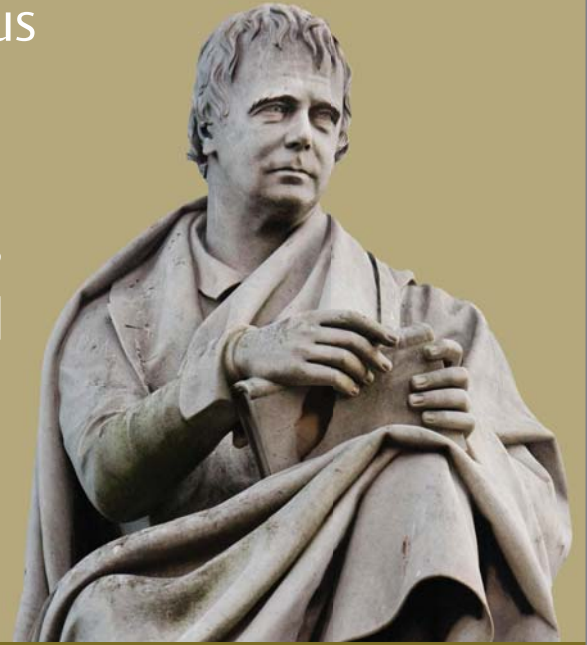


The Scotts were famous – and infamous – for their role in the chaos, banditry and feuding in the Scottish Borders in the Middle Ages. But one name stands out from the rest, the most celebrated of his kindred and among the best known sons of his nation, Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford.



THE CLAN SCOTTS WAS AT ITS HEIGHT IN THE 16TH CENTURY WHEN THEY COULD MUSTER 600 FIGHTING MEN

Scott Clan tartan



Scotstarvit Tower



GREAT SCOTTS

The grey stone block of Scotstarvit Tower is testament to a memorable Scott of the 17th century.

Dating from the previous century it was largely rebuilt by Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit in the 1620s.

In some ways it was an odd thing to do as buildings of this type, which loomed high above the landscape but were often narrow and had limited space, were going out of fashion.

But, retro had advantages; it suggested to onlookers that these were people with an ancient pedigree.

Scott was deeply involved in political faction fighting and suggested to King Charles I that feudal laws in Scotland should be changed to raise money for the Crown and free the gentry from the grip of the nobility.

Not everyone admired his efforts Sir James Balfour described him as: 'a bussie man in foule wether, and one quhosse [whose] covetousnesse far exceedit his honesty'.

Scott later fell from grace which prompted him to compile *'The Staggering State of Scottish Statesmen'* describing the rise and fall of leading Scottish officials.

His own tale of woe was included as an example.

A more famous author was Sir Walter Scott – who was also a great lover of the past.

In 1808 he had himself painted at the ruins of Hermitage Castle by the most famous portrait artist of the day, Sir Henry Raeburn.

But the site most closely linked to Walter Scott is another tower house, Smailholm Tower, which stands on an isolated rocky knoll some miles from Kelso, in the Borders.

It was here that Scott played as a boy, while staying with relatives at nearby Sandyknowe Farm.

Indeed his first major publication was the ballad collection *'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border'* which drew on his early experience at Sandyknowe.

Smailholm Tower



DRYBURGH ABBEY

This great medieval abbey was intended as a gateway to the next world.

Long after it fell out of use due to the Protestant Reformation of 1560 its peaceful ruins continued to be used for burials.

Entombed within its grounds is Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford.

As a novelist, poet and manuscript editor Scott's legacy was vast.

He was also a great champion of Scottish culture and identity.

Scott's family had owned the abbey but bankruptcy forced them to sell, prompting him to write that they had nothing left there 'but the right of stretching our bones'.

He was laid to rest in a north transept chapel on 26 September, 1832.



Hermitage Castle

Dryburgh Abbey



A FEARSOME WARRIOR, HE WAS LOYAL TO THE SCOTTISH CROWN

WHICH WALTER?

Walter Scott was quite a character – true, but which one?

Scottish history revels in a gaggle of men of this name including the great 18th and 19th-century poet and novelist who was so inspired by places like Smalholm Tower.

One was Borders chieftain Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch (c.1490–1552) – known as Wicked Wat.

A fearsome warrior he was loyal to the Scottish Crown when many of his neighbours defected to the English, fighting at the battles of Flodden and Pinkie.

In 1532 Sir Walter led a 3,000-man raid into England in revenge for the ravaging of his lands.

Nonetheless he was charged with assisting the English in burning Cavers and Denholm in Roxburghshire around the same time.

He often feuded with the Kers, even though his wife Janet was one of them.

This brought his downfall. In 1552 he was murdered by the Kers on the streets of Edinburgh.

There was also the Border reiver – cattle or sheep raider Walter Scott of Harden (c.1550–c.1629) known as Wat o'Harden and Auld Wat Scott.

In the 1590s he raided Drummelzier and Dreva and carried off 4,000 sheep and £2,000-worth of goods.

Sir Walter appears in legends, ballads and official crime records.

When the larder was bare it is said that his wife placed spurs before him as a signal that he must go reiving for his dinner.

SCOTT SITES

- 1 Abbotsford House:**
The Melrose home of Sir Walter Scott. The last of his direct descendants to inhabit Abbotsford was his great-great-great granddaughter Dame Jean Maxwell-Scott who died in 2004.
- 2 Bowhill:**
Home of the Buccleuch Family – Montagu Douglas Scott. The present house dates from 1812, and will host the first-ever Clan Scott gathering in September 2009.
- 3 Dryburgh Abbey:**
Burial place of Sir Walter Scott (died 1832).
- 4 Hermitage Castle:**
In the possession of Scott of Buccleuch by 1600.
- 5 Scotstarvit Tower:**
The tower was built, or rebuilt, after 1611 by Sir John Scot, author of the 'Staggering State of Scots Statesmanship'.
- 6 Smailholm Tower:**
Walter Scott of Harden bought the tower from the Pringles in 1645, and built a new house in the courtyard. Sir Walter Scott's maternal grandfather, Robert 'Beardie' Scott, and his Aunt Janet, lived at nearby Sandyknowe and he stayed with them here as an infant.



Dryburgh Abbey

Bowhill

Hermitage Castle

