
BUSINESS ALPHA EDINBURGH

news update

Issue one—July 2002

Introducing Business Alpha Edinburgh

The inaugural Business Alpha Edinburgh course, the first of its kind in Scotland, ran from 28th February to 23rd May. This report summarises some of the highlights of this exciting and innovative new venture.

What is Business Alpha Edinburgh?

Business Alpha Edinburgh (BAE) is a vehicle that offers people working in Edinburgh's West End a forum to relax and explore the meaning of life within the elegant surroundings of The Roxburghe Hotel in Charlotte Square. Over an eleven week period an average of 23 people chose to spend each Thursday lunchtime looking at the meaning of life and examining the relevance of Christianity to people's lives today.

The format of the meetings each week typically started at 12.45pm with a soup and sandwich lunch. There then followed a short talk lasting no more than 15 minutes which led on to a general discussion at the tables. This discussion lasted for around 30 minutes before the meeting formally closed at 1.50pm.

Most of the talks were given by Peter Neilson, Associate Minister at St Cuthbert's Parish Church. He made his talks particularly relevant to the business audience and provided up to the minute applications. On other occasions, Tony Thornthwaite, Minister at Viewforth Parish Church, and Brent Haywood, a partner of the Edinburgh law firm Biggart Baillie, set the context for the week's discussion with their thought-provoking and challenging insights.

Course Feedback

Three of the highlights from the course were:

- The smooth coming together of a team of people from half a dozen different businesses and over half a dozen churches in and around Edinburgh. It was thrilling to be part of such a team
- The 'away day' held at The Houstoun House Hotel near Uphall where guests were able to obtain a real sense of God's love for them through the workings of the Holy Spirit
- The 'celebration lunch' which marked the conclusion of the course. 38 people, including 11 new guests, came along to relax and enjoy the hospitality. This was also an opportunity to hear from two of the guests who had come along each week. They spoke warmly and movingly of their experience of Business Alpha. Overleaf is a distillation (in their own words) of what they shared at the celebration lunch. This is taken from the Business Alpha Edinburgh website.



BUSINESS ALPHA EDINBURGH—Explore the meaning of LIFE

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"Business Alpha's informal, friendly, challenging and informative approach generated frank and honest exchanges on core life issues sadly all too often side-stepped in our busy lives where trivia is often the norm. The experience was humbling and uplifting and it became the spiritual and intellectual highlight of my working week. I will miss it!"

From K whose background is Hindu

"I saw Business Alpha as a chance to re-energise my faith and to find something that seemed to be missing in my life. Brought up as a nominal Christian, I had joined a church in my early twenties and enjoyed the experience but had drifted away. The course was a great opportunity to meet people, to learn things and to discuss each other's views and beliefs."

From S who was brought up in the church

Administration and Finance

BAE has emerged under the umbrella of OASIS – a non-profit organisation serving the business community in Edinburgh's West End. BAE has become a charitable trust with six trustees drawn from across the business community. These are: Iain Archibald of OASIS, Michael Craig of Standard Life, Alison Anderson of Scottish Amicable, Lesley Anderson of Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Niels Calvert of World Mission (Church of Scotland) and Duncan MacLean of Henderson Boyd Jackson Solicitors. We who are the trustees agreed at our first meeting that BAE will be run twice yearly – in the spring and autumn of each year. The next course will start on Thursday 12th September 2002.

The financing of Business Alpha Edinburgh has principally been through donations from private benefactors, to whom BAE is most grateful. Support has also been given by Macdonald Hotels, Viewforth Parish Church, and Inigo Media who created and have maintained the website free of charge.

Summary Accounts

Income

Sponsorship, Donations and Gift Aid £2,872

Contributions from guests £1,817

Total £4,689

Expenditure

Catering £2,295

Marketing £880

Course materials £325

Total £3,500

Surplus £1,189



Conclusion

We have enjoyed a most encouraging start to Business Alpha Edinburgh. The trustees and course organisers are very grateful for the widespread support that we have received over the past few months. We very much hope and pray that you find this report of interest and that you may continue to support this venture in any way you feel able. We also look forward to serving more guests in the Autumn and in the Spring of 2003.

Michael Craig

Administrator and
Trustee of Business Alpha Edinburgh

Iain Archibald

Consultant to OASIS and
Trustee of Business Alpha Edinburgh