper Circle. © John Robb

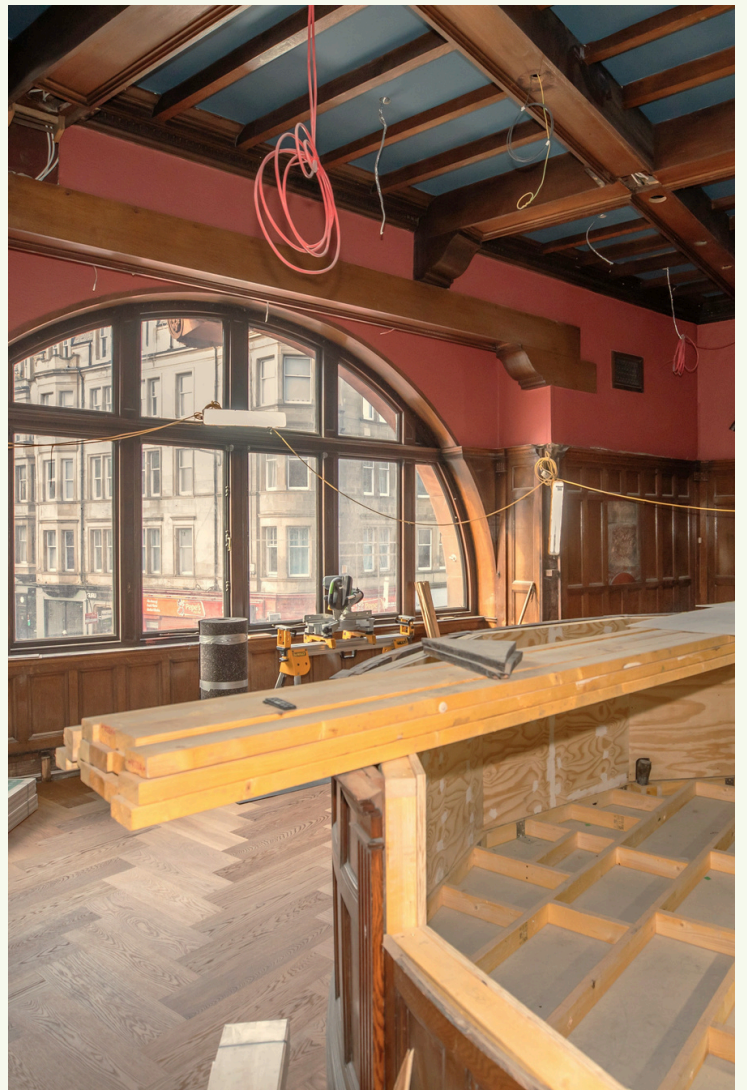


Top left: Dress Circle bar extension; Bottom left: Upper Circle bar © John Robb; Bottom centre: plasterwork restoration.





Top right: a dressing room with new features; Bottom right: Dress Circle bar with a new dropped-counter ©Mike Hume



Hope in a bottle

Share your memories of the King's and your hopes for its future

The King's has long been known as the People's Theatre. As we prepare for its grand reopening, we want to know what it means to those who know it best.

In December 2024, theatre photographer and historian Mike Hume discovered a glass bottle hidden inside a plaster crown, directly above the proscenium arch. Dated October 1906, just two months before the King's opened its doors to the public for the very first time, the bottle contained a list of the names of those who had helped build the theatre 120 years ago.

In just a few short months, a new chapter begins for the King's. This time it's your turn to leave a message for future generations to discover.

We'd love to know how you picture your future at the King's; whether you wish to step on the stage, get involved behind the scenes, come for a cuppa in our new café, attend events, or simply can't wait to share the joy of panto with your family once more. We would also love you to share some of your memories. Do you remember that first time you took your seat?



If you would like to get involved, please join us for a friendly, free, creative one-hour workshop led by our brilliant Engagement Artists. You'll explore some fascinating stories from the King's heritage before sharing your own hopes or memories on a beautiful scroll.

Location, Date and Times: Festival Theatre,
Wednesday 20th May, 10am and 5pm (lasting 1
hour)

To express your interest in attending, please email support@capitaltheatres.com by Friday 15 May indicating your preferred time of attending, and we'll get back to you to confirm your place. Spaces are limited, and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Alternatively, you can visit capitaltheatres.com/hope-in-a-bottle and share your hopes and memories through words, images or video. Messages can be submitted up until 31 May 2026.

Be part of history and join us in celebrating what theatres mean to the people that visit them – in the past, present and future.

Let's get technical

Capital Theatres' Technical team have tested the King's Theatre's new lighting gallery.

Heather Rolland, Senior Technician, explains how the King's kick-started her career:

"My very first professional job was at the King's Theatre in 2007. I received a last-minute call from head of the team, Graham Reith, because the National Theatre of Scotland required two follow-spot operators. I was completely honest and said, "I've wobbled one about for about five minutes and I hope that's enough". Fortunately for me, Graham had little choice, and fortunately for Graham, I had an aptitude for it!"

Heather goes on to share how that first day went...

"The show was The Bacchae as part of the Edinburgh International Festival with Alan Cumming at the top of the bill. My very first follow-spot cue was to follow Alan being dropped in by the feet on a Foley flying line. At the time he was wearing a gold mini-kilt which fell up around his ears as soon as he was turned upside down. Needless to say, this exposed his backside. All of it. So how can I ever forget my first professional follow-spot cue!"



Heather testing the revamped lighting system at the King's. © John Robb

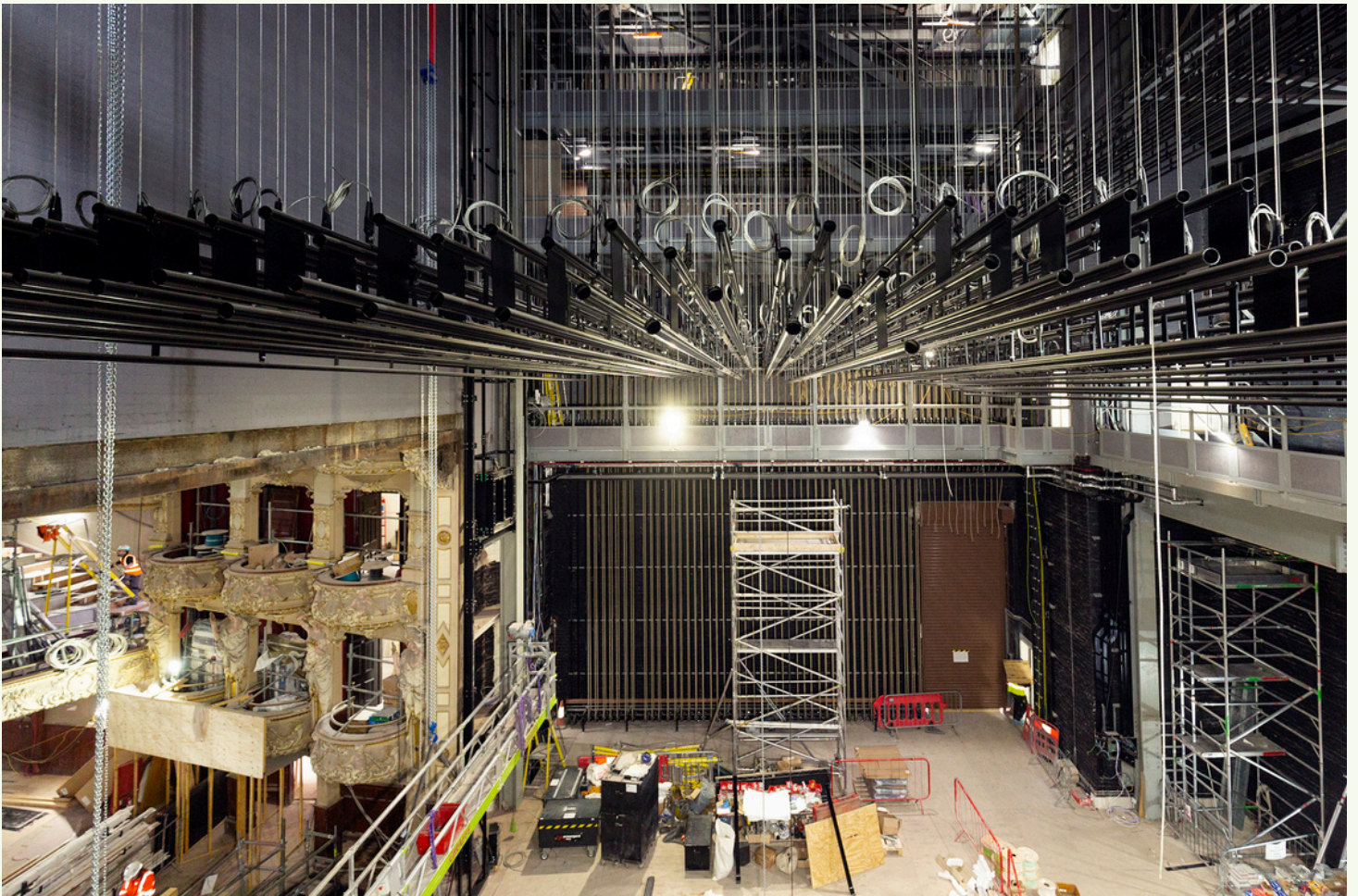
Heather recalls some of what makes working at the King's particularly special, and what she won't miss about some of the old stage house systems:

"When national touring companies visit the King's Theatre, it's more likely they'll bring fewer technical staff on tour with them, which has meant that, on occasion, I've found myself operating the lighting desk and being more actively involved in the running of a show, which is a great change of pace.

Also, before the King's closed we used a narrow, wooden bridge to cross from one fly floor to the next. This was an original feature of the 1906 King's and had frequently been used to rig lights or even confetti cannons in the Panto! It was very "charming", but very tricky to navigate so it'll be nice to work in a back-of-house area that is built for modern standards. I can't wait to get back in and lighting King's shows once again."



A view to the stage from the new lighting gallery. © Mike Hume



A view to the stage and rigged fly bars from the new stage-left gallery.

Last chance to name a step or dedicate a seat

Add your name to history and help us re-open the King's Theatre

We are thrilled that nearly all the beautiful new steps leading up to the Dress Circle and Upper Circle on either side of the theatre have been named. We have just seven more left.

The stairwells are wonderfully bright with handrails on either side for a more comfortable and safer climb. The design echos the vibrant colours of the original stained-glass panels created by Stephen Adam when the theatre first opened in 1906.

Alternatively, add your name or a message onto your favourite seat. Details are on our website or call the team to chat about how you would like to be part of the theatre when it reopens. We can create your plaque to be ready for the opening up until 5 June

Please visit capitaltheatres.com/kings-future or contact: connie.clark@capitaltheatres.com or call 0131 357 7858



A view to the auditorium from the box seats. © Mike Hume

You're receiving this King's Future update as you kindly donated to the campaign. If you would prefer not to receive them, or would prefer to receive them in a different format (postal, larger font etc.) please contact us on 0131 357 7858 or email support@capitaltheatres.com

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