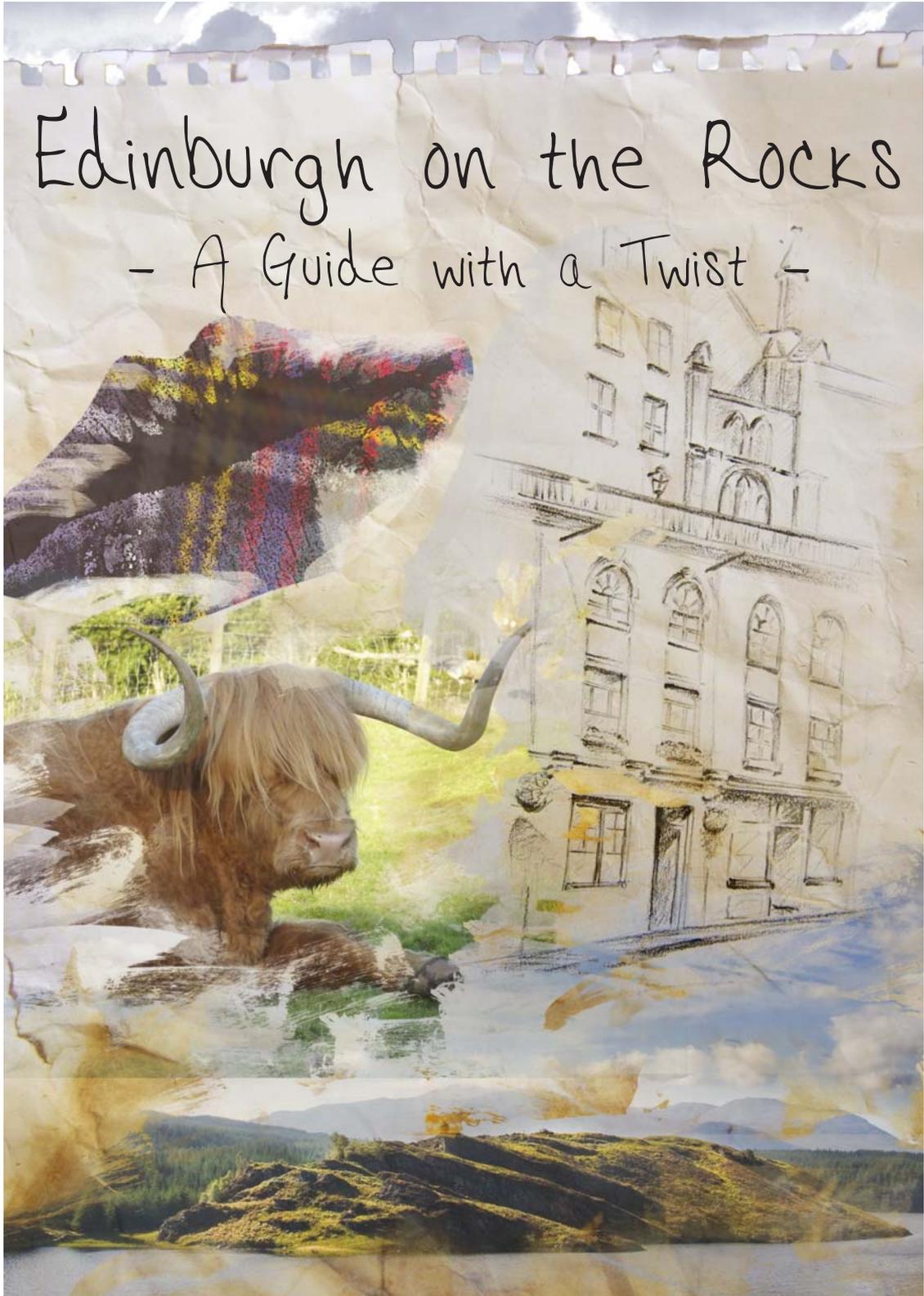


Edinburgh on the Rocks

- A Guide with a Twist -

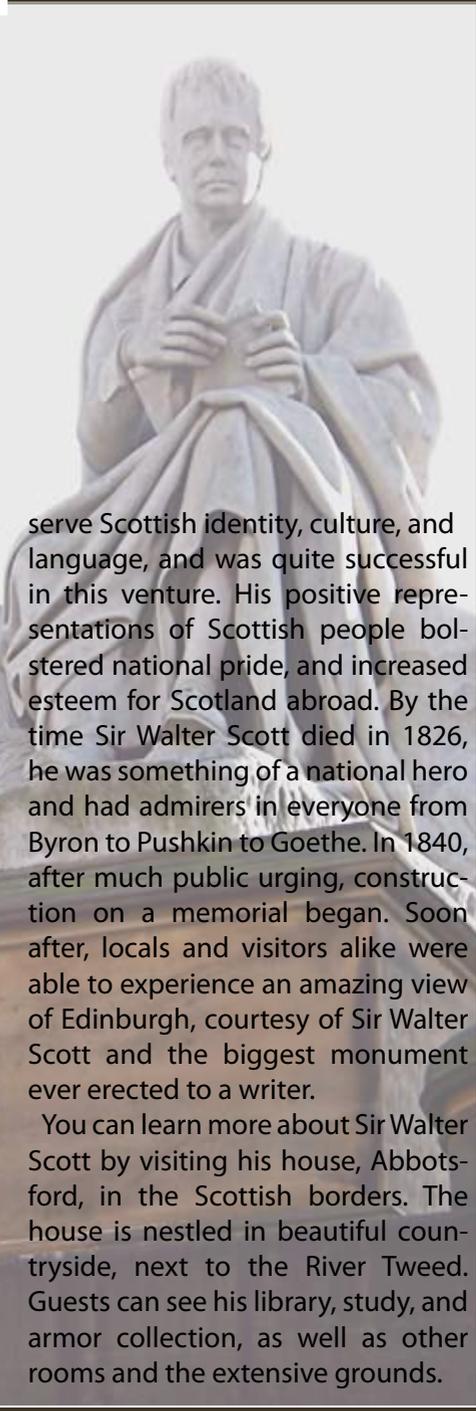


SIR WALTER SCOTT

Of the many great Scottish writers that travelers may become familiar with during a trip to Edinburgh, Sir Walter Scott in particular has left a very visible mark on the city—literally. His huge monument casts a friendly shadow over Princes Street—but why does he deserve a memorial in the first place?

With his popular novels and poetry, Sir Walter Scott did much to champion Scotland and make it well known to Europe and the rest of the world. He dearly loved his home country and used the power of his pen to express its potential to the public.

Born in 1771, during the Enlightenment, Scott grew up inspired and influenced by great Scottish thinkers like David Hume, Adam Smith, and the patriotic poet Robert Burns. He worked as a lawyer and a scholar of world languages, but became famous for his novels, such as “Waverley,” “Rob Roy,” and “Ivanhoe.” He pioneered the literary genre of historical fiction, and made it so popular that writers all over the world imitated his style. His works emphasize Enlightenment ideas like tolerance, and improvement—reforming society without forgetting tradition. Ordinary, everyday people, as well as nobles and kings, are important in the fabric of his novels, which promote respect for people regardless of their background. Scott tried to use his writing as a tool to help pre-



serve Scottish identity, culture, and language, and was quite successful in this venture. His positive representations of Scottish people bolstered national pride, and increased esteem for Scotland abroad. By the time Sir Walter Scott died in 1826, he was something of a national hero and had admirers in everyone from Byron to Pushkin to Goethe. In 1840, after much public urging, construction on a memorial began. Soon after, locals and visitors alike were able to experience an amazing view of Edinburgh, courtesy of Sir Walter Scott and the biggest monument ever erected to a writer.

You can learn more about Sir Walter Scott by visiting his house, Abbotsford, in the Scottish borders. The house is nestled in beautiful countryside, next to the River Tweed. Guests can see his library, study, and armor collection, as well as other rooms and the extensive grounds.

Literary Masters

Being the home of many famous Scottish writers throughout the centuries, Edinburgh is a goldmine for every bookworm and avid reader. Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Irvine Welsh and J.K. Rowling, to name a few, are somehow connected with the capital of Scotland. This literary atmosphere can be sensed in more or less every corner of the city. Edinburgh is the first UNESCO City of Literature for a reason...

The Scott Monument on Princes Street is probably the most impressive example of honouring the city's wordsmiths. Robert Burns is commemorated with the Burns Monument on Calton Hill, and the Scots poet Robert Fergusson keeps watch outside the gates of Canongate Kirkyard, where he is buried, along with Adam Smith and Robert Burns' hopeless romance Agnes McLehose.

Even the award-winning Scottish Parliament building is surrounded by quotes from a variety of literary sources on the walls. Not forgetting the Writer's Museum itself in Lady Stair's Close, where you can learn about Burns, Scott, and Stevenson. On the pavement out-

side the building you can also find inscriptions from famous Scottish writers. In addition, in the Scottish Storytelling Centre on High Street the oldest oral and literary artforms are kept alive.

Edinburgh is not only the home of the National Library of Scotland, but also the Scottish Poetry Library, where everybody can find a poem for every occasion.

One of the numerous festivals in Edinburgh is the Edinburgh International Book Festival, centred in Charlotte Square. Incidentally, nearby is the Oxford Bar, the second home of Ian Rankin's Inspector John Rebus, where the detective often has a hard earned drink. (Or three.)

J. K. Rowling found inspiration in the four towers of George Heriot's School for Hogwarts, writing her Harry Potter books in The Elephant House on George IV Bridge. She followed a tradition of being inspired by the dark streets of the Old Town, like Robert Louis Stevenson, whose imagination was influenced by the same streets, when developing the characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

So, it is impossible to escape the literary heritage of Edinburgh!

The Writer's Museum

Behind every door in Edinburgh you can find a small treasure. For example, the Writers' Museum in Lady Stair's Close. Seemingly just another picturesque building in the backyard of a street, this house hosts the legacy of Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Walter Scott. The museum dedicates these three writers one room each full of quotes, facts, artefacts and pictures telling their personal story. Learn about their lives as well as about their work. This lovingly compiled collection is a treasure for every enthusiast and is well worth a visit.



Lady Stair's House
Lady Stair's Close
Lawnmarket
Edinburgh
EH1 2PA
Monday to Saturday:
10.00am - 5.00pm
Admission free

The Scottish Bard

*"But to see her was to love her,
love but her, and love for ever."
("Ae fond kiss" - Robert Burns)*

These famous lines were penned by one of the most famous Scottish writers and poets, Robert Burns. He is known for his poems and songs, his fondness of a drink, and also for his numerous love affairs.

Born the son of a tenant farmer in Alloway, Ayrshire, Burns evinced talent as a writer from an early age. At 15, he wrote his first poem "My Handsome Nell". It was of course dedicated to a girl. However, Burns' first love was poetry, which he described as "the spontaneous language of my heart".

Soon, he discovered Robert Fergusson's Scottish poetry. Fergusson was a famous writer from Edinburgh who had a big influence on the young Burns. His epitaph to Fergusson was as his "older brother in the Muse". It was certainly due to Fergusson and the work of Allan Ramsay, another prominent Scots poet, that Burns decided to write in Scots.

His main connection to Edinburgh is the second edition of his highly successful work "Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect", originally published in Kilmarnock. He left for Edinburgh in 1786 and stayed in Baxter's Close with an old friend, not far away from Mary Stair's House, where today you can find the Writer's Museum. Soon, he was a member of the capital's leading society, and made himself a name as "the ploughman poet".

He was introduced to the bookseller and publisher William Creech, who announced in the same year that he would publish an Edinburgh edition of Burns' work. In the following year, the edition was released with 22 additional poems, one of which was "Address to a Haggis", a poem still recited, along with other famous songs and poems, at Burns Suppers. This celebration is held around Burns birthday, 25th January, to celebrate the poet's life and work. Burns Night is celebrated by lovers of his poetry throughout Scotland and all over the world.

After his successful Edinburgh edition, Burns decided to return to the life of a working man. Even though he was highly respected in Edinburgh society, his friends and companions could not help him obtain a post as an Exciseman. Instead, he decided to travel through the country and select Scots folk songs for his friend James Johnson's project, "Scots Musical Museum".

Back in Edinburgh 1787, Burns met Mrs Agnes McLehose. A passionate, but hopeless love affair began between them and the outcome, apart from a lengthy love correspondence, is the famous song "Ae Fond Kiss". Their romance never had a future, but Burns benefited from this second trip to Edinburgh by finally securing an appointment as an Exciseman. He worked for some time at his commission and retained this appointment even when he leased a farm called Ellisland near Dumfries. This joint burden finally led to illness and Burns was happy to give up the unfertile land when he had the opportunity to do so. For the last ten years of his life he obtained another excise post and wrote little poetry. He died on 21st July 1796. He was only 37 years old.

AULD TIME SCOTS...

dyke. Teller of tales, to tell tales

reek. Smoke ('Auld Reekie' is a nickname for Edinburgh)

Robert Louis Stevenson

- A World Famous Author -

"Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other, both in mind and body".

This quote by Robert Louis Stevenson seems to be quite interesting for a travel guide which wants to attract young people, and what is even more significant, we can adapt his thoughts to the present day. Furthermore, it shows us people today what kind of person this famous author was.

Stevenson was born in 1850 and had suffered from poor health ever since birth. That is why he travelled the world; to find healthier climates. As a logical consequence, travelling became his passion which he let the world know many times. He thought that "to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive." Stevenson believed that he travelled "not to go anywhere, but to go". In other words: "travel for travel's sake".

But let us return to his youth. He spent his early life in Edinburgh which provided him with ideas and the material for his later work; his heritage for the future, for us. He gained worldwide recognition with his verse, fictions, and essays. His

most famous works are *Treasure Island* (1883) which was supposedly inspired by Cramond Island, close to Edinburgh which tourists can visit, and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). People say that this work was inspired by the deeds of Deacon Brodie, one of Edinburgh's famous people.

Furthermore, they say that Stevenson got his motivation to write from one of his nurses, Alison Cunningham. She used to tell him many stories, especially about the religious wars of the 17th-century Covenanters. This trained his imaginative abilities which provided him with the skills he later required for his fictional works.

Stevenson was educated at Edinburgh Academy after which he entered Edinburgh University and became an engineer, which was the same profession as his father. Although he was successful in his career, he decided to study law; he was admitted to the Scottish Bar in 1875.

When his health became worse, Stevenson determined to travel; and this he did widely, e.g. through Eu-

rope and the South Pacific. Nevertheless, he returned to Edinburgh a couple of times: "It is not in vain that I return to the nothings of my childhood; for everyone of them has left some stamp upon me or put some fetter on my boasted free-will. In the past is my present fate; and in the past also is my real life".

People nowadays, who like to venture round the world will probably agree and sympathise with this special author when he says that "the great affair is to move; to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly; to come down off this featherbed of civilisation, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints".

There is one more important fact to reveal about Robert Louis Stevenson. He was not only a passionate traveller and writer but a romantic lover as well. His love to Fanny van de Grift Osbourne was one of deep affection and devotion. In a letter to Edmund Gosse, from 608 Bush Street, San Francisco, 23 January 1880 he wrote: "I am now engaged to be married to the woman whom I have loved for three years and a half ... few people before marriage have known each other so long or made more trials of each other's tenderness and constancy ... I do not think many wives are better loved than

mine will be". Everyone will agree that this is highly romantic and shows pure love and affection. A kind of love we do not find often nowadays. Robert Louis Stevenson died far away in Samoa in December 1894 at the age of 44.

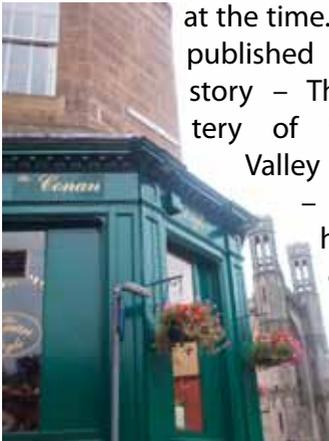
If you are interested in learning more about this special author and others you have the chance to visit the Writers' Museum in the historic Lady Stair's House on the Royal Mile. It opens Monday - Saturday 10am until 5pm and entrance is free. You are able to see showcases full with the writers' personal objects - like Stevenson's fishing rod, pipe, and the riding boots and hat he wore while living in Samoa -; pictures and photographs of the writers, their families, and their homes. Time-tables reveal exact dates about the authors' lives and there are readings of the famous novels through loudspeakers. Scenes are reconstructed and you can listen to conversations of that time. Just be aware of the age of the building. There are some even stairs and low doorways. Enjoy a journey into the past!



It is elementary, my dear visitors: Edinburgh is a literary delight!



Edinburgh has been the inspiration for many brilliant and subsequently famous writers over the centuries, whose literary legacies in turn continue to inspire modern writers to this day. You may be familiar with the work of one such author who grew up here: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the legendary Sherlock Holmes series. As the name suggests, Doyle was of Irish descent, but was born and raised in Edinburgh. His family relocated from London for his father's civil service job at Holyrood Palace, but remained very poor. While still a student, the resourceful young Doyle therefore wrote short stories to supplement his parents' meagre wages. In doing so he also acquired his initial taste for literary success, albeit limited



at the time. His first published short story – The Mystery of Sarsassa Valley (1879)

– earned him all of three guineas.

His five years (1876-1881) at Edinburgh University were not only important in Doyle's development as a writer, but also because it was during that time that he met Dr Joseph Bell. A surgeon at the Edinburgh Infirmary and a professor in the Faculty of Medicine, Bell unwittingly was to be the inspiration for Doyle's most famous creation, the character Sherlock Holmes. The young medical student later became Bell's clerk, which allowed him to observe the experienced doctor at work. During one consultation which Doyle witnessed, Bell deduced that the patient in question was a non-commissioned officer from a Highland regiment who had been stationed in Barbados, simply based on his observation of the man's behaviour, nationality and specific ailment. This unexpected episode turned out to be the inspiration for the world's most famous pipe-smoking detective.

Doyle gleaned inspiration not only from Joseph Bell, but from parts of the city itself. The plateau in his 1912 novel, *The Lost World*, is said to be based on the Salisbury Crag, the prominent Holyrood Park cliffs. In fact, Doyle tended

to use various Edinburgh place names (such as Lauriston Gardens which featured in his first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet*) because he was as yet unfamiliar with London, where the Sherlock Holmes collection was set.

Edinburgh-based Ian Rankin, author of the Inspector Rebus crime series, has cited Doyle (who features as a murderer in his book *The Acid Test*) as a major influence on his own work. However, Rankin laments Doyle's avoidance of Edinburgh, both physically and in his writing: "It is a shame that such a world-renowned author didn't write much about Edinburgh. A certain amount of mystery surrounds him, because he moved away as soon as he could – when he graduated from the university."

While Doyle was still in Edinburgh, he said to have frequented Rutherford's Houff pub (3 Drummond Street), as did Robert Louis Stevenson. Despite having undergone many changes of name and ownership throughout the years it still retains its distinctive 1899 façade. He also drank in The Beehive Inn in the Grassmarket, where other patrons included Walter Scott and Robert Burns. You might want to visit The Beehive Inn (said to have had a drinks licence for

about 400 years) during your stay, as it remains an important part of the modern literature scene of Edinburgh, with the Edinburgh Literary Pub Tour starting there.

11 Picardy Place – where Doyle was born in 1859 – was demolished 40 years ago to make way for the roundabout between Leith Walk and York Place. The closest surviving building to Doyle's first house is actually The Conan Doyle – a pub in which you can peruse paintings and other artefacts relating to the writer over lunch, while sipping on your tipple of choice. However, there is still a plaque tucked away in the wall on the opposite side of the road, next to The Street pub, commemorating his birth on Picardy Place. There is also normally a bronze statue of Sherlock Holmes complete with pipe in hand there, which is currently in storage until the city tram works are finished, due to be some time in 2011. Arthur Conan Doyle spent the formative years of his life in Ed

