

S.R. CROCKETT (1859 – 1914)

In 1886 Crockett became Free Church minister at Penicuik, preaching in what is now Penicuik South Church, an interesting and unusual building designed by Frederick T. Pilkington.

It was in the Free Kirk manse that many of Crockett's successful tales were written. The success of novels such as *The Raiders* and *The Lilac Sunbonnet*, together with a growing impatience with the narrow outlook of the Free Kirk, led him to embark on full-time writing.

Although often condemned to the Kailyard school of writing, some of his 40-odd novels are worthy of note. *Men of the Moss Hags* tells of Galloway Covenanters; *The Grey Man* features the legendary cannibal, Sawney Bean and *Cleg Kelly* contains scenes of urban deprivation among Edinburgh waifs and railwaymen.



TO S.R. CROCKETT

*'Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how!'*

from 'Blows the Wind Today!' by Robert Louis Stevenson



reading MIDLOTHIAN

To discover more about Midlothian, its rich literary heritage as well as all it can offer book lovers today, visit the Midlothian Council Library Service Local Studies Collection at Loanhead.

This is one of a series of Literary Guides to Scotland published by Book Trust Scotland.

Other guides include *reading Glasgow* and *reading Perthshire*.

For details of these and other Book Trust Scotland publications send a s.a.c. to Book Trust Scotland, Scottish Book Centre, 137 Dundee Street, Edinburgh EH11 1BG.

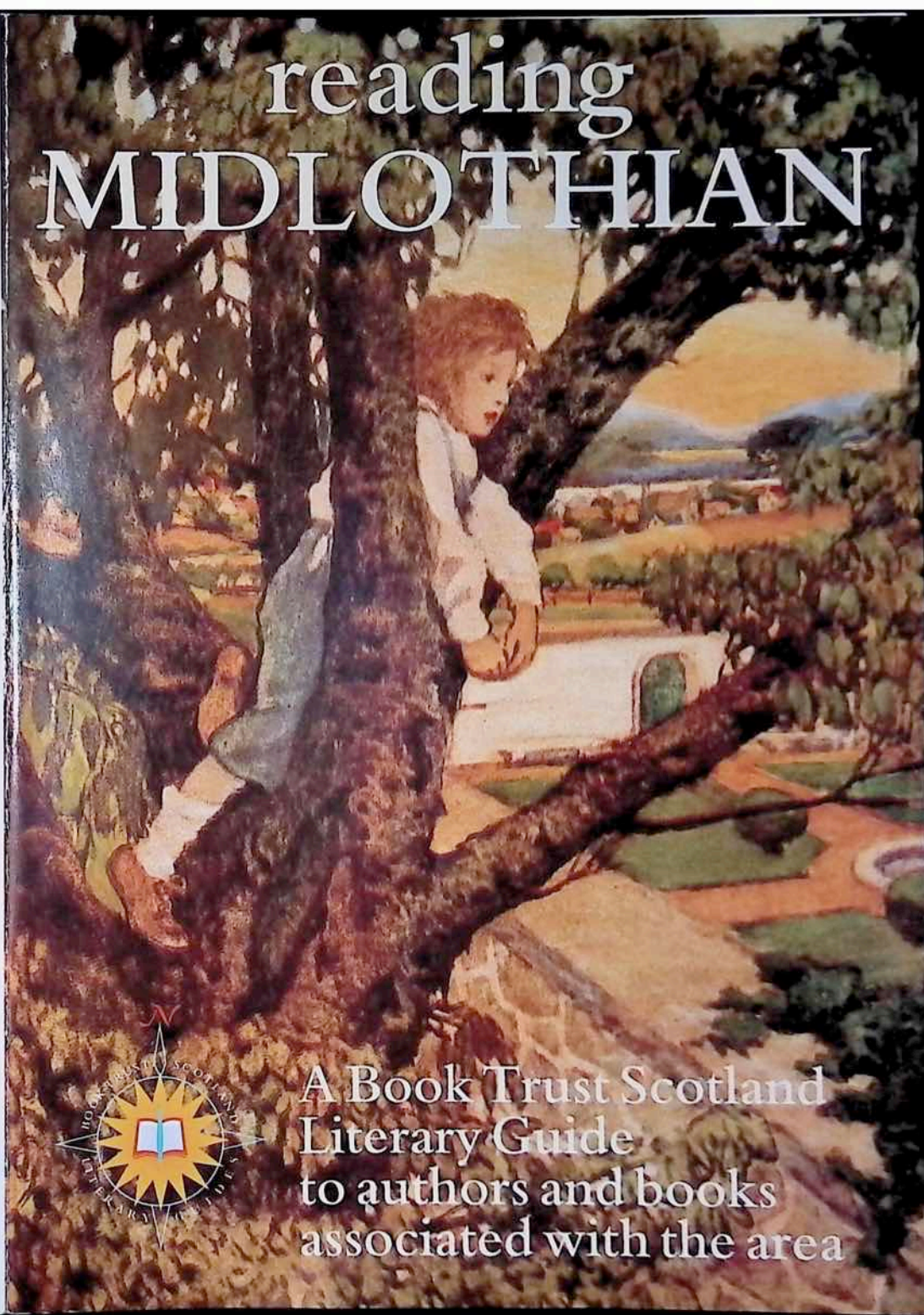
This leaflet was published with the support of Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board.
Text by Alan Reid. Picture research by Liffy Grant.

BOOK TRUST SCOTLAND is an educational charity promoting books and reading throughout Scotland.



DESIGN: ANN ROSS PATTERSON

reading MIDLOTHIAN



A Book Trust Scotland
Literary Guide
to authors and books
associated with the area



reading MIDLOTHIAN

There are not many areas in Scotland with so great a wealth of literary associations. Midlothian has been lived in by numerous writers and visited by many more. At Roslin, for example, are to be found all the ingredients which combine to draw literary visitors and inspire poets. Roslin has three great attractions – its unique and breathtaking Chapel, its ancient Castle and its Glen of scenic romance.

In 1773 James Boswell and Dr Johnson, during a visit recorded by the former in his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 'dined and drank tea at the inn'. In 1787 Robert Burns was a guest at the same inn, and in September 1803 William and Dorothy Wordsworth, in the company of Coleridge, spent a night there. William was to return and during a tour in Scotland in 1831 wrote the lines 'Composed in Roslin Chapel during a storm'.

Scott, for a while resident at Lasswade further down the River Esk, introduced his readers to the Chapel and Castle in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Byron turned to the sad remains of the Castle for inspiration:

Oh Roslin! Time, war, flood and fire
Have made your glories star by star expire.

Not only at Roslin but throughout Midlothian, visitors today can follow in the footsteps of some of the great and less well-known names of Scottish literature, all of whom have been influenced by their discovery of the county.

Let the writers be your guide: discover Midlothian for yourself.

Alan Reid Library Services Manager for Midlothian Council



Roslin Castle and Chapel by William Delacour
BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY

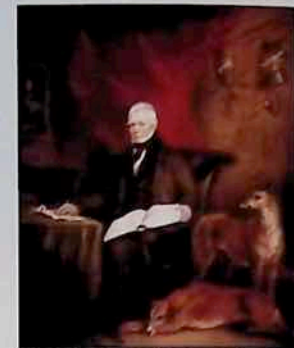
SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771 – 1832)

Following his marriage in 1797 Scott took a house at Lasswade. Barony Cottage, fictionalised as 'Gandercleuch' the residence of the 'author' of *Tales of a Grandfather*, is still standing. While there, the Scotts were visited by many other literary figures, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth on their tour of Scotland in 1803.

Scott's Lasswade home inspired the introduction of Midlothian scenes into his writing, notably in the poem, *The Gray Brother*. The vivid descriptions of Rosslyn Chapel and Castle and the legends associated with the St Clair family, featured in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, further reveal his familiarity with Esk Valley. It was friendship with the Countess of Buccleuch, whose palace lay at nearby Dalkeith, which led to his writing this book.

He was on familiar terms too with the Dundases of both Melville and Arncliffe. In his diary in January 1817 he wrote that 'I am always happy in finding myself in the old Oak Room of Arncliffe ... many a merry bottle...'.
A Midlothian Association is founded upon memorable descriptions in *Marmion* of the former and the latter of the Castle and the Water of Tyne which flows in the valley below.

Roslin Chapel, the ruins of the Castle, Arncliffe House, Crichton Castle and Rosslyn Chapel are all of great interest.



Sir Walter Scott by Sir Francis Grant
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



Madge Wildfire before Bailie Middleburgh by W.E. Lockhart and engraved by John Le Conte in *Six Engravings in the Heart of Midlothian* for the Members of the Royal Association for Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland.
THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

Mr Middleburgh had just taken his seat ... Madge Wildfire entered ... Maggie's eyes had glistened with something like an expression of pleasure when she saw her daughter at liberty. But ... her natural affection ... like that of the tigress, could not be displayed without a strain of ferocity ... '... ye street-raking limmer!' she exclaimed, pushing her daughter before her to the door, with no gentle degree of violence. 'I'll tell thee what thou is now – thou's a crazed hellicat Bess o' Bedlam, that sall taste naething but bread and water for a fortnight,

to serve ye for the plague ye hae gien me – and over gude for ye, ye idle taupie!' Madge however, escaped from her mother at the door, ran back to the foot of the table, dropped a very low and fantastic curtsy to the judge, and said, with a giggling laugh, – 'Our minnie's sair mis-set, after her ordinar, sir – She'll hae had some quarrel wi' her auld gudeman, – that's Satan, ye ken, sirs'.

from *Heart of Midlothian* (chapter 18) by Sir Walter Scott

Cover illustration: *Foreign Lands* by Jessie Willcox Smith in *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson
'I held the trunk with both my hands,
And looked abroad on foreign lands'

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND



ROBERT BURNS (1759 – 1796)

Midlothian enjoys several connections with the national bard. On 17 April 1787, Burns accepted 100 guineas for the copyright of the Edinburgh edition of his poems. The purchaser was William Creech, born in 1745 at Newbattle, the son of the minister there. As copyright holder it was Creech who secured all the profits from the poems and subsequent editions and reprints.

In the same year as his one-sided deal with



William Creech,
Publisher and Lord
Provost of Edinburgh
by Sir Henry
Raeburn
SCOTTISH NATIONAL
PORTRAIT GALLERY

Creech, Burns visited

Roslin. At that time, the old inn was situated nearby the gate to Rosslyn Chapel. After a night's carousing in Edinburgh, Burns, in the company of the painter Alexander Nasmyth, walked out to Roslin and had breakfast there. His thanks to the landlady, Mrs Wilson, are recorded in the poem beginning 'My blessings on ye, honest wife'. The inn, Colledgehill House, is now the residence of the Chapel curator.

A further Midlothian connection lies in the Burns song 'Ca' the Yowes', the original of which Burns is reputed to have collected from Revd John Clunie, minister of Borthwick from 1791. The attractive Borthwick church is open to visitors, and nearby is Borthwick Castle, considered to be the finest 15th-century tower house in Scotland, and now an hotel.



Part of Roslin Castle
the place where Burns
and Nasmyth
met 18
Alexander Nasmyth with Robert Burns at Roslin Castle
by Alexander Nasmyth SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

WILLIAM DRUMMOND (1585 – 1649)

The Drummond family home was Hawthornden, perched on cliffs above the River Esk near Roslin.

On his father's death in 1610 Drummond became Laird of Hawthornden, leading a retiring life of literary interests which he had embarked upon during his earlier years of study at Bourges and Paris. Although Drummond can be regarded as the first Scots poet to write in English, his verse, mainly madrigals and sonnets, reflects his wide reading and European literary influences. Among his friends and correspondents was the English poet Ben Jonson who visited him in 1618. On Jonson's arrival, Drummond's greeting is reputed to have been

'Welcome, welcome, royal Ben,'

to which the reply came

'Thank ye, thank ye, Hawthornden'.

On his death, on 4 December 1649, Drummond's famous library was presented to the University of Edinburgh. Hawthornden Castle is now a writers' retreat and is not open to the public. The exterior may be viewed from the opposite bank of the Esk among the woods of Roslin Glen.



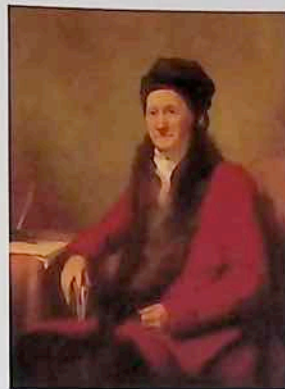
William Drummond of Hawthornden
by an unknown artist
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Top: Hawthornden in the
nineteenth century
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT
AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF
SCOTLAND/JAMES DARWIN

HENRY MACKENZIE (1745 – 1831)

Henry Mackenzie, novelist, essayist and man of letters, was born in Edinburgh. Like many prominent citizens of the capital, Mackenzie adopted a Midlothian *pied-à-terre*, and from 1795 to 1807 was resident in Auchendinny House, near Penicuik.

Mackenzie is best remembered for his novel *The Man of Feeling*, a sentimental story in which the hero possesses an ideal sensitivity, displayed as feelings of virtue, pity, sympathy and benevolence. Such was its success that the book's title came to be attached to the author himself. Burns, whom Mackenzie memorably praised as 'this heaven-taught ploughman', read the book so often, he wore out two copies.



Henry Mackenzie by Colvin Smith SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

EDWIN MUIR (1887 – 1959)

Born in Orkney, Muir suffered deep personal tragedy when his family was forced to move to Glasgow where he experienced the death of both parents and two of his five siblings within four years.

Muir produced seven collections of poems between 1925 and 1956, as well as three novels and other works, including a controversial assessment of Scottish culture, *Scott and Scotland*.

Despite a happy partnership with Willa Anderson, whom he had married in 1919, psychological distress and a sense of exile persisted until 1950 when he became Warden at Newbattle Abbey College. As he describes in *An Autobiography*, he found peace in teaching and by inspiring his adult students including George Mackay Brown and Tom Scott.

A memorial seat in the Pentland Hills records his achievements.



Top: Edwin Muir from *Authors in Session*
by Stanley Cursiter

GLASGOW MUSEUMS ART GALLERY & MUSEUM, KEEVINGROVE

Above: Willa Anderson Muir by Nigel McIsaac
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Left: Newbattle Abbey House
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL
MONUMENTS OF SCOTLAND



ALLAN RAMSAY (1684 – 1758)

In 1725 Ramsay established what is regarded as the first British circulating library in Edinburgh. He was already a successful poet, publishing his first collection of verse in 1721. Although Ramsay wrote in both Scots and English, he was certainly at his best in the former and paved the way for such writers as Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. As editor of *The Evergreen* he anthologised the work of long-neglected poets such as Dunbar and Henryson, while *The Tea Table Miscellany* resurrected many traditional songs and ballads.

Ramsay was a frequent guest at the old mansion house of Penicuik and a substantial stone obelisk to his memory was erected at Ravensneuk by Sir James Clerk in 1759. He also spent time at the home of his friends, the Forbes of Newhall. The house is the setting of his greatest triumph, the pastoral comedy *The Gentle Shepherd*, which describes rustic life and courtship among the Pentland Hills. The grounds of Newhall House are now open to the public.

Ramsay was buried in Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh.



Allan Ramsay by William Aikman
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



Entrance into Habbie's How from the Pentlands, as depicted in *The Gentle Shepherd: A Pastoral Comedy* by Allan Ramsay, 1725. Illustration by Sir David Forbes of Newhall, 1901. The Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

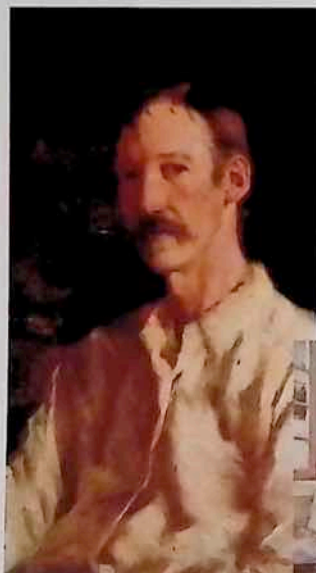
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850 – 1894)

The Pentlands, Stevenson's 'Hills of home', were the present part of his childhood and early manhood. Days at Colinton and Swanston inspired memories of his childhood captured in *A Child's Garden of Verses*, his first printed work, *The Pentland Rising*.

Pentlands settings are found in *St Ives*, and in the great unfinished novel, *Weir of Hermiston*. The minister of the Kirk at Hermiston is unmistakably the Revd Alexander Torrance, minister at Glencorse when Stevenson attended Sunday

service there. Glencorse is also the scene of 'resurrectionist' activity in the short story, *The Body Snatchers*.

To the end of his life in self-imposed exile in Samoa, Stevenson remained haunted by the Pentlands. He composed one of his most memorable poems, 'Blows the Wind Today!', a poignant Pentlands memory, in response to S.R. Crockett's dedication to him of a collection of sketches.



Robert Louis Stevenson
by Count Girolamo Nerli
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



Picture-books in *Winter* by Jessie Willcox Smith in *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson
'Water is now turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books'
THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

ANNIE S. SWAN (1859 – 1943)

Renowned for her light, romantic novels and serials for popular magazines, Annie S. Swan was born in Edinburgh. Later, the family moved to Mountskip Farm, near Gorebridge.

Her first novel, *Ups and Downs*, was published in 1878, but it was not until the publication of *Aldersyde* in 1883 that her name was made. The sequel, *Carlourie*, appeared the following year and is set in the Mountskip area, describing life on the neighbouring farms. Thereafter her output was prodigious. She claimed not to know how many books she had written, but bibliographies list over 150.



Annie S. Swan
frontispiece photograph by H.L. Mendelssohn in *The Gates of Eden*
EDINBURGH CITY LIBRARIES

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785 – 1860)

De Quincey was the son of a Manchester merchant and became a major figure in the literary world as well as the friend and mentor of the Lake Poets. He was notorious for his drug addiction, his most famous work being *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*.

In 1840 De Quincey moved his family to Polton and took up residence there at Mavis Bush Cottage which is now named after its most famous resident. He was a splendid character. We are told that at Polton his insistence that no one should touch his papers and books was taken to such a degree that they would pile up until his room was so cluttered that he could no longer work in it. When this happened he just locked the room and moved to another to work.



Thomas De Quincey by Sir John Watson Gordon
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

SIR JOHN CLERK (1676 – 1755)

The estate of Penicuik is inextricably linked with the Clerk family. The family's place in Scottish history and literature was secured by Sir John Clerk, a politician, poet and patron of the arts.

Study and travel in Europe turned his interests to architecture, music and literature. On his return to Scotland he became a Commissioner for the Act of Union and after the passing of the Act he retired to Penicuik to indulge his literary and antiquarian tastes. His seat there became a centre of hospitality and patronage to many of the best-known men of letters of the time, including Allan Ramsay. Sir John himself composed a number of rounded verses and wrote books on scientific and classical literary subjects.

The new, magnificent mansion house of Penicuik, built by Sir James Clerk during the 1760s, was gutted by fire in 1899 and is now a ruin.



Penicuik House in the eighteenth century
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF SCOTLAND