

Museums
& Galleries
Edinburgh

Writers'
Museum

SECOND LEVEL



THE WRITERS' MUSEUM

Second level

Featuring three famous 'Scottish Super Stars'
**ROBERT BURNS, SIR WALTER SCOTT
& ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON**



FEARE THE LORD



X S

W
G



& DEPART FROM EVILL

G
S 1622



Door lintel and a brief history of the building

- Lady Stair's House is nearly 400 years old! It is built from sandstone.
- This was once a great house sitting in a prestigious area of Edinburgh's old town.
- Many people have lived here and the close was previously called 'Lady Gray's Close' in honour of Lady Gray who lived here until the 18th century.
- The building you can see today is not the same as it was - by the 1890s the house was in a bad condition and was almost pulled down!
- Restoration saved most of the building but the north, south and west wings were demolished because they were dangerous.



- The Lintel above the front door is dated 1622.
(The Lintel is exactly above the front door of the building on the outside)
- Carved onto this are the initials **WG** for William Gray and **GS** for his wife Geida Smith.
- Sir William Gray of Pittendrum [**WG**] had the house built in 1622 and lived in it with his wife, Geida Smith [**GS**]. Geida was the Lady Gray - the Close was originally named after.
- To the left of William's initials, there are three letters intertwined: **W G S**.
- The banner / motto says: '**Feare the Lord and Depart from Evile**'.
- In the middle of the lintel is an escutcheon (this is a shield or emblem bearing a coat of arms). On the left of this is a lion rampant, a saltire on the right and in the top right corner a crescent moon.
- To the left by William's initials is a star and by Geida's there is a flower.

Questions

Is this banner here? What information can you gather from it?

Welcomes guests / date it was built / family crest in centre / initials.

Using prior knowledge - what is the animal in the middle?

Lion rampant.

Why was a lion used on the banner?

Symbolic for courage / valour / nobility / strength / stateliness.

What is on the right-hand side of the Lion? Why was the saltire used?

Scotland's national flag / based on St Andrew's cross / patron saint.

What do the words say - why are they there?

As a caution for only good people to enter / as a welcome.

Why is there a date on the banner - what is that date, what does that date tell you?

The year that the house was built as a record.

Look at the initials - why are they there? What could they signify?

Initials of the people who lived in the house.

NEXT PAGE - THIS WILL LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE OUTSIDE BUILDING OF THE MUSEUM



The building and surrounding area

- Looking at the commemorative plaque on the side of the building is important - it shows the date that the house was built (**1622**) and the date it was restored (**1897**).
- Clearly visible are the letters **R** and **S** (the letters are repeated many times, both inside and outside the museum).
- **S** is for Lady Stair who lived in the house from 1719 until 1731 (the house and close were renamed at this point to 'Lady Stair's House' and 'Lady Stair's Close' and have remained so to date).
- **R** is for Lord Roseberry who bought the house in 1895 saving it from the clearance schemes which tore down many buildings in the Old Town.



Questions

When the house was built?
1622.

What other information does this plaque give?

The date it was built / restored / name (Lady Stair's House).

Look at the family crests - are any of the symbols the same? Why is the lion so prominent?

Common feature for coats of arms.

What else can you see on this plaque?

Letters S and R.

Why are the initials S and R so prominent?

Lady Stair and Lord Roseberry - because of their connection to the house.

Look at the rest of the building - can you find the initials anywhere else?

On drain pipes / below and above windows.

THE WRITERS' MUSEUM CELEBRATES THE LIVES OF ROBERT BURNS, SIR WALTER SCOTT AND ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
IN THE COLLECTION ARE PORTRAITS, RARE BOOKS AND PERSONAL OBJECTS.



Robert Louis Stevenson

HEADING INTO THE MUSEUM: HAZARD! PLEASE WATCH THE STEP!

As you enter the museum the front door has a step.

Heading down - there are 6 uneven stairs and low ceiling height in places.

These rooms were originally the kitchen and servant rooms.

There are many family photographs, a tartan scarf, a telescope, lock of hair and books.

- Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh on the 13th of November 1850.
- He would be 170 years old if he was still alive today! *(at time of writing in 2020).*
- But he died when he was only 44 years old, on the 3rd of December 1894.
- Robert Louis Stevenson was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist and travel writer. He wrote a huge amount! He used a lot of Scots in his writing.
- Some of his best loved books: Treasure Island, Kidnapped, A Child's Garden of Verses and many more.
- On the right-hand side of the room as you enter there are lots of photos of RLS growing up. The first picture in the series is of him and his mother, Margaret. He was aged 4 in this photograph.

- In this photograph RLS is wearing a dress and has hair in a chin length style. Picture taken 1854.
- It wasn't until the 1920s that this tradition was phased out.
- 'Breeching' was a rite of passage for boys and generally happened between 4 and 8 years old. This was the process of boys graduating from dresses to trousers - this tradition could have come about because it made potty training easier, and it phased out in the 1920s.

Does anyone know who Robert Louis Stevenson is?

Look at the photograph - who do you think is in this photograph?

Is the child a boy or a girl? why do you think that?
(a boy)

Questions

Does the child look happy?

Look at the other photographs of Robert Louis Stevenson through his life – **what can you learn from them?**

Use these questions in both of the Stevenson rooms.

Looking at the collection, the photographs, books and information panels, be history detectives and find the answers to these questions: –

Where in Edinburgh did Stevenson live, when was he born, what era did he live in, was he married, what was his wife's name, how many people were in his family, did he have children, what was his job, jot down the names of any books or poems written by him that you spot, did he live anywhere else, what were his hobbies, when did he die, how old was he when he died, what was the cause of his death?

How did you find out the answers?

Was it from reading something or from looking at something that used to belong to Stevenson or his family? Was it a Primary Source or a Secondary source?



Tusitala - teller of tales

The Lamplighter

(a poem from 'A Child's Garden of Verses')

*My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.
Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
Oh Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!
For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight!*

Robert Louis Stevenson

HEADING INTO THE MUSEUM:
HAZARD! PLEASE WATCH THE STEP! *There are 3 steps down.*

There are some interesting artefacts in this room from Robert Louis Stevenson's time in Samoa and some items from his Edinburgh life too. To Look out for: his wardrobe, made by the infamous Deacon Brodie whose double life may have inspired the novel, 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', his riding gear, a pillow he used in Samoa, printing machinery, some mother of pearl shells, some fans and some household items (plates and glasses).

Optional extra:

Reading the poem with the children in the museum is an optional extra.

The Lamplighter

(a poem from 'A Child's Garden of Verses')

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For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,
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*Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
Oh Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!*

*For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight!*

Questions about the poem:

Who is the narrator for this poem? - Stevenson as a child.

What is a leerie? - A lamplighter.

Why were there leeries? - To light the street lamps.

Why is Stevenson interested in the leerie?

He thinks it is a good job and one that he wants to do when grown up.

Do you think that would be a good job? Do you think it would be easy?

He says, 'When I am stronger' - so this job requires strength, it could be hard if it was in the middle of winter and very cold, or if it was raining.

What job would you like to do when you are grown up?

Why aren't there leeries anymore?

Street lights use electricity.

Questions

Continuing the questions from the previous room, you will find some of the answers in this room.



BLISSIT BE GOD FOR AL HIS GIFTIS

What's On



The Great Hall

HAZARD! PLEASE WATCH THE STEP! *There are 3 steps down.*

Head back up towards the front door (up 6 steps) from the front door there are 11 further stairs - again, these are uneven and irregular.

Did anyone spot the initials on the way up the stairs? The reoccurring initials R and S. Did they notice the flowers and thistles in a repeating pattern? Why do they think they are there?

Go through the glass door on the left-hand side of the stairs on a small landing.

This room is the Great Hall. In the middle of this room is a space for temporary exhibitions, there may be a temporary exhibition on the day of your trip. Originally, the Great Hall used to be, the dining room and a bedroom. The shop for the Writers' Museum is on this level. There are pocket money items available to buy.



Questions

Why is the fireplace so large in this room?

To help heat it - no central heating.

What does it say above the fireplace?

Blissit be God for al his Giftis.

What does that mean?

Blessed be God for all his Gifts.

Remembering the inscription above the front door, what can you deduce about the people who lived here?

They might be Christians.

Can you see any other writing in this room?

Above the arch - same as above front door.

Looking at the busts of the writers do you think that they look like the writers - how can you check if they are a good likeness?

Look at portraits and photographs in the museum to compare and contrast.

What are they made from?

Burns is marble, Scott is Bronze and Plaster is Stevenson.

What do you think of them? Do you like them? Which one is your favourite one and why? Make a note of the artists who created each one.



CHALLENGE! Who can be the fastest to work out how many panes of glass there are altogether? (in the largest window)



Sir Walter R.

Sir Walter Scott

Introduction to the next amazing Scottish writer - **Sir Walter Scott**.

The Walter Scott collection begins in the Great Hall, this includes his desk, a model of the Scott Monument and some paintings.

The rest of the Scott collection is upstairs - the staircase for this room is just off the Great Hall and is a narrow and uneven staircase with a fantastic history.

Questions

- Sir Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh on the 15th of August 1771.
- He would be 249 years old if he was still alive today! (*at time of writing in 2020*).
- He died when he was 61 years old (a good old age) on the 21st of September 1832.
- Out of the three writers in this museum, Scott lived the longest.
- Sir Walter Scott was a Scottish novelist - he invented a new kind of storybook called the Historical Novel. He wrote lots and lots of books, poems and essays. He used **Scots** in his writing.
- He also had another job as Clerk of Session and Sheriff Depute of Selkirkshire whilst writing and editing!
- By the 1820s Scott was possibly one of the most famous of living Scotsmen.



Questions

Has anyone ever heard of Sir Walter Scott before?

- Continuing your fact finding - look at the collection in this room and the next one to find out some information about Sir Walter Scott.

Where in Edinburgh did Scott live, when was he born, what era did he live in, was he married, what was his wife's name, how many people were in his family, did he have children, what was his job, jot down the names of any books or poems written by him that you spot, did he have any pets, did he live anywhere else, what were his hobbies, when did he die, how old was he when he died, what was the cause of his death?

Why did they build the Scott Monument?

What information can you discover about the Scott Monument in the museum?

Have you ever been to see the monument?

How did you find out? Was it primary or secondary source?



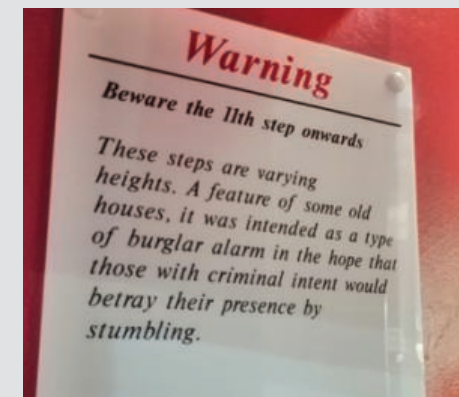
STAIRS

The Burglar Stairs

HAZARD! PLEASE WATCH THE STEP!

Head up the steps but please take care - these steps were deliberately made uneven and of different heights.

- At the top of the staircase on the right-hand side is a small room - this is the Scott room. It is very small but has some lovely artefacts in it.
- This room would probably have been a bedroom.
- Although the blinds are down for conservation reasons, it offers a wonderful view over Princes Street Gardens and beyond - it would have been a nice room.



The burglar alarm

This staircase was part of the old house. It was made deliberately uneven - with steps of varying heights. This was a common feature in old houses, it was intended as a type of burglar alarm!

The idea was that the intruder would trip - not expecting the varying heights and make a noise. This noise would alert the household and the intruder would be caught.

CHALLENGE! Can you all sneak up the stairs without making a sound?

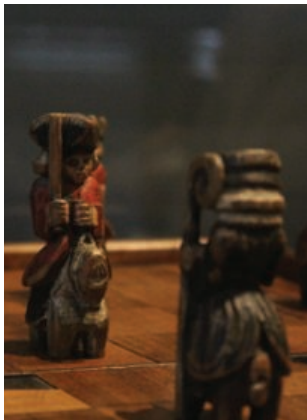


Sir Walter Scott

Questions

- Please help us to **conserve** the collection by not touching the objects that are on open display.

Where in Edinburgh did Scott live, when was he born, what era did he live in, was he married, what was his wife's name, how many people were in his family, did he have children, what was his job, jot down the names of any books or poems written by him that you spot, did he have any pets, did he live anywhere else, what were his hobbies, when did he die, how old was he when he died, what was the cause of his death?



What was it that made Scott so famous?

Has anyone ever heard of Waverley before - list what you know?

**What is the connection between Scott and Waverley?
There is a clue in this room!**

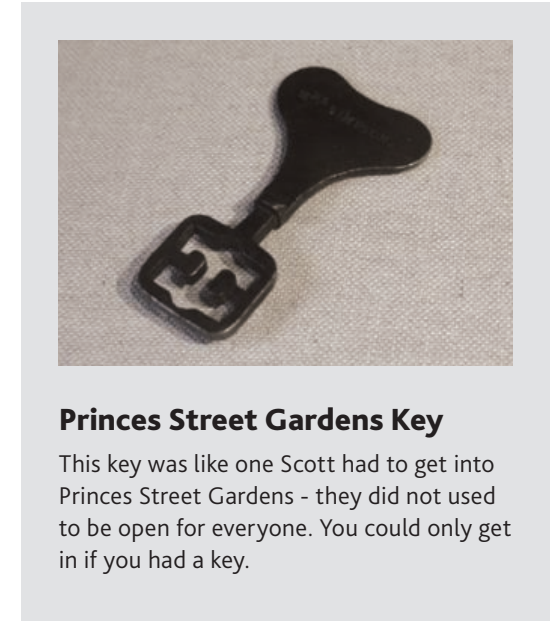
Have you ever been to the house Scott built in the Scottish Borders?

- It is called Abbotsford House - you could look at it online back at school.

The rocking horse has one foot rest higher than the other - can you find anything which tells you the reason for this? What other information did it tell you about the rocking horse? What is polio?

**What game can you see in the room?
Chess.**

Look at the faces of the pieces. Do you like them?



Princes Street Gardens Key

This key was like one Scott had to get into Princes Street Gardens - they did not used to be open for everyone. You could only get in if you had a key.





To a Mouse (verse one)

by Robert Burns

*Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle"*

Robert Burns

From the Great Hall go up the three steps and head right. There are 2 rooms about Burns. The statue of Burns that the children are looking for is in a window space in the hallway before you get into the Burns rooms - so keep your eyes open! There are many sculptures, artefacts and paintings to see.

- Robert Burns was born in Alloway on the 25th of January 1759.
- He would be 262 years old if he was still alive today (at time of writing in 2020).
- He died when only 37 years old, on the 21st of July, 1796.
- He lived in Edinburgh for a short while (in a house very close to this museum- unfortunately no longer there because it was cleared away).
- Burns is often referred to as Scotland's National Bard, his poetry and songs are known and loved all over the world. His birthday is celebrated widely as 'Burns Night' and traditionally many people sing 'Auld Lang Syne' to welcome the new year in.
- Burns was a champion of **Scots** and used Scots in most of his writing.

Burns and Scott

The lives of Burns and Scott overlapped a little and there is a fantastic painting hanging over the fireplace in the first room you will enter. This is an oil painting by William Borthwick Johnstone (1856).

Scott is the young, blonde haired boy, sitting on the bottom left of the painting, Burns is third from the left, standing in the doorway and many eyes are upon him. The people in the painting are named along the edge of the frame.

Can you notice anything else in the painting which is interesting?

Optional extra: To a Mouse (verse one) by Robert Burns (read aloud)

<i>Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,</i>	<i>(Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast,)</i>
<i>O, what a panic's in thy breastie!</i>	<i>(Oh, what panic is in your breast!)</i>
<i>Thou need na start awa sae hasty,</i>	<i>(You need not start away so hasty)</i>
<i>Wi' bickering brattle!</i>	<i>(With a hurrying scamper!)</i>
<i>I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,</i>	<i>(I would be loath to run and chase you,)</i>
<i>Wi' murd'ring pattle"</i>	<i>(With a murderous spade.)</i>

Questions

How old was Scott in the painting where he is looking at Burns?

Where in Edinburgh did Burns live, when was he born, what era did he live in, was he married, what was his wife's name, how many people were in his family, did he have children, what was his job, jot down the names of any books or poems written by him that you spot, did he have any pets, did he live anywhere else, what were his hobbies, when did he die, how old was he when he died, what was the cause of his death?

How did you find out? Was it primary or secondary source?





Robert Burns

Can you spot the R and S on the fireplace in this room?

WARNING: There is a plaster cast copy of Robert Burns skull in the far display cabinet in this room.

Questions

- This was Burns' writing desk, used by the poet during his life.

Looking at the pictures and sculptures of Robert Burns, can you work out what he looked like? What colour hair and eyes did he have? Was he tall or short? How did you come to those conclusions?

Why are there no photographs of Burns?

Burns lived pre-photography, it was still to be invented.

Do you think that the paintings tell us accurately what Robert looked like?

How could we work this out?

By looking at all the pictures of Robert you will notice there is a lot of similarities in their depiction of him - he has dark eyes and dark hair etc.

Optional extra:

Look at the sculpture of Burns holding a pen - why do you think he was depicted in this way? What does it tell you about Burns?

When you get back to school can you write a poem,

Where in Edinburgh did Burns live, when was he born, what era did he live in, was he married, what was his wife's name, how many people were in his family, did he have children, what was his job, jot down the names of any books or poems written by him that you spot, did he have any pets, did he live anywhere else, what were his hobbies, when did he die, how old was he when he died, what was the cause of his death?

CHALLENGE! How many sculptures you can find of Robert Burns in both rooms and the hall? (4)
What are they made from?

story or report about the museum? Can you use some Scots words in your writing?

Can you do more research to increase your knowledge about the writers?



Robert Burns funeral picture (above)

This picture is in the middle of the wall opposite the windows.

In this picture it shows thousands of people lining the streets of Dumfries for the funeral procession (25th July 1796 just 4 days after he died) of this much-loved poet.

The procession was led by the Dumfries Royal Volunteers, a regiment that Burns helped to form in 1795 (January) when France threatened to invade Britain.

'Sword Stick' (below)

This looks like a walking cane but inside it hides a sword! Probably useful for Robert when he was working as an excise man.

This job involved checking people had paid the right amount of tax on items they were bringing into the county. Not an easy job.

