



BURT WOLF

TRAVELS & TRADITIONS

GATEWAY TO SCOTLAND

Scotland. People have been living on this land for at least 6,000 years. The first inhabitants appear to have been groups of hunters and fishermen. Next, the Celtic tribes who had been forced out of Europe. In the year 80 AD the Roman legions marched through. And finally the English.

The first references to Scotland's central city of Edinburgh were in the notes of Ptolemy, an ancient Roman writer who made his comments in the year 160 AD. The first site in the area to be colonized was probably a hill called Arthur's Seat.

Precisely which Arthur actually took a seat here isn't quite clear. Romantics like to point to the legendary King Arthur of the Round Table. But there is no evidence to support that view. There is, however, considerable evidence that the hill had at least four prehistoric forts and an ancient farming community.

Immediate seating for Camelot or not, it's definitely a spot from which you can see a lot. And just below Arthur's Seat -- Old Town.



Edinburgh's Old Town is one of the oldest communities in Great Britain and much of it has remained intact.

One of the things I like about the Old Town was that all economic levels of the society lived in the same house. The rich and famous lived in the middle, the poor and unknown at the top and the bottom. And they were in regular contact with each other. They met each other in the hallways, on the staircases, in the courtyards. And they knew a lot about each others' lives. If someone in business was being dishonest or a magistrate handed down an unpopular opinion in the courts, they would be confronted about those issues when they got home. And often the confrontation took the form of a flying bucket of

garbage. I like that system a lot. As I see our public officials leaving their elegant homes in their chauffeur-driven limousines, I wonder if it wouldn't be a good idea to have a law that said that all government officials had to go to work in public transportation. Just to keep them in touch.

ANNE DOIG
DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
CITY OF EDINBURGH



We begin by taking you to the top of the most famous building in the city -- Edinburgh Castle. You can see the city is very dramatic, because it's a city born from fire and sculpted by ice. This whole area was under a shallow tropical sea that was subject to intense volcanic activity. Eventually when the ice came, one time there was two miles of sheet ice on top of this area and when it moved, it tipped up so dramatically that the ice scraped away all the soft debris and earth and rock and left seven hills that Edinburgh was created on. These hills are still volcanic hills.

Saint Margaret's Chapel is the oldest building in Edinburgh. It dates back to the eleventh, twelfth century. The castle was taken in 1313 by the Scots again when they took it back from the English. They razed it to the ground. So everything went except the chapel. So it predates 1313. The Scottish military can still hold their weddings and christenings in that chapel. It's a very tiny chapel. So if it's a wedding, it's much to the delight of the father of the bride because it only holds sixteen people so it's not an expensive wedding, he loves it.

This is actually quite interesting because we're standing here looking at the oldest building in the castle to the right and the very youngest opposite us. And you'd never really believe that that was the youngest building on the rock, it was actually built between 1923 and 1927. The weathered rock used to build this war memorial was originally part of a chapel called St. Mary's On the Rock. It was a Catholic chapel which was demolished during the turbulence of the



Reformation. But being Scottish, they didn't waste anything, right? Recycling is nothing new to the Scots. They kept all the original stonework until they had another purpose to build on this site. And it was after the First World War they wanted to build a memorial to all the Scots who died in World War I. All the Scots who died and all the conflicts of the twentieth century are listed by name in books in this memorial. People come from all around the world to visit Edinburgh Castle, and they might have a grandfather or an uncle or something who died in the First or Second World War, and they can go to the books inside and their names will be there. So it can be really quite a touching experience.

The origins of the Old Town of Edinburgh and the city begin with the castle, which was a fortress. And what happened was we had several periods of invading armies and so what the people did is they built these scattered houses and huts in the shadow of the old fortress for protection, and as the city increased its importance and eventually became a capital, there was a huge population concentrated on this rocky ridge, and so there was no room for the city to expand out the way, it had to develop up the way because it was a walled city. So it became a vertical city. So there was a tumble of tall tenements developed all the way down from the castle down a spine of rock. So you can forget about Manhattan being the place where the skyscraper was developed; the skyscraper/high-rise development, first in the world, was right here in Edinburgh and that's a superb example. Some of the buildings were fifteen, sixteen stories high.



The man that Jekyll and Hyde was based on lived right here. His name was William Brodie; his title was Deacon Brodie and he was a well-respected man in the city. But at night, he became a

burglar. So this wave of crime was well-known but they couldn't catch the thief. Why not? Because he was chairing the committee examining it. So eventually he was caught red-handed. There was another twist to the tale, because when he was executed, he was actually executed on the new, improved gallows. He designed the trap door and he was the first person executed. So the double life of William Brodie inspired Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

In 1752, the Lord Mayor of Edinburgh secretly published a proposal for the improvement of the city. He complained that there was no place for the merchants of Edinburgh to do their business, no safe repository for the public records, no meeting place for the magistrates and the town council. The New Town was constructed to meet the needs which the Lord Mayor so rightly described. And everyone who could get up the money moved from the Old Town to the New Town. The exodus from the Old Town was so fast and so dramatic that it has come to be known as "the great flitting."

ANNE DOIG

The New Town of Edinburgh was built at the same time when there was an outburst of amazing intellectual energy. It was a period in our history known as the Golden Age, the enlightenment. And the New Town of Edinburgh was really the physical manifestation of what was happening in the minds of the people at that time. So in contrast to the Old Town, described by Stevenson as so many smoky beehives, the New Town was light; it was a city of nature, gardens, reason. The streets were laid out symmetrically. Squares were balanced at either end. That's quite amazing that the architecture would follow the intellectual thought of the period.

You can read all about the people by reading the buildings. You can still see the wide doorways, lovely fanlight windows, the original lamps which would have been whale oil, then gas and now electricity.

And this is a typical house from that period built by one of the greatest men in our history; the greatest architect of the eighteenth century was Robert Adam. So this house belongs to the National Trust, but they've brought it back to the way it was back in 1790s. This is exactly the way the people would have eaten.

You see the china's Wedgwood. Everything came to the table at the same time. So you have the soup, fish, vegetables. But back in the eighteenth century they ate everything all at once.



And typically of the eighteenth century, they had chairs on the outside. So there was a big space in the middle, because they might have spontaneous dancing, Scots dancing.

TIME TO EAT

When most people think about Scottish food they come up with, shall we say, less than the most enticing images. First to mind is usually Haggis, a nationally famous dish made from the innards of sheep that have been chopped up and boiled in the lining of a sheep's stomach.

And then they stop thinking about Scottish food and desperately try to think about something else. Reflect for a moment. You've undoubtedly heard people say: "Let's go out for French food, or Italian food, or Chinese food. But I'll bet you, that you have never heard anybody say: "Let's go out for Scottish food."

And yet, for the last few years, I have been having really good meals in Scotland.

And where have we been eating in Edinburgh? A grand, French-style building in Register Place. Inside, the Cafe Royal, originally opened in 1817. Hundred-year-old stained glass windows show the British at their traditional sports. At the end of the bar, a tile that presents the first ship that put to sea for the Cunard Line. For lunch: seafood chowder, and grilled salmon on a bed of spinach with a mustard sauce.



Leith has been a port area for centuries, an independent and wealthy place with a clear sense of its own future. But as Edinburgh

grew, it slowly incorporated Leith. I say slowly, because Leith went to war to prevent that incorporation. Today it is a charming, gentrified edge of the city of Edinburgh. The docks are lined with a dozen or so small restaurants of which our favorite turned out to be The Shore. Set in a building that was constructed during the 1700s, the collective preference of our crew was the Squid with Rosemary, Saffron Fish Soup, and for dessert -- Lemon Tart and Toffee Pudding Cake.

Just in front of the entrance to Edinburgh Castle, in a building that dates back to the 1500s, is a restaurant called The Witchery.

**JAMES THOMSON
THE WITCHERY**

Well, the restaurant's called The Witchery because between 1470 and 1722 over fifteen hundred people were burned as witches in the Castle Hill, which is just outside here. Anybody who had a physical deformity -- it could be a large nose, or a wart, or whatever -- could be thought to be a witch. And they'd be taken away and tortured until they confessed to being a witch. Of course, most of them weren't actually witches; it was just a public sport at the time, but the church and the Crown became very wealthy because they inherited the estate of the witch. So I thought that with this building being on the Castle Hill, we would be a reminder for all those innocent people who died, sadly, of being accused of being witches.

The room is decorated with Scottish antiques, and the kitchen specializes in the use of traditional Scottish produce. I had a good lunch here. It started with a roasted

WHERE TO EAT



THE CAFE ROYAL
17 WEST REGISTER STREET
EDINBURGH EH2 2AA SCOTLAND
TELEPHONE: +44 (0) 131 556 4124

THE SHORE BAR AND RESTAURANT
3 SHORE
LEITH, EDINBURGH EH6 6QW SCOTLAND
TEL: +44 (0) 131 553 5080

THE WITCHERY
CASTLEHILL, THE ROYAL MILE
EDINBURGH EH1 2NF SCOTLAND
TEL: +44 (0) 131 225 5613

tomato soup and was followed by a roast loin of lamb with a mustard and chopped olive crust. No dessert today -- because my lighting grip, Nigel Smith tells me that there is a unique Edinburgh sweet that I must taste.

Here in Pasquale's, as in Fish and Chips houses all over Scotland, the Mars Bar Fritter is as common as malt vinegar. And no one knows if it was created



intentionally or if it was the result of a freak deep-fat fryer accident, but the famous candy bar is indeed coated with batter and plunged into hot fat. ... This batch seems to be fortified with a little

extra iron... and yes, this is the same fat that the fish and chips are fried in.

Besides Mars Bars, they do many other kinds of candy, but Pasquale thinks The Mars Bar is the best, and it is the most popular. You gotta eat 'em when they're hot. And they are definitely an acquired taste.

THE WHISKEY TRAIL

The national beverage of Scotland is whiskey -- a whiskey of such importance that the rest of the world simply calls it Scotch. There are about one hundred different Scotch whiskey producers in Scotland and each one has their own very particular approach to the craft.

But it's not only the skilled labor of the maker that controls the final product. To a great extent, the color and taste of a particular Scotch whiskey is the result of the physical environment in which the distillery is located. And that has led to the development of something called the whiskey trail.

The whiskey trail is actually a well-beaten path that takes you through Scotland's Scotch producing districts, which fortunately for the Tourist Commission, takes in all of Scotland. It is an ideal journey for someone with a great thirst for knowledge. If you are starting out from Edinburgh, a good first stop would be the Central Highlands.

And this is the Dalwhinnie Distillery. It's been in operation since 1897. Its name is Gaelic for the meeting



place. Dalwhinnie is the highest distillery in Scotland at over 1,000 feet above sea level.

Each of the distilleries in Scotland has chosen a very specific place for its facility. In the old days one of the most important considerations was the relationship of the distillery to tax agents. Ideally you would be in a place where the King's men could never find you. At the very minimum you wanted to be in a spot where you got enough warning so you could hide your whiskey.

The next most important element in the selection of a site has always been the water supply. Most of the distilleries are set next to streams. The water that is drained to make the whiskey comes into the stream from a spring, or drains down from the rain that falls on the nearby hills, or from melting snow. The trip that the water makes on the way to the distillery gives it a very distinct taste. If the water passes over and through rocks, it picks

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up the flavors of the minerals in those rocks. If it passes through a moor with heather growing, the water will pick up a honey note. If it passes through fields of peat it will end up with a peaty flavor. How peaty will depend on the amount of time that the water spends near the peat. Peat is the remains of compressed plant life, sort of an early form of coal. Some land formations will filter water for years before delivering it to a stream that feeds a still. And every inch of the journey will be reflected in the taste of the Scotch.

The type of wood used in the aging cask is also important. In the early days of Scotch making, the wooden casks were used merely as containers to store the whiskey. Eventually, however, people discovered that the cask could change the flavor of the Scotch.

Temperature also affects the flavor of Scotch whiskey.



And so does the air. Scotch spends years maturing in wooden casks, and during that time period, it pulls air into the cask. If the distillery is near the sea the air may have a salty quality. That salty

air enters the cask and the salty flavor is reflected in the Scotch.

When all the whiskey in a particular bottle comes from the same distillery and has not been blended with whiskey from any other distillery, it has earned the right to be called a malt, or single malt.

The next leg of Scotland's whiskey trail runs northeast, into a district that faces out on the Moray Firth and the North Sea, and is known as Speyside. The river from which the area takes its name is one of the world's great locations for salmon fishing.

Cragganmore is a small distillery in Speyside, but its whiskey is considered to be one of the best. The area is also famous for its wild mushrooms. For a classic recipe, take a look at salmon on a bed of roasted fennel with a white wine and cream sauce. There's also lots of home-baked fruit cakes, scones and shortbreads.

Now the path works its way across the top of Scotland to the Isle of Skye which is only fifty miles long and thirty miles wide.

The only distillery on the Isle of Skye is called Talisker. It was established in 1831, and makes a whiskey that turned out to be the favorite of the great Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson who, amongst his many famous books wrote *Treasure Island*, the search for the buried treasure of

Captain Kidd, a treasure that very well might have included a bottle of whiskey from Skye.

Talisker is considered to have a peppery quality, which goes well with the food of the area. Skye is famous for fish and shellfish... grilled scallops on a bed of langoustine and monkfish wrapped in slices of Scottish ham.

Now it's time to turn down and head along the west coast. This is one of the most romantic parts of Scotland. Isolated villages. Tiny port towns.

The first settlers in the area are thought to have arrived about 7,000 years ago and made their homes in cliff side caves. These days the capital of the area is a town called Oban, which is also the name of the local Scotch whiskey. Authorities believe that Oban is a classic example of the single malts that are made in this area.



The pros describe it as having the aroma of fresh peat with a slight hint of the sea. They like to add a splash of water and drink it along with a dinner of grilled fish.

Leaving Oban, the trail heads south to the Isle of Islay. Islay is the most famous of the Whiskey Islands.

Their stills produce whiskey with flavor notes that remind drinkers of peat and the great North Atlantic Ocean. The whiskey rests in casks; can be there for three years minimum, or may be there for decades, and during that time period the casks actually breathe in the atmosphere. The end result is that the climate becomes part of the flavor.

A wee dram of the local whiskey called Lagavulin makes the point. And to go along with it, the great seafood of the region -- Islay's famous for its oysters and mussels.

And finally, the trail moves across the southern Lowlands, an area known as the Borders because it borders on England.

This is one of the most unspoiled spots in Europe. It's Scotland's garden and it's covered with rich farmland. It's also the birthplace of John Muir, a Scotsman who was a conservationist who moved to North America and actually began the idea of establishing National Parks.

Glenkinchie is a good example of a Lowland whiskey. The aroma of the local wildflowers ends up in the glass. And the fields of wheat end up in a wide range of yeast breads. The Borders are also famous for their traditional Scottish cheeses.

GLENEAGLES

And if you would like to see a wee bit of the magnificent Scottish countryside and what elegant country life was like for the British during the heydays of the 1920s, you can get yourself some wheels and head north... over the bridge that crosses the Firth of Forth, which is easier to cross than it is to pronounce and on into Gleneagles.

Gleneagles was opened in 1924 and described as a Riviera resort in the Highlands. I assume that the river they had in mind was the Tay that runs near the property. It was the place to vacation in Great Britain, and it still is.

What also makes Gleneagles attractive is their activity program. They focused on a series of leisure time undertakings and set up a school for each -- a school that was designed and in many cases is still directed by one of the world's leading authorities on the subject. The championship golf course was developed by Jack Nicklaus.

For me, however, the most fascinating school at Gleneagles is the British School of Falconry, where James Knight took me through the introductory course.



**JAMES KNIGHT
THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF FALCONRY**

This is Talisker. He's obviously raring to go. Now, the most important thing that we do with him now -- and I'll explain it while we're there -- is we've got to weigh him before we can use him. So we take him down the corridor and then we pop him on the scale.

He gets weighed every day. The thing to remember about falconry is it's four thousand years old. It started in China and Japan as a means of getting food for ourselves, but he's not going to do that if he's full and fat. So he has to be hungry. He does nothing for us whatsoever. He purely does it for himself. So if he doesn't feel like hunting, he's not going to do it. So we have to get him to what we call his hunting weight. And that happens to be one pound, four ounces. So we're lucky, he's just spot on.

Now we'll try to get him to do a little bit of work for you, and I say "work" because he doesn't like flying.

People always think that birds like to fly and that's our idea because we can't fly -- you know, we think it would

be great to fly. But flying for him is work. And he only does it for a reason. That's true of all birds, and with us it's food, in the wild he's got to find a mate to build a nest and do all sorts of things. But he's not thinking "Yippee I'm enjoying this." He's thinking "Yippee I've got a bit of beef." So to cast him off, you put your arm out straight. You can see he's excited, he's ready to go, keep hold of the jesses through the thumb and middle fingers and then I'm just going to take a little step and give him a little push. Just like an airplane, they always like to take and land off into the wind. They hate the downwind landing. So fingers crossed. So take a little step and give him a push. There he goes; you see he turns into the wind and lands into the wind. Now to call him back all I have to do is to put my glove up with some food on and back he comes. His eyesight is eight times better than ours. He will see that little piece of beef from three or four hundred yards away without any problem.



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