

**GREAT  
SCOTT!**



• EDINBURGH •  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



EDINBURGH  
University Press



National Library of Scotland  
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba



Text and arrangement copyright © Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2014  
with thanks to Dr Douglas McNaughton.

Produced for EUCL by Waverley Books, an imprint of The Gresham Publishing Company, Ltd.

Image copyright: image on page 4 with kind permission of Edinburgh Writers' Museum, City of Edinburgh Council; images on pages 9, 18, 29, 30, 35, 39, 50 with kind permission of The Abbotsford Trust; images on pages 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 27, 33, 38, 61 with kind permission of the National Library of Scotland. Various design elements are copyright © Maaïke Boot, Volodymyr Leus, Natalia Sheinkin courtesy of Shutterstock. Other illustrations by Mark Mechan.

Design by Mark Mechan, Red Axe Design

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been created by Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust as part of the Scott 2014 campaign devised by Ali Bowden and taking place at Waverley train station to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Waverley* and the 10th anniversary of the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature designation.

We would like to thank everyone involved in the creation of this book and in particular Network Rail, City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland. Our thanks to Dr Douglas McNaughton, Professor Ian Campbell, Sir Eric Anderson, Lee Simpson, Jenni Steele, Jenni Calder, Dr Donald Smith, Ron Grosset, Duncan Jones, Professor Alison Lumsden, James Robertson and Stuart Kelly.

*Waverley* quotations from Jenni Calder's 2014 edition.

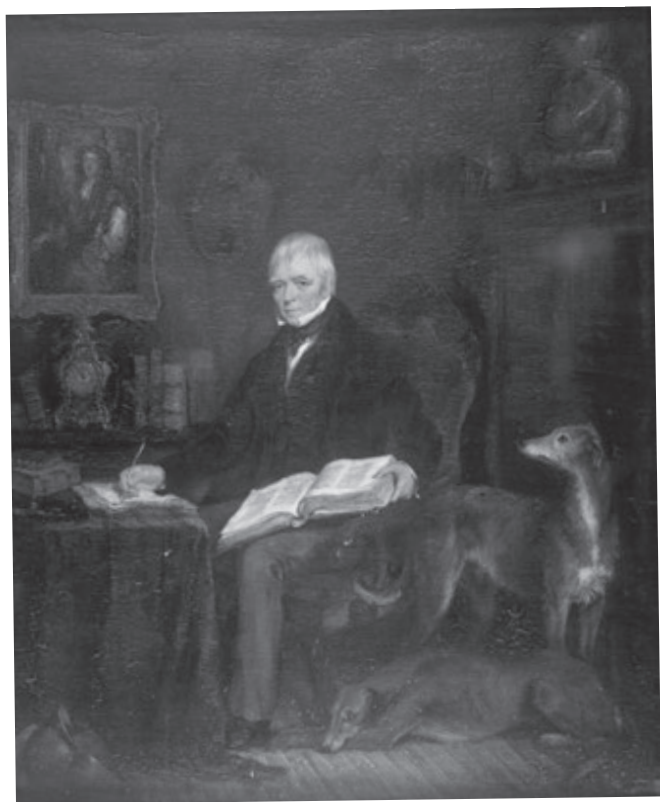
## OUR THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS:

The Abbotsford Trust  
Association for Scottish Literary Studies  
City of Edinburgh Council  
Creative Scotland  
Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club  
Edinburgh University Press  
The Faculty of Advocates  
Luath Press  
The National Library of Scotland

Network Rail  
Polygon Books  
Queen Margaret University  
Scottish Storytelling Centre  
University of Edinburgh  
VisitScotland  
Waverley Books  
Waverley train station staff

# CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>THE LIFE OF SCOTT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>THE WIT AND WISDOM OF WALTER SCOTT</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>EXPLORE SCOTT'S WORLD</b>	<b>49</b>



# PREFACE

*In literature as in love  
courage is half the battle.*

– *Journal*

Sir Walter Scott is one of Scotland's best-known writers and he was a major celebrity in his own time. The tallest monument to an author in the world is in honour of Scott and was built by public subscription in Edinburgh, his birthplace. When his first novel, *Waverley*, was published, in its first year it sold more copies than all the other novels published in the UK that year put together. By public demand, Waverley train station was named after Scott's novel, and is the only station in the world named after a book. Thanks to his defence of the Scottish banknote, Scott still appears on Bank of Scotland notes today. He has influenced writers around the world including today's best-selling author George R. R. Martin, creator of *A Game of Thrones*.

Scott was an amazing man and this book celebrates and explores his life, his work and his world.



**INTRODUCTION**

**SIR**

**WALTER**

**SCOTT**

**1771-1832**

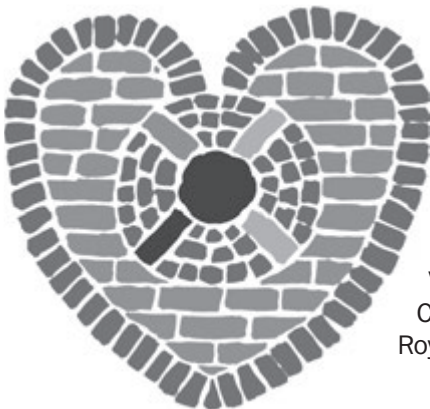


Although born in Edinburgh, Scott spent much of his youth in the Scottish Borders and developed a fascination with the songs and folklore of the region. He collected Border ballads and his early success as a writer was as a poet. Not wanting to risk his poetic fame when he turned to prose, he published his novel *Waverley* anonymously in 1814. Scott arguably invented the historical novel. Scott's formula, inserting fictional characters into recent history, was an instant success. Readers enjoyed the verve of his descriptive prose, the Scottish settings and characters, and the vivid Scots language which some of his characters spoke. Amazingly, in addition to his prolific writing career, Scott also practised as a lawyer throughout his adult life.

Scott sparked a craze for all things Scottish which spread throughout Europe and America. During the Napoleonic Wars (1803–15) the fashionable British could no longer enjoy the European 'Grand Tour', and Scott's poems and novels drew them to the Highlands in vast numbers, arguably beginning Scotland's modern tourist industry. Scott's work spawned images of Scotland and Scottishness which are still enormously influential; he changed how the world saw Scotland, and how Scotland saw itself.

In an extraordinary coup, in 1818 he uncovered the lost Scottish Crown Jewels, hidden away in Edinburgh Castle. In 1822, Scott masterminded King George IV's visit to Edinburgh, organising a pageant of Highland chieftains.

George IV was the first British monarch to visit Scotland in well over a century and he even wore tartan, which had been banned following the Jacobite rebellions. This Royal interest in Scotland was taken up by Queen Victoria, who built Balmoral Castle in Royal Deeside as the Royal family's holiday home.

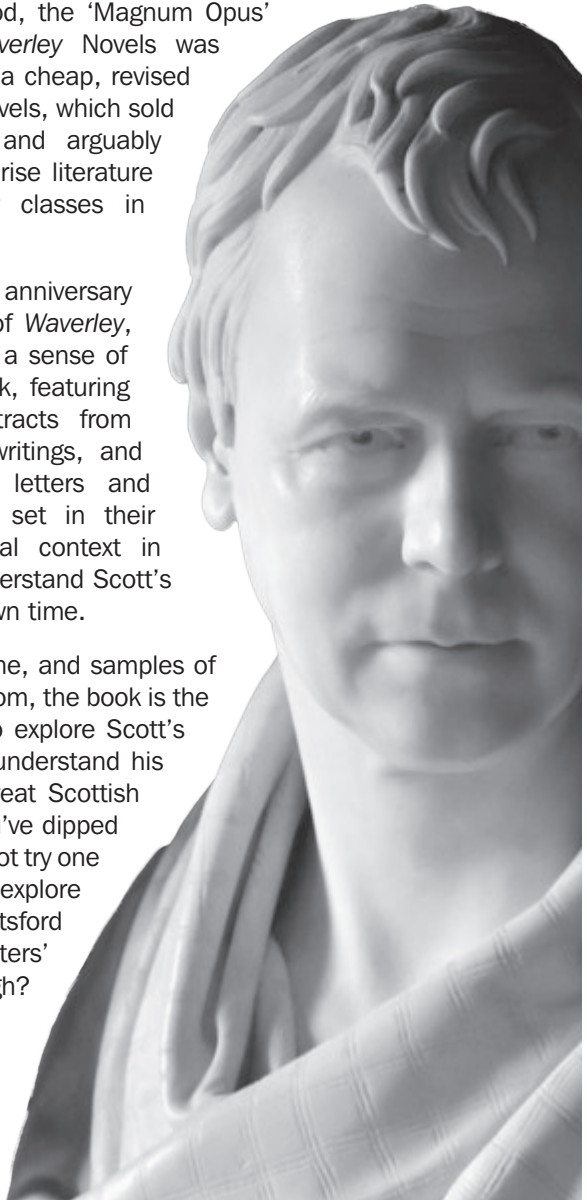




Despite his success, in 1826 Scott suffered a disastrous financial crash, when the printing and publishing firms producing his work collapsed. Scott vowed to write off his debts, and produced vast amounts of work at high pressure despite failing health. In this period, the 'Magnum Opus' edition of the *Waverley* Novels was produced. This was a cheap, revised edition of Scott's novels, which sold spectacularly well and arguably did much to popularise literature among the poorer classes in Scotland.

To mark the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Waverley*, this book gives you a sense of Scott's life and work, featuring a selection of extracts from Scott's published writings, and nuggets from his letters and journals. They are set in their social and historical context in order for you to understand Scott's importance in his own time.

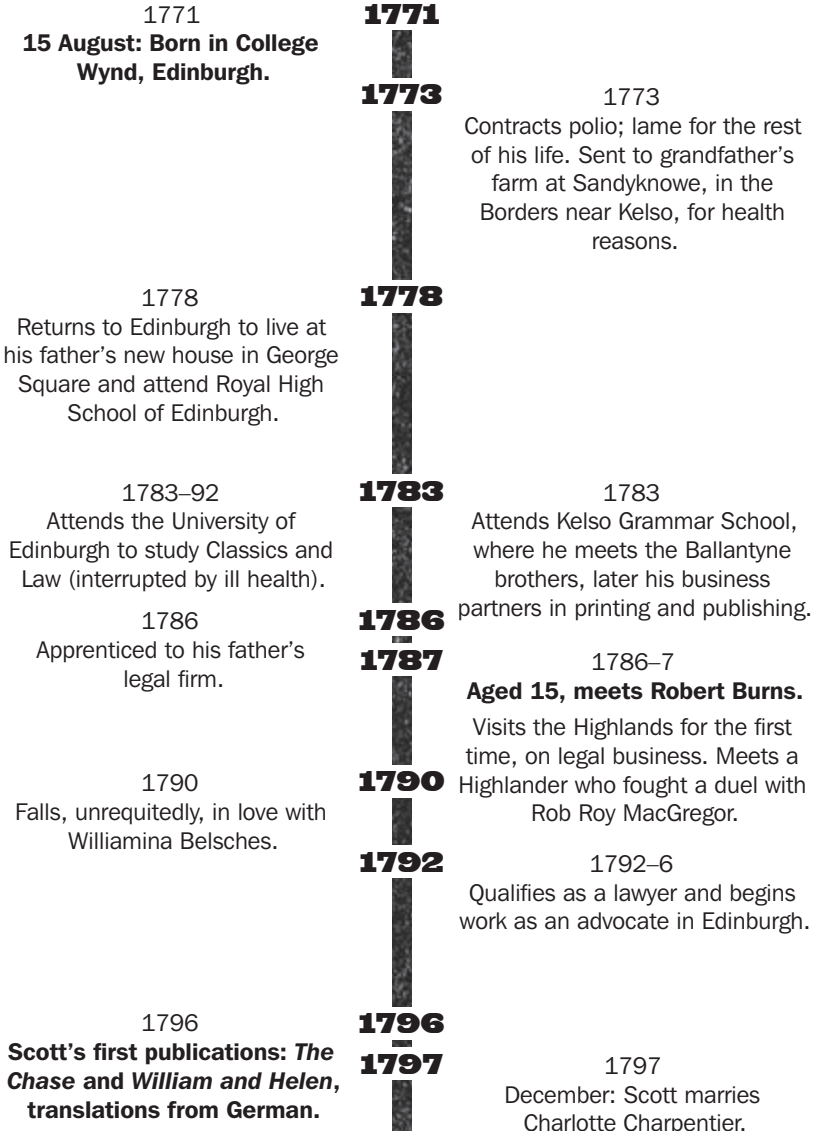
With a useful timeline, and samples of Scott's wit and wisdom, the book is the ideal way for you to explore Scott's life and work, and understand his significance as a great Scottish writer. And once you've dipped into this book, why not try one of the novels ... or explore his home at Abbotsford ... or visit the Writers' Museum in Edinburgh?





# TIMELINE

Only selected publications are mentioned here.



**1799**

1799

April: Scott's father dies.

October: birth of first child,  
Charlotte Sophia.

December: becomes Sheriff-  
Depute for the county of Selkirk in  
the Scottish Borders.

**1801**

1801

October: birth of Walter, Scott's  
first son.

December: Family moves to 39  
Castle Street, Edinburgh.

**1803**

1803

Napoleonic Wars begin, lasting  
until 1815; one effect is to end  
the tradition of the 'Grand Tour' of  
Europe by the upper and middle  
classes. Scott's work promotes  
Scottish tourism boom.

**First edition of *Minstrelsy of  
the Scottish Border* published.**

**1805**

1805

Scott's epic poem *The Lay of the  
Last Minstrel* is published: it is an  
instant success, establishing Scott  
as a best-selling poet.

Scott enters secret business  
partnership with the publisher/  
printer Ballantyne brothers.

**1806**

1806

Becomes a Principal Clerk to the  
Court of Session, Edinburgh

**1808**

1808

Publishes epic poem *Marmion*,  
after Edinburgh publisher  
Archibald Constable paid Scott a  
staggering 1,000 guinea advance.

**1810**

1810

Publishes epic poem *Lady of the  
Lake* to great acclaim, bringing  
tourists to the Trossachs and  
Loch Lomond.

**1811**

1811

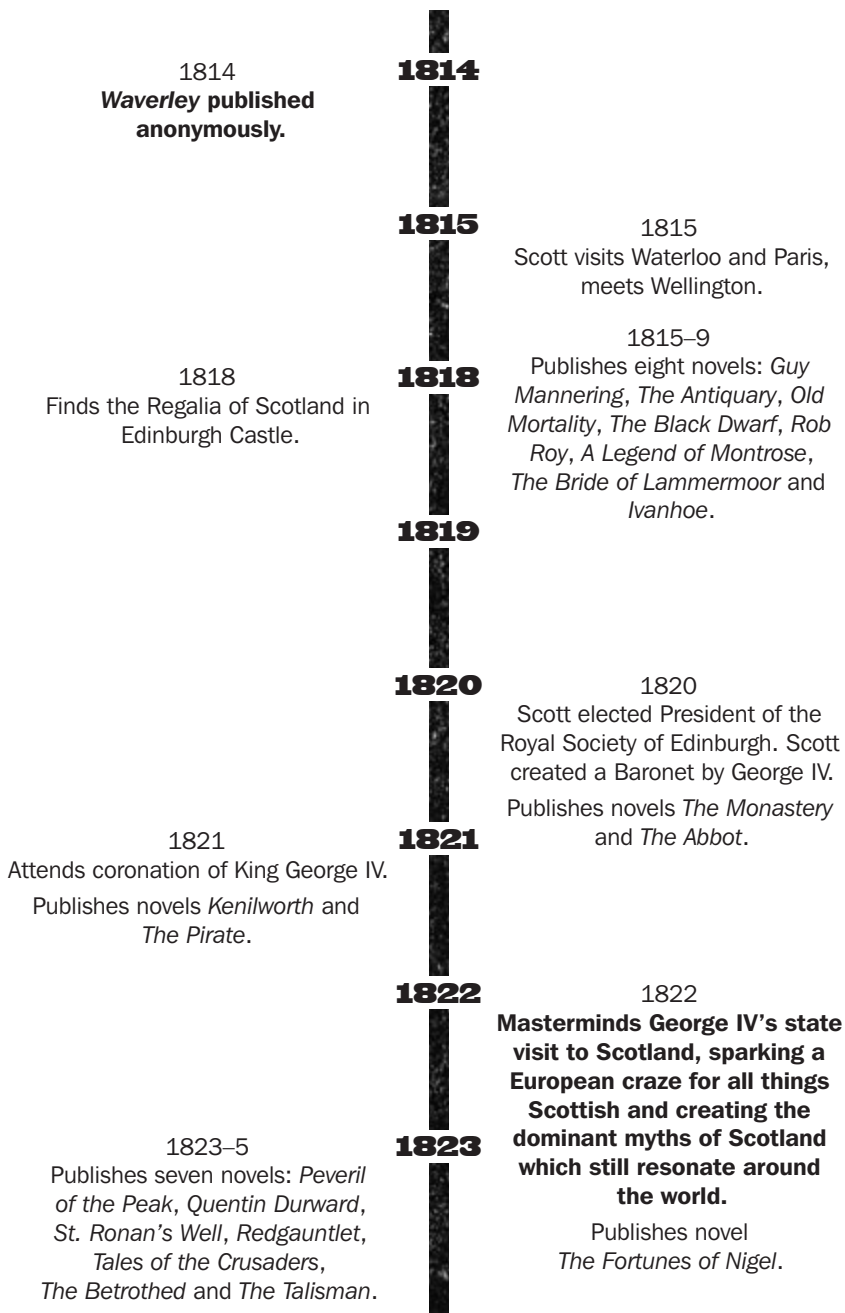
Buys Cartley Hole Farm in the  
Scottish Borders; builds a cottage  
there, renames it Abbotsford.

**1813**

1813

**Offered (and declines) the  
Poet Laureateship.**

Meets his admirer and rival Lord Byron,  
whose epic poems outsold Scott's.



1824  
Death of Scott's rival Lord Byron.

**1824**

1827  
**At a Theatrical Fund dinner, publicly admits to being the author of the *Waverley* Novels.**

Publishes *The Life of Napoleon* and novel *Chronicles of the Canongate*.

1828–9  
Publishes novels *The Fair Maid of Perth* and the First and Second Series of *Tales of a Grandfather*, *Anne of Geierstein*.

Begins publication of the 'Magnum Opus', a cheap, revised edition of the *Waverley* Novels.

1831  
Publication of Fourth Series of *Tales of a Grandfather* and Fourth Series of *Tales of my Landlord* (*Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*).

Scott suffers a stroke and paralysis follows. Goes to the Continent to recuperate.

**1826**

1826  
**January: Collapse of publisher, Archibald Constable, and printer, James Ballantyne. Scott faces debts of £131,000; vows to write his way out of debt.**

Sells 39 Castle Street.  
15 May: Scott's wife Charlotte dies.

**1827**

**1828**

Leads a successful campaign, through *The Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*, to preserve the Scottish banknote.

Publishes novel *Woodstock*.

**1829**

**1830**

1830  
Scott declines Civil List pension and rank of Privy Councillor. Writes *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.

**1831**

**1832**

1832  
**21 September: Scott dies at his home Abbotsford in the Scottish Borders.**

# THE LIFE OF SCOTT



# W

alter Scott was born on 15 August 1771 in College Wynd (now Guthrie Street) in Edinburgh's Old Town. His early life was spent in Edinburgh and with his grandparents at Sandyknowe Farm in Roxburghshire. The Border landscape fired Scott's imagination: Smailholm Tower, an old fortress, recalled the region's turbulent history. For the rest of his life, his time was largely divided between Edinburgh and the Borders.



In 1778, Scott returned to Edinburgh. By this time, Scott's father had moved into a smart new house, 25 George Square. This square was then *the* desirable address for Edinburgh society. Scott enrolled, aged 12, at Edinburgh University to study classics.





## **DID YOU KNOW?**

In the winter of 1786–7, the young Scott met ‘Scotland’s Bard’ Robert Burns, at the Edinburgh home of his friend Adam Ferguson. Burns was a major celebrity at this time. Scott, then 15, was impressed by the meeting: ‘I remember well the flash of his dark brown eye,’ he recalled; ‘I never saw such another eye in a human head.’

In March 1786 Scott was apprenticed to his father’s legal firm and made his first visit to the Highlands. His client was a Jacobite veteran, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, who claimed to have once fought a duel with Rob Roy MacGregor.



## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Scott is one of the most famous members of the Faculty of Advocates, a body of independent Scottish lawyers dating back at least to 1532. Other famous names have included Robert Louis Stevenson and James Boswell.

The Faculty’s Library was founded in 1689. In 1925 the National Library of Scotland was established when the Faculty gifted to the nation its whole non-law collections comprising 750,000 books, pamphlets, manuscripts, maps and sheet music.



Scott qualified as an advocate on 11 July 1792. As much of his work was in the Borders, he started collecting the ballads he had enjoyed at Sandyknowe. Eventually these would be published as *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

In 1797, Scott married Charlotte Charpentier, a 27-year-old woman of French birth, proposing after a three-week romance. Married life began in a rented house at 50 George Street, Edinburgh.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Scott and his wife enjoyed a long and happy marriage. However, his first love Williamina Belsches cast a long shadow. He wrote in a letter:**

*Mrs Scott's match and mine was of our own making, and proceeded from the most sincere affection on both sides... But it is something short of love in all its forms, which I suspect people only feel once in their lives: folk who have been nearly drowned in bathing rarely venturing a second time out of their depth.*

– Letters

**After Williamina died, Scott wrote:**

*Scarce one person out of twenty marries his first love, and scarce one out of twenty of the remainder has cause to rejoice at having done so. What we love in these early days is generally rather a fanciful creation of our own than a reality. We build statues of snow and weep when they melt.*

– Letters

**In *Waverley*, Scott's heroine Flora says:**

A lover may persevere under very discouraging circumstances. Affection can withstand severe storms of rigour, but not a long polar frost of indifference. Love will subsist on wonderfully little hope, but not altogether without it.

Scott was appointed Sheriff-Depute (a kind of county judge) of Selkirkshire in 1799, so from now on, he divided his time between the Borders and Edinburgh. Winters were spent in Edinburgh, while mid-July to mid-November found him in Selkirk.

In 1801 Scott's first son Walter was born and the family moved to a gracious new three-storey house at 39 Castle Street, which was to be Scott's Edinburgh address until 1826.

*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was published in 1802 and enjoyed great success, with the first edition sold out within six months. In 1805, Scott published the smash-hit poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which established him as a leading poet.



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Scott's supernatural imitation ballad *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published in 1805 and brought Scott instant fame. It sold incredibly well for a work of poetry (around 44,000 copies in all) and brought crowds to Melrose Abbey with its descriptions of the moonlit Abbey, which became a popular subject with painters.**

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.

[...]

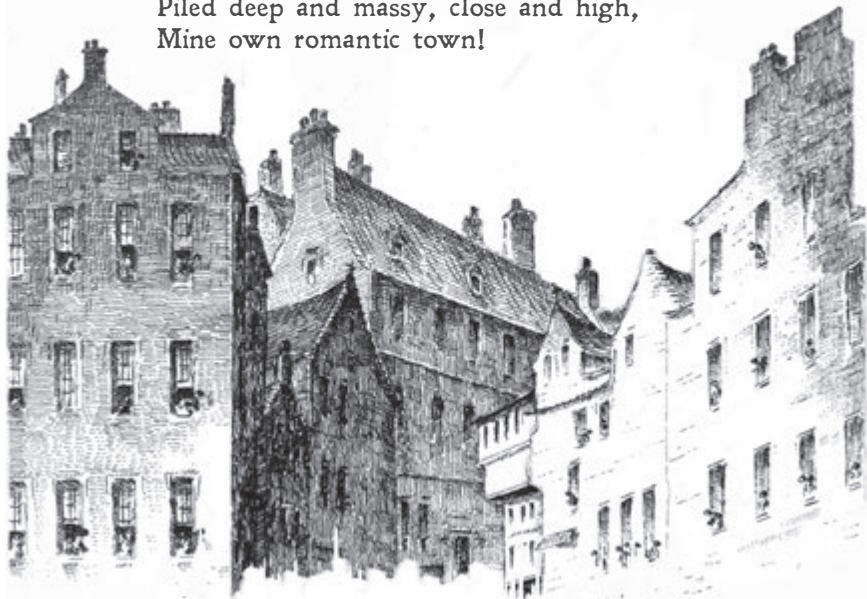
Then go – but go alone the while –  
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;  
And, home returning, soothly swear,  
Was never scene so sad and fair!

In later years Scott would admit he had never actually seen the Abbey by moonlight, but it was a foreshadowing of his dramatic effect on Scotland's tourist industry. Scott found himself lionised in London, where he met Caroline Princess of Wales. From *The Lay* come the famous lines:

Breathes there the man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!

His next major poem was *Marmion*, published in 1808, set against the battle of Flodden Field, Scotland's greatest military defeat. The poem was an even greater success than *The Lay*, and features an evocative description of Edinburgh:

Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,  
Where the huge Castle holds its state  
And all the steep slope down,  
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,  
Piled deep and massy, close and high,  
Mine own romantic town!



*Marmion* features the famous lines:

O what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practise to deceive!

In 1809 Scott helped to establish the publishing house of Ballantyne & Co. with his school friends John and James Ballantyne. Scott was a silent partner with a 50% share of the business while the brothers split the other 50% between them. In 1810 he published his narrative poem *The Lady of the Lake*.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**In 1809 Scott holidayed at Loch Katrine, which was to feature as the setting of his next narrative poem, *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). Telling the story of King James V's struggle with the Douglas clan, the poem built on the success of its predecessors and broke all records for sales of poetry. Within eight months, 25,000 copies were sold, and the poem created a fashion for the loch and the Trossachs as a tourist destination with its descriptions of Loch Katrine.**

And thus an airy point he won,  
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,  
One burnished sheet of living gold,  
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled

**The Scott connection is seen today in the loch's 1900 steamship named *Sir Walter Scott* and the cruiser *Lady of the Lake*.**

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Scott's work has inspired around 90 operas – more than any writer other than Shakespeare – but one of his verses has had a particularly influential life. Verses from *The Lady of the Lake* were put to music for a London stage production. Starting from around 1815, this became the march traditionally played to honour the President of the United States.**

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!  
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!  
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,  
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!

In 1811, Scott paid the then-enormous sum of £4,200 for Cartley Hole Farm (nicknamed 'Clarty', a Scots word meaning dirty). Situated in the Borders between Kelso and Melrose, this was to be the site of Scott's beloved home Abbotsford.

The year 1814 saw the publication of his first novel, *Waverley, or 'tis Sixty Years Since*. In 1805, inspired by his travels in the Highlands and the tales told by Jacobite veterans, Scott had begun a work about the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, which attempted to restore a Stuart king to the throne. According to his own account, he was looking for fishing tackle in Abbotsford one day in 1813 when he came across the abandoned draft in a drawer and decided to complete the work.

It is difficult now to comprehend the extraordinary success of *Waverley*. In the days before electronic media, a novel, poem or painting could become a sensation in the same way as a new film today. Scott's blending of recent history and fiction was a heady mix and met with critical acclaim and popular success. Stuart Kelly, in his book *Scott-land*, claims that the first print run of 2,000 sold out within two days.







*Waverley* is about the Jacobite attempts to restore the Stuarts. Against the vividly described backdrop of this divided Scotland, Edward Waverley is caught up in the 1745 rebellion. One of the most thrilling images in *Waverley* is the besieged city of Edinburgh, with the Castle wreathed in smoke from cannon fire:

They speedily reached an eminence from which they could view Edinburgh stretching along the ridgy hill which slopes eastward from the Castle. The latter being in a state of blockade by the northern insurgents, who had already occupied the town for two or three days, fired at intervals upon such Highlanders as exposed themselves. The morning being calm and fair, the effect of this was to invest the Castle in wreaths of smoke, the edges of which dissipated slowly in the air while the central veil was darkened by fresh clouds poured forth from the battlements, the whole giving an appearance of grandeur and gloom.



Rather like an action movie today, Scott uses a variety of striking locations which would have seemed impossibly exotic to many of his readers. Edward Waverley explores the Highlands, visits Stirling Castle, and meets Bonnie Prince Charlie in his headquarters in the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. His books were the blockbusters of their day.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

One possible reason for *Waverley's* success is that it addressed pressing worries around Scottish identity. The Battle of Culloden and the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion were still within living memory. For readers in 1814, the '45 was as recent as the Second World War is to us now. In the '45, followers of the Stuart family tried to reassert their claim to the throne. Half a century later, the Highland Clearances were sweeping away traditional ways of life, displacing the Highlanders and changing the very landscape in the name of progress. Scotland was in the midst of social upheaval – the Union of the Parliaments of 1707 divided the country, with some in favour of the Union and some against, and created arguments about Scottish identity which continue to this day.

Until Scott, history books had presented the facts, the big picture and the 'great men' of history; novels had presented fictional characters and narratives. Scott's great breakthrough was to combine the two; mixing the political and the personal, he had his characters meet real historical figures. Scott's approach, inserting his fictional characters into recent history, managed to personalise historical events and make them emotionally resonate with his readers. Many writers credit Scott with saving Scots as a living language through his dialogue.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### The 'Great Unknown': the Author of *Waverley*

Scott did not confirm his authorship of the *Waverley Novels* until 1827, although it was an open secret in some circles. Jane Austen protested jealously: 'Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair.' Thomas Carlyle complained of how irritating it was to be in on the secret but to have to pretend to be amazed by theories about the author's identity. He particularly noted how enjoyable this all was for Scott,

*'who probably had not to listen, as other hapless individuals often had, to this or the other long-drawn "clear proof at last," that the author was not Walter Scott, but a certain astonishing Mr. So-and-so; [...] to the general imagination the "Author of Waverley" was like some living mythological personage, and ranked among the chief wonders of the world.'*

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of Scott's strengths is the dry wit of his writing, and his array of comical characters anticipating Dickens' later work. For example, *The Antiquary* features an amusing description of Mrs Mailsetter's small Scottish post office, 'a source more famous for the circulation of news than for their accuracy.'

*Waverley* too is replete with amusing grotesques: the Baron of Bradwardine, a learned man whose 'learning was more diffuse than accurate'; Mrs Mucklewrath ('great anger' in Scots), a 'large-boned hard-featured woman, dressed as if her clothes had been flung on with a pitchfork'; the interfering Madam Nosebag, and others. A particular highlight is the early scene in which Edward Waverley unsuccessfully tries to avoid getting drunk, then has to subdue a drunken quarrel:

Our hero ... escorted the Baron to his own dwelling, but could not prevail upon him to retire to bed until he had made a long and learned apology for the events of the evening, of which there was not a word intelligible.

As Scott's fame grew and distinguished guests enjoyed his hospitality, Abbotsford was simply too small, and from 1818 Scott embarked on a major expansion of the house.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Abbotsford combines Scott's fascination with all things medieval and his thoroughly modern outlook. Although built in Scots Baronial style, it was remarkably advanced technologically. The exterior resembles a 16th-century Scottish fortified house, while the interior was decorated with suits of armour and old weapons (including Rob Roy's gun, pouch and dirk). However, its modern innovations included a pneumatic bell system, water closets and gas lighting. Completed in 1824, it sparked a craze for the Scots Baronial style – see also, for example, Victoria and Albert's Balmoral Castle.

*It is a kind of Bonundrum Castle to be sure and I have great pleasure in it for while it pleases a fantastic person in the stile and manner of its architecture and decoration it has all the comforts of a commodious habitation.*

– Journal





February 1818 saw another triumph for Scott: the unearthing of the lost Scottish Regalia, or Crown Jewels. The whereabouts of these was one of Scott's personal obsessions and he lobbied the Prince Regent about it when they met in 1815. The Prince Regent gave permission for Edinburgh Castle to be searched, leading Scott to the chest containing the forgotten regalia.





## DID YOU KNOW?

The 'Honours of Scotland' – the crown and sceptre from the reign of James V, the Sword of State presented to James IV by Pope Julian II and the silver mace of the Treasurer of Scotland – had enjoyed an exciting history. During Cromwell's occupation of Scotland in the 1650s the regalia had been held in Dunnottar Castle and concealed under the pulpit of the Kirk of Kinneff. They were produced again during the Restoration of the Monarchy and held in Edinburgh Castle. In the absence of a resident monarch, the crown sat before the throne. When the Scottish Parliament was dissolved in 1707 the regalia were locked in a chest in the Crown Room at Edinburgh Castle and gradually forgotten.

In 1820, Scott ventured beyond Scotland's history with *Ivanhoe*. Exploring 12th-century England widened his appeal; the novel became internationally famous. It was a huge success, selling 10,000 copies in a fortnight. This strategy helped to inspire the 19th-century craze for the medieval which influenced such movements as the Pre-Raphaelite painters and the architecture of Pugin. As well as his influence on images of Scotland, then, Scott created myths of 'Merrie England' which survive today.

In 1822, Scott masterminded King George IV's visit to Scotland. This was no ordinary state visit. George IV was the first British monarch to visit Scotland for over a century. Scott arranged for Highland chieftains to visit Edinburgh for a display of loyalty to the king, and assisted in the design of their clan tartans – the basis for the colour-coded tartans in use today. The wearing of tartan had been banned following the 1745 rebellion, though lifted in 1782, but the ban had imbued the plaid with tremendous nationalistic glamour.

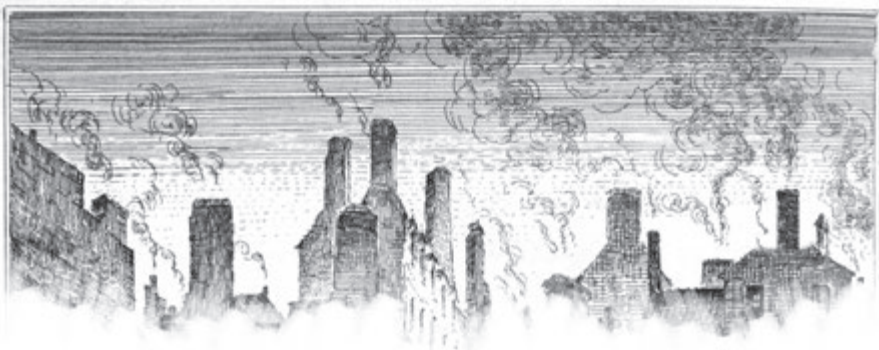
Half the population of Scotland was drawn to the capital for the royal pageant, organised by Scott, in which the King wore a kilt of the Royal Stewart tartan (and, allegedly, pink silk stockings to keep out the cold). Holyrood Palace was refurbished as a venue for some of the events on the royal itinerary, which included a state procession to Edinburgh Castle, a Royal Command performance of an adaptation of Scott's *Rob Roy* and a grand ball at the Assembly Rooms.



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**The Grand Ball was to prove a turning point in the attitude of Scots to Highland dress. The original plaid was a length of material worn over a loose shirt, wound round the body. It was a multi-purpose garment, for the shepherds and farmers who wore it in the Highlands could wrap it around themselves to sleep in. The short, modernised version – the kilt – was popularised in 1822 by the King's visit. Until then it had been seen as the basic dress of backward Highlanders, scorned by Lowlanders and Edinburgh's metropolitan set. When Scott stipulated that the ball was to have a Highland theme, the cream of Edinburgh society suddenly developed an interest in its heritage, and Highland ancestors were abruptly unearthed to legitimise the wearing of the kilt. From this point on the kilt would become Scotland's national dress.**





## DID YOU KNOW?

Although famed for his historical works, Scott was thoroughly modern. He was one of the few contemporary critics to write a favourable review of Mary Shelley's seminal science-fiction novel *Frankenstein* (1818). Living through a time of rapid technological change, Scott mused on the social effects of industrialisation:

*Nature intended that population should be diffused over the soil in proportion to its extent. We have accumulated in huge cities and smouldering manufactories the numbers which should be spread across the face of a country and what wonder that they should be corrupted?*

– Journal

And he wondered about the effect of steam technology and rail transport, little knowing Edinburgh's main station would one day be named for his first novel:

*The increasing powers of Steam ... will I think one day waft friends together in the course of a few hours and for aught we may be able to tell bring Hampstead and Abbotsford within the distance of 'will you dine with us quietly tomorrow'.*

– Letters

Would Scott perhaps have become a science-fiction writer, mixing swashbuckling adventure with fantastic technologies, like his admirer Jules Verne?



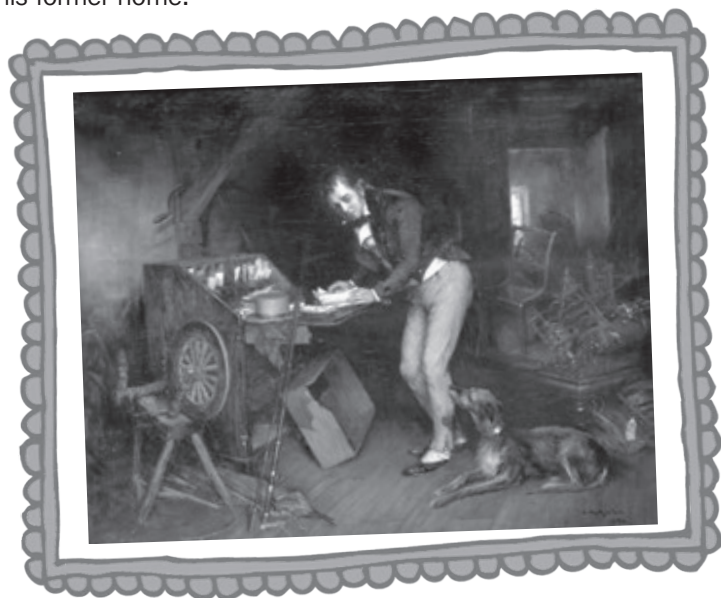
In 1825, disaster struck. A financial crash in the City of London led to Scott's publishing and printing companies losing huge sums. Bankruptcy loomed. Scott, who suffered a slight stroke, was left with the staggering debt of £121,000 – a colossal sum then. Adding to Scott's woes, his wife Charlotte died on 15 May 1826.

Although inundated with offers of financial help from relatives and friends (including the Duke of Buccleuch), Scott refused to fall back on their support. He had the option of declaring himself bankrupt, but Scott resolved to honour his debts. He famously declared,

*I will involve no friend either rich or poor  
— my own right hand shall do it.*

— Journal

And so he set to writing himself out of financial straits. Abbotsford was safe, as Scott had settled the property on his son in 1825. However, his Edinburgh house at 39 North Castle Street was sold along with its contents, including his writing desk. For the rest of his life, when visiting the capital, Scott could never bear to pass his former home.



I see before me a long tedious and dark path  
but it leads to true Fame and stainless  
reputation. If I die in the harrows as is  
very likely I shall die with honour.

– Journal

From this point on, Scott wrote at a torrential pace. As well as new novels and his huge biography *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827–8), Scott embarked on the task of revisiting his fiction for the affordable ‘Magnum Opus’ edition of the *Waverley* Novels, published between 1829 and 1833. In 1827, at a Theatrical Fund dinner, Scott at last admitted to authorship of the *Waverley* Novels.

In 1830 Scott declined the offer of a Civil List pension. But by now, worn out by stress and work, his health was in decline. He suffered a stroke and in September 1831 he went on a Mediterranean cruise to recuperate. He returned to Great Britain in June 1832, gravely ill. Unable to travel further, he spent three weeks in London. Newspapers published daily reports of his condition and members of the Royal Family sent messages of support.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Scott's celebrity followed him right to the end of his life. While ill in London, he was inundated with social invitations. When his hostess attempted to procure for Scott some bloaters he liked, the reaction of a star-struck Billingsgate fishmonger tells us much about Scott's fame among all levels of society:

*The rough fishmonger started back and pushing forward to me through his piles of fish cried out almost loudly 'Sir Walter Scott! – did you say madam? Sir Walter Scott! – God bless my soul! He shall have them directly if I carry them myself – Sir Walter Scott!' When Scott heard this story, he laughed 'I don't think my works ever produced an effect so much to my taste before.'*

Returning to Scotland, Scott died in what is now the dining room at Abbotsford on 21 September 1832, aged 61. His son-in-law Lockhart recorded

*About half past one on 21<sup>st</sup> September Sir Walter breathed his last in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day – so warm that every window was wide open – and so perfectly still that the sound most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around his bed.*

At the time of Scott's death, his outstanding debt had been drastically reduced to £53,000. It was finally paid off in 1847 by the sale of Scott's remaining copyrights.

A few days after his death Scott was accorded something along the lines of a state funeral. Through his mother's family, Scott was entitled to burial in Dryburgh Abbey. His own horses drew the hearse and, as they had during Scott's life, paused on Bemersyde Hill, where Scott had always enjoyed the view of the Eildon Hills. Lockhart recorded that

*When the coffin was taken from the hearse,  
one deep sob burst from a thousand lips.*





## **SCOTT'S LEGACY**

Many critics agree that Scott's publication of *Waverley* marked the emergence of the modern novel in the western world, inspiring authors such as Balzac, Tolstoy, Dickens and Verne. Although critics have complained that Scott constructed a romanticised, ahistorical Scotland, the Scott scholar Alison Lumsden (2007) has suggested that Scott simply used existing ideas about Scotland but with a modernising spin. In this reading, romantic images of the Highlands were well established – Loch Katrine, for example, was already a popular tourist spot – and Scott built on these ideas, both reinforcing and challenging them. Furthermore, Scott sought to unite Lowlanders and Highlanders, creating a more unified, forward-looking Scottish national identity. What is clear is that, in his many contributions to Scottish literature, culture and identity, Scott brought Scotland to the world, and the world to Scotland.





**THE  
WIT  
AND  
WISDOM  
OF  
WALTER  
SCOTT**

## **ON COMPANY AND FAMILY**

The chain of friendship however bright does not stand the attrition of constant close contact.

– Journal

I have rarely if ever found anyone out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification.

– Journal

I care not for children till they care a little for me.

– Letters

I generally affect good spirits in the company of my family whether I am enjoying them or not ... for the good spirits which are at first simulated become at length real.

– Journal

When, musing on companions gone,  
We doubly feel ourselves alone.

– *Marmion*

## ON WORK

I have had all my life a longing to do some thing else when I am called to particular labour – a vile contradictory humour which I cannot get rid of.

– Journal

To enjoy leisure, it is absolutely necessary it should be preceded by occupation.

– *The Monastery*

I have no turn for these committees and yet I always get jammed into them. They take up a cruel deal of time in a way very unsatisfactory.

– Journal

Jock, when you hae naething else to do, ye may be ay sticking in a tree; it will be growing, Jock, when ye're sleeping.

– *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

A lawyer without history or literature is a mechanic, a mere working mason; if he possesses some knowledge of these, he may venture to call himself an architect.

– *Guy Mannering*

The great art of life, so far as I have been able to observe, consists in fortitude and perseverance.

– Letters

## **ON WRITING**

One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.

– *Old Mortality*

I think there is a demon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose.

– *The Fortunes of Nigel*

I cannot tell how the truth may be;  
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

– *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

In literature as in love courage is half the battle.

– Journal

Many a clever boy is flogged into a dunce and many an original composition corrected into mediocrity.

– Journal

The Newspaper told about fifty lies about this matter as usual but one would have little to do who should mind them.

– Letters

The misfortune of writing fast is that one cannot at the same time write concisely.

– Journal

## **ON THE SCOTS**

The Scotch are not a people who speedily admit innovation, even when it comes in the shape of improvement.

– *Rob Roy*

As far as I have observed no two nations in Europe resemble each other less than the English and Scotch.

– Letters

Scottish audiences ... are certainly not inclined to give applause on credit.

– Journal

... when we had a king, and a chancellor, and parliament – men o' our ain, we could aye peeble them wi' stanes when they werena gude bairns – But naebody's nails can reach the length o' Lunnon.

– *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

The hour's come, but not the man.

– *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

## **ON HUMAN NATURE**

The best of luxuries, the luxury of knowledge.

– *Guy Mannering*

The ae half of the warld thinks the tither daft.

– *Redgauntlet*

To see foreign parts gives I think more the feelings of youth to those of an advanced age than anything they can engage in.

– Letters

Good humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance.

– *The Black Dwarf*

An orator is like a top. Let him alone and he must stop one time or another – flog him and he may go on for ever.

– Journal

Your deepest pools, like your deepest politicians and philosophers, often turn out more shallow than expected.

– Journal

Good advice is easily followed when it jumps with our own sentiments and inclinations.

– Letters

Life is dear even to those who feel it a burden.

– *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

Life is too short for the indulgence of animosity.

– Letters

Of all the boring machines ever devised your regular and determined story-teller is the most peremptory and powerful in his operations.

– Letters

Many people care less to gain their point than they do to play the orator and be listened to for a certain time.

– Journal

O, what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practise to deceive!

– *Marmion*

Revenge, the sweetest morsel to the mouth, that ever cooked in hell!

– *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

## **ON LOVE**

Love will subsist on wonderfully little hope, but not altogether without it.

– *Waverley*

Folks who have been nearly drowned in bathing rarely venturing a second time out of their depth.

– Letters

Scarce one person out of twenty marries his first love, and scarce one out of twenty of the remainder has cause to rejoice at having done so.

– Letters

True love's the gift which God has given  
To man alone beneath the heaven.

– *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

## **ON WINE**

A glass of good wine is a gracious creature and reconciles poor mortality to itself, and that is what few things can do.

– Journal

Wine unveils the passions and throws away restraint but it does not create habits or opinions which did not previously exist in the mind.

– Letters



**EXPLORE  
SCOTT'S  
WORLD**

# VISIT:

## **ABBOTSFORD**

In 1811, Scott bought a small farm, Cartley (nicknamed 'Clarty') Hole Farm, situated in the Borders between Kelso and Melrose, which he renamed Abbotsford. Equipped with modern technology including a pneumatic bell system, water closets and gas lighting, Abbotsford was completed in 1824.

**[scottsabbotsford.com](http://scottsabbotsford.com)**



## **DRYBURGH ABBEY**

This gracious ruin in the Scottish Borders is Scott's last resting place.

**[historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://historic-scotland.gov.uk)**

## **EDINBURGH CASTLE**

As well as the many other events in its thousand-year history, the castle is the site of Scott's dramatic rediscovery of the Scottish Crown Jewels in 1818.

**[edinburghcastle.gov.uk](http://edinburghcastle.gov.uk)**

## **EDINBURGH LITERARY WALKING TOURS**

There is the original Edinburgh Literary Pub Tour, founded in 1996

**[edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk](http://edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk)**

and the Edinburgh Book Lovers' Tour, led by author Allan Foster.

**[edinburghbookloverstour.com](http://edinburghbookloverstour.com)**

## **EDINBURGH WRITERS' MUSEUM**

The Museum holds a range of materials related to Scott, from his childhood rocking horse to the press on which the *Waverley* Novels were printed.

**[edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/The-Writers-Museum](http://edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/The-Writers-Museum)**



## **GEORGE SQUARE, EDINBURGH**

George Square was at one time the most fashionable square in Edinburgh. The gardens in the centre included a maze and there was a popular dance hall in neighbouring Buccleuch Place. Before her marriage, Jane Welsh Carlyle stayed at Number 22 and Scott was a regular visitor. Scott's father owned Number 25 and Scott lived there throughout his attendance at the Royal High School of Edinburgh and Edinburgh University. It is now owned by Edinburgh University.

## **THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN**

This heart-shaped mosaic set into the cobbles in Parliament Square on Edinburgh's High Street marks the site of the Old Tolbooth Prison and public execution point, as featured in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*.



## **THE PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE**

Among other Scott connections, this was the site of some of the events in celebration of the visit of George IV in 1822. It also features in *Waverley* as Bonnie Prince Charlie's Edinburgh headquarters.

**royal.gov.uk/ (select 'The Royal Residences')**

## **LOCH KATRINE**

Offering the magnificent landscapes of the Trossachs, Loch Katrine's fame was assured by Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. The local vessels which operate on the loch, *Sir Walter Scott* and *Lady of the Lake*, preserve the link with Scott.

**lochkatrine.com**

## **MELROSE ABBEY**

This magnificent ruined abbey in the Scottish Borders is the burial place of Robert the Bruce's heart, and features in Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

**historic-scotland.gov.uk**

## **NORTH CASTLE STREET, EDINBURGH**

Scott had a spacious town house built at Number 39 Castle Street, into which he moved his family shortly after Walter's birth in 1801. It was to remain his Edinburgh residence until 1826, when financial disaster struck. After that, he could never again bear to pass the house. Nearby are the Assembly Rooms in George Street, opened in 1787, which Scott knew well.

## **OLD COLLEGE, EDINBURGH**

A plaque on Guthrie Street marks the site of Scott's birth, in a third-floor flat in what was then called College Wynd in the Old Town of Edinburgh. College Wynd was a cramped, dimly lit alleyway with poor sanitation. The actual building where Scott was born was pulled down to be replaced by what is now known as Old College, part of the University of Edinburgh.

## **THE SCOTT APARTMENT**

The literary tourist can stay in the basement of 39 North Castle Street, one of Scott's former homes. It has a very modern interior so is not an 'authentic' experience.

**[thescottapartment.com](http://thescottapartment.com)**

## **SCOTT MONUMENT**

Standing in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens, this is the tallest monument to a writer in the world. It was paid for by public subscription after Scott's death and shows his celebrity and the affection in which he was held. You can climb 287 steps to its Museum Room and enjoy breathtaking views of Edinburgh.

**[edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/Scott-Monument](http://edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/Scott-Monument)**



## **SIR WALTER SCOTT WAY**

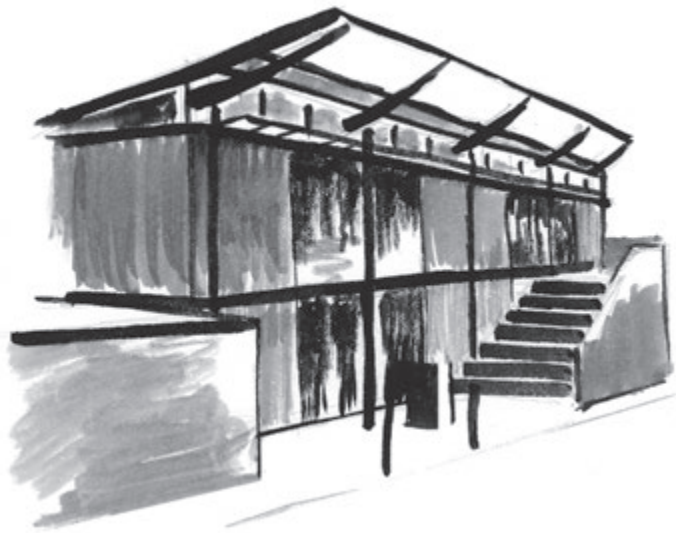
The Sir Walter Scott Way is a 92-mile/148-kilometre cross-country walk between Moffat in South Central Scotland to Cockburnspath on the South East Scottish Coast. Along its length are numerous connections to Scott, who spent much of his life in the area.

**[sirwalterscottway.com](http://sirwalterscottway.com)**

## **SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY**

This is a unique national resource, with its doors open for anyone wanting to explore poetry, Scottish and otherwise.

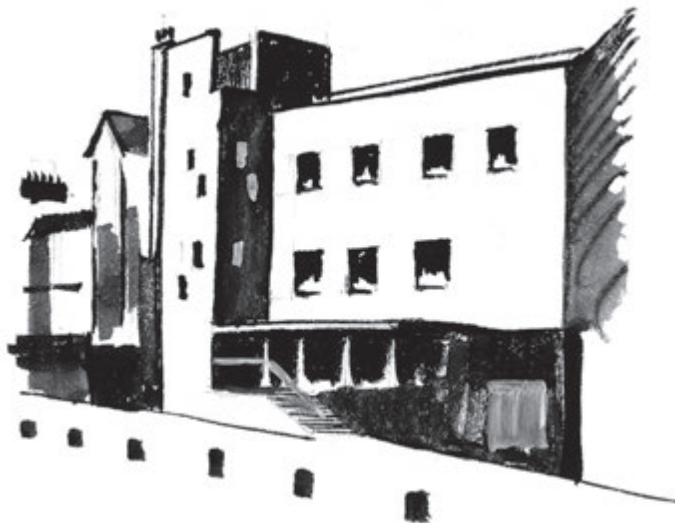
**[scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk)**



## SCOTTISH STORYTELLING CENTRE

This vibrant arts venue sits on Edinburgh's Royal Mile, and offers live storytelling, theatre, music, exhibitions, family events and workshops.

[tracscotland.org/scottish-storytelling-centre](http://tracscotland.org/scottish-storytelling-centre)



## SMAILHOLM TOWER AND SANDYKNOWE FARM, ROXBURGHSHIRE

Smailholm Tower is a striking 15th-century Border keep, a lookout tower commanding a bleak and forbidding panoramic vista. Nearby Sandyknowe Farm is where Scott stayed when he was a boy, and the striking landscapes gave him a lifelong love of the ballads and traditions of the Borders.

**IDEAS** – for more information on what to see and do and where to stay in literary Edinburgh visit [cityofliterature.com](http://cityofliterature.com) and for literary Scotland visit [visitscotland.com](http://visitscotland.com)



# EXPLORE:

## **EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S WALTER SCOTT DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

Updated regularly with information, news of events and publications.

**walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk**

## **NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND JOHN MURRAY ARCHIVE**

The publisher John Murray published some of Scott's works in his lifetime and the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland contains a range of Scott's letters, manuscript reviews and related items.

**nls.uk**

## **SCOTS LANGUAGE DICTIONARY**

**dsl.ac.uk/dsl**

## **THE EDINBURGH SIR WALTER SCOTT CLUB**

The purpose of the Club is to advance the education of the public concerning the life and works of Sir Walter Scott.

**eswsc.com**

## **THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES**

Sir Walter Scott was one of the most prominent members of the Faculty of Advocates. The Faculty owns Scott's library of 9,000 books and is highly active in conserving, supporting and promoting Scott's legacy.

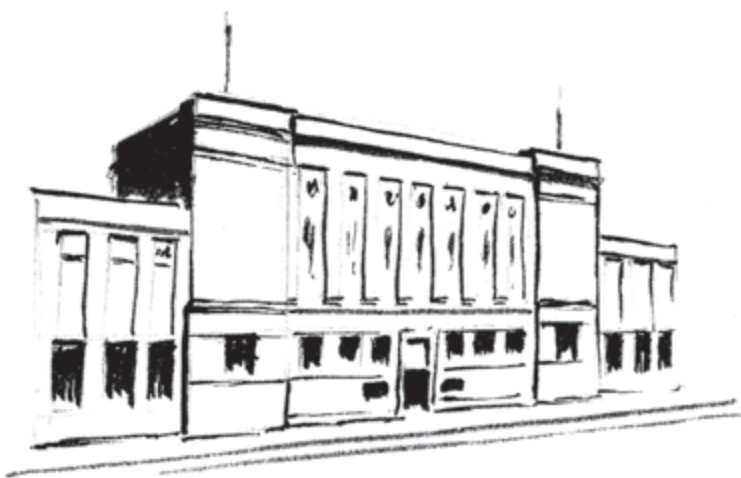
**advocates.org.uk**



# LITERARY EDINBURGH

Planning to visit Edinburgh? Discover more about the city's poets, storytellers and writers. For more on what to see and do, visit

**[cityofliterature.com](http://cityofliterature.com)**



# DISCOVER SCOTT'S WRITING

We've picked a few books to help you enjoy Scott in his own words. If you haven't read Scott before, these are a good place to start. You can borrow them from your local library or order online at [booksfromscotland.com](http://booksfromscotland.com)

## **THE LADY OF THE LAKE**

The Lady of the Lake is Ellen, whose father is James of Douglas, the Earl of Bothwell and who is hiding at the castle of Roderick Dhu on an island in Loch Katrine. The Earl has been banished by the King, and the King's forces have turned on Roderick's stronghold. A mysterious stranger, Fitz-James arrives, and falls in love with Ellen, who is also being wooed by Roderick himself, but whose heart is loyal to Malcolm Graeme – a young knight who thinks the King's banishment is unfair, but who wants to remain in the King's service. It's a brilliant love story set against the background of medieval politics during the reign of James V. We recommend the Association for Scottish Literary Studies edition edited by Thomas Crawford.

## **THE HEART OF MID-LOTHIAN**

Effie Deans is charged with infanticide when she cannot show the authorities her child, even though she was known to be pregnant. Her virtuous sister Jeanie refuses to lie under oath, and Effie is sent to the notorious Tolbooth Prison awaiting execution. At the same time, an Edinburgh mob, outraged at the pardoning of Captain Porteous, storm the prison to effect their own justice, and Jeanie begins a long and arduous walk south to plead for her sister's life to Queen Caroline. On her way, she discovers far more about Effie's seduction and the wiles of the world in the 18th century.

## **IVANHOE**

The novel that started the idea of ‘swashbuckling’, *Ivanhoe* is set in the time of Richard the Lion-heart. The novel features tournaments, battles, Robin Hood, Knights Templar, trials for witchcraft and trials by mortal combat, as Ivanhoe and King Richard attempt to prevent wicked King John’s attempt to seize the throne, aided by the sinister Brian de Bois-Guilbert and his Knights Templar.

## **SCOTT-LAND**

This is a superb, friendly and fascinating introduction to Scott’s life and work written by literary critic and author, Stuart Kelly, and available from Polygon Books.

## **SIR WALTER’S WIT AND WISDOM**

Compiled by Sir Eric Anderson, the former President of the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club, this book gives a sense of Scott’s world and draws from the many novels, poems and journals that he wrote. Published by the Abbotsford Press.

## **THE TALE OF OLD MORTALITY**

Perhaps Scott’s most politically astute novel, *The Tale of Old Mortality* is set during the 17th-century Wars of the Covenant. Henry Morton is a moderate Presbyterian, who finds common cause with the more radical and fanatical Covenanters due to their persecution by the elegant, monstrous Lord Claverhouse. He attempts to restrain the more intolerant of his allies, while all the time being in love with the Royalist Edith Bellenden. Their fortunes rise and fall with the political crises of the time.

## WAVERLEY

Young Edward Waverley is entranced by the Highlands – and by the proud-spirited sister of the dashing Jacobite chieftain Fergus Maclvor. He throws in his army commission to join Bonnie Prince Charlie's 1745 rebellion, travelling with Fergus, the Prince and the comical Baron Bradwardine to Edinburgh and to the military engagement at Prestonpans. But how long can Waverley keep his naive enthusiasm and his liberal politics separate? And as the tide begins to turn against the Jacobites, can he escape the fury of his former commanders?

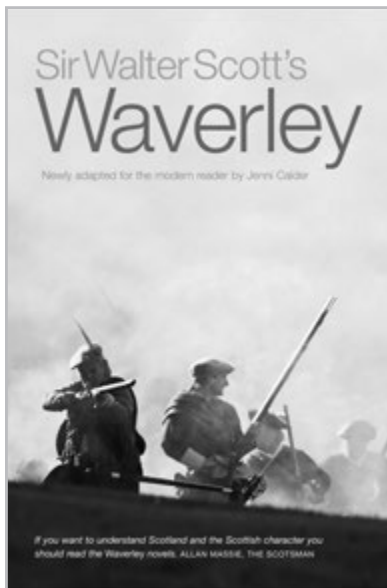
We recommend the Luath Press abridged version by Jenni Calder for those starting out, or the Edinburgh University Press critical edition edited by Peter Garside for those looking for the definitive version.

There is also the Chris Harvie book, *1814 Year of Waverley: How Walter Scott's Novel Changed Us*, in the Clan Scotland series by Argyll Publishing, which is particularly good for younger readers.



**An up-to-date list of recommended reads is available at [cityofliterature.com](http://cityofliterature.com) along with links to short films, documentaries and audio about Scott and his work. You can join the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club if you want further recommendations or are looking for people to share your love of Scott.**

**Our thanks to Stuart Kelly for helping us create this list.**



Sir Walter Scott's  
**WAVERLEY**

*Newly adapted for the modern reader by Jenni Calder*

*'It seemed like a dream to Waverley that these deeds of violence should be familiar to men's minds and currently talked of as happening daily in the immediate neighbourhood, without his having crossed the seas.'*

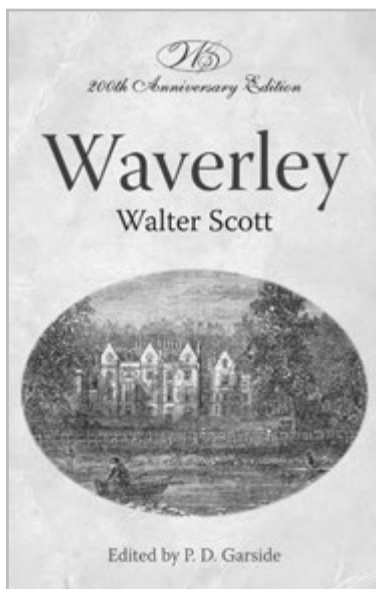
Scotland, 1745: Edward Waverley is a naive English soldier drawn into the heart of the Jacobite rebellion. Charmed by clan leader Fergus Maclvor and his sister Flora, he allies himself with the Jacobite cause – a bold and dangerous move. He finds himself caught between two women – feisty Flora and demure Rose – proving that love can be just as powerful as politics.

First published in 1814, *Waverley* is widely regarded as the first historical novel in the western tradition. This new edition celebrates the 200th anniversary of its publication, and has been expertly reworked for modern readers by Jenni Calder.

**ISBN 978-1-9100-2125-5 • Published by Luath Press • £9.99**



**Luath Press Ltd**



**WAVERLEY** by Walter Scott

*Edited by Peter Garside, University of Edinburgh*

This edition of Scott's *Waverley* marks the bicentenary of the first publication of the novel. It presents the authoritatively edited text by Peter Garside for the Edinburgh Edition of the *Waverley* Novels, together with a new short introduction, making the anonymous novel that enraptured its first audience again readily accessible to readers.

This, the first of the *Waverley* Novels, burst anonymously upon an astonished world in 1814. Its publication marked the emergence of the modern novel in the western world and was to have an influence on the great European writers of the 19th century, including Tolstoy, Balzac and Stendhal.

Edward Waverley is a young, cultured, but impressionable man whose sensibilities lead to his involvement in the Jacobite Rising of 1745. In his journey into Scotland, down to Derby, and back up again he witnesses the cultural and political geography of Great Britain in all its variety and in a state of political crisis. Two hundred years on, it is still an exciting read and relevant to today's issues.

**ISBN 978-0-7486-9787-8 • Published by Edinburgh University Press • £14.99**



EDINBURGH  
University Press

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered  
in Scotland, with registration number SC005336.



Edinburgh is the world's first UNESCO City of Literature, a city built on books, words and ideas with incredible literary heritage and a vibrant literary scene; something for everyone every day of the year.

Visit us at **[cityofliterature.com](http://cityofliterature.com)**

or

**@EdinCityofLit**

and find out more.

