

Midlothian – Interesting 'Facts'

- 1 **Lothian**, once a **Celtic Kingdom**, is thought to have taken its name from its historical founder, Leudonus, of uncertain origin.
- 2 Situated **less than ten miles** from Scotland's capital city (Edinburgh), Midlothian has much to offer visitors to the area. It's vistas to the city are unrivalled as is the panoramic landscape of its Pentland Hills.
- 3 Midlothian Snowsports Centre, at Hillend, is the **longest artificial slope** for skiers and boarders in **Europe**.
- 4 **Dolly the sheep** was cloned at Roslin Research centre.
- 5 Penicuik primary school stands on the site of the former Mauricewood Colliery where there was a major disaster in 1890. 62 miners were killed by smoke and fire.
- 6 Newbattle Abbey monks were the **first to mine coal** for salt pans at Prestonpans.
- 7 Melville castle was designed by **William Playfair** for Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville in 1786. The Castle has been restored and is now a country house hotel.
- 8 Mavisbank House, designed by William Adam, was the **very first Palladian villa** to be built in Scotland. Currently held in trust it recently featured in the BBC program Restoration.
- 9 Dalkeith Palace, owned by the Duke of Buccleuch, is currently under lease to Wisconsin University.
- 10 Crichton Castle was used in the filming of **Rob Roy** which starred Liam Neeson in the title role.
- 11 The **Heart of Midlothian**, which consists of a heart-shape set in the cobble-stones of the street, is located just to the west of St. Giles Kirk in Edinburgh on the Royal Mile and marks the spot of the town's tolbooth.
- 12 **Sir Walter Scott**, author of the novel the *Heart of Midlothian*, lived near **Lasswade** for several years.
- 13 **Dorothy Wordsworth** said, 'I never passed through a more delicious dell than the Glen of Roslin, though the water of the stream is dingy and muddy.'
- 14 Stobs Mill in Gorebridge was established as Scotland's **first gunpowder mill** in 1793 and operated until 1875.
- 15 Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (1742) was born in Dalkeith. Dundas gained the sobriquet 'Henry the Ninth' and 'The Uncrowned King of Scotland' when his political ambitions took him to an unassailable position of power for 30 years in Scotland.
- 16 **The largest ever Scottish army of 40,000 men** was mustered at Fala Moor in 1547. The following battle of Pinkie was the climax of England's 'Rough Wooing' of the Scots, as they attempted to procure the hand of the young Mary Stuart for Edward VI of England.
- 17 Prince Henry Sinclair, Lord of Rosslyn is believed to have **discovered America in 1398**, over one hundred years before Christopher Columbus.
- 18 In 1801 Midlothian's total population was 17,701. By 2001 the population was 80,941.
- 19 In 2001, the service industry was the largest sector of the local economy, employing 71% of all workers, while in 1841 31% worked in the service industry.
- 20 Dalkeith Masonic Lodge is one of the **oldest purpose built lodges** in the world.
- 21 Heart of Midlothian Football Club was founded in 1874 and took its name from the Royal Mile **dance hall** frequented by the team founders.
- 22 Rosslyn chapel attracts more than 115,000 visitors a year and is famous world-wide for the beauty of its carvings and its frequent references to the Knights Templar & Freemasonry; not to mention, its starring role in the **Da Vinci Code**

- 23 One of the area's most popular tourist attractions, the Scottish mining museum is based at the Lady Victoria Colliery, **one of the finest surviving examples** of a Victorian colliery in Europe. It has recently undergone a £5million restoration and now has a new visitor centre, restaurant and shop as well as major new exhibitions and interactive displays.
- 24 Penicuik House, described as the Scots Palladian House at its best, has stood as a ruin since its destruction by fire in 1899. The remains were placed in Trust in 1985 and a partnership has been formed which hopes to commence restorative and consolidation work in 2006. This project will create **public access to the gardens and policies** in addition to securing the structure itself.
- 25 Midlothian remains predominantly Scots, with over 10% more than the national average of school leavers choosing employment over further education, than the Scots average.
- 26 Arniston House is an 18th century **William Adam** mansion, near Gorebridge. It is open to visitors during the summer and has been home to the Dundas family for over four hundred years.
- 27 IKEA, the Scandinavian furniture manufacturers, have had a successful partnership with Midlothian since situating its store near Roslin. The company employ almost 500 people.
- 28 Rosslyn Castle dates back to 1304 and is the ancestral home of the St Clair family and **is still used** by the present Earl.
- 29 At 110 feet, Borthwick Castle is the **tallest** castle in Scotland.
- 30 Robert Smith (1722-1777) from Dalkeith was the architect of **Benjamin Franklin's house in Philadelphia**.
- 31 During the Highland Clearances of the mid 19th century the ship *Midlothian* carried hundreds of forced Scottish émigrés to the Americas, Australia and New Zealand.
- 32 **Dalkeith** means *field by the wood* from Brythonic origins. Early documents showed *Dalkied* in 1140, *Dolchet* in 1144 and *Dalketh* in 1145.
- 33 The town **Lasswade** probably means, *the ford by the meadow*, from Old English.
- 34 There are towns named Midlothian in Texas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Virginia and Maryland.
- 35 James Small of Dalkeith **revolutionised ploughing** through the invention of the two-horse swing plough in 1784. Previously 12 oxen and many men were required to plough the fields.
- 36 Glencorse, Midlothian was the birthplace of Charles Thomson Rees Wilson (1869-1959), inventor of the cloud chamber (**Nobel Prize in Physics**, 1927).
- 37 Penicuik's Professor Geoff Palmer OBE was born Godfrey Henry Oliver Palmer in St Elizabeth, Jamaica in 1940. His early research work was to study the physiological mechanisms that control the transformation of barley into malt, which is used at an industrial scale to make bread, beer and whisky. He lives in the Lothians, which he says are, 'some of the best barley growing areas in the world'.
- 38 Midlothian Council is the **largest employer** in the area with more than 4,500 employees.
- 39 The acclaimed Scots artist, **Sir William MacTaggart**, spent the last twenty years of his life at his home, "Dean Park", Broomieknowe, Bonnyrigg. His funeral, in 1910, was attended by many artists of the day including the then president of the RSA, Sir James Guthrie.
- 40 Butterfly World is a marvellous experience for those that venture in. Have a butterfly land on your head or pet one of the snakes. Not a place for the herpetophobic.
- 41 **With over 40 birds of prey** Dalhousie Castle Falconry is situated in the grounds of this famous Scottish Castle for the guests to enjoy during their stay. Special events include ring delivery during wedding ceremonies - better than trusting the best man!
- 42 The Midlothian area has around 30,000 households with 10% of this number being built in the last decade.

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- 43 James Finlayson, of Penicuik, gave his name and reputation to the Finnish city of Tampere and the company he founded there, Finlayson-Forssa.
- 44 Penicuik is currently home to **Edinburgh Crystal** where there is a visitor centre, which allows an insight into the craft of crystal manufacture.
- 45 The 2004 Canadian film drama, *Margaret's Museum*, although set in Nova Scotia was in fact **filmed at the Scottish Mining Museum**. It stars Helena Bohnam Carter as Margaret McNeil, a woman who is happy to be single in a town full of miners - daily risking their lives in the pit, until she is wooed by a charming and sincere bagpiper come dishwasher.
- 46 Scotland's new parliament at Holyrood, incorporates in its fabric, some stonework from the **original parliament** that was built in 1639. When the original building was demolished carved stonework was taken to Arniston House in Midlothian for 'safe-keeping'.
- 47 **Penicuik** may mean *Hill of the cuckoo* from Brythonic roots Pen=*head or hill* and cog=*cuckoo*.
- 48 Immediately to the northwest of the village of Fala on the A68 is a straight section of road, which was once part of the **Roman Dere Street** and later the royal route to Edinburgh or Via Regia.
- 49 During World War II **Borthwick Castle** was considered strong enough to store Scottish Public Records as well as treasures from the National Library and the Royal Museums of Scotland.
- 50 Sir James Arnot Hamilton (b.1925) of Penicuik was the designer of **Concorde's Delta wing design**. The design had few moving parts and allowed for efficient lift at take off and supersonic speeds.
- 51 MSPs voted on 14th June 2006 to **reinstate** the Waverley rail line from Newcraighall into the Borders at an estimated cost of £155 million. Scottish Borders Council, which is leading the project, hailed the vote as "the single most important economic and social decision to impact on the Borders and Midlothian communities for decades".