

# CLAN SCOTT TOUR 2024

## JUNE 8 – JUNE 16

### Day 1 – Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

Arrive into Edinburgh today and transfer to your city center accommodation. Time to relax. Meet your fellow travelers this evening for a transfer to the world famous Rosslyn Chapel for a private tour and welcome dinner. Rosslyn Chapel dates from 1446 and has very strong connections to the Knights Templar. It is believed to be a possible location for the Holy Grail and is still used as a place of worship today. The chapel is full of ornate carvings which tell different biblical and other stories. The architecture of Rosslyn Chapel also inspired Sir Walter Scott and extended to his Borders home, Abbotsford. Copies of some of the Chapel's carvings were made and can still be seen in Abbotsford today.

**Transfer back to your Edinburgh accommodation and overnight.**

### Day 2 – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Welcome to Scotland! We start this day delving into the life of Sir Walter Scott, and the impact he had on the story of Scotland. On our walking tour the first stop will be the mighty fortress of Edinburgh Castle, the seat of Scottish Kings. Visit Mons Meg, see the Honours of Scotland (Crown Jewels) rediscovered by a search party led by Walter on 4<sup>th</sup> of February in 1818. Make your decision on the authenticity of the Stone of Destiny which was used in the inauguration of Scottish Kings for centuries, seized by King Edward I and built into the throne at Westminster Abbey in 1296, and finally returned to Edinburgh Castle in 1996.

We continue down the Royal Mile for a private tour of the Signet Library home to the Society of Writers to her Majesty's Signet of which Sir Walter Scott was apprenticed as a WS. Private viewing of a variety of artifacts from the Sir Walter Scott Collection such as the manuscript to Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Larrermoor*, first editions of Scott's poetry & novels, correspondence and possibly one of the death mask of Sir Walter.

Enjoy lunch before we continue on to St. Giles Cathedral a working church for almost 900 years, the backdrop to Scotland's turbulent religious history, and home to the service for the Most Ancient and Noble Order of the Thistle of which the current Duke of Buccleuch is a member. Enjoy a private tour including the Thistle Chapel itself. Outside we make a stop by the Heart of Midlothian located close to the west door of St. Giles. This mosaic heart marks the spot where the public once paid taxes, a formidable prison, and a brutal execution site. The Old Tolbooth and accompanying acts of evil will forever be immortalized through the stone shaped heart and in *The Heart of Midlothian*, a novel published in 1818 by Sir Walter Scott. We will also stop to admire the regal bronze statue of the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch and 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Queensberry, wearing the Order of the Garter robe. The people of Scotland held the Duke in such high respect, that following his death in 1884 the statue was commissioned and paid for by public subscription.

**Leisurely walk back to your accommodation or linger longer. Overnight Edinburgh.**

### Day 3 – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024

We start this morning at the foot of the Royal Mile with a visit to Holyrood Palace, where Sir Walter Scott in 1822 would see King George IV in the first visit of a monarch to Scotland in nearly 200 years. It is thanks to Walter and his organization of the King's visit, including the creation of the Highland dress outfit the King wore, made tartan and kilts fashionable and turned them into symbols of Scottish national identity. You will be able to see a portrait of King George IV along with the traditional Highland weaponry he wore during your tour of the palace.

Explore the Palace's close associations with some of Scotland's most well-known historic figures such as Mary, Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie, and learn how today it is used by The King when carrying out official engagements in Scotland. The Throne Room's centerpiece is the pair of thrones, commissioned by King George V in 1911, and is also the location to host lunch for the Knights and Ladies of the Order of the Thistle, the highest order of chivalry in Scotland. Continue to Holyrood Abbey to learn the history, myth and legend surrounding this iconic national treasure.

After lunch we head to the Museum On The Mound, located in the historic Bank of Scotland head office. Enjoy a private presentation on Walter Scott's links to banking, the most well known being his successful campaign to save lower denomination bank notes from being withdrawn from circulation. He produced a series of letters under the pseudonym Malachi Malagrowther protesting the changes, some of which you will be able to see. It's because of this action that his image featured on many British Linen Bank banknotes, and when BLB was taken over by Bank of Scotland in 1971 that image became part of Bank of Scotland banknotes, as it still is to this day!

We finish today at the Scott Monument, one of the largest monuments to a writer anywhere in the world! Here the story of the monument, discover more about Scott's tumultuous life, while viewing the 4 magnificent stained-glass windows before pausing for those who wish to embark on the climb to the 3<sup>rd</sup> viewing platform.

**Overnight Edinburgh.**

#### **Day 4 – Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Leave the capital city behind as we head to The Borders of Scotland and Clan Scott homelands. Our first stop will be Dalkeith Palace Commissioned by Anna 1st Duchess of Buccleuch, Dalkeith Palace was designed by architect James Smith, Scotland's leading architect of the time and completed in 1711. The original medieval castle, which stood on the same site had been occupied by the Buccleuch family since 1642. Several well-known figures from English and Scottish history have been guests at the palace in the intervening centuries. Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed two nights in 1745, King George IV slept here during his visit to Edinburgh in 1822, as did Queen Victoria in 1842. Enjoy a guided historic walking tour of the grounds, visit the 18th century icehouse, St Mary's Church which houses one of only two water powered organs in Scotland, and the early 19th century coal-fired Orangerie, and finish up with afternoon tea in the historic setting of the Palace.

We will continue on to Melrose Abbey but first we will make a stop at Scott's View - Sir Walter Scott's favorite view and the story is told that when his funeral cortege was making its way to Dryburgh, the horses stopped, unbidden, at the spot – they were so used to stopping there during Scott's visits to the area. The view takes in the Eildon Hills, the River Tweed and the original site of the Abbey at Melrose.

Enjoy a tour of probably the most famous ruin in Scotland, Melrose abbey was founded by David I in 1136 for the Cistercian Order, and it was largely destroyed by Richard II's English army in 1385. The surviving remains of the church are of the early 15th century, and are of an elegance unsurpassed in Scotland. The exterior of this magnificent ruin is decorated by unusual sculptures, including hobgoblins, cooks with ladles and a bagpipe playing pig. This is also the burial place of Robert the Bruce's heart, marked with a commemorative carved stone plaque within the grounds.

**Check in to your Border accommodation, Peebles, for 4 nights.**

#### **Day 5 – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

This morning we head out to see The Great Tapestry of Scotland. It was created and hand stitched by 1,000 people from across Scotland. The Tapestry tells a compelling visual account of Scotland's history, heritage and culture from its formation to present day. It was the vision of one of the world's best loved writers Alexander McCall-Smith, designed by artist Andrew Crummy and teams of stitchers around Scotland from a narrative written by the award-winning writer and historian Alistair Moffat. It is made up of 300 miles of wool (enough to lay the entire length of Scotland from the border with England to the tip of the Shetland in the North Atlantic).

We continue on to Smailholm Tower dominates a rocky Craig. The Pringles, who built this border stronghold in the first half of the 1400s, were a prominent local family. As squires of the powerful earls of Douglas, the Pringles had the role of warden of the Ettrick Forest – a profitable position. But like everyone else either side of the border, they suffered at the hands of the reivers. In 1645, the Scotts of Harden

bought the tower and estate. They already had a fine house, so they leased Smailholm to a kinsman, Walter 'Beardie' Scott – better known as Sir Walter Scott's great-grandfather. Sir Walter Scott was sent by his parents to Smailholm as a sickly infant for the good of his health.

Our next stop is Abbotsford the home of 19th century novelist and poet, Sir Walter Scott, is one of the most famous houses in the world. Constructed on the ample proceeds of a literary career without parallel, it is an enduring monument to the tastes, talents and achievements of its creator, the 'Great Scott'! Wander through Scott's study, where his books changed the world, marvel at his magnificent library with its richly carved ceiling, and admire his eclectic and world-class collection of arms, armour and curiosities. Enjoy lunch and a private tour.

### **Overnight Peebles**

#### **Day 6 – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

This morning we head to Branxholme Castle for a short guided walk of the castle grounds, followed by a cup of tea & shortbread in the Orangery. This was the Ancestral Home of "Wicked Wat" and the "Bold Buccleuch" and dates back to the earliest part of the fifteenth century. Up to the seventeenth century, the castle was the principal home of the Scott's of Buccleuch.

Time to enjoy some of our fine Scottish products with a visit to Lochcarron Waverley Mill who has been weaving tartan for over 75 years, and kilted numerous celebrities from Sean Connery to Shrek. Enjoy a mill tour following the design, dying of yarn to cloth, and production of traditional Scottish tartan and accessories. Along the way learn more about Selkirk and its tradition of textile manufacturing. Enjoy a private shopping experience and made to measure appointments will also be available.

We now head to the Borders Distillery, the first Scotch Whisky Distillery in the Scottish Borders since 1837. The distillery is an award-winning conversion of Hawick's former electrical works, a prominent landmark in the town since 1903. Enjoy the sunny and airy feel beneath the glass roofs of the Mash and Still Houses, the source for this *water of life* is drawn from an underground lake deep beneath the site containing enough pure water to last the distillery for thousands of years! Enjoy your private tour from the milling of the barley, mashing, fermentation to distillation, and finally maturation and of course top it off with a sampling!

Our final stop this afternoon will be Traquair, Scotland's Oldest Inhabited House. Visited by 27 Scottish Kings and Queens Traquair dates back to 1107 and has been lived in by the Stuart family since 1491. Originally a royal hunting lodge, Traquair played host to Mary Queen of Scots and later as staunch Catholics they supported the Jacobite cause without counting the cost. Enjoy exclusive private tour with Catherine Maxwell Stuart, the 21st Lady of Traquair.

### **Overnight Peebles**

#### **Day 7 – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Early rise & breakfast this morning as we head out to Selkirk for their boundary marking custom. Over 400 riders take part in the Selkirk Common Riding, which is recognized as one of the oldest of the Border festivals and can be traced back to 1113, when David I gave Selkirk land to build an Abbey.

In 1513, at the Battle of Flodden, Selkirk sent 80 men with the Scottish King but only one returned to his home town, bearing a blood-stained English flag. Unable to speak the terrible news of the defeat, he raised the flag high above his head before sweeping it low, like a scythe, to show that all were slain. This poignant act is remembered every year at the Selkirk Common Riding in the final ceremony of the Casting of the Colours.

Enjoy morning coffee and tasting of the famous Selkirk Bannock along with Souter's Route guided walk through the streets of Selkirk learning its history as you go and walking in the steps as Sir Walter Scott once did himself. Visit the courtroom where Sir Walter Scott sat as Sherriff, dispensing justice for nearly

30 years. The iconic building dates back to 1804 and inside you will be able to view the personal objects of this world famous writer. Early afternoon return to your accommodation to relax.

**Tentative:** Early evening private visit & reception with the Duke of Buccleuch, Richard Walter John Montagu Douglas Scott, and Chief of Clan Scott. The Scott's of Buccleuch and Bowhill House have a fascinating story to share with you and is almost as old as the nation of Scotland itself. The present house dates mainly from 1812, and was christened as "Sweet Bowhill" in Sir William Scott's famous poem "The Lay of the Last Minstrel". Enjoy your visit to this magical property including viewing items from the world-renowned Buccleuch art collection. You'll find masterworks by Canaletto, Raeburn, Reynolds and Gainsborough alongside beautiful silverware, porcelain and French furniture. Relics of the Duke of Monmouth, Queen Victoria and Sir Walter Scott will also be on display.

### **Overnight Peebles**

### **Day 8 – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

We leave our Borders home behind today and head to perhaps one of the most beautiful Border abbeys, Dryburgh, remarkably complete and surrounded by beautiful grounds. Despite having been set on fire three times, the chapter house features paintwork that dates back to its construction and today boasts some of the best Gothic architecture in Scotland. These graceful ruins became the final resting place of Sir Walter Scott in 1832.

We continue on to the Holy Island, Lindisfarne a tidal island on the North Sea coast of Northumberland. It is famed as a place of history and for its bleak, isolated position, in which it stands cut off by the tide for half the day and presided over by the stately Lindisfarne Castle. A causeway connects the island to the mainland and is flooded twice a day by tides – something well described by Sir Walter Scott in *Marmion - A Tale of Flodden Field*, a narrative poem concerning the events of the Battle of Flodden, fought between England and Scotland in 1513. The poem, published in 1808, is divided into six cantos. Enjoy free time to explore the island – visit the castle, the priory, the heritage center, or sample some mead and enjoy lunch.

**We now continue back to Edinburgh, and overnight.**

### **Day 8 – Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Bid Scotland a fond farewell and transfer back to the airport for your flight home!