

»

**May 15th 2020**

## **Scotland - the brave and the beautiful**



Scotland's breathtaking vistas, countless brooding castles and history full of drama and intrigue have inspired countless authors and filmmakers to choose the country as the perfect setting for their stories.

Whether you're a fan of movies, a book-lover, or enjoy watching great TV shows, you could easily create an entire travel itinerary around visiting the numerous book settings and famous filming locations dotted around the country. Our three Scottish Walks in the Outer Hebrides, the Highlands and Edinburgh and Border country take us to see some of these favorites scenes from screen and page.

We're talking vast beaches, ancient castles, mountains, idyllic rolling hills, distinctive cities and historic towns and villages.

Scotland as a whole has provided both inspiration and setting for authors across the centuries - ranging from Sir Walter Scott (we visit his home Abbotsford in the Borders) and Robert Louis Stevenson, to contemporary writers like Ian Rankin and Val McDermid. Let's not forget Alistair Moffet who we meet on our Borders Walk.



### **The Highlands**

The royal capital, Edinburgh, is the stamping ground of world-weary Detective Inspector

John **Rebus**. The city plays an integral role in the TV adaptation of **Ian Rankin's** popular novels with Oxford Bar, Calton Hill, Edinburgh Castle, Port Edgar Marina and the Water of Leith among the many landmarks which make an appearance in the four series.



It's hard to beat a **James Bond** movie as an escapist watch during lockdown and in **Skyfall**, Bond flees to Scotland (where he spent some of his childhood) to escape the bad guys. This section of the movie is filmed in Glen Coe, one of the Highlands' many incredible landscapes.



**Diane Gabaldon's** best-selling **Outlander** books and resulting TV series follow the fates of the time-travelling English nurse Claire Randall and the young Highland warrior Jamie Fraser during the tragic Jacobite Rebellion in 18th century Scotland.

Locations include Inverness, the Old Town of Edinburgh, the shores of Loch Ness, the tiny island of St Kilda and the tragic battlefield at Culloden, another fascinating place we visit on our Highlands Walk.



**Monarch of the Glen**, set on picturesque Loch Laggan, is a charming British TV series features stunning Highland scenery and the eccentric family of a modern-day laird.



The movie **Edie**, starring English actress Sheila Hancock (who was actually 83 when it was filmed) is about an elderly widow who decides to climb a dramatic Scottish mountain. Sheila - and the entire cast and crew - actually had to climb the peak to make the movie!



For quintessential Highland cinematography, watch **Braveheart** (1995). Mel Gibson stars in this Academy Award-winning adventure about the Scots overthrowing English rule in the 13th century.



## The Borders

A major celebrity in his own time, **Sir Walter Scott** is probably Scotland's best-known author and his novels number among the most widely-read books set in Scotland. The Scott Monument in Edinburgh is the tallest monument in the world built in honor of an author and the Waverley station – the only train station in the world named after a book – derives its name from Scott's first novel.

The historical novels in Scott's **Waverley** series feature many interesting locations worth a visit, including the stunning Melrose Abbey – see the evocative ruins on our Walk in the Borders – and the site of the Old Tolbooth Prison and public execution point on Edinburgh's High Street.



There's an entire 92-mile hiking route (The Rob Roy Way) for those who want to walk in the footsteps of the roguish hero of Scott's historical novel **Rob Roy**, also a 1995 movie starring Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange, where the famous Scottish rebel struggles against feudal landlords in 18th-century Scotland.



Based on the true-life relationship between England's Queen Victoria (Dame Judi Dench in fine form) and royal servant John Brown, the movie **Mrs. Brown** paints a revealing picture of the monarch's private life and was filmed at various locations including Duns Castle in the Borders region.





## Outer Hebrides

When it comes to brooding beauty, the remote Scottish islands can't be beaten.



**Ann Cleeves's Shetland** books provided the inspiration for the BBC TV series of the same name based in the most northerly part of Britain.

To the west, our Outer Hebrides Walk takes us to the isles of Harris, Lewis and Skye.



**Peter May** captures the essence of the Outer Hebrides in his popular series of crime novels. **The Lewis Trilogy (The Blackhouse, The Lewis Man and The Chessmen)** shows the isle of Lewis as a land of strange beauty, harsh living and inhabitants of deep-rooted faith.



**To the Lighthouse**, *Virginia Woolf's* introspective drama set on the Isle of Skye masterfully explores the complexities of human relationships and experience.



Here's a classic delight: **Whisky Galore!** Is the real-life story of the SS Politician, which ran aground off the coast of the isle of Eriskay in the Hebrides with a cargo of 264,000 bottles of malt whisky during wartime rationing. It has inspired two movies. The 1949 comedy, based on a novel by Compton Mackenzie was shot almost entirely on location in the islands and a 2016 version was filmed in various locations across Scotland.

And did you know that in **Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey**, scenes on Jupiter were actually filmed on the Isle of Harris?

### **More for readers:**

**Scotland, A Concise History** by *Fitzroy MacLean and Magnus Linklater* This richly illustrated survey brings Scottish history right up to the present through its romantic figures and bloody battles.

**The Borders: A History of the Borders from Earliest Times** by *Alistair Moffat* The history of England and Scotland from the up-close and personal perspective of the border country.

**Culloden Tales**, Stories from Scotland's Most Famous Battlefield by *Hugh G Allison*

Having worked at the Culloden battle site for many years, author Hugh Allison presents stories from its visitors, each with a personal connection to the entirely unique event - the last pitched battle on British soil.

**The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** by **Robert Louis Stevenson** This classic and Gothic tale deals with the social and religious politics of 17th-century Edinburgh, a dark and moody backdrop to this classic novel about Dr. Jekyll's struggle with his dual personalities.

**The Sunday Philosophy Club** by **Alexander McCall Smith** The first book in the Sunday Philosophy Club series, set in Edinburgh and starring detective Isabel Dalhousie, the editor of the Review of Applied Ethics. The mystery opens when a man falls to his death outside a concert hall.

**Hebrides** by **Peter May** In this photographic exploration of Scotland's Outer Hebrides, author Peter May presents the landscapes that inspired him: peat bogs, heather-coated hills, rugged islands, weather-beaten churches and all the majesty of the archipelago.

**Rough Guide - Scottish Highlands and Islands** by **Rob Humphreys** A comprehensive guide in the informative Rough Guide style. It's divided cleanly between practical information and illuminating background on culture and history.