



19/03/21

Legendary author Sir Walter Scott is star of Saturday night show

An international celebration for the 250th anniversary of the life and works of Sir Walter Scott gets underway this weekend (Saturday March 20th) with an online broadcast of a spectacular light show from the Scottish Borders.

Scott fans around the globe are being invited to view the stunning display at Smailholm Tower by visiting the website, www.WalterScott250.com, at 6pm (GMT) on Saturday, which is World Storytelling Day (March 20th).

The broadcast will feature well-known Scott enthusiasts, including Outlander author Diana Gabaldon who will share how Scott inspired her and what her writing has in common with the 19th Century author. This will be followed by the world premiere of a brand-new short film of the Young Scott, created by artist and director, Andy McGregor, which will be projected onto the 15th-century tower.



The 250th anniversary launch event is being funded by EventScotland and organised by Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott, on behalf of the international Walter Scott 250 Partnership.

Smailholm Tower, which is owned by Historic Environment Scotland, was chosen as the location to start the celebrations because of its influence on Scott as a child. The tower is next door to the farm where Scott lived as a boy, and his early experiences here continued to inspire him throughout his life.

The programme for the launch evening is:

6pm Start of broadcast at www.WalterScott250.com.

This will be presented by Brian Taylor, former BBC correspondent and past President of the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club. It will feature well known Scott fans including award-winning author and presenter Damian Barr, Scottish historian Professor Sir Tom Devine, TV presenter, author and journalist Kirsty Wark and Outlander author Diana Gabaldon.



6.30pm Live broadcast from Smailholm Tower

Meet Andy McGregor, the artist behind the film, and the projection team; find out more about how the area influenced Scott.

6.45pm Live streaming of the film projected onto the 15th Century tower in the stunning Borders landscape.



Giles Ingram, Chief Executive of Abbotsford, Scott's home near Melrose in the Scottish Borders, said: "Abbotsford is delighted to be leading a partnership of over 50 organisations who will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of Scott's birth from now until August 2022. World Storytelling Day seemed the appropriate time to launch the celebrations, as Scott is renowned as one of the world's greatest storytellers, and his global impact is reflected in the range and diversity of our partners."

VisitScotland Film & Creative Industries Manager Jenni Steele said: "Sir Walter Scott has long been considered the father of the modern Scottish tourism industry, who ignited an interest in Scotland as a visitor destination with his early works such as the poem *The Lady of the Lake* and later, his novel *Waverley*.

"With one in six people inspired to visit destinations they know from books, TV or film, the year-long programme of celebrations to mark this important milestone will help shine the spotlight on his legacy in the Scottish Borders, as well as right across the country.

"We are delighted to be supporting the launch activity through Scotland's Events Recovery Fund. While people are not able to visit locations associated with Scott at the moment, we hope that these celebrations will provide inspiration to visit in the future."

Russel Griggs OBE, Chair of South of Scotland Enterprise, said: "It is fantastic that the story of Sir Walter Scott is being celebrated, 250 years on. Scott's influence remains hugely significant, from his literary work to his magnificent Abbotsford home, which has been one of the Borders' most popular visitor destinations for many years.

"With COVID-19 still with us, the 250th programme will be largely virtual, which should open it up to even more people to participate right across the globe."

Alex Paterson, CEO of Historic Environment Scotland, said: "Walter Scott remains an iconic and important figure in Scotland's story, both historically and culturally and HES is looking forward to playing our part in celebrating the 250th anniversary of his life and works.

"Smailholm Tower is a wonderful site and given Scott's well-known connection to it, it makes for the perfect location to launch the programme commemorating one of our country's best known cultural icons."

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Notes to Editors

Issued by The Abbotsford Trust on behalf of the Walter Scott 250 Partnership. For further information, please contact Angela Stormont, Marketing & Communications Manager. Tel 07771 577784, email media@scottsassbotsford.co.uk

Images, video and audio of the light show and of Diana Gabaldon, Kirsty Wark, Damian Barr, Prof Sir Tom Devine, Fiona Hyslop MSP, and Matthew Maxwell Scott are available for immediate use. Contact the Abbotsford press team: Angela Stormont 07771 577784; Jill Paterson 07816 397686; Becky Purves 07776 528883, or email: media@scottsassbotsford.co.uk

For further information on the Walter Scott 250th anniversary please see:
www.WalterScott250.com

Additional information

Celebratory Light Show

The light show to launch the 250th anniversary celebrations was created by artist Andy McGregor and his team: Artist & Illustrator, Jenny Soep; Composer and sound designer, Hamish Brown; Fiddle player, Morag Currie; and 3D Animator, John Butler.

It will be beamed on to two facades of Smailholm Tower and uses 3D images, music and quotes from Scott to tell the story of how his imagination was inspired by the land and the Borders tales which triggered his creativity. This ultimately led to his decision to “make my bread by storytelling... and honest bread it is... I will dig in the mines of my imagination to find diamonds.”

Further information on Andy McGregor & previous work: www.andymcgregor.com

The Abbotsford Trust

The Abbotsford Trust was formed in 2007 following the death of Dame Jean Maxwell Scott, the last descendant of Sir Walter Scott to live in the house. The Trust's Patron is the Duke of Buccleuch and it also has one of Scott's descendants among its members.

The Abbotsford Trust aims to preserve, protect and improve Abbotsford and its surroundings for the benefit and enjoyment of the public and also aims to enhance knowledge and understanding about the life and works of Sir Walter Scott.

Website: www.scottsassbotsford.com

EventScotland

EventScotland is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors. For further information about EventScotland, its funding programmes and latest event news visit www.EventScotland.org. Follow EventScotland on Twitter [@EventScotNews](https://twitter.com/EventScotNews).

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, the national tourism organisation which markets Scotland as a tourism destination across the world, gives support to the tourism industry and brings sustainable tourism growth to Scotland. For more information about VisitScotland see www.visitscotland.org or for consumer information on Scotland as a visitor destination see www.visitscotland.com.

VisitScotland

VisitScotland is Scotland's national tourism organisation. Its core purpose is to maximise the economic benefit of tourism to Scotland.

The organisation's key objective is to contribute to Scotland Outlook 2030, the national tourism strategy ambition of pursuing a sustainable and responsible tourism agenda.

This will be supported by five overarching strategies: Marketing, Events, Quality and Sustainability, Inclusive Tourism, International Engagement.

Spending by tourists in Scotland generates around £12 billion of economic activity in the wider Scottish supply chain and contributes around £6 billion to Scottish GDP (in basic prices).

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