

Exploring Edinburgh With Rankin and Rebus (and Bill)

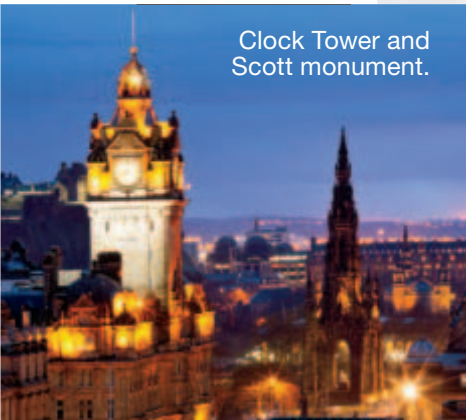
Two writers tour the Scottish capital, guided by a bestselling author and two policemen—one retired, the other fictional

By Wendy and Rob Lindsay

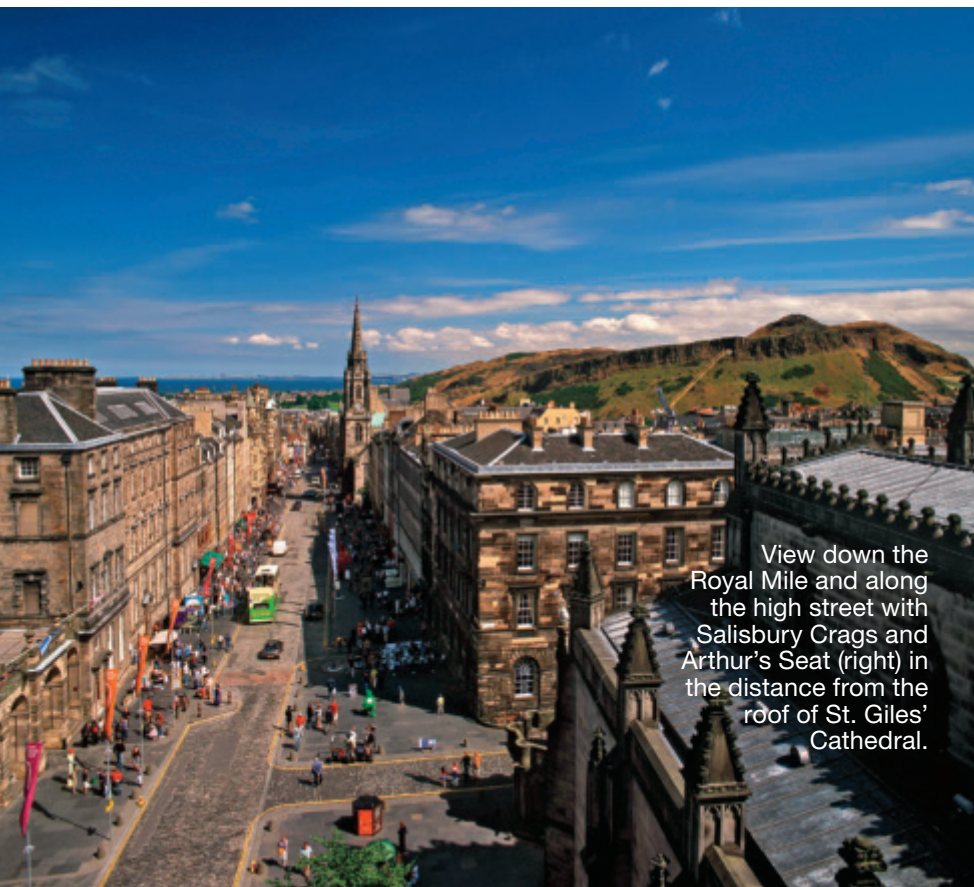
From the Dugald Stewart Monument, Calton Hill, looking west to the castle and Old Town, Edinburgh.

Photo: Thinkstock/Jacek Nowak

Clock Tower and Scott monument.



Three views of the monument to writer Sir Walter Scott near bustling Princes Street.



View down the Royal Mile and along the high street with Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat (right) in the distance from the roof of St. Giles' Cathedral.

It was a lovely fall day, sunny but crisp, as we waited to meet our guide for a walking tour of Scotland's capital. Our quest was twofold: to explore some of the haunts of Ian Rankin's fictional Detective Inspector John Rebus and to delve deeper into our family's Scottish ancestry. We were therefore delighted when our kilt-wearing guide, Bill Peden, turned out to be a retired policeman. Who better to lead us through the streets of Edinburgh?

On learning we were writers, Bill had suggested as our designated meeting spot one of Edinburgh's most recognizable landmarks—the monument to writer Sir Walter Scott overlooking the green expanse of Princes Street Gardens. Located where South St. David Street meets bustling Princes Street, the monument is a Gothic stone tower resembling a church spire rising

writers, along with Robert Louis Stevenson, whom Ian Rankin credits with inspiring his own writing.

Along the Royal Mile

Since his first Inspector Rebus novel—*Knots and Crosses*—appeared in 1987, Ian Rankin has grown to become the UK's number-one bestselling crime writer. Playing an important role in all the stories, Edinburgh is almost a character, often as brooding and volatile as the protagonist, the street-smart detective John Rebus. The crime novels often follow Rebus through the back streets and slimy underbelly of the capital city, and we, like many Rankin fans, had come to Edinburgh to discover Rebus's literary links with the historic city.

There's nothing slimy about the Royal Mile, the heart of Edinburgh, which spans six streets leading from hilltop Edinburgh Castle down to Holyrood Palace. The cobblestone street is actually 1.1 miles long, known as a Scots mile, Bill told us. As the numerous shops and crowds prove, it's also the most popular spot with tourists.

At the top of the hill is the Tartan Weaving Mill and Exhibition, which we found a useful genealogical stop. We discovered that we are two among the more than five million Canadians with Scottish ancestry.

That morning, we learned the difference between the muted Lindsay tartan, referred to as the ancient or hunting tartan, and the modern Lindsay tartan with its bolder, brighter maroons and greens. A plethora of souvenirs and research books in all price ranges lines the shelves for visitors from every clan. Having armed ourselves with Clan Lindsay scarves, books, and a crest, we decided it was time to head to the castle.



just over 200 feet with a small statue of Scott and his dog at the base. Bill explained that one reason for Scott's standing in Edinburgh is that he is credited with helping to re-establish the tartan as the national dress of Scotland—the wearing of clan tartans was banned for almost 100 years following the Battle of Culloden in 1746, which ended the uprising that sought to put Charles Stuart on the throne of Great Britain. Scott is also one of the Scottish

Photos: Dreamstime/Vichava/Kiching-angalea (night) and Andrea Pede (monument); Eschelle/Mia (Clock Tower statue); VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint/Paul Tomkins (Royal Mile); Stock/Lt. Leiden (shop).

Photos: VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint/Paul Tomkins (castle); Lindsay Editorial (castle entrance).



Edinburgh Castle.

