

## Famous Scots

Scotland is renowned for the huge impact its people have made on how we live today. From legendary warriors to great kings and queens, innovative inventors to inspiring writers and artists, the list of famous Scots keeps on growing.

## 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. Today, Iona remains 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 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, Robert the Bruce was a key figure during the Wars of Independence against English occupation. He was crowned in 1306 and reigned until 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, William Wallace 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 dedicated to him at Stirling.

### John Knox 1505-1572

Born in Haddington, John Knox 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 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. There are sites across Scotland related to Mary, Queen of Scots.

### 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 Scotland and England thus uniting the crown.

### John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee 1649-1689

John Graham 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 Balquhidder.

## **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 where there is now an impressive visitor centre. 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, Flora Macdonald 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.

## **Politics**

### **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, Harold MacMillan became Prime Minister of Great Britain between 1957 and 1963. 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.

## **Sport**

### **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.

**Andy Murray 1987-**

Andy Murray is a professional tennis player and currently ranked No.3 in the world. He has been runner-up in three Grand Slam finals: the 2008 US Open, the 2010 Australian Open and the 2011 Australian Open, and has reached the semi-finals of all four Grand Slam tournaments.

**Chris Hoy 1976-**

Chris Hoy is a Scottish track cyclist who represents both Scotland and also Great Britain. He is a multiple world champion and Olympic Games gold medal winner, impressively winning three golds at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He has received many accolades including an MBE in 2005 and The Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, built for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, is named in his honour.

**Invention and Discovery****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 also 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 then 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, John MacAdam invented the Macadamising system of road making, commonly known as Tarmac.

**Thomas Telford 1757-1834**

The son of an Eskdalemuir shepherd, Telford 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 Macintosh 1766-1843**

Born in Glasgow, Charles Macintosh was a chemist and inventor of waterproof fabrics. The Mackintosh raincoat was named after him.

### **James 'Paraffin' Young 1811-1883**

Born in Glasgow, Young 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 that he met 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 James Clerk-Maxwell 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.

### **Andrew Carnegie 1835-1918**

Born in Dunfermline to a weaving family, Andrew Carnegie 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 2,500 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.

### **John Muir 1838-1914**

Born in Dunbar, Muir was one of the most famous conservationists of his time. He influenced President Roosevelt to form America's first national park. In Scotland, the JohnMuir 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, Bell 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, John Logie Baird 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.

## **Literature**

### **Robert Burns 1759-1796**

Born in Alloway, just south of Ayr, Robert Burns was the son of a gardener and is 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 Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway also incorporates the cottage where he was born.

### **Sir Walter Scott 1771-1832**

Born in Edinburgh, Sir Walter Scott 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.

### **Robert Louis Stevenson 1850-1894**

Born in Edinburgh, the son of a lighthouse engineer, Robert Louise Stevenson 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, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle went on to study medicine there, though he is best known for his series of detective novels, Sherlock Holmes. 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, Sir James Barrie's most famous work is Peter Pan. The National Trust for Scotland owns his birthplace in Kirriemuir, which is open to the public.

### **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, particularly The 39 Steps. He also wrote historical biographies.

### **Hugh MacDiarmid 1892-1978**

Born in Langholm, MacDiarmid 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. However, it was his poetry that made him famous and he worked hard to establish Scotland as a serious literary base.

## **Alexander McCall Smith (1948-)**

Alexander McCall Smith is a prolific Edinburgh-based writer who has written a number of well-known series along with numerous successful children's books. McCall Smith is best-known for The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series which has earned him international renown after a film and spin-off television series was created from the novels as well as the episodic 44 Scotland Street.

## **Ian Rankin (1960-)**

Ian Rankin, one of Britain's most prolific crime writers, uses the Edinburgh's dark side as the focus of his best-selling Inspector Rebus novels. Rankin is originally from Fife but now lives in Edinburgh after attending university in the city.

## **JK Rowling (1965-)**

J K Rowling became one of Scotland's most renowned contemporary authors with her well-known Harry Potter books that have become the best-selling book series of all time. Rowling lives in Edinburgh and the city has influenced her books from the very beginning.

## **Art and Architecture**

### **Robert Adam 1728-1792**

Born in Kirkcaldy, Fife, Robert Adam is a famous architect whose work includes Register House and Charlotte Square in Edinburgh, and Culzean Castle in Ayrshire.

### **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, 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. Their works can be seen in various Scottish collections, notably the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the Burrell Collection and Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.

### **The 'Scottish Colourists'**

The Scottish Colourists found fame in the 1920s long after they were exhibiting in the 1920s and 1930s and had a seminal influence on 20th Century Scottish painting. Trained in France and consequently borrowing from the strong and vibrant colours of contemporary French painting, their main representatives are S.J. Peploe, F.C.B. Cadell, Leslie Hunter and J.D. Fergusson. Originals can be seen in galleries such as Aberdeen Art Gallery, Kirkcaldy Art Gallery and the JD Fergusson Gallery in Perth.

### **Jack Vettrianno (1951-)**

Hailing from the small town of Methil in Fife, Jack Vettrianno began painting by accident when his girlfriend at the time gave him some watercolour paints for his 21st birthday. Vettrianno began his career as an apprentice mining engineer in the Scottish coalfields and painted in his spare time until 1988, when he decided to submit two paintings to the Royal Scottish Academy. Perhaps the most well-known of his paintings is The Singing Butler, which fetched £750,000 at auction.

## Film, TV and Comedy

### Harry Lauder 1870-1950

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

### Donald Crisp 1880-1974

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

### Sean Connery (1930-)

A popular and well known film actor, Connery is 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-)

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

### Ewan McGregor (1971-)

Born in Crieff, this 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.

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