



### 50 facts about East Lothian

1. ATHELSTANEFORD has a special place in Scotland's history. It was close by this East Lothian village in the year 832 AD that a battle was fought which led to the adoption of the St Andrew's Cross, or Saltire, as Scotland's national flag

*'Tradition says that near this place in times remote, Pictish and Scottish warriors about to defeat an army of Northumbrians, saw against a blue sky a great white cross like St Andrew's, and in its image made a banner, which became the flag of Scotland'.*

2. At the western end of the Athelstaneford lies the Church of Scotland Parish Church, originally built in 1176 by Ada, wife of Henry, Prince of Scotland and the mother of William the Lion. Within the burial ground of the Church, the saltire memorial is located.
3. According to local legend, Prestonpans was originally founded in the 11th century by a pirate named Althamer, who became shipwrecked on the coast. Finding it impossible to get home, the survivors of the wreck decided to remain where they were and founded a settlement named Althamer in honour of their leader.
4. Salt panning was a very important industry in the early history of Prestonpans, by the beginning of the 15th century there were ten salt works belonging to the town capable of producing between 800 and 900 bushels of salt per week.
5. Halloween 2004 was very special for 81 Scots. Convicted of being witches and executed in the 16th and 17th centuries, their innocence was publicly declared during an October 31st ceremony in Scotland's Prestonpans township. The ceremony followed Baron Gordon Prestoungrange's grant of posthumous pardons to the 81 people on July 27, 2004.
6. The 81 pardoned people were convicted of being witches in Prestonpans during a period of time that Scottish historian Roy Pugh has described as a "mini-holocaust."<sup>3</sup> From 1563 to 1727 as many as 4,500 Scots - 80% women - were lawfully convicted of witchcraft and executed. That is an average of *more than two* innocent people in Scotland being convicted of a capital crime *every month* for 164 years.
7. Two parallel geological fault lines 1¼ miles apart traverse East Lothian from southwest to northeast, the Dunbar-Gifford fault and the Lammermuir fault.
8. East Lothian has a total of 19 golf courses. Courses include- Dunbar, North Berwick, Musselburgh, Gullane and The Open Championship course at Muirfield.
9. Musselburgh Links is the oldest surviving golf course in the world,
10. There are 21 designated Sites of Scientific Interest, including locations such as the Bass Rock and Danskine Loch, in addition to Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve and John Muir Country Park.
11. Between 1951 and 1991, the population of East Lothian increased from 52,000 to more than 85,000, its chief settlements being Musselburgh, Haddington (the administrative centre), Tranent, Gullane, Aberlady, North Berwick, East Linton, Prestonpans and Dunbar.
12. East Lothian benefits from a mild climate with some of the lowest rainfall in Scotland.
13. Formerly known as Haddingtonshire, East Lothian was one of the four districts of Lothian region between 1975 and 1996.
14. East Lothian was in the forefront of the Agricultural Revolution during the 18th and 19th centuries when landowners reclaimed land, enclosed fields, introduced crop rotations and created planned estate villages such as Ormiston.
15. The history of East Lothian has been influenced by its proximity to the mouth of the Forth estuary and its position on the main routeways to Edinburgh skirting

either side of the Lammermuirs, the ruins of sizeable castles such as Tantallon, Dirleton and Dunbar occupying strategic locations.

16. Evidence of early occupation is to be found in the Iron Age settlements in the northern foothills of the Lammermuirs at sites such as White Castle and The Chesters.
17. The whale-backed Traprain Law at 734 feet above sea level is of volcanic origin.
18. A hoard of silver was found by Traprain Law in 1919. This is thought to have represented a payment from the Romans to their local allies the *Votadini tribe*, who had a settlement on the Law.
19. Robert Louis Stevenson lived for a short time in the second half of the 19th century in The Quadrant, North Berwick. Fidra, an island situated off the coast from North Berwick, is thought to have inspired his book 'Treasure Island'.
20. The Bass Rock island is a volcanic plug which lies one mile to the east of North Berwick. This crag has a long history, as it is here that St. Baldred died in 757 AD. In 1316 it was given to the Bishop of St. Andrews. By 1651 it was in the possession of the government who turned the castle, which had been there since 1405, into a state prison. This prison was known as 'Scotland's Bastille'. One of its more famous inmates was the heretic John Blackadder who died on the island in 1685.
21. Today the Bass Rock is world famous for its colony of gannets; the bird takes its Latin name, *Sula Bassana*, from the island. And is the 3rd largest gannetry in the world
22. In North Berwick in the 1590's several local people were accused of causing a storm which delayed a ship carrying King James VI and his bride from Denmark. After torture, Agnes Sampson, a traditional healer, confessed to the King himself. She claimed that the Earl of Bothwell had encouraged 200 witches to gather at the Auld Kirk at Halloween where the devil had told them to conjure up the storm by throwing a cat into the sea.
23. Berwick Law is a volcanic plug of solidified lava shaped by the movement of ice in the Ice age.
24. Berwick Law is 613 feet above sea level and throughout history has been used as a look out point, from the Iron Age to the Second World War, when a concrete lookout house was erected on the summit which is still there today.
25. A whale's jaw bone was first erected on the Law in 1709, and when the original one blew down in 1933 another was put up two years later.
26. East Lothian is known as the Larder of Edinburgh. The stunning silhouette of the Old Town skyline is recognisable from much of the larder's domain.
27. The mother of Robert Burns is buried at Bolton parish church as is his brother Gilbert.
28. John Knox, the great Scots religious reformer, was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in St Mary's Haddington. His religious studies led him to join the Reformation movement and he is today considered by many as the father of the Presbyterian church world-wide.
29. John Muir, born in Dunbar, was to become father of America's National Parks. 50% of overseas visitors to his house in Dunbar are from California.
30. John Cockburn of Ormiston is considered the Father of Scottish Husbandry and founded one of the most successful agricultural improvement societies in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
31. Andrew Meikle of Pencaitland invented the threshing machine.
32. Robert Moffat of Ormiston became a missionary in South Africa. He devised a system to translate the bible into Bantu. His eldest daughter married David Livingstone.
33. St Mary's of Haddington, The Lamp of the Lothians, underwent a miraculous restoration starting in the 1970s to allow the ruins to be reclaimed. The church is now longer than St Giles in Edinburgh.
34. Nigel Tranter, a prolific author walked on the coastline at Aberlady most days when he was working on a book. He could be heard talking to himself as he walked.
35. The Museum of Flight at East Fortune is the final resting place of Concorde. East Fortune was a WWII airfield.

36. North Berwick's Scottish Seabird Centre was opened in 2000 by HRH Prince Charles.
37. Winton House near Pencaitland was designed by William Wallace, who also built George Heriot's school in Edinburgh. It is possible to stay at Winton.
38. The Rev. John Witherspoon of Gifford co-ordinated the voyage of the Hector the first ship to sail from Scotland to Nova Scotia. He was invited to immigrate to America as Principal of Princeton University and was a signatory to the American Declaration of Independence.
39. Musselburgh Racecourse (the oldest in Scotland) has been a venue for racing since 1816. The racecourse has 26 race days planned for 2007. The course is a very popular leisure venue and underwent a £5 million refurbishment to ensure first class facilities for all visitors.
40. Tranent was the site for what historians later dubbed "Scotland's Forgotten Massacre". Twelve unnamed people were slain by regular cavalry unit following the Tranent Militia Riot of 1797.
41. Dunbar castle, which stands guard over the town's harbour, once sheltered Mary Queen of Scots when she fled Edinburgh after the murder of Rizzio.
42. Cockenzie's name derives from the Celtic perhaps CULCHOINNICH - the nook of Kenneth. The town has grown out of a small fishing village.
43. The Gothenburg in Prestonpans was the first of its kind established in Britain in 1908. Originally from Sweden it was set up to help people drink in a more controlled environment by providing food as well as ale.
44. September 2007 will see the 7<sup>th</sup> East Lothian Food and Drink Festival, promoting the produce and purveyors of Edinburgh's larder.
45. Prestongrange is a site of major importance in the story of Scotland's Industrial Revolution. It was the location of a sixteenth century harbour, a seventeenth century glass works, eighteenth and nineteenth century potteries and a nineteenth/twentieth century coal mine and brick works. Remnants of these former industries can still be seen, and many of the structures are still intact including the rare Hoffman Kiln and the Cornish Beam Engine, unique in Scotland.
46. Fowler's Real Ales are brewed in Prestoungrange Gothenberg's in-house micro-brewery.
47. A shelter on the sea front at Prestonpans, presented to the town by Burns' enthusiasts was recently restored and painted with scenes from Burns' poems Tam O Shanter and Twa Dogs.
48. Miles of sandy beaches and steady onshore breezes makes East Lothian a haven for the new breed of thrill seekers in extreme watersports like kite surfing.
49. The Battle of Prestonpans saw Bonnie Prince Charlie's army defeat the government forces under the command of Sir John Cope. A song commemorates Johnny Cope's ignominious retreat from the field.
50. Visible across East Lothian is the Hopetoun monument which sits atop the Garleton Hills. The monument is to the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Hopetoun who fought with distinction during the Napoleonic wars.