"Keep watching the sky, MacIntyre."
Local Hero (1983)

Set in Scotland takes you on a journey through film. Inside are just some of those movies which have been shot in Scotland. From ancient mountain ranges, mysterious stone circles, lush green glens and deep lochs to castles, stately homes and vibrant cities, many Scottish destinations and attractions have graced the big screen.

The country has been a playground for filmmakers and dazzled cinemagoers ever since the first Scottish film, The Departure of the Columba from Rothesay Pier, was screened at The Skating Palace (latterly the ABC nightclub and music venue) in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, in 1896. Use the links found throughout the guide for more film content on visitscotland.com.

For more on Scotland's links to the small screen, see our sister publication TV Set in Scotland.
There is a magical quality to films shot in Scotland that reaches all corners of the world.

Scottish films have formed connections throughout my life.

One of my very first memories is as a child with my sister on the Crinan Canal in Argyll watching the Maggie (during production of The Maggie) puffing through. My father, James Copeland, played the ship’s Mate in that wonderful 1954 British comedy (see page 45).

Its director, the great Ealing Studios filmmaker, Alexander Mackendrick, had already crafted another classic comedy, Whisky Galore! (I played a part in the 2016 remake), which took production to Barra in the Outer Hebrides, several years earlier.

The neighbouring island of South Uist was the location of one of my early short films – The Duna Bull (1972) – directed by Laurence Henson and photographed by Edward McConnell, under their Films of Scotland banner. It was a lovely light-hearted comedy about islanders faced with having to replace their only bull.

I have warm affection for my early films, and Laurence and Edward were real lovers of filmmaking in Scotland.

All those Scottish films have that same whimsical charm as a personal favourite of mine (of which I played no role) – Local Hero (see page 19).

Director Bill Forsyth drew on that deep well of Scottishness, crafting a truly lyrical and magnificent film that continues to connect with people around the world.

That lyrical quality of the people is just one of the reasons why so many filmmakers are drawn to our beautiful country. It is our vast landscapes; from those imposing and dramatic mountains and lochs, and coastlines that stretch for miles, to the enchanting architecture of our cities, towns, and villages that, with each step, take you from modern day to those gone by.

Scotland can be Scotland or, as it has been many times in the past, Philadelphia, San Francisco, London, Stockholm, even, New Asgard. It is home to the fantastical and fictional places of Brigadoon, Todday, Ferness and Hogwarts.

There is a magical quality to films shot in Scotland that reaches all corners of the world.

They are the thread that binds the Scottish diaspora and a window to the wonders of what makes our country special.

Throughout my career I have been privileged enough to be involved in many that have made a real connection with audiences worldwide.

People still come up to me while in Scotland and tell me they are here because they watched Scottish films such as Braveheart or Highlander. And what is wonderful, is that the films are only the starting point. They then form a strong connection with the real country – it may be because of their ancestors or the feeling they get while they’re here. That stays with them.

That is the powerful connection of film.
GENRES

**Animation**
Scotland’s landscapes are rich in inspiration, myth and legend, so it’s no surprise that they provide the backdrop for some well-loved animated tales. The Celtic and Pictish designs of the Outer Hebrides inspired Disney’s Brave. The Inner Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland, meanwhile, provided the basis for the Isle of Berk in How to Train Your Dragon. Scotland’s iconic cityscapes have also been drawn on for artistic inspiration. Critically acclaimed The Illusionist, based on an unproduced script by Jacques Tati, perfectly captures the nation’s character, with some well-known Edinburgh sites including Arthur’s Seat and the former department store, Jenners. For a trip to Scotland could never be classed as a horror film, though that hasn’t stopped filmmakers from making use of our rural and urban settings to scare filmgoers. Perthshire stood in for the centre of Scotland in Where Eagles Dare, while Dumfries and Galloway feature in the opening scenes of the taut zombie apocalypse thriller World War Z.

**Action/Adventure**
From fast-paced scenes to epic conundrums, Scotland has seen its fair share of action in films. Just a short trip outside the capital sits the stunning Rosslyn Chapel and, with its fascinating history and intricate stonework, it makes for a dazzling climax to the Tom Hanks-starring The Da Vinci Code. The Highlands is no stranger to pulse-quickening pictures, with Glen Nevis making an appearance in Detective Pikachu, Harry Potter and Rob Roy to name just a few, while Dumfries and Galloway played host to Tom Cruise’s daring railway climax in the original Mission: Impossible.

**Horror**
A trip to Scotland could never be classed as horrific, though that hasn’t stopped filmmakers from making use of our rural and urban settings to scare filmgoers. Perthshire stood in for the centre of Scotland in Where Eagles Dare, while Dumfries and Galloway feature in the opening scenes of the taut zombie apocalypse thriller World War Z.

**Romance**
With a literary pedigree that includes the likes of Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, Scotland is not immune to a romantic overture. The same is true of its film appearances, whether it be the expansive views from Calton Hill and Arthur’s Seat, some of Edinburgh’s popular romantic spots, in the adaptation of David Nicholls’s One Day, or the splendidly stately home, Hopetoun House, in the festive feel-good The Princess Switch series. Glasgow too tugs strongly on the heartstrings, with renowned filmmaker Ken Loach’s Ae Fond Kiss (named after the Burns song) encapsulating the diverse vibrancy of Scotland’s ‘dear green place’.

**Drama**
Scotland’s history and culture is not short on drama, be it in our stories or in our landscapes. And so it is that many filmmakers return time and time again to classic tales and new adaptations. In the Highlands, Glen Coe has become the setting for some of the most dramatic, from espionage thrillers (Skyfall) to historical adventures (Mary Queen of Scots). And who can forget the iconic beach run in Chariots of Fire along the West Sands in St Andrews?

**Comedy**
Scots are famous for their dry humour and sense of the absurd which has lent itself to some light and darkly comic moments on-screen. The gritty realism of Danny Boyle’s Trainspotting (and its sequel T2) is offset by its black humour with Edinburgh’s Princes Street and Leith appearing alongside... Glasgow which doubles for Edinburgh (shh, don’t tell the locals). The Outer Hebrides offers a more light-hearted comedy, Whisky Galore! Set on the fictional Isle of Todday, the 1949 original film was largely shot on Barra (the 2016 adaption used the picturesque seaside town of Portsoy) and is based on the true story of a village which discovered a shipwreck carrying 50,000 cases of whisky during wartime rationing.

**Science Fiction/Fantasy**
Rugged mountains, scenic coastlines, quaint villages and modern cities make Scotland the star of science fiction and fantasy films. Edinburgh provided the backdrop for an epic battle scene in Avengers: Infinity War, taking place on Cockburn Street and Waverley Station, while Thor and the rest of the Asgardians found a new homeland in the fishing village of St Abbs (now ‘twinned’ with New Asgard) in Avengers: Endgame. Thor is even featured sampling Scotland’s other national drink – Irn Bru. Wester Ross and the Isle of Skye created a fairy tale quality in Stardust, based on the fantasy novel by Neil Gaiman, and the opening scene of The Dark Knight Rises introduced Scotland to the Batman saga. The dark knight returned with Robert Pattinson donning the cowl as Glasgow doubled for Gotham City.

**Film Focus**
There are some films and filmmakers that are intrinsically linked with a region. From Local Hero in Aberdeenshire to Harry Potter in the Highlands – not forgetting award-winning English film director, Ken Loach, whose vast body of work is synonymous with Glasgow.
Highlands & Skye, Outer Hebrides, Orkney, Shetland

Featuring

The BFG • Brave • Braveheart • The Dark Knight Rises • Detective Pikachu • The Edge of the World
Edie • Flash Gordon • Harry Potter series • Highlander • It’s Nice Up North • Limbo • Loch Ness
Missing Link • Our Ladies • Prometheus • The Road Dance • Seachd: The Inaccessible Pinnacle
The Spy in Black • Stardust • Trainspotting • Transformers: The Last Knight
2001: A Space Odyssey • What We Did On Our Holiday • Whisky Galore!

TV & Film blogs
Find out more here

“...It’s unique to the world and there’s a beauty there: the fact that there’s four seasons in one day! It’s snowing, it’s hailing, it’s raining but it’s also sunny! I remember one shot on Highlander 3 with snow in the foreground and a sunset in the background. It was pure magic.”

Christopher Lambert, star of Highlander (1986)

EDIE (2018)
Starring: Suilven and Lochinver, Highlands
English actress Sheila Hancock stars as an 83-year-old widow who decides to climb the 731 metre (2,398 feet) tall mountain Suilven, in the sumptuous surroundings of Assynt in Sutherland – a feat which was carried out for real by the actress herself during filming. Directed by Simon Hunter, the film co-stars Kevin Guthrie (Sunshine on Leith) as a reluctant local guide who joins Edie on her quest. Filming took place in and around Lochinver and during the shoot the entire crew scaled the mountain, camping out over several nights. Suilven is part of the North West Highland Geopark, which covers 2,000 km² from the Summer Isles to Cape Wrath and Kyle of Tongue.

DETECTIVE PIKACHU (2019)
Starring: Glen Affric and Glen Nevis, Highlands
Scotland is home to plenty of mythical and magical creatures, so it seems appropriate that it was used for the countryside setting of the fantastical world of Pokémon. The film (dir. Rob Letterman) follows Tim Goodman, played by Justice Smith, who teams up with wisecracking Pikachu (voiced by Deadpool’s Ryan Reynolds) to uncover the mystery around the death of Goodman’s father. As the action transfers from Ryme City, a city where humans and Pokémon live together in harmony, to the country, Glen Nevis can be seen in all its glory.

THE BFG (2016)
Starring: Old Man of Storr, Isle of Skye and Old Man of Hoy, Orkney
The remarkable landscape of the Isle of Skye has had a mesmerising effect on holidaymakers and filmmakers alike in recent years. Legendary director Steven Spielberg used digitally enhanced footage of Skye as the backdrop of Giant Country for the film adaptation of Roald Dahl’s literary classic, The BFG. The Old Man of Hoy, an imposing sea stack off the coast of Hoy, also features.

STARDUST (2007)
Starring: Quiraing, Isle of Skye
Sequences of the fantasy film Stardust (dir. Matthew Vaughn), with an ensemble cast that features Robert de Niro, Michelle Pfeiffer and Ricky Gervais, were shot at the Quiraing on the eastern face of the 543 metres-high Meall na Suiramach.

Sheila Hancock scaled Suilven in Edie. © Arrow Films
The Old Man of Hoy appears in Giant Country in The BFG.

Find out more here
TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT (2017)  Starring: Quiraing, the Storr and Trotternish Ridge, Isle of Skye  The long-running Transformers franchise came to Scotland for its fifth instalment (dir. Michael Bay) when it took an Arthurian slant on the mythology, as the Autobots race against time to find an ancient artefact before the evil Decepticons. These transformers may be renowned for their shape-changing disguises but there is little disguising the Isle of Skye, in particular the Storr, which appears as the location of a spaceship.

HIGHLANDER (1986)  Starring: Eilean Donan Castle, Highlands  Sitting on the banks of Kyle of Lochalsh is one of the most instantly recognisable castles in the world. Eilean Donan in Dornie was transformed into the castle and village of Glenfinnan for the cult hit. Highlander (dir. Russell Mulcahy), with Christopher Lambert in the lead role as immortal Connor MacLeod and Scots actor Sean Connery as Juan Sánchez-Villalobos Ramírez. Lambert would later return to Scotland for Highlander 3 (dir. Andy Morahan, 1994).

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY (2014)  Starring: Wester Ross, Highlands  To the east of Skye, the beach visited by Sir Billy Connolly and his on-screen grandchildren in the Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin directed comedy-drama is found in Wester Ross. As the camera sweeps over the landscape, it’s easy to see why the serene sands of Redpoint were chosen for the movie’s pivotal moments. See also page 33.

SEACHD: THE INACCESSIBLE PINNACLE (2007)  Starring: Sgurr Dearg, Isle of Skye  This Gaelic language feature (dir. Simon David Miller) was shot entirely on Skye, including the Sleat peninsula in the south of the island. The story follows a young man’s journey as he uncovers the truth about the death of his parents and his grandfather’s incredible stories. Unable to afford a helicopter, amazingly the cast and crew climbed Sgurr Dearg, of the famous Cuillin mountain range, four times during the production. Splitting the camera and equipment into rucksacks, they endured the four-hour climb to the summit before filming.

PROMETHEUS (2012)  Starring: Old Man of Storr, Isle of Skye  It’s been said that James Cameron was inspired by Skye when he created the world of Avatar (2009), one of the biggest movies of all time. Whether that is the case or not, one director to fall for the island’s ethereal charms was Sir Ridley Scott, who shot the opening scenes of Prometheus, the prequel to the science fiction Alien series, at the Old Man of Storr. In the scene, archaeologist Dr Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) discovers ancient cave paintings with alien connections. The 50ft rock also features briefly in Snow White and the Huntsman (dir. Rupert Sanders, 2012).

LOCH NESS (1995)  Starring: Loch Diabaig, Highlands  Despite the title, it was Loch Diabaig in Wester Ross which substituted for the more famous loch in John Henderson’s family film, starring Ted Danson and Joely Richardson. Still, the 90 miles from the real location is a mere stone’s throw compared to the 11,500 miles between Loch Ness and New Zealand’s Lake Wakatipu, which doubles for Nessie’s home in The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep (dir. Jay Russell, 2007).

HARRY POTTER SERIES (2001-2011)  Starring: Glenfinnan Viaduct, Loch Shiel and Glen Coe, Highlands  The Glenfinnan Viaduct in Lochaber has been an icon of the Highlands ever since its construction in 1898. It reached further stardom in 2002 following the release of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (dir. Chris Columbus). The movie versions of Edinburgh-based author JK Rowling’s books have wowed millions all over the world. In the second of the eight films, the Hogwarts Express passes over the viaduct as Harry hangs on for dear life to Ron’s flying Ford Anglia. Visitors to the region can get into the Harry Potter spirit by taking a ride on the Jacobite, a steam train that operates over part of the West Highland Line, crossing the viaduct. Nearby Loch Shiel, where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his standard on the Jacobite Rising, also appears as the Black Lake throughout the film series. Hagrid’s Hut was built on location in Clachaig Gully in Glen Coe, just five minutes’ walk from the Clachaig Inn, while Glen Nevis formed the backdrop to Quidditch matches, and the beautiful Steall Falls are seen during the Tri-Wizard Tournament in The Goblet of Fire (dir. Mike Newell).
A group of Shetland Ponies roaming the hills on Foula, Shetland, with Da Noup beyond.

**TRAINSPOTTING (1996)**

Starring: Corrour Railway Station, Highlands

Situated at Rannoch Moor on the Glasgow to Fort William line, as part of the The West Highland Line (one of the most scenic rail journeys in the world). Corrour is the highest and most remote railway station in the UK. It is here in director Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* that Renton (Ewan McGregor) tells his friend Tommy (Kevin McKidd) that, in slightly more colourful language, being Scottish isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. See also pages 25, 39.

**THE DARK KNIGHT RISES (2012)**

Starring: Loch Bealach Culaidh, Highlands

Director Christopher Nolan felt the vast desert plains of Arizona were too familiar to audiences and opted for the “more visually distinct” landscape of Ross-shire for the opening scenes of the closer of his Batman trilogy. Shrouded in secrecy, the film crew operated out of Inverness Airport, flying a C130 transport plane as part of the sequence in which arch villain Bane (Tom Hardy) escapes his CIA captors – showing amazing panoramic views above Loch Bealach Culaidh.

**IT’S NICE UP NORTH (2006)**

Starring: Shetland

Back in 2006, the most northerly part of the British Isles became the subject of an important scientific experiment. John Shuttleworth (aka comedian Graham Fellows), the renowned musician behind such hits as *Austin Ambassador Y Reg* and *Pigeons in Flight*, wanted to know whether there was any truth in the adage that it was, indeed, “nice up north”. The documentary is a loving, and often hilarious, homage to the islands, featuring interviews with locals and visits to the most interesting places, including the world’s most northerly (and well-equipped) bus stop on Unst.

**FLASH GORDON (1980)**

Starring: Broadford Airfield, Isle of Skye

With a score by rock legends Queen and a lycra-clad cast, Mike Hodges’ ultra-camp film version of comic book hero, *Flash Gordon*, fits firmly in the “so bad it’s good” category. While the comic book hero, played by Sam J. Jones, and company spend much of the movie battling Ming the Merciless (Max Von Sydow) on the planet Mongo, one of Flash Gordon’s first scenes was shot on Skye. Broadford Airfield stands in for an airstrip in Dark Harbor, in Vermont’s Green Mountains. This is where Flash and Dale are bombed with dastardly Ming’s hot hail but is perhaps equally notable for one of the first cinematic appearances of Scottish star Robbie Coltrane as a baggage handler.

**THE EDGE OF THE WORLD (1937)**

Starring: Foula, Shetland

The Edge of the World was originally inspired by the true story of the depopulation of the Outer Hebridean island of St Kilda in 1930. However, it was Foula’s majestic hills, sheer cliff faces and distinctive natural features which ultimately provided the unforgettable natural backdrop to this tempestuous romantic adventure by director Michael Powell. The movie stars a young, John Laurie who, in later life, would find huge television fame as Private James “we’re doomed!” Fraser in classic BBC television comedy, *Dad’s Army*.

**2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968)**

Starring: Loch Arigh, Isle of Harris

Harris gained a well-earned reputation for being ‘out of this world’ when it doubled for the surface of Jupiter in 2001: A Space Odyssey. Budget constraints saw producers reluctant to fund a second unit excursion to the far reaches of the solar system, so legendary director Stanley Kubrick was forced to look elsewhere to get his memorable shots of astronaut Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea) flying across the psychedelic landscape. Kubrick settled on Harris, with nine out of ten cinema-goers unable to tell the difference as the rocky shores of Loch Arigh play a vital role in one of the most influential science fiction films of all time.

**THE SPY IN BLACK (1939)**

Starring: Scapa Flow and Old Man of Hoy, Orkney

Set on the island of Hoy, *The Spy in Black* saw renowned British filmmaker Michael Powell return to the north of Scotland following *The Edge of the World*, for his first pairing with scriptwriter Emeric Pressburger, a collaboration which would eventually make both household names. This racy spy thriller is set during the First World War, when Orkney provided the naval base for the British fleet. One of the film’s stars, Sebastian Shaw, would become better known for his brief but memorable appearance as the unmasked Darth Vader (aka Anakin Skywalker) in 1983’s *Return of The Jedi*.
**MISSING LINK** (2019)

*Starring:* Loch Ness and Nessie, Highlands

Scotland’s famously shy creature makes a decidedly grumpy appearance in the Laika Studios’ animation, Missing Link (dir. Chris Butler). Nessie spars with explorer Sir Lionel Frost (voiced by Hugh Jackman) as he tries to take a photograph of the Loch Ness monster to prove its existence. It is not the first time the monster has been glimpsed on screen. Nessie has been referenced to, or made a cameo in, countless films and TV shows over the years, including The Simpsons, Ghostbusters, Napoleon Dynamite, Monsters Inc, South Park, Doctor Who and Futurama. In real life the monster was caught on camera in 1934 in what is known as the “Surgeon’s Photograph” – which ultimately proved to be fake. And in 2016, an underwater sonar-imaging investigation of the loch revealed a 30-foot Loch Ness Monster model used from the 1970 film, The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes, nestled in its depths.

**THE ROAD DANCE** (2022)

*Starring:* Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, Isle of Lewis

Based on John MacKay’s historical novel of the same name, The Road Dance (dir. Richie Adams) stars Hermione Corfield as Kirsty MacLeod, who dreams of a better life away from her small village on an island in the Outer Hebrides. However, the outbreak of the First World War and a fateful road dance take her life on a dramatic and tragic turn. Filming predominantly took place at the restored Gearrannan Black House Village near Carloway on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis with the coastline reflecting the mood of the film – beautiful, but at times unforgiving. Gearrannan Black House Village was occupied by crofting families right up until the 1970s. It now provides self-catering accommodation. Further north, Historic Scotland’s The Blackhouse at Arnol also offers a further glimpse into island life under a thatched roof.

**WHISKY GALORE!** (1949)

*Starring:* Isle of Barra

Based on the popular novel by Compton Mackenzie, the classic 1949 Ealing version of Whisky Galore! (dir. Alexander Mackendrick) sees the inhabitants of the fictional islands of Great and Little Todday in their element when a ship transporting 50,000 cases of whisky runs aground. The true story on which the film is based began when a ship called the SS Politician, which was carrying a cargo of whisky, ran aground on the small island of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides. Eriskay had only one road and a single main street so the Whisky Galore producers opted to set the film on the slightly larger, neighbouring 23-square miles island of Barra. Ealing Studios had opted to shoot the entire film on location, using the whole island as a giant set during the wild and unpredictable summer of 1948. The main street (the only street) of the island of Todday in Whisky Galore! was filmed in the village of Castlebay and the current Post Office served as the island store in the film, while the old Castlebay village hall was used as a makeshift studio and interiors and interiors were shot all over the island. The one exception is the final chase scene of Whisky Galore! which was re-shot on the more forgiving south coast of England.
From Shakespeare’s dramatisation of the 11th century king, Macbeth, to Diana Gabaldon’s Jacobite adventure Outlander, storytellers have found inspiration from Scotland’s turbulent royal past. The arrival of cinema allowed filmmakers to match the country’s historic drama with its atmospheric landscapes. Here is a filmic lineage of Scotland’s on-screen monarchs.

**MACBETH**
Justin Kurzel, 2015

Director Justin Kurzel brought William Shakespeare’s Macbeth, with Michael Fassbender in the lead role, to the big screen to critical acclaim. Production took place on the Isle of Skye, with many landmarks featuring. The Quiraing is where Macbeth returns from battle and is appointed the Thane of Cawdor by King Duncan. In another shot, Macbeth is seen riding past the striking Old Man of Storr, a SOtH rock. This wasn’t the first time the Scottish play appeared on the big screen. In 1997, Jason Connery (son of Sir Sean) starred as the title character, alongside Helen Baxendale as Lady Macbeth, with director Jeremy Freeston bringing the production to Dunfermline Abbey. The real 11th century king was far removed from the central character in Shakespeare’s immortal play. Locations linked to the real king and Fassbender film form the VisitScotland map, ‘Macbeth: The Man, Myth & Legend’.

**OUTLAW KING**
David Mackenzie, 2018

Based on the life of the famous Scottish monarch, Outlaw King charts the story of Robert the Bruce (played by Chris Pine), from defeated nobleman in 1304 to victorious King of Scots at the Battle of Loudoun Hill in 1307 (rather than Bannockburn, as seen in Braveheart). Director David Mackenzie felt like he had been location scouting his entire adult life — the film is as much about the land itself as the King of Scots. Entirely shot in Scotland, according to the nation’s geographical boundaries of the time (which included Berwick), locations include: Dunfermline Abbey, the real-life resting place of the King of Scots, doubles as Westminster, and St Michael’s Chapel in the grounds of Linlithgow Palace, plays Bruce’s castle chapel where he marries Elizabeth. VisitScotland produced an online map, On the trail of the Outlaw King, which highlights 20 filming locations and 24 sites linked to the Bruce, from Annandale in Dumfries and Galloway, where the King of Scots was raised, to Claggan Coral Beach on the Isle of Skye, which portrays the island of Islay in the film. Dunfermline Abbey also has a starring role in the 1996 version of Robert the Bruce’s life, The Bruce (dir. Bob Carruthers and David Jarrott, 1971) which starred Sir Billy Connolly as her cousin, Elizabeth I, in the film charting Mary’s return to Scotland. Josie Rourke, who directs, wanted to film as much as possible in Scotland, with production taking place in the Highlands, taking place in the Highlands, with many landmarks featuring. The Quiraing is where Macbeth returns from battle and is appointed the Thane of Cawdor by King Duncan. In another shot, Macbeth is seen riding past the striking Old Man of Storr, a SOtH rock. This wasn’t the first time the Scottish play appeared on the big screen. In 1997, Jason Connery (son of Sir Sean) starred as the title character, alongside Helen Baxendale as Lady Macbeth, with director Jeremy Freeston bringing the production to Dunfermline Abbey. The real 11th century king was far removed from the central character in Shakespeare’s immortal play. Locations linked to the real king and Fassbender film form the VisitScotland map, ‘Macbeth: The Man, Myth & Legend’.

**MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS**
Josie Rourke, 2019

Mary Stuart became Queen of Scots at six days old. Queen of France at 16, was widowed twice at 18 and 24, reigned for only six turbulent years and was executed on her cousin’s order at 44. Saoirse Ronan stars as the Scottish Queen, with Margot Robbie as her cousin, Elizabeth I, in the film charting Mary’s return to Scotland. Josie Rourke, who directs, wanted to film as much as possible in Scotland, with production taking place in the Highlands, with many landmarks featuring. The Quiraing is where Macbeth returns from battle and is appointed the Thane of Cawdor by King Duncan. In another shot, Macbeth is seen riding past the striking Old Man of Storr, a SOtH rock. This wasn’t the first time the Scottish play appeared on the big screen. In 1997, Jason Connery (son of Sir Sean) starred as the title character, alongside Helen Baxendale as Lady Macbeth, with director Jeremy Freeston bringing the production to Dunfermline Abbey. The real 11th century king was far removed from the central character in Shakespeare’s immortal play. Locations linked to the real king and Fassbender film form the VisitScotland map, ‘Macbeth: The Man, Myth & Legend’.

**MRS BROWN**
John Madden, 1997

Initially earmarked as a television movie, Mrs Brown (dir. John Madden) became a critical and commercial success. Starring Dame Judi Dench as Queen Victoria, the film focuses on the monarch’s relationship with a Scottish servant, John Brown (Sir Billy Connolly, pictured right) following the death of her husband, Prince Albert. Duns Castle doubles for their Highlands holiday residence, Balmoral, while the stables at Manderston, a magnificent Edwardian mansion in Duns, double for those at Windsor Castle. Dame Judi would return to the role of Queen Victoria in Victoria & Abdul (2017) with filming at Highland locations including Glen Affric and the stunning and wild Glenfeshie in Cairngorms National Park.

**THE QUEEN**
Stephen Frears, 2006

Director Stephen Frears charts the response of the Royal Family to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, with Dame Helen Mirren in Oscar-winning form as Elizabeth II. Production came to Scotland for its portrayal of the Royal residence Balmoral. Cluny Castle and Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire and Culzean Castle in Ayrshire were used in exterior shots while the opulent interior of Blairquhan Castle, Maybole, was used to depict the interior of Balmoral. It is here that Her Majesty meets with Prime Minister Tony Blair (Michael Sheen, pictured right).
“Everybody remembers the opening jogging scene along the beach. We’d been filming in Edinburgh so shot these scenes at St Andrews since it’s close, although it’s meant to be Broadstairs in Kent. There was no wind, the light was totally flat, but we didn’t have time or money to wait. As luck would have it, though, a grain of sand got into the camera and scratched the negative, so we had to go back and redo it. This time the wind was up, creating all those white horses on the sea.”

Hugh Hudson, director of Chariots of Fire (1981)
WHISKY GALORE! (2016)
Starring: Portsoy, Moray and Pennan, Aberdeenshire
— The real-life story of the SS Politician which ran aground with a cargo of 264,000 bottles of malt whisky during wartime rationing has inspired not one but two versions of the tale. Alexander Mackendrick’s 1949 comedy, based on the 1947 novel by Compton Mackenzie, was shot almost entirely on location in the Outer Hebrides (see page 13). The 2016 version by director Gillies MacKinnon was filmed across Scotland, including Portsoy Harbour, Aberdeenshire; Mill Beach, New Aberdour Beach, Pennan, St Monan’s Parish Church, Fife and Luss, Argyll.

SUNSET SONG (2015)
Starring: Glen Tanar Estate, Aberdeenshire
— One of Scotland’s most famous novels, Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s Sunset Song was brought to the big screen by director Terence Davies. Starring Peterhead-born Peter Mullan and former model Agyness Deyn (as Chris Guthrie), it tells the powerful story of a young farmer, Chris, who endures a series of hardships whilst working the land in Aberdeenshire at the turn of the 20th century and outbreak of the Great War. Set in the fictional estate of Kinnraddie, whilst the harvest scenes were filmed in New Zealand, production was also shot on location in its spiritual home of Aberdeenshire, including the Glen Tanar Estate in Royal Deeside.

HAMLET (1990)
Starring: Dunnottar Castle, Aberdeenshire
— Mel Gibson, the man who brought the name of Wallace to the cinematic masses in Braveheart (1995), came to Dunnottar to portray the Prince of Denmark in William Shakespeare’s Hamlet (dir. Franco Zeffirelli). See also page 32.

UNDER THE SKIN (2013)
Starring: Auchmithie, Angus
— Based on the acclaimed satirical novel by Michel Faber, the film (dir. Jonathan Glazer) sees Scarlett Johansson as an alien in human form who has an appetite for human flesh, preying on unsuspecting Scottish men. Auchmithie was chosen for its picturesque but rugged harbour, the kind of landscape that can only be found in Scotland. See also pages 28, 38.

TOMMY’S HONOUR (2017)
Starring: St Andrews, Fife
— Directed by Jason Connery and based on the critically acclaimed book by Kevin Cook, young Tom Morris (Jack Lowden) is considered the first true superstar of golf, winning The Open four times before he was 21. Old Tom (played by Scottish acting veteran Glazer) sees Scarlett Johansson as an alien in human form who has an appetite for human flesh, preying on unsuspecting Scottish men. Auchmithie was chosen for its picturesque but rugged harbour, the kind of landscape that can only be found in Scotland. See also pages 28, 38.

THE DESCENT (2005)/ PART 2 (2009)
Starring: Linn of Tummel and Dunkeld, Perthshire
— Perthshire is renowned for its adrenaline adventure sports to get the blood pumping, and blood — and caving — is very much at the core of the Neil Marshall horror flick, The Descent. It follows a group of six women (led by Scottish actress Shauna Macdonald) as they embark on a caving expedition in the Appalachian Mountains, little knowing that their adventure is about to turn into a nightmare thanks to a horde of flesh-eating monsters. The opening shots of the film, which sees members of the group white-water rafting, were shot at the Linn of Tummel, near Pitlochry. And although the film was set in America, a number of the exterior scenes, the vast expanse of which contrasts sharply with the terrifying claustrophobia of the caves, were also filmed in the Dunkeld region. Those surviving members of the cast returned to Scotland to film The Descent Part 2; this time directed by Jon Harris.

NEVER LET ME GO (2010)
Starring: St Andrews, Fife
— Based on the novel by Kazuo ishiguro, Scotland makes an appearance in the British dystopian drama (dir. Mark Romanek). Student halls of residence, Andrew Melville Hall, at the University of St Andrews, plays the Recovery Centre in Dover, where Kathy (Carey Mulligan) cares for ‘donors’ throughout their short life until they ‘complete’.

LOCAL HERO (1983)
Starring: Pennan, Aberdeenshire
— Writer-director Bill Forsyth is synonymous with some of Scotland’s best and most loved comedies. His biggest hit came in 1983 with the release of Local Hero. Set in the fictional Scottish village of Ferness (real life Aberdeenshire village, Pennan), it follows the story of Mac MacIntyre (Peter Riegert), an American yuppie whose attempts to build an oil refinery on behalf of his boss, Felix Happer (played by veteran screen legend Burt Lancaster), are scuppered by the locals and the local way of life. The iconic red telephone box which features in the film was actually a prop but that doesn’t stop the village’s original phone box being a popular haunt for film fans. Take a stroll along the waterfront and pop into the famous Pennan Inn – a place where, in the midst of a ceilidh, Mac runs into his old friend MacKenzie Capaldi, an actor who would go on to fly the nation’s flag in Doctor Who. The Doctor Who Phone Box – an exact replica of the TARDIS – is situated opposite Pennan Inn on the corner of George Street and High Street.
Drummond Castle Gardens appears in Rob Roy.

**BOBBY JONES: STROKE OF GENIUS** *(2004)*

**Starring:** St Andrews, Fife

Rowdy Herrington’s biopic stars Jim Caviezel (best-known for playing Jesus in Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ) as the first man to win all four major golf championships. It is notable as the first movie featuring the Royal & Ancient Golf Club in St Andrews to be given permission to film on location.

**BRAVE** *(2012)*

**Starring:** Dunnotar Castle, Aberdeen

In 2012, Scotland claimed its first Disney Princess in the form of Merida, the strong-willed daughter of Queen Elinor and King Fergus. The influence of real Scottish locations is evident throughout the award-winning Disney-Pixar animated fantasy (dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman). A series of scouting missions by Disney animators included a trip to the incredible Dunnotar Castle, near Stonehaven, and it’s clear that the princess’s home of Dunbroch owes a great deal of its cinematic grandeur to the castle, not least its cliff-top setting. While in reality, the castle saw little in the way of bears, rebellious redheads and ancient curses, Mary Queen of Scots, the Marquis of Montrose (the future King Charles II) and William Wallace were just some of its notable visitors. See also page 12.

**CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER** *(2011)*

**Starring:** Culross, Fife

Chris Evans donned the famous star-spangled costume of Captain America in this, his first appearance as part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Directed by Joe Johnston, the film came to Culross which stood in as a Norwegian town as part of the World War II-set comic book fantasy. Seven years later Evans would return to Scotland, battling magical evil in the capital, in Avengers: Infinity War (see page 27). The 17th century royal burgh has also made an appearance in the film adaptations of children’s fantasy, The Little Vampire (dir. Ul Edel, 2000), and Robert Louis Stevenson’s landmark historical novel, Kidnapped (dir. Delbert Mann, 1971).

**ON A CLEAR DAY** *(2005)*

**Starring:** Loch Monzievaird, Perthshire

A popular fishing spot and relaxing getaway, the loch is one of the places where Frank Redmond (Peter Mullan) and his friends begin training for his swim of the English Channel in Gaby Lella’s On a Clear Day. It’s a life-affirming tale of triumph against the odds and bringing a family closer together as a result.

**ROB ROY** *(1995)*

**Starring:** Drummond Castle Gardens, Perthshire

Liam Neeson stars as the famous 18th century clan-leader-cum-outlaw in the Michael Caton-Jones film, with an Oscar-nominated turn by Tim Roth as the arch villain Archibald Cunningham. While the vast, untamed wilderness of the great Scottish outdoors were filmed mainly in the Highlands, scenes of the immaculately maintained gardens belonging to the Marquis of Montrose (John Hurt), were filmed at Drummond. Although the castle itself is not open to the public, the gardens, situated near Crieff, offer terrific views of the buildings and surrounding countryside – perfect for a relaxed, and ever so civilised, day out. Drummond Castle also features in a number of other movies, including The Bruce (dir. Bob Carruthers and David McW whinnie, 1996) and Man to Man (dir. Regis Wargnier, 2005), which stars Joseph Fiennes and Kristin Scott-Thomas, and will be a familiar sight for fans of TV series, Outlander.

**THE RAILWAY MAN** *(2013)*

**Starring:** St Monans, Fife

This scenic part of the Kingdom attracted a pair of Oscar winners, when Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman came to the village of St Monans during the filming of The Railway Man (dir. Jonathan Teplitzky). An adaptation of Scottish war hero Eric Lomax’s bestselling biopic, about tracking down those responsible for his torture in a Japanese prison camp, the village’s charming church features in the movie. See also page 29.

**GET DUKED!** *(2020)*

**Starring:** Crieff, Perthshire

Originally titled Boyz in the Wood, and the opening film of the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2019, this black comedy (dir. Ninian Doff) follows a group of delinquents carted to the Highlands by their teacher to complete the Duke of Edinburgh Award. While there, they find they have more than the wilderness to contend with – as they come face-to-face with a shotgun-wielding Duke (Eddie Izzard). Despite being set in the Highlands, the majority of the production was filmed in the Perthshire landscape surrounding Crieff.

**THE WINTER GUEST** *(1997)*

**Starring:** Elie and Pittenweem, Fife

The hugely talented Dame Emma Thompson teamed up with her mum, the Scottish actress Phyllida Law, in this heart-warming tale filmed in the East Neuk villages of Elie and Pittenweem. Particularly notable as the directorial debut of the late Alan Rickman (best known as Severus Snape in the Harry Potter movies and Hans Gruber in the quintessential Christmas actioner, Die Hard), The Winter Guest features the lighthouse in Elie as well as the main A917 road through Pittenweem.

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**PRODUCERS OF BOLLYWOOD FILMS, WHICH ARE FAMOUS FOR THEIR EXTRAVAGANT SONG-AND-DANCE ROUTINES, HAVE BEEN FLOCKING TO SCOTLAND SINCE 1998.**

More than 20 Bollywood films, with megastars such as former Miss World Aishwarya Rai, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan, have filmed at Stirling Castle, Linlithgow Palace, Culzean Castle and Traquair House among many other locations. Here are a few.

**MAIN SOLAH BARAS KI**

_Sweet Sixteen_

Devi Anand, 1998

As well as directing, Bollywood legend Dev Anand plays himself in this sweet comedy as he looks for a new actress to star in his upcoming movie. After finding no suitable candidates in India, he continues his search in the UK, meeting Tina (Neeru Bajwa) and 16-year-old Madhu Mehra (Sabrina), who takes more of a shine to him than he anticipated.

_The movie was shot throughout Scotland, including the Mound, Parliament Square and St Giles’ Cathedral in Edinburgh; the Forth Bridges viewed from South Queensferry; Union Street in Aberdeen; Fort William town centre; Urquhart Castle by Loch Ness; Inverness Castle esplanade; Crief town centre; and Plockton._

**KUCH KUCH HOTÄ HAI**

_Something Happens in My Heart_

Karan Johar, 1998

Karan Johar’s directorial debut, which tells the story of two love triangles set several years apart, was the highest-grossing Indian film of 1998 and was the first Bollywood film to enter the UK cinema top 10. After shooting at a number of iconic Scottish landmarks, including Edinburgh’s Royal Mile, Eilean Donan Castle in the Highlands, Crossraguel Abbey in Ayrshire and the Bass Rock and Tantallon Castle at North Berwick, the director said: “From the lush greenery to the beautiful castles and the breezy weather, Scotland made for the perfect romantic setting.”

**AARZOO**

_Wish_

Lawrence d’Souza, 1999

While a number of Bollywood movies shot in Scotland use the country’s landmarks during dream-like song-and-dance sequences, the country is sometimes part of the narrative. _Aarzoo_ is a love story in which one of the central characters, Amar (Saif Ali Khan), studies in Edinburgh. He and the woman he loves, Pooja (Madhuri Dixit) are seen at a number of locations in the capital, including Edinburgh Castle, Princes Street Gardens and the Scott Monument. The action also moves out to the Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh, East Lothian, and to St Andrews (the Cathedral and St Rule’s Tower), as well as Perth city centre.

Another location used in the film is Scone Palace in Perthshire. Here, visitors can find the only known portrait of Dido Belle – the subject of the 2013 film _Belle_ (Amma Asante), which stars Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Tom Wilkinson and Miranda Richardson and tells the story of the mixed-race daughter of a slave and a British admiral.

_The Glenesk Hotel and Inglis Memorial Hall in the village of Edzell, Angus, double for Pooja’s home, in a memorable scene in which she opens a window and pours a bucket of water over Amar._

_Fans of Harrison Ford might recognise Amrish Puri, who plays Pooja’s father. In _Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom_ (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1984), Puri plays the demonic Mola Ram, who attempts to pull out Indy’s heart through his ribcage._

**KANDUKONDAIN KANDUKONDAIN**

_I Have Found It I Have Found It_

Rajiv Menon, 2000

_Based on Jane Austen’s _Sense and Sensibility_, _I Have Found It_ focuses on two sisters with vastly different temperaments. Sowmya (Tabu), who is the more serious of the two, falls in love with an aspiring film director. While she is admired by a wounded commando, Captain Bala (Mammootty), her passionate younger sibling Meenakshi (played by former Miss India Aishwarya Rai) only has eyes for handsome young businessman Srikanth (Abbas)._ The love song sequence, a lyrical Indian love ballad played out in a Scottish fairytale setting, was filmed at Eilean Donan Castle.

**THREE: LOVE, LIES, BETRAYAL**

_Vishal Pandya, 2009_

_The story of married couple Anjini Dutt (Nausheen Ali Sardar) and Rajeev Dutt (Akshay Kapoor), their money worries and the troublesome arrival of a lodger Sanjay (Aashish Chaudhary), is played out against the background of the Highlands._

_Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness both make an appearance, while Inverness features heavily._

_Ashish and Nausheen’s characters go shopping in the High Street, while Clansman Harbour, Greig Street Bridge, Eden Court Theatre, the Caledonian Canal and Tomnahurich Swing Bridge are also seen during the film. Achnagairn Castle in Kirkhill provides the luxury setting for Anjini’s violin class, while the couple even walk across the pitch at the Caledonian Stadium – home to Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club._

**BELL BOTTOM**

_Ranjit M Tewari, 2021_

_Set in 1984 in India, _RAW_ secret agent, Anshul Malhotra, code-named _Bell Bottom_ (Akshay Kumar), is assigned to handle the hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight 691. Flashbacks show his personal experience with hijackings and how he became an agent._

_The first Bollywood film to commence shooting after the 2020 pandemic lockdown, many of the London scenes of this thriller were filmed in Glasgow, including The Barras Market and Glasgow Prestwick Airport._
"It’s a beautiful city obviously. We shot it at night because we were looking for a noiry kind of feel so we wanted a gothic tone to the sequence. The town was incredible, the support was incredible. The crew just had a fantastic time.”

Joe Russo, co-director of Avengers: Infinity War (2018)

Edinburgh & The Lothians

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Featuring

A Castle for Christmas • Avengers: Infinity War • Cloud Atlas • The Da Vinci Code
Death Defying Acts • Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga
Fast & Furious 9 • Greyfriars Bobby • Hallam Foe • The Illusionist • One Day
Our Ladies • The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie • The Princess Switch 2: Switched Again
The Princess Switch 3: Romancing the Star • The Railway Man • Shallow Grave
Sunshine on Leith • The 39 Steps • Trainspotting • T2: Trainspotting • Under the Skin • The Wife

Find out more here

THE WIFE (2017)
Starring: National Museum of Flight, East Lothian

Directed by Björn Runge, Glenn Close stars as the titular wife to Jonathan Pryce’s Nobel Prize-winning author on his trip to Stockholm to receive his award. Shot on location in Scotland, filming took place on board Scotland’s only Concorde, in the National Museum of Flight near the village of East Fortune. Famously travelling faster than the speed of sound, the museum’s Concorde recorded 8,064 flights with British Airways before the fleet was decommissioned in 2003. Museum visitors can discover what a transatlantic flight was like for passengers and crew and learn about the legacy of this iconic aircraft. See also pages 36, 49.

THE ILLUSIONIST (2010)
Starring: Princes Street, Edinburgh

The beautiful British-French animation directed by Sylvain Chomet, and set in the 1950s, finds an out-of-work illusionist travel to Edinburgh where he takes up work in the former Jenners department store.

FAST & FURIOUS 9 (2021)
Starring: Edinburgh Old Town

The fastest and most furious saga returned to Scotland for its ninth outing, directed by Justin Lin, with Vin Diesel’s Dom Toretto and the gang battling Toretto’s brother (John Cena) in an explosive chase by car and rooftop through the streets of the Old and New Town.

THE 39 STEPS (1935/1959)
Starring: Forth Bridge

The iconic UNESCO World Heritage Site, Forth Bridge, makes its appearance in not one but two versions of John Buchan’s thriller The 39 Steps (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1935 and Ralph Thomas, 1959); however, the setting of Richard Hannay’s daring escape is not lifted from the pages of the novel and only appears on-screen.

The Forth Bridge appeared in Hitchcock’s The 39 Steps.
DEATH DEFYING ACTS (2007)
Starring: Scott Monument, Edinburgh
The life of illusionist Harry Houdini is brought to the screen by Gillian Armstrong with Guy Pearce in the title role. The story follows Houdini on his travels to Edinburgh where he meets Mary McGarvie (Catherine Zeta-Jones) and her daughter Benji (Saoirse Ronan). The Scott Monument makes its appearance on screen when Houdini takes Mary and her daughter up the 287 steps of the monument by night.

SHALLOW GRAVE (1994)
Starring: New Town, Edinburgh
The directorial debut of Danny Boyle, who would return to the Scottish capital just a few years later to film Trainspotting, famously opens with the camera zooming through the streets of the New Town to the thumping beats of Leftfield. Later, Alex Law (Ewan McGregor) is also seen driving along North Bridge – constructed by the same contractors who built the Forth Bridge – with The Scotsman Hotel in the background. See also page 39.

EUROVISION SONG CONTEST: THE STORY OF FIRE SAGA (2020)
Starring: The Royal Mile and Holyrood Park, Edinburgh
Back in 1972, the Scottish Capital hosted the Eurovision Song Contest after Monaco, which won the year before, was unable to provide a suitable venue. The international music competition returned to the city, albeit in fictional form, in Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga. Directed by David Dobkin, the film follows Icelandic musicians Lars (Will Ferrell) and Sigrit (Rachel McAdams), performing together as Fire Saga, who are selected to battle it out for the coveted title in this outrageous comedy. Filming took place across Edinburgh (movie magic transposes the OVO Hydro in Glasgow to The Royal Mile) with Princes Street Gardens and the Ross Fountain, New Town and Newhaven Harbour all featuring – while parts of Holyrood Park, home of Iron Age forts and Bronze Age agricultural terraces, double for the home of some Icelandic elves. See also page 38.

HALLAM FOE (2007)
Starring: Caledonian Hotel, Edinburgh
Directed by prolific Scottish filmmaker, David Mackenzie, and based on the novel by Peter Jinks, Hallam Foe (Jamie Bell) suspects his stepmother is responsible for his mother’s death and travels to Edinburgh where he falls for Kate (Sophia Myles). The film was shot on location in the city, including Cockburn Street and the Caledonian Hotel in Princes Street where Kate gets Hallam a job. See also page 47.

THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE (1969)
Starring: Barnbougle Castle, South Queensferry
The celebrated big-screen version of The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (dir. Ronald Neame), for which Dame Maggie Smith won a Best Actress Oscar as Muriel Spark’s protagonist, makes great use of Edinburgh’s splendid architecture. The grand Crmond home of Mr Lowther (Gordon Jackson), where Miss Brodie takes her girls for weekend getaways, was filmed at Barnbougle Castle, which is situated on the shore of the Firth of Forth between South Queensferry and Crmond. Marcia Blaine School for Girls, where Miss Jean Brodie practices her off-the-wall teaching methods, was filmed at the former Donaldson’s School for the Deaf near Haymarket, while Greyfriars Kirkyard also makes an appearance.

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR (2018)
Starring: Cockburn Street, St Giles’ Cathedral and Waverley Station, Edinburgh
Captain America (Chris Evans) returned to Scottish shores for the first time since his Marvel Cinematic Universe debut (Captain America, see page 20) for the third instalment of the Avengers film series (dir. Anthony and Joe Russo). Vision (Paul Bettany) and Wanda (Elizabeth Olsen) are hiding out in the Scottish capital when they are attacked by Thanos’s followers and after a skirmish in Chambers Street and on the roof of St Giles’ Cathedral, it is Cap, Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) and The Falcon (Anthony Mackie) who come to their rescue in Waverley Station. An aerial shot of Edinburgh Castle – home of the Honours of Scotland, the oldest Crown jewels in Britain – can be seen as the heroes fly off. Some eagle-eyed viewers may be distracted by a notice on the wall of the fictional ‘Hunsu Kebab House’ in Cockburn Street, during a quieter scene between Vision and Wanda, which offers customers a chance to ‘deep fry your kebab’ – a play on Scotland’s famous culinary creation, the deep-fried Mars Bar.
Starring: Hopeptoun House, West Lothian, Gosford House, East Lothian, and Newbattle Abbey College, Midlothian
In the vein of The Prince and the Pauper, the first in this rom-com festive series sees Vanessa Hudgens (High School Musical) play Chicago baker Stacy De Novo who switches places with Lady Margaret Delacourt, Duchess of Montenaro (also played by Hudgens). The sequel and threequel (dir. Michael Rohl) saw not only Hudgens switch again but so too doubles for a police station. See also page 12.

CLOUD ATLAS (2012)
Starring: Scott Monument, Edinburgh
At the east of Princes Street Gardens is a “gothic rocket ship”, as American writer Bill Bryson described it, dedicated to the memory of Sir Walter Scott. Completed in 1844, the Scott Monument stands at just over 200ft high and is one of Scotland’s most instantly recognisable landmarks. In Cloud Atlas (dir. The Wachowskis and Tom Tykwer), the monument is visited by composer Robert Frobisher (Ben Whishaw) in the 1936 segment of the movie. The City Chambers also makes an appearance. See also pages 31, 36.

SUNSHINE ON LEITH (2013)
Starring: Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh
In Princes Street Gardens, you can try to re-create the flash dance to The Proclaimers’ 500 Miles, as featured in Dexter Fletcher’s feel-good musical Sunshine on Leith. If you prefer, I’m on my Way; you can sing and dance in Ally and Davy’s footsteps on Leith’s Constitution Street.

ONE DAY (2011)
Starring: Edinburgh
Based on the bestselling Edinburgh-set novel by David Nicholls, the film, directed by Lone Scherfig, sees Emma Morley (Anne Hathaway) and Dexter Mayhew (Jim Sturgess) meet and fall in love at the University of Edinburgh. The city is featured extensively in the film, with other locations including Cockburn Street, Victoria Street and Arthur’s Seat – the extinct volcano that looks down on the Scottish Parliament.

UNDER THE SKIN (2013)
Starring: Tantallon Castle, North Berwick
The 14th century fortress is visited by Scarlett Johansson’s mysterious alien seductress in the science fiction film directed by Jonathan Glazer, based on the novel by Michel Faber. See also pages 18 and 38.

Starring: Rosslyn Chapel, Midlothian
Just a few miles to the south of Edinburgh lies Rosslyn Chapel, a key location in both the book and the film of Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code. The international bestseller, which was brought to the big screen by Ron Howard, suggests that the 15th century building is the final resting place of the Holy Grail. Tom Hanks filmed the climactic scenes with Amelie star Audrey Tatou on location. Due to vital restoration work, the chapel was under scaffolding at the time of filming, so a miniature version was built on site.

GREYFRIARS BOBBY (1961)
Starring: Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh
The kirkyard plays a pivotal role in Disney’s Greyfriars Bobby (dir. John Chaffrey) as this is where the heartbroken pooch mourns for his owner, Auld Jock. A popular attraction among the millions of visitors to Edinburgh is the statue of Bobby, a Skye Terrier, which can be found just a stone’s throw from the National Museum of Scotland – on the corner of Candlemaker Row and George IV Bridge. Legend has it that, in the 19th century, Bobby sat by his master’s grave for some 14 years. Although the film features a wonderful shot from Calton Hill, much of the filming for Greyfriars Bobby was done in the studio.

A CASTLE FOR CHRISTMAS (2021)
Starring: Dalmeny House, South Queensferry
Bestselling American author Sophie (Brooke Shields) journeys to Scotland where she falls in love with a castle (played by Dalmeny House, home to the Earls of Rosebery since 1662). But her plans to buy it are put in jeopardy when the owner, a grumpy Scottish Duke named Myles (Cary Elwes), is reluctant to sell to a foreigner. In addition to the stately home, the film (dir. Mary Lambert) features Tantallon Castle in East Lothian, Dakota Hotel near South Queensferry, and Edinburgh Airport.

THE PRINCESS SWITCH 3: ROMANCING THE STAR
Starring: Dalmeny House, South Queensferry
Billed as the final instalment in the Christmas movie series, Princess Switch 3 promises to be as festive and romantic as the first two. Vanessa Hudgens returns as the dual lead, with a new role for Cary Elwes as the grumpy Duke. The cast and crew have been filming extensively in East Lothian, with locations including Dalmeny House and Tantallon Castle, to create the perfect Christmas escape for movie fans.

OOUR LADIES (2021)
Starring: Edinburgh
Director Michael-Caton Jones’s passion project was filmed across the city. Grassmarket, Cockburn Street and Charlotte Square make an appearance. Club and live music venue, The Liquid Room on Victoria Street, plays The Pillbox nightclub, while tech incubator, CodeBase on Castle Terrace, doubles for a police station. See also page 12.

THE PRINCESS SWITCH
Starring: Edinburgh
Vanessa Hudgens (High School Musical) plays a Chicago baker who switches places with a Scottish duchess in this romantic comedy. With locations throughout Scotland, the movie promises to be a festive treat for fans. See also page 3.

UNDER THE SKIN
Starring: Edinburgh
Based on the novel by Michel Faber, the film follows a mysterious alien (Scarlett Johansson) and her relationships with a couple (Jim Sturgess and Charlotte Rampling). The location of Edinburgh provides an eerie and atmospheric backdrop to the story.

ONE DAY
Starring: Edinburgh
Based on the novel by David Nicholls, the film follows the love story of Emma (Anne Hathaway) and Dexter (Jim Sturgess) as they meet and fall in love at the University of Edinburgh. The city is depicted with numerous close-ups and locations are described in the plot.

GREYFRIARS BOBBY
Starring: Edinburgh
The true story of Greyfriars Bobby, a Skye Terrier who lived for 14 years by his owner’s grave in the Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh, is brought to life in this film. Directed by John Chaffrey, it features Audrey Tatou as a fictional character who becomes infatuated with Bobby’s story.

A CASTLE FOR CHRISTMAS
Starring: East Lothian
Cary Elwes and Brooke Shields star in this festive romantic comedy set in Scotland. The film follows a Chicago baker who switches places with a Scottish duchess, leading to a heartwarming Christmas tale.

THE PRINCESS SWITCH 3
Starring: Edinburgh
Vanessa Hudgens returns to the role of the Chicago baker who switches places with a Scottish duchess in this new instalment of the Christmas romance series. With locations across Scotland, the film promises to be a festive delight for fans.

CARY ELWES AND BROOKE SHIELDS IN A CASTLE FOR CHRISTMAS
Vanessa Hudgens in Hopetoun House, in The Princess Switch 3. Mark Mainz/NETFLIX © 2021
THE PRINCESS SWITCH 3: ROMANCING THE STAR
Starring: Cary Elwes and Brooke Shields in A Castle for Christmas. Mark Mainz/NETFLIX © 2021
ROSSELYN CHAPEL IS A KEY PART OF THE DA VINCI CODE.
Rosslyn Chapel is a key part of The Da Vinci Code. Mark Mainz/NETFLIX © 2021
THE DA VINCI CODE
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Just a few miles to the south of Edinburgh lies Rosslyn Chapel, a key location in both the book and the film of Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code. The international bestseller, which was brought to the big screen by Ron Howard, suggests that the 15th century building is the final resting place of the Holy Grail. Tom Hanks filmed the climactic scenes with Amelie star Audrey Tatou on location. Due to vital restoration work, the chapel was under scaffolding at the time of filming, so a miniature version was built on site.

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“We started out in Blackness [Castle] and went to Aviemore, Glen Feshie, Glen Coe. We travelled around a lot, and on the weekends I’d go off and discover the country a bit. I love it – absolutely love working up here.”

Saoirse Ronan, star of Mary Queen of Scots (2019)

KIDNAPPED (1971)
Starring: Stirling Castle

One of Scotland’s most famous attractions, Stirling Castle originally dates back to the 12th century. In the years that followed, it was the scene of multiple sieges, and in 1543 saw Mary Stuart crowned Queen of Scots in the Chapel Royal. James V’s Palace at the castle can now be seen by visitors much as it would have looked on completion around 1545 and is one of the finest and best-preserved Renaissance buildings in Britain. The castle appears in a number of films including Kidnapped (dir. Delbert Mann), starring Sir Michael Caine as Alan Breck Stewart, Gregory’s Girl follow-up, Gregory’s Two Girls (dir. Bill Forsyth, 1999) and the John Landis comedy about the infamous 19th century Edinburgh body snatchers and serial killers, Burke & Hare (2010).

CLOUD ATLAS (2012)
Starring: Clackmannanshire Bridge and Bo’ness and Kinneil Railway

While not opened until 2008, the Clackmannanshire Bridge is transported to 1973 San Francisco in Cloud Atlas (dir. The Wachowskis and Tom Tykwer). Digital trickery is used to show journalist Luisa Rey (Halle Berry) crossing the bridge towards a nuclear power station. A popular attraction in the region, which also appears in The Railway Man (see page 29), the steam trains of Bo’ness and Kinneil Railway give people a chance to step into the more recent past. One of the stops, Birkhill Station, can be seen in the film. See also pages 28, 36.

TUNES OF GLORY (1960)
Starring: Stirling Castle

Based on the 1956 debut novel by Scottish author James Kennaway, the film (dir. Ronald Neame) stars Alec Guinness and John Mills as Army officers struggling against each other to win the respect of a peacetime battalion. Filming at the castle was restricted to exterior shots – including the final dramatic scene in which Major Jock Sinclair (Guinness) is driven away in a Jeep – after the commanding officer of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders apparently took exception to a lurid front cover of Kennaway’s book.

SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS (2016)
Starring: Loch Venachar

The picturesque loch located just five miles from Callander appears in the adaptation of Arthur Ransome’s children’s novel Swallows and Amazons (dir. Philippa Lowthorpe) about a group of children on an adventurous holiday in the Lake District during the 1930s. To the south of the loch is a network of cycling and walking forest trails. Follow the trails over the hills to the Lake of Menteith – Scotland’s only official lake – which is home to the ancient island priory, Inchmahome.
Loch Katrine seen from the summit of Ben A'an in The Trossachs.

DOOMSDAY (2008)
Starring: Loch Katrine and Blackness Castle
— This apocalyptic actioner, directed by Neil Marshall, imagines a plague unleashed in Scotland which results in the country sealed off from England by the way of a huge wall — aka Hadrian’s Wall. With the possibility of a cure found within its borders, a crack team is sent to retrieve it, led by Rhona Mitra. Among the locations used were Brenachole Forest near Loch Katrine and Blackness Castle, which is the home to scientist Marcus Kane (played by Malcolm McDowell). Marshall was no stranger to Scotland having filmed The Descent (see page 19) here and would return after Doomsday with the Michael Fassbender-starring Centurion. It isn’t the first time that Loch Katrine has provided inspiration for storytellers. Sir Walter Scott used its waters as Brenachoile Forest near Loch Katrine and Blackness Castle, which is the home to scientist Marcus Kane (played by Malcolm McDowell). Marshall was no stranger to Scotland having filmed The Descent (see page 19) here and would return after Doomsday with the Michael Fassbender-starring Centurion. It isn’t the first time that Loch Katrine has provided inspiration for storytellers. Sir Walter Scott used its waters to create the fictional seat of Clan MacKenzie), fictional setting for Winterfell in the pilot) and Castle Leoch (the fictional seat of Clan MacKenzie), respectively. See also page 45.

THE EAGLE (2011)
Starring: Loch Lomond
— Scotland’s Roman past was brought to life in 2011 with The Eagle, Kevin Macdonald’s adaptation of Rosemary Sutcliff’s novel, The Eagle of the Ninth. Starring Channing Tatum, the sword and sandals epic tells the story of a Roman legion that supposedly went missing in 2nd century Scotland. Parts of the film were shot at the world-famous Loch Lomond, the bonnie banks of which were once home to the legendary Scottish “rogue” Rob Roy MacGregor. Those seeking more on the Romans in Scotland should venture to Callendar House in Falkirk which is home to a permanent exhibition on the Antonine Wall, of which remnants of a wall ditch can be found in its grounds.

HAMLET (1990)
Starring: Blackness Castle
— The 15th century ship-like fortress of Blackness near Linlithgow was used for scenes depicting Elsinore Castle in Franco Zeffirelli’s 1990 adaptation of Hamlet, which starred Mel Gibson as the Prince of Denmark. See also page 18.

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY (2014)
Starring: Loch Katrine
— Rob Roy’s birthplace at Glengyne lies on the shores of Loch Katrine — where Billy Connolly can be seen fishing in What We Did On Our Holiday (dir. Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin). The grave of the 18th century Scottish outlaw and folk hero can be visited in the grounds of Balquhidder Kirk. The village of Doune and Blairdrummond Safari & Adventure Park also star in the comedy drama about family visiting the Scottish Highlands (see also page 8). The story of Rob Roy Macgregor was famously brought to the screen in 1995 by Scottish director Michael Caton-Jones starring Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange (see page 2).

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THE ANGELS’ SHARE (2012)
Starring: Deanston Distillery
— The critically acclaimed comedy-drama won director Ken Loach the Jury Prize at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival, with Deanston Distillery, on the banks of the River Teith, playing a major role. It is during a visit to the distillery that the central character of Robbie (Paul Brannigan) discovers he has a talent for whisky tasting and fuels his subsequent decision to make a mint from a priceless malt. The village itself, meanwhile, has the honour of making an even bigger contribution to cinema — being the birthplace of John Grierson (born 1898), founder of the British documentary movement. Grierson was brought up in Cambusbarron and a plaque features on the old school house in the Stirlingshire village — marking his old childhood home.

THE HOLY GRAIL (1975)
Starring: Doune Castle
— A severely limited budget meant the crew of Monty Python and the Holy Grail (dir. Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam) determined to squeeze every last drop of production value out of Doune Castle. Situated eight miles north-west of Stirling, the 14th century building was shot from different angles to give the illusion that it was multiple locations. In the opening scene, King Arthur (Graham Chapman) and his servant Patsy (Terry Gilliam) approach the east wall, where the soldiers above point out to them that only an African swallow, as opposed to its European cousin, would have the strength to carry a coconut. Doune also doubles for Camelot, with the Knights of the Round Table singing about their tendency to “eat spam a lot” in the Great Hall. The server and kitchen appear as Castle Anthrax, where Sir Galahad the Chaste (Michael Palin) must fight his basic human urges, while Sir Lancelot (John Cleese) causes mayhem at a royal wedding in the courtyard and Great Hall. The giant Trojan Rabbit is seen being wheeled through the castle’s entrance and into the courtyard. Co-director Jones can be heard on the Doune Castle audio guide. Game of Thrones and Outlander fans will also recognise the castle as both Winterfell (in the pilot) and Castle Leoch (the fictional seat of Clan MacKenzie), respectively. See also page 45.

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“Glasgow really opened their arms – they were very welcoming, and especially for doing the stunts that I was looking to try to do, we really needed the perfect partner. I feel very fortunate, as a lot of different cities weren’t as cooperative, so to have that kind of welcome energy is something that these films – this film – definitely needed.”

Justin Lin, director of Fast & Furious 6 (2013)

GLASGOW

Greater Glasgow & The Clyde Valley

* * * * *

Featuring

Ae Fond Kiss • The Angels’ Share • Anna and the Apocalypse • The Batman • Cloud Atlas
Carla’s Song • Death Watch • Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga
Fast & Furious 6 • Gregory’s Girl • Hobbs & Shaw • The House of Mirth • The Last Bus
Madeleine • My Name is Joe • 1917 • Shallow Grave • Small Faces • Sweet Sixteen
That Sinking Feeling • Trainspotting • Under the Skin • The Wife • Wild Rose • World War Z

Scottish Film locations itinerary
Find out more here

THE LAST BUS (2021)
Starring: Bridgeton Bus Garage, Glasgow
Timothy Spall stars as 90-year-old Tom Harper who, after the death of his wife Mary (Phyllis Logan), travels the 874 miles from their home at Scotland’s most northern mainland point John O’Groats to Land’s End in England. Despite the epic journey, the cast and crew never left Scotland, instead Scottish director Gillies MacKinnon made clever use of Scottish locations and real regional buses to recreate the route. Most of the filming took place in and around Glasgow, including at the Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust’s Bridgeton Bus Garage on Fordneuk Street. The exterior of the former Corporation bus garage was used for bus stops and depots, while sets were built in the interior of the museum which is home to around 130 vintage buses, coaches, commercial vehicles, and fire appliances.

1917 (2019)
Starring: Govan Graving Docks, Glasgow
The former dry docks on the Clyde, just a stone’s throw from the Glasgow Science Centre Tower, were transformed into a war-torn bridge and part-village in 1917 France for the WW1 film. Kyrsty Wilson-Cairns, the Scottish writer who co-wrote the script with director Sam Mendes, named one of the trenches in the film after the city’s famous thoroughfare, Sauchiehall Street.

ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE (2018)
Starring: Port Glasgow, Inverclyde
Based on the 2010 BAFTA–winning short film Zombie Musical (written and directed by Ryan McHenry), Anna and the Apocalypse (dir. John McPhail) wouldn’t be what you’d call a traditional festive flick. Ella Hunt plays Anna Shepherd who is planning her gap year when a zombie apocalypse strikes at Christmas. Filming of the musical took place across Port Glasgow which doubled as the fictional town of Little Haven, with beautiful views over the wintry Firth of Clyde, including the timber ponds. The shipbuilding town dates back to the 15th century when George Maxwell built Newark Castle.
THE HOUSE OF MIRTH (2000)
Starring: Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow

Glasgow’s cinematic splendour saw it stand in for New York in the Terence Davies adaptation of The House of Mirth, which stars Gillian Anderson as socialite Lily Bart. Masquerading as various parts of the Big Apple are the City Chambers, Kelvinbridge, St Vincent Place, the Theatre Royal, Great Western Road and, appearing as Grand Central Station, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, of which its stunning architecture is matched by regular organ recitals in its Centre Hall. See also page 48.

THE WIFE (2017)
Starring: Hutchesons Hall, Glasgow

Directed by Björn Runge, Oscar-nominated Glenn Close stars as the titular wife to Jonathan Pryce’s Nobel Prize-winning author on his trip to Stockholm to receive his award. Former hospital and A-listed building, Hutchesons Hall in Ingram Street, stood in for the bar where Close is quizzed by a suspicious journalist played by Christian Slater. See also pages 25, 49.

CLOUD ATLAS (2012)
Starring: Douglas Street, Glasgow

Co-directed by The Matrix’s Wachowskis and German film-maker Tom Tykwer, the film version of David Mitchell’s Booker Prize-nominated novel, Cloud Atlas, came to Glasgow with Oscar winner Halle Berry in tow. Just north of the city centre runs Douglas Street, with its steep descent from Blythswood Hill making it a perfect substitute for the hills of San Francisco in Cloud Atlas. It gets a little help from a green sign bearing the name “Spring Street”. The West Quadrangle of the University of Glasgow also appears, doubling for the University of Cambridge. See also pages 28, 31.

WILD ROSE (2018)
Starring: Glasgow’s Grand Ole Opry and Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow

Fresh out of prison, a Scottish woman (Jessie Buckley) juggles her job and two children while pursuing her dream of becoming a country music star. The comedy-drama was directed by Tom Harper and filmed on-location across the city. Real country music venue, Glasgow’s Grand Ole Opry, appears, as does the Old Fruitmarket as part of the city’s music festival, Celtic Connections.

Starring: Glasgow city centre

The Fast & Furious franchise first set foot in Scotland in 2013 when its sixth instalment (dir. Justin Lin) took to the financial services district of Glasgow for some thrilling chase scenes. Six years later the franchise returned to the city for its spin-off, Hobbs & Shaw (dir. David Leitch) starring Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham and Idris Elba. The headline car chase through the streets of London between our heroes and Elba’s villain actually took place more than 400 miles away in Glasgow, standing in for the English capital.

DEATH WATCH (1980)
Starring: City Chambers, Glasgow

The impressive City Chambers appeared in the seldom-see French sci-fi movie Death Watch (dir. Bertrand Tavernier), starring Romy Schneider, Harvey Keitel, Harry Dean Stanton and Max von Sydow. Set in a time when death from disease has become a rarity and those afflicted are the subject of intense media focus, Tavernier chose Glasgow to represent “any city of the future”. He was fascinated by a city in transition following the razing of the tenements, while the Glasgow Necropolis, the huge Victorian cemetery near St Mungo’s Cathedral, also features prominently. Travel west from the city to Paisley for another sci-fi classic. Before Prometheus (see page 9), Paisley Abbey was the nearest Scotland came to the Alien film series – featuring a gargoyle that looks surprisingly like the Xenomorph from Ridley Scott’s 1979 film.

WORLD WAR Z (2013)
Starring: George Square, Glasgow

It may come as a surprise to many, but the crowd scenes in Brad Pitt zombie flick World War Z (dir. Marc Forster) weren’t filmed in Philadelphia, but in the west of Scotland. Those familiar with Glasgow’s historic George Square found it difficult to miss as the camera sweeps over the amazing Victorian architecture – and hordes of the undead.

Glasgow’s City Chambers is transposed to Philadelphia in World War Z. © Martin Breslin

Glasgow’s City Chambers appears in Fast & Furious 6. © Martin Breslin

Renowned English filmmaker Ken Loach has visited Glasgow on numerous occasions, with his gritty dramas Carla’s Song (1996), My Name is Joe (1998), Sweet Sixteen (2002), Ae Fond Kiss (2004) and The Angels’ Share (2012) all being shot on the city’s streets.

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THE BATMAN (2022)
Starring: The Necropolis, Glasgow Cathedral and Bridge of Sighs, Glasgow

Riddle me this: which Scottish city puts the gothic into Gotham? Glasgow, of course. Some of the city’s famous gothic architecture, the Necropolis, Glasgow Cathedral and the Bridge of Sighs feature in The Batman (dir. Matt Reeves), as the "Dark Knight" returned to Scotland ten years after The Dark Knight Rises (see page 10) – this time with Robert Pattinson (Twilight) under the cowl. Reeves described the city as "beautiful" and a "very special place".

UNDER THE SKIN (2013)
Starring: Buchanan Galleries, Glasgow

Scarlett Johansson’s man-stalking alien takes human form and goes on the prowl for victims in Glasgow, frequenting the Buchanan Galleries shopping centre, in the science fiction film directed by Jonathan Glazer, based on the novel by Michel Faber. See also pages 18, 28.

GREGORY’S GIRL (1981)
Starring: Cumbernauld

The film focuses on the hapless teenager Gregory (John Gordon Sinclair) and his unrequited love for the new star of the school football team, Dorothy (Dee Hepburn). Also starring Clare Grogan as Susan, this beloved Scottish classic by Bill Forsyth is the ultimate coming-of-age tale. Hilarious and touching in equal measure, there isn’t a teenage boy anywhere who isn’t able to empathise with Gregory’s woes. Gregory’s Girl was shot entirely on location in the North Lanarkshire new town of Cumbernauld, with much of the action taking place at the now-demolished Abernethy High School. However, you can find the famous St Enoch clock, where a white-jacketed Gregory waits aimlessly for Dorothy to show up, at the Antonine Shopping Centre. Another famous scene, which sees Gregory attempt to woo Susan by dancing on his back, was shot in Cumbernauld House Park.

THAT SINKING FEELING (1979)
Starring: Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow

The debut feature of Bill Forsyth (Local Hero, Gregory’s Girl), the minuscule budget was such that he had to recruit members of the city’s youth theatre, including Rab Buchanan and John Gordon Sinclair, to star in his sink-stealing crime caper. The film features the likes of Kelvingrove Park, Dennistoun, and Springburn and Bishopbriggs railway stations.

MADELEINE (1950)
Starring: Blythswood Square, Glasgow

Although mostly shot at Pinewood Studios, Madeleine (dir. David Lean) opens with a sweeping panorama of the West End of the city. Starring Lean’s wife Ann Todd as Madeleine Smith, the Glasgow socialite who went on trial in 1857 accused of murdering her lover, the film was the second on which Lean and Todd had worked together following The Passionate Friends a year earlier. Blythswood Square and the exterior of the real home of Madeleine are also shown.

EUROVISION SONG CONTEST: THE STORY OF FIRE SAGA (2020)
Starring: OVO Hydro, Glasgow

Scotland’s largest entertainment venue is magically transposed from its location on the River Clyde in Glasgow to the foot of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, in this Will Ferrell comedy. See also page 26.

Starring: Rouken Glen Park, East Renfrewshire

The park played key roles in the first two movies by Oscar-winning English director Danny Boyle. In Shallow Grave, a wooded area of the park is the scene of the grave referred to in the title, where stars Ewan McGregor, Kerry Fox and Christopher Eccleston dispose of the body of Hugo (Keith Allen). It is also where McGregor (as heroin addict Renton) and Sick Boy (played by Jonny Lee Miller) philosophise while adopting Sean Connery accents and firing an air rifle at unsuspecting members of the public in Trainspotting. See also pages 10, 25, 26.
Few could have imagined, back in 1962, that a low-budget spy caper called Dr No (directed by Terence Young) would herald the beginning of the world’s longest-running film franchise.

The release of No Time To Die (dir. Cary Joji Fukunaga) in 2021 marked the 25th outing for the UK’s most conspicuous secret agent and the final bow of star Daniel Craig as Ian Fleming’s 007. A byword for style, sophistication and cool, Edinburgh-born Sir Sean Connery, first of six actors to date to play Bond on the big screen, wowed audiences throughout the world and a global superstar was born.

Originally sceptical over the choice of Connery, Fleming finally succumbed to the Scotsman’s charms, even alluding to his spy’s Scots ancestry in one of his last books – You Only Live Twice (published in 1964). It was also written that Bond attended the illustrious private school, Fettes, in Edinburgh.

Aside from beautiful women and ingenious gadgets, another key ingredient of the James Bond movies is exotic locations.

Five Bond films (starring four different versions of the man himself) have been partially filmed in Scotland – with some versions of the man himself) have been written that Bond attended the illustrious private school, Fettes, in Edinburgh.

There’s just a fleeting glimpse of Scotland this time, although it’s a key moment in arguably the best of the Roger Moore movies. Released in 1977, The Spy Who Loved Me had it all: incredible stunts (the Union Jack parachute jump); gorgeous women (Barbara Bach and Caroline Munro); ingenious gadgets (the underwater Lotus); and an unforgettable bad guy (Jaws, played by Richard Kiel).

Her Majesty’s Naval Base in Clyde (also known as Faslane), on the eastern shore of Gare Loch in Argyll and Bute, is where Commander Bond (in one of the few occasions he is seen wearing full Navy uniform) discovers that the loss of British naval submarines is no accident, but part of a sinister plan by the evil Stromberg (Curd Jurgens).

The actual Skyfall estate, in which gamekeeper Kincade (Albert Finney) blows away an evil henchman with the words “welcome to Scotland”, was filmed in England.

It’s not unusual for filming locations to depict somewhere entirely different on screen, recent examples being Glasgow’s appearance as Philadelphia in World War Z (2013) or as London in Hobbs & Shaw (2019).

Many years earlier, From Russia With Love, undeniably one of the best Bond movies, sees Bond (Sean Connery) and beautiful Russian agent Tatiana Romanova (Daniela Bianchi) being pursued by sinister SPECTRE agents in a speed boat in Turkey.

Unbeknown to the vast majority of cinemagoers, the final boat chase scene, due to filming difficulties, was actually shot on Loch Craignish, near Crinan, Argyll.

The secret agent’s iconic Aston Martin DB5 even fully embraced the Scottish connection, with Q (Desmond Llewelyn) giving Bond (Pierce Brosnan) a demonstration of bagpipes that double as a flame thrower. Edinburgh-born Shirley Manson, lead singer of Garbage, performed the title song.

The scene featuring Llewelyn marked the Welsh actor’s 17th and final appearance as Q, having made his debut as the gadget master in From Russia With Love more than 30 years previously.

The film is something of an anomaly, along with 1983’s Never Say Never Again, in that this is not an “official” Bond movie. In one thrilling scene, Bond is chased along the bridges of the Norwegian islands and fjords and then, through the power of movie magic, turns off-road and into the forests of the Cairngorms, and the Ardenrive Estate on the shore of Loch Laggan (standing in for mainland Norway).

There is also 1967’s Casino Royale, starring David Niven, who is seen driving past the Falls of Dochart in the village of Killin, near Stirling.

The film is something of an anomaly, along with 1983’s Never Say Never Again, in that it is not an “official” Bond movie. Along with the 2006 Bond revamp and a 1954 TV movie, this is one of three adaptations of Ian Fleming’s first Bond novel. The spoof sees a total of six characters assume the role of the secret agent, including Niven, Peter Sellers, Woody Allen and, bizarrely, Ursula Andress, who played the iconic Honey Ryder in Dr No.

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The Spy Who Loved Me
Lewis Gilbert, 1977

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The actual Skyfall estate, in which gamekeeper Kincade (Albert Finney) blows away an evil henchman with the words “welcome to Scotland”, was filmed in England.
“The first couple of days we just sort of leaped into it. Immediately, we first of all had chosen an impossible location, about a half a mile up Glen Coe, so everything had to be hunked by sherpas up the mountain. We got up there, the very first shot of the film, the big moment, the camera turns and it jams. So we didn’t have a sound camera and all of our great laid plans were suddenly up in the air. We panicked and we just had to try and get a film made suddenly on the spot, because we had this incredible location, no camera and no experience; that’s the worst thing.”

Terry Gilliam, co-director of Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)
**THEN CAME YOU** (2020)  
*Starring:* Ardington House & Estate and Kilmorch Church, Argyll  
In a plot that could have been the basis for this guide, US TV presenter and singer Kathie Lee Gifford (stars and writes) as a widow who travels to Scotland, inspired by the movies she shot here. While staying at an Inn (Ardington House) she crosses paths with the gruff owner (Scotts actor Craig Ferguson) and the possibility of happiness again. Co-starring Scots comedy actor, Ford Kiernan (Still Game), and Liz Hurley, the rom-com (dir. Adriana Trigiani) was shot in Argyll, including Kilmorch Church at Cairndow, and features stunning views across Loch Fyne and the surrounding landscape. The cast and crew stayed on location at Dalmarnock Holiday Park during the six-week shoot, with Gifford staying at The Lodge on Loch Goil, which she was so taken with that she rewrote the film’s ending to include it. Younger viewers will be familiar with the other fictional gruff owner who roams the Ardington Estate – that of The Gruffalo – and you can meet his woodland friends, of snake, owl and fox, on The Gruffalo Trail.

**HOOD TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON** (2010)  
*Starring:* Inner Hebrides  
In the first film adaption of Cressida Cowell’s book series of the same name, we are introduced to Hiccup (Jay Baruchel), an awkward 15-year-old son of the village chieftain, Stoick the Vast (played by Scottish actor Gerard Butler), who forms a bond with a fallen and injured Night Fury dragon he calls Toothless. Cowell based the Viking setting of Berk Island on one or more islands in the Inner Hebrides (she remains tight-lipped of the actual islands), and the filmmakers (dir. Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois) pay tribute to this with the Scottish acting talents of Butler, David Tennant and Craig Ferguson.

**FALLING FOR FIGARO** (2020)  
*Starring:* Glen Coe, Highlands and Luss, Argyll  
In *Falling for Figaro* (dir. Ben Lewin), a young American fund manager (Danielle Macdonald) leaves her job and long-term boyfriend in pursuit of her lifelong dream of becoming an opera singer. Her search takes her north to the Scottish Highlands and former opera diva-turned singing teacher, Meghan Geoffrey-Bishop (Joanna Lumley).

**WHEN EIGHT BELLS TOLL** (1971)  
*Starring:* Fingal’s Cave, Isle of Staffa.  
Fingal’s Cave, an extraordinary natural haven composed of hexagonally jointed basalt columns, has long drawn visitors to this with the Scottish acting talents of Butler, David Tennant and Craig Ferguson.

**ENTRAPMENT** (1999)  
*Starring:* Duart Castle, Isle of Mull  
Duart Castle is a popular fortress that brings the 13th century to life. It’s easy to see why attracted filmmakers here in the late 1990s, when the castle was used as the hideout of international art thief Robert “Mac” MacDougal (Sean Connery) in Entrapment (dir. Jon Amiel). It is here that Mac trains his accomplice Gin Baker (Catherine Zeta-Jones) to wriggle her way through security laser beams as they plan a major heist. Equally impressive as her acrobatic skills is the backdrop of the Isle of Mull.

**I KNOW WHERE I’M GOING!** (1945)  
*Starring:* Corryvreckan Whirpool  
One of Scotland’s most remarkable natural phenomena, the Corryvreckan Whirlpool, between the islands of Scarba and Jura – and the third largest in the world – forms a formidable barrier in *I Know Where I’m Going!* (dir. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger). Today, visitors can observe this fascinating wonder of nature in safety courtesy of a boat tour.

**THE MAGGIE** (1954)  
*Starring:* Isle of Islay, and Crinan Canal, Argyll  
The Crinan Canal, which runs between Crinan and Ardrishaig, appears in this Ealing comedy classic (dir. Alexander Mackendrick) in which the crew of an aging puffer is contracted to deliver a valuable cargo between Glasgow and the remote port of Kiltarra – much to the chagrin of the American owner of the shipment. Extensive filming took place across Islay with Bowmore Harbour, Port Charlotte and Port Askaig making an appearance.

**RING OF BRIGHT WATER** (1969)  
*Starring:* Oban, Argyll  
Due to the fact it was shot almost entirely on location in the region, perhaps the film most closely associated with Argyll & The Isles is *Ring of Bright Water* (dir. Jack Couffer). Based on Scottish author and naturalist Gavin Maxwell’s best-selling, semi-autobiographical tale of a writer who brings his pet otter to the west coast of Scotland, *Ring of Bright Water* is a traditional family favourite. The Railway Pier in Oban is where Graham Merrill (Bill Travers, who was following up his animal-loving role in 1966’s *Born Free*) buys some fish for the otter, Mij. *Ring of Bright Water*’s reliance on extraordinary Argyll & The Isles scenery makes it easy for film fans to follow in the footsteps of Merrill and Mij. Just seven miles south-west of Oban, you can cross the Clachan Bridge (better known as “the Bridge over the Atlantic”) over to Seil Island.

**JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM** (2018)  
*Starring:* Loch Long, Argyll  
The fifth instalment (dir. J. A. Bayona) in the dinosaur-rampaging series sees the Glen Mallan Jetty at Loch Long in Arrochar used to transport the captured creatures for their auction at the home of Sir Benjamin Lockwood (James Cromwell).
“We chose Celtic melodies where we could. Robbie Burns provided us with
that perfect love song, Gently Johnny, which Paul Giovanni, our composer,
himself sang, and Corn Rigs is the melody that takes us on our flight past
the peaks of Skye to the palm-fringed coast of Summerisle.”

Robin Hardy, director of *The Wicker Man* (1973)

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**MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE** (1996)

**Starring:** Dumfries to Annan rail line, Dumfries & Galloway

Based on the cult television series of the 1960s, and the first in the ‘Tom Cruise runs’
American spy Ethan Hunt on a deadly mission to find out who has framed him for murder.
The climax of this big-budget action fest sees
Cruise and Jon Voight clinging to the roof of a train as it speeds towards the Channel
Tunnel. But the lush, green countryside whizzing by in the background as Jean Reno’s
helicopter hovers menacingly overhead is not Kent in the south of England, but rather the
landscape on the Dumfries to Annan line in the south of Scotland. The region appealed
to the producers as it was one of the few stretches of track in the UK without overhead
electric cables and with few bridges.

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**HALLAM FOE** (2007)

**Starring:** Tweed Valley, Scottish Borders

The Glen Estate near Innerleithen, in the mountain biking mecca that is the
Tweed Valley, is home to Jamie Bell’s
eponymous lead in *Hallam Foe* (dir. David Mackenzie), which tells the story of
a teenage loner haunted by his
mother’s death. See also page 27.

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**THE THIRTY-ONE STEPS** (1978)

**Starring:** Drumlanrig Castle, Durisdeer

and Morton Castle, Dumfries & Galloway

There is more espionage afoot in Dumfries &
Galloway in Don Sharp’s acclaimed version
of John Buchan’s classic novel. Fresh from playing the saviour of mankind in TV’s
*Jesus of Nazareth*, Robert Powell stepped
into the role of Richard Hannay as he goes
on the run from sinister Prussian agents. It
was a character most notably portrayed by Robert Donat in Alfred Hitchcock’s 1935
version (see page 25). While Sharp’s film was notable for being the only version of
the story up until that point not to feature the Forth Bridge, it was arguably the most
faithful to the original novel which, rather than
taking place in the Highlands, is actually set in Dumfries & Galloway. Also starring David
Warner, John Mills and Karen Dotrice (of
*Mary Poppins* fame), the film is set just before
the outbreak of the First World War and
features, among other locations, the village
of Durisdeer, which contains the mausoleum
of the Dukes of Queensberry; the Forest of
Ae; the 17th-century Drumlanrig Castle; and
the ruined Morton Castle, near Thornhill.
**THE HOUSING OF MIRTH** (2000)
**Starring:** Manderston, Scottish Borders

Manderston House near Duns was used as the home of the Trenors in *The House of Mirth* (dir. Terence Davies), starring Gillian Anderson as socialite Lily Bart, based on the novel of the same name by Edith Wharton. The Edwardian Country House stands in 56 acres of formal gardens, with magnificent stables and a stunning marble staircase in the world. See also page 36.

**AVENGERS: ENDGAME** (2019)
**Starring:** St Abb’s, Scottish Borders

The follow-up to *Avengers: Infinity War* which also gave Scotland a starring role (see page 27), briefly topped James Cameron’s *Avatar* as the world’s highest-grossing film of all time. The fantasy epic (dir. Anthony and Joe Russo) picks up immediately after the ‘snap’ that sees the remaining Marvel superheroes coming to terms with a universe devastated by Thanos’ actions. Chris Hemsworths returns as Thor and in his despair retreats to “New Asgard” in Norway. But that quaint fishing village is actually St Abb’s in the Scottish Borders. Following the film’s release, the village officially ‘twinned’ itself with New Asgard. Karen Gillan (Nebula) never appeared with her co-stars in Scotland, but did return to her hometown of Inverness for her directorial debut (*The Party’s Just Beginning*, 2018).

**THE VANISHING** (2019)
**Starring:** Mull of Galloway and Port Logan, Dumfries & Galloway

Loosely based on the disappearance of three lighthouse keepers on Flannan Isle in the Outer Hebrides in 1900, Gerard Butler and Peter Mullen star as the aforementioned keepers in this thriller (dir. Kristoffer Nyholm) presenting its own take on that true unsolved mystery. Filming took place along the coastline of Galloway, including Mull of Galloway, Scotland’s southern-most point. Visitors to the award-winning Mull of Galloway Experience can climb the 112 steps to the top of Scotland’s most southerly lighthouse. Nearby lighthouses, Killantringan and Corsewall also feature in part of the film, with Port Logan used as the harbour from which the men disembark for their fateful posting.

**SOLOMON KANE** (2010)
**Starring:** St Abb’s Head, Scottish Borders

The swords—and-sorcery epic (dir. Michael J. Bassett), based on the comic books, stars James Purefoy in the title role as a 17th century English mercenary who has to battle demons to save his soul and his family. Nature reserve, St Abb’s Head, features as Solomon’s ancestral Devon home where an accident befalls his brother. The clifftop also provides the backdrop to the home of a super-intelligent orangutan in the 1986 horror, *Link* (dir. Richard Franklin).

**THE WIFE** (2018)
**Starring:** Arbigland Estate, Dumfries & Galloway

Based on the novel by Meg Wolitzer, *The Wife* (dir. Björn Runge) sees Oscar-nominated Glenn Close as Joan Castleman, an intelligent, charming and diplomatic woman and devoted wife, questioning her life choices as she accompanies her husband, Joe (Jonathan Pryce) to Stockholm, where he is set to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. Despite being set in the USA and Sweden, the film was shot across Scotland (see also pages 25, 36) with the Arbigland Estate on the Solway Firth coast standing in for the on-screen couple’s Connecticut beach house in New England.

**Starring:** Floors Castle, Scottish Borders

Based on Edgar Rice Burroughs’ 1912 novel, *Tarzan of the Apes*, Hugh Hudson directed a pre-*Highlander* Christopher Lambert as he grappled with the role of literature’s most famous loincloth-wearing vine-swingers in the snappily titled *Greystoke – The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*. Having been raised by primates in the African jungle following the death of his parents, the re-christened “Jean” is shipped over to his family’s stately home in England. In reality, the stately home was shot in Scotland, with the 18th century Floors Castle in Kelso being used for the exterior and ballroom shots of Greystoke.

**THE WICKER MAN** (1973)
**Starring:** Anworth, Creetown and Burrow Head, Dumfries & Galloway

This British horror classic is most associated with the region, with director Robin Hardy shooting extensively in the towns and villages of Dumfries & Galloway. The quiet rural locations exuding an altogether more menacing quality on-screen as Sergeant Neil Howie (Edward Woodward) flies to the fictional Scottish island of Summerisle to solve the mystery of a missing schoolgirl. Instead of co-operation from the islanders, Howie instead uncovers bizarre pagan rituals and disturbing tales of human sacrifice. The fiery climactic scene was shot on the cliffs of Burrow Head, near the Isle of Whithorn, one of the most southerly points in Scotland. The nearby St Ninian’s Cave, reputed to be a retreat for Scotland’s first saint, not only serves as a place of holy pilgrimage, but also as a favourite spot for The Wicker Man fans. It was here that Howie emerges on to the beach and is led away during the climax. Several sequences were also filmed in the small village of Anworth and Kirkcudbright, while the interior of The Green Man Pub, where Willow (Britt Ekland) first tries to unleash her charms on Howie, was shot in the Ellangowan Hotel bar in Creetown. See also page 43.
Scottish Borders
Avengers: Endgame (2019)
Greystoke – the Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (1984)
Hallam Foe (2007)
The House of Mirth (2000)
Link (1986)
Mary, Queen of Scots (1971)
Mrs. Brown (1997)
Solomon Kane (2010)

WEST
Argyll & the Isles
Entrapment (1999)
Falling for Figaro (2020)
From Russia With Love (1963)
How to Train your Dragon (2010)
I Know Where I’m Going! (1945)
Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018)
The Magg (1954)
Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)
Restless Natives (1985)
Ring of Bright Water (1969)
The Spy Who Loved Me (1967)
Then Came You (2020)
To Catch a Spy (1971)
Under the Skin (2013)
When Eight Bells Toll (1971)
Whisky Galore! (2016)

Ayrshire & Arran
The Flying Scotsman (2006)
The Governess (1998)
Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998)
The Queen (2006)
The Wicker Man (1973)

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"Legends are lessons, they ring with truths."
Brave (2012)
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Scottish film locations

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