

FAMOUS SCOTS

Famous Scots

Few countries in the world could boast such a vast number of people who have gone down in history. Some are famous, just because of the bloody past, which Scotland has endured. Others have invented things that have changed our daily lives, or even have saved our lives. Others are famous due to their efforts in the world of sport or the arts. Listed below are just a few of these famous people.

History

St Columba 521-598

St Columba, born in 521 in Donegal, was an Irish Prince, but is better known for bringing Christianity to Scotland. He founded the monastery at Iona and set about the conversion of the Picts. Iona is still a religious community.

MacBeth 1005-1057

MacBeth was King of Scotland from 1040-1057, made famous by Shakespeare's play of the same name. The real story chronicled has portrayed him in a better light as a fair king in bloodthirsty times. He was the first Scottish king to make a pilgrimage to Rome in 1050.

Robert the Bruce 1274-1329

Born in Turnberry Castle, he was a key figure in the Wars of Independence against English occupation. He was crowned in 1306 and reigned till 1329. The Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was one of the main turning points of the war and there is a National Trust for Scotland visitor centre at the site near Stirling.

William Wallace 1274-1305

Born in Elderslie, near Paisley. He was leader of the Scots' resistance against the English occupation at the beginning of the Wars of Independence. He defeated the army of Edward I at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. He was eventually betrayed and executed in London. There is a monument at Stirling to Wallace.

John Knox 1505-1572

Born in Haddington, he was a key figure in the Reformation in Scotland. Influenced by John Calvin, he often came into conflict with the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. John Knox House is open to the public on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh.

Mary Queen of Scots 1542-1587

Born in Linlithgow Palace, but brought up in France as a Catholic, she returned to Scotland on the death of her first husband, King Francis II of France, to reign in turbulent years. After two marriages which were political disasters and the appointment of an Italian First Minister, she fled to England where her cousin Elizabeth I imprisoned her. Mary was executed at Fotheringhay Castle in 1587.

James I of England and VI of Scotland 1566-1625

James, the only son of Mary, Queen of Scots, was born in Edinburgh Castle. He was crowned in 1567 on the abdication of his mother. When Elizabeth I of England died childless in 1603, he became king of both countries, thus uniting the crown of both England and Scotland.

John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee 1649-1689

He was a professional soldier who fought in Europe before returning to control the Covenanters in the reign of James II, where he earned the name 'Bloody Clavers'. He was shot and killed after successfully routing the government forces of William of Orange at the Battle of Killiecrankie. There is a visitor centre at Killiecrankie near Pitlochry.

Rob Roy MacGregor 1671-1734

He was a famous freebooter from the Trossachs area who also participated in the 1715 Jacobite uprising. Sir Walter Scott immortalised him in the book of the same name. There is a Rob Roy Visitor Centre in Callander and his grave is situated in nearby Balquhider.

Bonnie Prince Charlie 1720-1788

Born in Italy, he was the grandson of James VII of Scotland and II of England. He led the ill-fated 1745 Jacobite rebellion which, despite being a much smaller army than expected, managed to reach Derby. The rebellion was effectively crushed at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. He was a fugitive in the Highlands before his return to France. As he lay dying in Rome, a piper played 'Lochaber no More' in the courtyard outside.

Flora Macdonald 1722-1790

Born on South Uist in the Western Isles, she was made famous for her part in sheltering Bonnie Prince Charlie on his escape through Scotland. She disguised him as her Irish maid Betty Burke, when he had a price on his head of £30,000. Later in life she emigrated to the United States, where her family sided with the British in the Wars of Independence. She returned to Scotland in 1778.

John Paul Jones 1747-1792

Jones was born in Kirkcudbrightshire in 1747 and founded the American Navy during the Wars of Independence. He fought with the French when they planned to invade Britain in 1778 and was thwarted only by the weather from launching an attack on Edinburgh.

W.E. Gladstone 1809-1898

Born at Fasque House in Fettercairn, Gladstone is the grand old man of British politics. Leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister in four governments from 1868 to 1894. He was responsible for major reforms in every sphere of national life and for the development of imperial and foreign policy. He stamped his moral authority on the politics of his time. He finally divided the Liberal Party on the issue of Irish Home Rule. Gladstone was also a considerable scholar and author in his own right. Fasque House has an exhibition of William Gladstone memorabilia.

Ramsay MacDonald 1866-1937

Born illegitimate, the son of a plough-boy and serving girl in Lossiemouth, he was elected the first Labour Prime Minister in 1924. He was re-elected in 1929 and later formed a coalition Government with Stanley Baldwin in 1931.

Harold MacMillan 1894-1986

Born of Scottish descent, he became Prime Minister of Great Britain between 1957-63. He was known as 'Super Mac' due to the rate that the standard of living went up during his time in office. He is also remembered for his 'Wind of Change' warning on Africa.

Eric Liddell 1902-1945

An outstanding sportsman, Liddell broke the 100 yards British record in 1923, following on by winning gold (440 yards) at the 1924 Paris Olympics. A great deal of his spirit and character was captured in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*.

Jim Clark 1936-1968

Born in Chirnside, Berwickshire, Jim Clark became World Champion Racing driver twice. Considered by many as the greatest racing driver of all time, he won 25 Grand Prix. There is a museum dedicated to him in Duns.

Science

John Napier 1550-1617

Napier was born in Merchiston Castle in Edinburgh, which is now part of the University named after him. He was an eminent mathematician and invented logarithms. He also invented war machines, including the forerunner of the armoured tank and the submarine. He built Lauriston Castle in Edinburgh, which is open to the public.

Adam Smith 1723-1790

Born and raised in Kirkcaldy, Smith is known as the true founder of classical economics. One of his books, *The Wealth of Nations*, is one of the two most influential works of economic theory, the other being *Das Kapital* by Marx. His theories are still relevant in today's economic climate.

James Watt 1736-1819

Born in Greenock, he followed in his father's trade of mathematical instrument maker. He patented an invention which was the prototype steam engine in 1769, whilst working at an ironworks in Falkirk and worked on improving this in Birmingham. The unit of electrical power named after him was standardised in the 1880s.

David Dale 1739-1806

Born in Stewarton, Ayrshire, Dale joined with the English cotton-spinning inventor Sir Richard Arkwright in a short lived partnership to build the New Lanark Mills. Dale improved the conditions of his employees, providing a balanced diet, free schooling and low cost housing. The New Lanark Centre is now a visitor attraction and world heritage site.

John 'Tar' MacAdam 1756-1836

Born in Ayr, he was the inventor of the Macadamising system of road making, commonly known as Tarmac.

Thomas Telford 1757-1834

The son of an Eskdalemuir shepherd, he served his apprenticeship as a stone mason, which put him in good stead as a civil engineer. His creations as an engineer included the Dean Bridge in Edinburgh, the Caledonian Canal, linking the east and west coast of Scotland, and the Gotha Canal in Sweden.

Charles McIntosh 1766-1843

Born in Glasgow, he invented a waterproofing agent for the coat of the same name.

James 'Paraffin' Young 1811-1883

Born in Glasgow, he realised the potential for extracting paraffin from oil-rich shales and coals, and went on to set up Scotland's first oil industry.

David Livingstone 1813-1873

Born in Blantyre, Livingstone became an explorer and missionary. He discovered the Victoria Falls and led expeditions up the Zambesi and Nile. It was on the Nile he met the journalist Henry Stanley who spoke the often quoted line "Dr Livingstone I presume". There is a visitor centre in Blantyre about the life of Livingstone.

James Clerk-Maxwell 1831-1879

Son of a Dunfermline landowner he made important discoveries in the field of science. He originated the notion of cybernetics, introduced the idea of electro-magnetism and took the first colour photograph.

John Muir 1838-1914

Born in Dunbar, he was one of the most famous conservationists of his time. He influenced President Roosevelt to form America's first national park. In Scotland, the John Muir Trust has reserves throughout the country, including areas in East Lothian, Knoydart, Skye and Sutherland.

Sir William Arrol 1839-1913

Born in Renfrewshire, the son of a spinner, two projects were to give Arrol lasting fame. His engineering business constructed the new 85-span Tay Railway Bridge (1882-1887), and the cantilever Forth Railway Bridge (1883-1890).

John Dunlop 1840-1921

Dunlop was born in Ayrshire and became a vet. It was his hobby as a cyclist that led him to change the tyres of a cycle from solid rubber to having a pneumatic tyre. This concept was fundamental in the development of the motor car.

Sir James Dewar 1842-1923

Dewar was born in Kincardine. He invented the vacuum flask, whilst investigating the behaviour of gases at low temperature. He also invented cordite.

Alexander Graham Bell 1847-1922

Born in Charlotte Square in Edinburgh's New Town, he emigrated to the United States due to ill health. He initially planned to invent a machine to help the deaf to hear. It was in this research in Boston that he developed the telephone.

Sir Alexander Fleming 1881-1955

Born in Loudoun, Ayrshire, he worked on anti-typhoid vaccines. He became famous for his discovery of penicillin in 1928 although the drug was not perfected for another 11 years.

John Logie Baird 1888-1946

Born in Helensburgh, he was a student of electrical engineering. In 1922 he began television research with makeshift equipment. In 1926 he first demonstrated television to a number of scientists in his flat in London.

Richard Noble (1946-)

After reaching 633 mph in the Nevada Desert in 1983 Richard Noble won the World Land Speed Record. He then joined the 'Thrust SSC' team and broke the speed of sound after reaching 763 mph on land in 1997. Richard Noble was born in Edinburgh.

Arts**Robert Adam 1728-1792**

Born in Kirkcaldy, Fife, he is probably the most famous Scottish architect. His work includes Register House and Charlotte Square in Edinburgh, and Culzean Castle in Ayrshire.

Robert Burns 1759-1796

Born in Alloway, just south of Ayr, he was the son of a gardener. He was famed for writing in the language of the people. His work became very popular with the literary elite in Edinburgh with its often satirical attacks on the establishment. He later became an Exciseman and died in Dumfries. The Burns National Heritage Park in Alloway includes the cottage where he was born. There is also a museum commemorating Burns in Dumfries.

Sir Walter Scott 1771-1832

Born in Edinburgh, he began in the legal profession, but became a phenomenally successful poet and novelist with romantic historical works such as Waverley and Rob Roy. Scott was more responsible than anyone else for transforming the image of Scotland and for establishing many modern conceptions of Scottish history and character.

Andrew Carnegie 1835-1918

Born in Dunfermline to a weaving family, he made a fortune in the steel industry in the United States. What is remarkable is that he gave a sizeable percentage of his wealth to causes he felt would benefit society, and built over 2500 free libraries throughout Scotland, England, the United States and Canada. He returned to Scotland and built Skibo Castle for his retirement. The Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum in Dunfermline tells the story of this exceptional man.

Robert Louis Stevenson 1850-1894

Born in Edinburgh, the son of a lighthouse engineer, he became a famous novelist. He wrote many classics including *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. He was constantly dogged by ill health and for this reason he moved to Samoa, where he died in 1894.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1859-1930

Born in Edinburgh, he went on to study medicine there. He is best known for his novels of the adventures of the detective *Sherlock Holmes*, of whom there is a statue of the fictional detective on Picardy Place, where Doyle was born.

Sir James Barrie 1860-1937

Born in Kirriemuir in Angus, his most famous work was *Peter Pan*. The National Trust for Scotland owns his birthplace, which is open to the public.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh 1868-1928

Born in Glasgow, Mackintosh was one of Scotland's most original architects. His works include the Glasgow School of Art, and House for an Art Lover in the Glasgow area and Hill House in Helensburgh. Later he concentrated on his painting career although he never gained as much international fame for this as for his architecture.

The 'Glasgow Boys'

In the late 1870s a group of young artists, influenced by the social realism of certain French painters, and by the tonal harmonies of Whistler, gained recognition as a challenge to the classical and allegorical subject matter of the established art world, as represented by the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh. They flourished throughout the 1880s and 1890s and, as well as painting in Glasgow and its environs they sought scenes of rural life and character in Kirkcudbright, Cockburnspath and other parts of Scotland. Principal members of the group included Joseph Crawhill, Sir James Guthrie, George Henry and E.A. Hornel and their works can be seen in various Scottish collections, notably the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, the Burrell Collection and Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.

The 'Scottish Colourists'

After the Glasgow Boys came a smaller group, who although not recognised in the 1920s and 1930s when they were actually exhibiting, were rediscovered in the 1980s as a seminal influence on 20th Century Scottish painting and are now highly regarded internationally. Trained in France and consequently borrowing from the strong and vibrant colours of contemporary French painting, they became known as the Scottish Colourists and their main representatives are S.J. Peploe, F.C.B. Cadell, Leslie Hunter and J.D. Fergusson. Their works have become familiar particularly through reproductions of their still-lives and of landscapes such as those of Iona. Originals can be seen in such places as Aberdeen Art Gallery, Kirkcaldy Art Gallery and the JD Fergusson Gallery in Perth.

Harry Lauder 1870-1950

Born in Portobello, he became one of the most famous comics to come out of Scotland. He attracted many critics as his humour was seen to support a derogatory although benign stereotype of Scotland but he was at the top of his profession for 50 years, filling halls across the country.

John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir 1875-1940

John Buchan was born in Perth and went on to have a distinguished diplomatic career culminating as Governor General of Canada. He was most famous for his novels such as *The 39 Steps*. He also wrote historical biographies.

Hugh MacDiarmid 1892-1978

Born in Langholm, he was involved in politics as an early member of the Independent Labour Party, the Communist Party and a founder member of the Scottish National Party. It was however his poetry that made him famous, and he worked hard to establish Scotland as a serious literary base.

Donald Crisp 1880-1974

Appeared in over 400 Hollywood films including *International Velvet* and *How Green was my Valley*. He emigrated to the USA in 1906 but was born in Aberfeldy.

Sean Connery (1930-)

A popular and well known film actor perhaps best known for his role as James Bond, although he also won an Oscar for his role in *The Untouchables*. Now living in The Bahamas, he returns regularly to Scotland and was born and bred in Edinburgh.

Billy Connolly (1942-)

Glasgow born comedian and TV personality. After working in the Shipyards as a welder, Billy started off playing the banjo but the comedy element of his shows took over and he shot to fame, especially after appearing on the Parkinson show in the early 70's. He has since been in a number of movies included the acclaimed *Mrs Brown* and *The Last Samurai*.

Ewan McGregor (1971-)

Born in Crieff, the young actor shot to fame in *Trainspotting* in 1996 and is now one of the best known and critically acclaimed actors of his generation. He also appeared as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*.

Scotland.
Welcome to our life.

Want to know more about Scotland?
The No. 1 Booking and Information Service for Scotland
Tel: 0845 22 55 121 or +44 (0)1506 832 121 (outside UK)
Email: info@visitscotland.com

www.visitscotland.com

The information contained in this publication is correct at the time of going to print.
VisitScotland can accept no responsibility, for any errors or omissions contained in the publication.
Produced by Marketing Services, VisitScotland.