

SCOTLAND'S STORIES START HERE

Introduction

Scotland is world renowned for its great storytelling and warmth of welcome. Indeed, it is a core part of Scotland's national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030, which states that a **"picture of success will be one where communities embrace visitors and the stories of our destinations and world-famous assets are brought to life by Scotland's people; where strong partnerships are in play to protect and enhance our environment whilst growing social, cultural and economic wealth."**

Stories Experience Collection

The Scottish Tourism Leadership Programme is supporting the delivery of Scotland Outlook 2030 through funding 10 innovative projects, including The South of Scotland Destination Alliance's (SSDA) Stories Experience Collection, which helped to position the south of Scotland as a leading literary destination. The project qualified for the Programme's support through participation in the Communities Leading in Tourism Programme delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy and the Destination Leaders Programme delivered by Edinburgh Napier University.

Authentic connections

Literary tourism is known to bring numerous benefits to destinations and the communities that fully harness their authentic associations. With strong connections to a number of globally renowned poets and authors (including Robert Burns, Hugh MacDiarmid, Sir Walter Scott and JM Barrie), two acclaimed book festivals and Scotland's Book Town (Wigtown), the south of Scotland is ideally situated to embrace this.

Explaining Sarah Macdonald said: **"With so many compelling literary experiences, the south of Scotland has long held an ambition to become one of Scotland's leading literary destinations, and Scotland's Year of Stories seemed the perfect time to fully embrace this. However, for our claim to have real credibility we needed to support the industry in co-developing innovative new bookable products and engaging new platforms that both inspire people to visit and give them new ways of engaging with our great visitor experience."**

With support from the Scottish Tourism Leadership Fund, the destination marketing organisation for the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway worked in partnership with ten of the destination's leading literary tourism businesses to share best practice, create appealing new bookable experiences, develop innovative new routes to market and build an impactful legacy for the whole area.

How it works

Together they produced:

- **Toolkits to help tourism businesses:**
 - **Develop their own memorable and authentic visitor experiences.**
 - **Engage with the travel trade.**
- **An interactive PDF guide showcasing the 'Stories Collection' to the travel trade.**
- **Two apps, designed in partnership with the University of St Andrews to encourage a new younger audience to explore what historical sites looked like in the past. Trimontium and Whithorn were selected as the focal points for these apps following a competitive tender among the project's ten key business partners.**
- **A Minecraft Experience, in collaboration with the University of Glasgow and Ellisland Farm and Museum.**
- **An image library with 1.5k images.**
- **Seven literary trails.**
- **A stories resource library to support other tourism businesses and community groups in telling their own story.**
- **Securing additional support from the VisitScotland Destination and Sector Marketing Fund, SSDA promoted the new products through a series of videos, a dedicated website landing page, a media campaign, social media and influencer engagement.**



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The impact

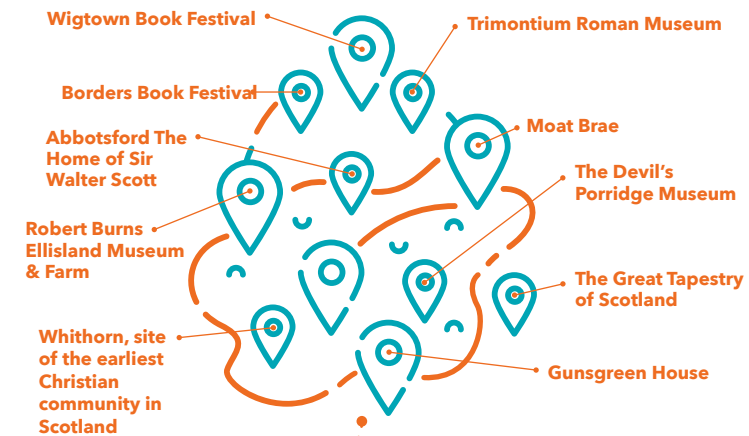
Within 6 months, the SSDA's pilot project created an impactful legacy for the south of Scotland:

- Building positive momentum towards becoming an iconic literary destination.
- Providing a toolkit and catalyst for further development of innovative, authentic and appealing tourism products and experiences.
- Generating:
 - Over 7,000 unique website visits, with an average engagement of 1.5 minutes per visit.
 - 1.8 million impressions and 12.5k clicks on social media.
 - 132 items of coverage worldwide with a 1.43 billion audience reach.
 - Over 300k views of influencer-led content.
- Supporting more than 45 tourism businesses across all activity.
- Securing positive feedback from travel trade, participating businesses, VisitScotland and visitors.

“Sarah concludes:
“This really is a fantastic example of communities embracing our destination’s stories and bringing our world-famous assets to life. Collaboration with our 10 literary business partners has been absolutely crucial to this success and has reignited our shared ambition to become one of the great global literary destinations.”

The SSDA Year of Stories initiative was one of 10 projects supported by the Scottish Government’s Tourism Leadership & Recovery Fund, delivered by Scottish Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise through the Scottish Tourism Leadership Programme. It was available to individuals from businesses or organisations who previously participated in Scotland’s flagship leadership programmes, which were delivered by Edinburgh Napier University, the Social Enterprise Academy and Scottish Enterprise – the Destination Leaders Programme (DLP), Communities Leading in Tourism (CLT) and the Rural Leadership Programme (RLP).

For more information about SSDA’s Year of Stories products email: info@ssdalliance.com



To find out how Scotland’s enterprise agencies are supporting local businesses visit:



Scottish Enterprise: scottish-enterprise.com
South of Scotland Enterprise: southofscotlandenterprise.com
Highlands and Islands Enterprise: hie.co.uk