

Scottish Borders Historic House and Abbeys

Floors Castle near Kelso

Floors Castle was originally built for the 1st Duke of Roxburghe, in 1721. The Castle was first opened to the public in 1977. Since then it has welcomed well over a million visitors. It is still very much a family home for the Duke of Roxburghe and his family and we know you will enjoy visiting if you get the chance.

[Plan a visit](#)

Bowhill House & Estate, Selkirk

For more than seven centuries the Scotts of Buccleuch have been part of Scottish Borders history and their principal house, Bowhill is today home to the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry and a part of the internationally renowned Buccleuch art collection.

Bowhill sits at the heart of an energetic country estate amidst the magical scenery of the Yarrow and Ettrick valleys.

Bowhill Country Estate is open weekends and bank holidays in April, May and June. The House and Country Estate is open to the public every day in July and August. For more information about opening please see...

[Plan a visit](#)

Traquair House, Traquair, Innerleithen

Dating back to 1107, Traquair was originally a hunting lodge for the kings and queens of Scotland. Later a refuge for Catholic priests in times of terror the Stuarts of Traquair supported Mary Queen of Scots and the Jacobite cause without counting the cost.

Today, Traquair is a unique piece of living history welcoming visitors from all over the world, providing a magical and romantic setting for weddings, hosting a wide range of summer events and a superb venue for corporate groups.

Visitors are invited to enjoy the house, extensive grounds, maze, craft workshops, 1745 Cottage Restaurant and the famous Traquair House Brewery housed in the eighteenth century wing and producing the world famous Traquair House Ales.

[Plan a visit](#)

Abbotsford, Melrose

Abbotsford is the exclusive creation of Sir Walter Scott.

His "Conundrum Castle" was where Scotland's greatest son created a notion of Scotland that was more romantic perhaps, but also higher, more honourable, more

noble than it had been in the past, and in consequence, raised Scotland's reputation in the world. Here he worked diligently and the result was the legend of a great man which exists for so many people across the world to the present day.

[Plan a visit](#)

Thirlestane Castle, Lauder

Thirlestane has its origins in the 13th Century. It was rebuilt as the Maitland family home in 1590 and greatly enhanced by the Duke of Lauderdale in the 1670s. In 1840, it was extended and refurbished with the addition of two new wings.

The Maitlands are a famous Scottish family who first came to Britain from France with William the Conqueror. As the seat of the Earls and Duke of Lauderdale, the Castle has at times held a central role in the history of Scotland. Now in the care of a Charitable Trust, Thirlestane has been carefully restored to its former splendour.

MELROSE ABBEY

A Gothic-style abbey found in Melrose, Scotland. It was founded in 1136 by Cistercian monks, on the request of King David I of Scotland. It was headed by the Abbot or Commendator of Melrose. Today the abbey is maintained by Historic Scotland (open all year; entrance charge). The ruins of Melrose are widely considered among the most beautiful of religious houses in the United Kingdom, being especially notable for a wealth of well-preserved figure-sculpture, and its architecture is considered to be some of the finest in Scotland.

The east end of the abbey was completed in 1146. Other buildings in the complex were added over the next 50 years. The abbey was built in the form of a St. John's cross. A considerable portion of the abbey is now in ruins, though a structure dating from 1590 is maintained as a museum open to the public.

Alexander II and other Scottish kings and nobles are buried at the abbey. The embalmed heart of Robert the Bruce is also said to rest on the abbey's grounds, while the rest of his body is buried in Dunfermline Abbey. In 1812, a stone coffin that some speculated was that of Michael Scot the philosopher and "wizard", was found in an aisle in the abbey's south chancel.

It is known for its many carved decorative details, including likenesses of saints, dragons, gargoyles and plants. On one of the abbey's stairways is an inscription by John Morow, a master mason, that says: "Be halde to ye hende" (Keep in mind, the end, your salvation), which has become the motto of the town of Melrose.

JEDBURGH ABBEY

Jedburgh Abbey, a ruined Augustinian abbey which was founded in the 12th century is situated in the town of Jedburgh, in the Scottish Borders just ten miles north of the border with England at Carter Bar. Jedburgh is the largest town on the A68 between Newcastle upon Tyne and the Scottish capital, Edinburgh.

Towards the middle of the 9th century, before the present border between England and Scotland had been determined, there were two Gedworths (as Jedburgh was then known). One of them became the Jedburgh we know now, the other was four

miles to the south. According to Symeon of Durham, Ecgred, bishop of Lindisfarne from 830AD to 845AD, gifted the two villages of the same name to the See of Lindisfarne. The southerly Gedworth was the place of Ecgred's church, the first church in the parish. The present town was distinguished from the long disappeared south village by UBI CASTELLUM EST meaning, 'where the castle is'. The only solid evidence of Ecgred's church came from Symeon of Durham when he described the burial, at the church of Geddewerde, of Eadulf, one of the assassins of William Walcher, Bishop of Durham.

In 1118, prior to his ascension to the Scottish throne, Prince David established a foundation of canons regular of the order of St. Augustine at, what is now Jedburgh. The foundation appeared to have the status of 'priory' in the early years and a man by the name of Daniel was described as the Prior of Geddwrd in 1139. The church was later raised to the status of monastery before becoming in the years prior to King David's death in 1153 probably in 1147, a fully fledged abbey and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It has to be mentioned that over the years, Jedburgh has been described by 83 different names or spellings.

After the death King David I of Scotland, the patronage and privileges of the abbey were accorded, first by David's son, Prince Henry then by his grandsons Malcolm IV of Scotland and William I of Scotland also known as William the Lion. The nave and the choir were built in the 13th century and were in place by the time Alexander III of Scotland married Yolande, daughter of the Comte de Dreux in 1288 at the church. The great abbey was said to contain the finery of the best of Norman and early English Architecture. The Abbey Church of St. Mary of Jedeworth was growing in stature and importance and the abbot was even invited to attend Scottish Parliaments. As well as the lands and chapels in southern Scotland, Jedburgh Abbey owned great lands in Northumberland. In 1296, the Abbot of Jedburgh swore fealty to Edward I of England at Berwick-on-Tweed. Edward intended to rule the abbey and presented William de Jarum as the new Abbot of Jedburgh in 1296. After the defeat of the Earl of Surrey in 1297 at Stirling at the hands of William Wallace, the abbey was pillaged and wrecked by the English as retribution. Robert I of Scotland (The Bruce) continued to patronise the church during his reign in the early 14th century. In 1346, after the Scottish defeat at the Battle of Neville's Cross, the English once again slighted the church. Later that century, in 1370, David II of Scotland was instrumental in the completion of the north transept we can still see today. The abbey faced more torture and destruction in 1410,1416 and by the Earl of Warwick in 1464. In 1523, the town and abbey were set ablaze by the Earl of Surrey. The abbey faced more indignity in 1544 at the hands of the Earl of Hertford. The end came for the great Abbey of St. Mary of Jedburgh in 1560 and the coming of the Scottish Reformation