

Sir Walter Scott 250th anniversary – BBC programme looks at his legacy

To mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott, author Damian Barr goes in search of the legacy and lasting influence of one of Scotland's great historical figures, novelists and poets.

Edinburgh takes centre stage in Damian's travels with visits to the Scott Monument, the National Library of Scotland and Waverley – the only train station in the world named after a novel.

His travels also range from Smailholm Tower in the Borders, which inspired Scott as a child to Loch Katrine – the setting for his most famous poem *The Lady of the Lake* – and to Doune Castle, which featured in his debut novel *Waverley*, and is a setting which continues to inspire historical novelists to this day.



Damian Barr with a bust of Sir Walter Scott © Factory Films/BBC Scotland

Damian – known to BBC Scotland audiences as the host of *The Big Scottish Book Club* – goes on a personal journey to discover the truth about the man, his world and his work.

He meets with world experts including Professor Alison Lumsden, of Aberdeen University, Novelist James Robertson, Author of “Scott-land” Stuart Kelly and Abbotsford curator, Kirsty Archer-Thompson.

In *Search of Sir Walter Scott*, which is a production by Factory Films for BBC Scotland, reveals the long lasting influence of Scott and his writing, his political campaigning and his role in creating a version of Scotland we are still living with today.

Damian said: “Walter Scott remains one of the world’s most famous writers...the pioneer of a new literary genre, historical fiction, he changed the way the world views Scotland and how we Scots see ourselves.

“His legacy is all around us but he is almost invisible now. He outsold his contemporaries Lord Byron and Jane Austen, but these days Scott’s works are barely lifted off the shelves.

“Like a lot of people, I’ve got an idea about Scott, but is it accurate? So that’s why 250 years after his birth I’m going in search of Sir Walter Scott.”

The programme In Search of Sir Walter Scott will go out on the BBC Scotland channel on Tuesday 10 August 2021 at 10pm and will be available to view afterwards on BBC iPlayer.



Damian Barr at the Scott Monument © Factory Films/BBC Scotland