



HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

SMAILHOLM TOWER

LARGE PRINT AUDIO GUIDE SCRIPT



100. Welcome

Narrator: **BILLY**

Hello and welcome to Smailholm. You should now be standing in the main room, or Hall, on the first floor of this fortified tower. Today, you'll have a chance to discover the secrets of this windblown site, its history, its location and the stories and legends that pervade it and that have been the inspiration for the miniature scenes that we will discover here and in the other rooms. But before we start our tour, you may want to hear how this audioguide works. If so, enter number 99 on your keypad. Or, to continue, press the green play button.

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99. Instructions

Narrator: **BILLY**

This guide is very easy to use.

You can pause a commentary at any time by pressing the red button. It will resume if you press the green button. The volume controls are marked with a loudspeaker symbol, and you can rewind and fast-forward within a commentary by pressing the buttons marked with the double arrows.

If you want to listen to these instructions again, enter number 99 on your keypad. Or to start your tour, press the green play button.

XX 101

101. Smailholm

Narrator: **BILLY**

Have a look back to the landing that leads into this hall. You'll see, in the outer wall, an opening shaped like a large inverted keyhole. *(Pause)* This is a gun-loop or hole, and it's an indication that Smailholm Tower was not just built to withstand the harsh Scottish weather.

For most of the Middle Ages and well into the 17th century, the frontier region between Scotland and England, known as the Borders, was subject to continuous violence. Farmsteads were pillaged, cattle stolen, and their owners killed. But this was no scourge from outside, these raids were carried out between the Scottish and English Border families themselves, the so-called Border Reivers. Feuding clans were raiding and counter-raiding the farmsteads, resulting in a repeated cycle of theft and bloodshed.

Smailholm was built by a Border family called the Pringles, most probably around 1450. They were prosperous landowners, and if you walk over to the fireplace and look out of the window closest to it, you'll be able to see the

remains of some of the other buildings that would have formed the farmstead.

Today, however, Smailholm is not so much associated with the Pringles, as with another important Border family. In 1645, Sir William Scott of Harden bought Smailholm and leased the Tower and the nearby farm of Sandyknowe to his kinsman Walter “Beardie” Scott, the great-grandfather of Sir Walter Scott. If you walk over to the window opposite, you’ll be able to catch a glimpse of Sandyknowe, still a working farm today. *(Pause)*

It is this connection with the Scott family, and more particularly Sir Walter Scott, that will concern us today. As you will have noticed, there are display cases in this room. The costumed dolls are the work of the artist Anne Carrick, and they were installed here in 1983 as a gift from the Saltire Society, a charitable organisation whose aim it is to preserve Scottish traditions. They tell the story of Sir Walter Scott’s fascination with Smailholm and, as we shall see, his devotion to the Border region’s songs and folklore.

But it’s time to meet Sir Walter himself. Walk towards the display case right next to the door you came in by and press

the play button when you're ready to hear more.

XX 1

1. Young Walter with Aunt Janet

Narrator: BILLY

The little boy you see here is Sir Walter Scott. You may have noticed that he's leaning on a crutch.

Male Voice (Sir Walter Scott): HAMISH

I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed; and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning, I was discovered to be affected with a fever (...). It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg.

Narrator: BILLY

Walter had contracted polio. His parents consulted various doctors, and finally decided to send him to the country:

Male Voice (Sir Walter Scott): HAMISH

and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was (...) an inmate in the farm-house at Sandy-Knowe.

Narrator: **BILLY**

Walter loved Sandyknowe; his grandmother and his aunt Janet, whom we see here with her little nephew, never tired of amusing him with books and the recital of ancient ballads.

Male Voice (Sir Walter Scott): **HAMISH**

My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air (...).and, in a word, I who in the city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child.

Narrator: **BILLY**

Walter stayed in Sandyknowe for four years , and after that made frequent visits to his family there.

From now on, you'll be free to listen to the commentaries in any order you want. Down here, you'll find more cases

relating to Sir Walter Scott's time at Smailholm, and in the two rooms upstairs, cases showing scenes from some of the Border Ballads he collected. You'll have a chance to hear extracts and see how they relate to the history, geography and myths of the region. All display cases have been marked with a number and an audioguide symbol. All you need to do is enter the number and the commentary will start automatically. If you listen to everything, your tour will last approximately one hour.

We hope you'll enjoy your visit!

2. Walter Reading Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*

Narrator: **BILLY**

Sir Walter Scott often credited Smailholm, and the influence of his grandmother and aunt, with the awakening of his imagination and his interest in folklore. Here we see him reading Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

Male Voice (Sir Walter Scott): **HAMISH**

I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the garden (...). The summer-day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet.

3. Mrs Hogg Chants a Ballad to Walter Scott, Willie Laidlaw and James Hogg

Female Voice (Mrs Hogg) singing ALISON

Extract from Dowie Dens of Yarrow

To be used as a sound effect running under the narrative

Narrator: BILLY

Spurred on by his interest in the folklore of the Border region, Walter Scott, whom we see here dressed in green, began to collect ballads. Accompanied by his friend and fellow enthusiast William Laidlaw, he visited local farmers, like Mrs Hogg here and her son James, and transcribed what they recollected. In 1802, he published these collected ballads in the books titled *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

It's important to note that, although much of what has come down to us has been preserved in the form of poetry, Border Ballads were meant to be sung, not recited, and some of the tunes you're going to hear have been passed on from generation to generation since the 16th century.

4. The Lay of the Last Minstrel

Male Voice – (Sir Walter Scott reciting): **HAMISH**

The way was long, the wind was cold,
 The Minstrel was infirm and old;
 His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
 Seem'd to have known a better day;
 The harp, his sole remaining joy,
 Was carried by an orphan boy.

Narrator: **BILLY**

It is with these lines that Sir Walter Scott's epic poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* opens. He started it in 1802, at the request of the Duchess of Buccleuch. It is set in the middle of the 16th century and tells the story of the last of the Scottish bards to sing the ballads once so popular in the Border regions. Shunned and ridiculed for his art, he finally comes to the castle of a young Duchess who takes pity on him and invites him in.

Male Voice : **HAMISH**

The old man raised his face, and smiled;
 And lighten'd up his faded eye,

With all the poet's ecstasy!

(...)

And, while his heart responsive rung,

“Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

Narrator: **BILLY**

And so begin the tales that will last three nights and three days...

In some ways, this last minstrel is an apt image for Sir Walter Scott's own endeavour to record and preserve the Border ballads, and as you walk out of this room, and up the stairs into the next room, you will find yourself immersed in some of these Ballads, as they were recorded and written down by Sir Walter Scott.

5. Kinmont Willie

Narrator: **BILLY**

In spring 1596, William Armstrong of Kinmont, or Kinmont Willie, a notorious border reiver, was captured and imprisoned in Carlisle Castle. You can see him here, in a white shirt, as he escapes down the prison walls, supported by his fellow reiver, Red Rowan.

Standing beneath the ladder with a lantern is Willie's friend, a young Scottish chieftain, Scott of Buccleuch. Hearing of Kinmont Willie's capture, he had assembled a party of 80 and, under the cover of night, had raided Carlisle Castle to free him.

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garr'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie. (...)

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell

To mount the first, before us a'. (...)

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's aims played clang!

Narrator: **BILLY**

What had provoked Buccleuch and his followers, was that Kinmont Willie had been captured while returning from a truce day. To hear more about this particular Border practice, press the play button.

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205. Layer: Truce Days

Narrator: BILLY

From the middle of the 13th century onwards, days of truce were regularly held in the Border districts, also known as Marches. On such days English and Scottish representatives would meet to settle disputes. As part of the ritual surrounding these truce days, assurance of peace was given by both sides until sunrise the next day, thereby promising that whoever attended the truce day would be able to travel home without being attacked. It is this law that was violated when Kinmont Willie was captured, and it was this breach his kinsmen and friends wanted to avenge.

The fact that truce days were always called between the Scottish and the English, would seem to suggest that the disputes were chiefly between these two nations. This is not, in fact, the case. Allegiances in the Border Region were complex and rarely organised along national lines. It was family ties, rather than national allegiances, that account for the feuds and friendships in the Marches, and your name, rather than your nationality, would have determined whom you could trust and whom you had to fight. It's interesting to

note here, that, although strictly prohibited by law, marriages between the Scots and the English were common in the Borders.

6. Lament of the Queen's Marie

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

Marie Hamilton's to the kirk gane,
 Wi' ribbons on her hair;
 The king thought mair o' Marie Hamilton,
 Than ony that were there

Narrator: BILLY

We're at the court of Mary, Queen of Scots.
 The Queen is attended by her ladies-in waiting: Marie
 Seaton, Marie Carmichael, Marie Beaton and Marie
 Hamilton, the Queen's Four Maries as they're called. But
 look below, at the foot of the pillar.
 Forlorn and forsaken, one of them, Marie Hamilton,
 languishes in a cell. What can have happened?

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

Word is to the kitchen gane,
 And word is to the ha',
 And word is to the noble room,
 Amang the ladyes a',
 That Marie Hamilton's brought to bed,
 And the bonny babe's mist and awa.

Narrator: **BILLY**

Unlike many of the Border Ballads, the story of Mary Hamilton's murder of her illegitimate child is not based on historical fact, but on a combination of several stories, among them the rumours surrounding the hanging of one of Queen Mary's chambermaids, the same fate that's awaiting Mary Hamilton...

Female Voice (singing): **ALISON**

O, often have I dress'd my queen,
 And put gold upon her hair;
 But now I've gotten for my reward
 The gallows to be my share.

Yestreen the queen had four Maries,
 The night she'll hae but three;
 Yestreen the queen had four Maries,
 The night she'll hae but three...

7. The Ladies (from Sir Patrick Spens)

Male Voice (singing – buoyant): **GEORDIE**

To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway o'er the faem;
 The king's daughter of Noroway,
 'Tis thou maun bring her hame

Narrator: **BILLY**

Anxiously, two ladies sit on the shore, waiting for their loved-ones to come home. They have been sent to Norway, with the King's best sailor, Sir Patrick Spens, to accompany the Norwegian King's daughter on her voyage to Scotland.

Male Voice (singing, as above): **GEORDIE**

To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway o'er the faem;
 The king's daughter of Noroway,
 'Tis thou maun bring her hame

Narrator: **BILLY**

But it's winter, and Sir Patrick Spens and his crew have misgivings about the voyage.

Male Voice(s) (singing, as above) GEORDIE

To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway o'er the faem;
 The king's daughter of Noroway,
 'Tis thou maun bring her hame

Male Voice (reciting): GEORDIE (or possibly BILLY)

I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
 Wi' the auld moon in her arm,
 And if we gang to sea, master,
 I fear we'll come to harm.

Male Voice: GEORDIE

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
 A league but barely three,
 When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
 And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmasts lap,
 It was sik a deadly storm;

And the waves came o'er the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

Female Voice (reciting, very quietly): ALISON

O lang, lang may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spence
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
Wi' their goud kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see na mair!

*Male Voice (from far away - singing dying slowly away):
GEORDIE*

To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame

8 Johnnie Armstrang

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

Sum speikis of lords, sum speikis of lairds,
 And sick lyke men of hie degrie;
 Of a gentleman I sing a sang,
 Sum tyme called laird of Gilnockie.

Narrator: BILLY

A historic figure, Johnnie Armstrong of Gilnockie was one of the greatest of the Border reivers. We see him here, dressed in his finery, kneeling before King James V.

In 1529, King James V went on a tour of the border marches with the specific intent of bringing peace to this region, and on this occasion he sent for Johnnie Armstrong.

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

The king he wrytes a luving letter,
 With his ain hand sae tenderly,
 And he hath sent it to Johnnie Armstrang,
 To cum and speik with him speedily.

John wore a girdle about his middle,

Imbroidered ower wi' burning gold,
 Bespangled wi' the same metal;
 Maist beautiful was to behold.

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

“May I find grace, my sovereign liege,
 Grace for my loyal man and me?
 For my name it is Johnie Armstrang,
 And subject of your's, my liege,” said he.

Narrator: **BILLY**

But the king turns a stern face.

Male Voice (booming, angry): **BILLY**

“Away, away, thou traitor strang!
 Out o' my sight soon may'st thou be!
 I grantit nevir a traitor's life,
 And now I'll not begin wi' thee.”

Narrator: **BILLY**

Armstrong offers all manner of gifts and compensation to the king and starts pleading for his life, but the king's answer is always the same.

Male Voice – M2 (stronger, angrier): **BILLY**

“Away, away, thou traitor strang!
 Out o’ my sight soon may’st thou be!
 I grantit nevir a traitor’s life,
 And now I’ll not begin wi’ thee.”

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

“Ye lied, ye lied, now king,” he says.
 “Altho’ a king and prince ye be!
 For I’ve luvd naething in my life,
 “I weel dare say it, but honesty—

Female Voice (reciting): **ALISON**

John murdered was at Carlinrigg,
 And all his gallant cumpanie;
 But Scotland’s heart was ne’er sae wae,
 To see sae mony brave men die—

Narrator: **BILLY**

It's a tragic story that's told here. And one that's wholly sympathetic to Johnie Armstrong. But knowing the historical details behind the case might help to throw a different light on the King's unwillingness to forgive. To hear more, press the play button.

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208. Layer: Johnnie Armstrong

Narrator: BILLY

The clan of the Armstrongs was the most fierce and dangerous reiver family in the Borders. During the time of Johnnie Armstrong, their supporting force would have been up to 3,000 men strong, and it has been said that they are responsible for more theft and bloodshed in the Borders than any two families combined.

It is true that the Border reivers were violent and aggressive and always willing to put their own laws before those of their country – and James V would have felt the need to combat this. But they also lived in an area that was largely left to its own devices, receiving little support from the governments in either Edinburgh or London; a no-man's land both regents were quite happy to keep as a buffer zone between their countries.

9. The Lament of the Border Widow

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

My love he built me a bonny bower,
 And clad it a' wi' lilye flour;
 A brawer bower ye ne'er did see,
 Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man, by middle day,
 He spied his sport, and went away;
 And brought the king that very night,
 Who brake my bower, and slew my knight.

He slew my knight, to me sae dear;
 He slew my knight, and poin'd his gear;
 My servants all for life did flee,
 And left me in extremitie.

I sew'd his sheet, making my mane;
 I watched the corpse, myself alane;
 I watched his body, night and day;
 No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I satte;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him with the sod sae green. (...)

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

Narrator: **BILLY**

If you'd like to hear about the possible historical background of this ballad, press the play button.

209. Layer: The Lament of the Border Widow

Narrator: BILLY

Border reivers came from all social classes, and the widow who so courageously buries her own husband here is not a peasant woman, but a lady. And we may even be able to identify her. There have been speculations that the story relates to an incident in 1529 when a border reiver, Cokburne of Henderland, was surprised over dinner by King James V, on his expedition to the Border regions, and hanged over the gate of his own tower.

Many of the ballads romanticise the life of the Border reivers, their spirit of adventure, their courage and fierce loyalty to their clan. And undoubtedly some of this existed and there must have been a tremendous sense of community. But for many members of this community, and especially the women, this also meant hardship and heartbreak. In 1581, Isabell Routledge, a widow, was visited by thirty riders from the Elliot clan, who took all her possessions, including her only horse, and left her with just the remains of her ransacked home. And yet she was lucky. We know from other sources that a few years later Hecky Noble had 200 cattle stolen and nine houses destroyed while her son and

daughter-in-law, who was pregnant at the time, were burned alive.

10. The Douglas (from Battle of Otterbourne)

Male Voice (reciting): **GEORDIE**

It fell upon the Lammas tide,
 When the muir-men win their hay,
 The doughty earl of Douglas rode,
 Into England, to catch a prey.

Narrator: **BILLY**

And here he is, the fearless earl of Douglas, the red heart of the Douglas clan embroidered on his chest and holding the Scottish Royal banner with the lion rampant. In 1387, James, Earl of Douglas and his brother invaded Northumberland with 3,000 men.

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

And he has burn'd the dales of Tyne,
 And part of Bambrough shire;
 And three good towers on Roxburgh fells,
 He left them all on fire

And he march'd up to Newcastle,
 And rode it round about;
 "O wha's the lord of this castle,

“Or wha’s the lady o’t?”

Narrator: **BILLY**

In Newcastle, Douglas meets Henry Percy, the valiant Hotspur of Shakespeare’s plays, who’s lying in garrison there. *SFX fade* The Scottish set up camp in Otterbourne. But on the night of the 15th August 1388, they are attacked by Percy’s army.

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

When Percy wi’ the Douglas met,
I wat he was fu’ fain!
They swakked their swords, till sair they swat,
And the blood ran down like rain.

But Percy, with his good broad sword,
That could so sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.

Male Voice: **BILLY**

“O bury me by the braken bush,
“Beneath the blooming briar;

“Let never living mortal ken,
“That ere a kindly Scot lies here.” (...)

Male Voice: **GEORDIE**

This deed was done at Otterbourne,
About the breaking of the day;
Earl Douglas was buried at the braken bush,
And the Percy led captive away.

11. Annie and her Sister (from Lord Thomas and Fair Annie)

Narrator: BILLY

From the top of the highest tower in the castle, fair Annie looks out for the ship that will bring her lover's new bride. Seven sons she has born him, but now he's gone across the sea to bring home a wife.

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

“It's I will bake your bridal bread,
And brew your bridal ale;
And I will welcome your brisk bride,
That you bring o'er the dale.”

And aye she served the lang tables,
With white bread and with brown;
And aye she turned her round about,
Sae fast the tears fall down.

“You're welcome to your ha's, ladye';
You're welcome to your bowers'
You're welcome to your hame, ladye:
For a' that's here is yours.”

When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
 And a' men bound to bed,
 Lord Thomas and his new-come bride,
 To their chamber they were gaed.

And wae and sad fair Annie sat,
 And drearie was her sang:
 And ever, as she sobb'd and grat,
 "Wae to the man that did the wrang!"

Narrator: **BILLY**

But the young bride takes an interest in Annie and starts to question her about her family.

Female Voice: **ALISON**

"O wha was't was your father, Annie,
 Or what was't was your mother?
 And had ye ony sister, Annie,
 Or had ye ony brother?"

Narrator: **BILLY**

She herself reveals that she once had a sister, abducted by a cruel knight. And so, among tears and promises of love, the two sisters are reunited.

12. Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead

Male Voice— a desperate cry: **GEORDIE**

“Its I, Jamie Telfer o’ the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
There’s naething left at the fair Dodhead,
But a waefu’ wife and bairnies three.”

Narrator: **BILLY**

Pillaging and theft were all too common in the Border region, and were often done on a grand scale. One contemporary recalls one night in November 1544 when a reiving party...

Male Voice: **BILLY**

... took up Smailholm [village and tower] and took away 100 prisoners, brought away 600 cattles, 100 horses and much household furnishings.

Narrator: **BILLY**

On another occasion the same year, 123 cattle and 8 horses were stolen, and two years later the theft of 60 cattle and the driving away of 4 prisoners was reported.

For the victims of a raid, there were three courses of action. They could lodge a complaint with the Warden, the official administering the law of the respective district, or March. This solution was mostly taken by weak landowners or those with few friends to support them. Or they could wait and plan a revenge attack, hoping to recover their property with interest. Or they could decide to pursue the robbers on the spot, a legal course of action called the Hot Trod. It is this we're witnessing here. James Telfer has rounded up his neighbours and they're chasing the reivers across the hills and valleys of the Border marches.

Incidentally, his neighbours would not have had much choice in the matter. In some districts, the failure to follow a trod was punishable by death, and anyone impeding it would have been liable at least for the goods stolen.

Reiver families often had to pay a heavy price for the way of life of the Border Marches. If you'd like to hear more, press the play button.

212. Layer: Jamie Telfer

Narrator: **BILLY**

In the front of the case, on the right hand side, we can see Jamie Telfer's wife and their three children. They stand forlorn, and somewhat frightened, as the riders pass by. Apart from the perilous practice of the Hot Trod, which always carried the risk that those in pursuit would not come home, families lived in constant fear of raiding and counter-raiding, family feuds, pillaging, burning, blackmail and kidnapping, as well as the official punishment of execution and the unofficial practice of lynching. Rather poignantly, the word 'bereaved' has the same Old English root as the word 'reiver'.

Male Voice – a desperate cry: **GEORDIE**

"Its I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
There's naething left at the fair Dodhead,
But a waefu' wife and bairnies three."

13. The Young Tamlane

Voices – record this with three voices (female, M2, M3 – reciting) – to be used as if fading in and out (mono - right and left headphone) – use mainly passages marked in black

GEORDIE, ALISON & HAMISH

“But we, that live in Fairy-land,

“No sickness know, nor pain;

“I quit my body when I will,

“And take to it again.

“I quit my body when I please,

“Or unto it repair,

“We can inhabit, at our ease,

“In either earth or air.

“Our shapes and size we can convert,

“To either large or small;

“An old nut-shell’s the same to us,

“As is the lofty hall.

“We sleep in rose-buds, soft and sweet,

“We revel in the stream;

“We wanton lightly on the wind,

“Or glide on a sunbeam.

Narrator: **BILLY**

In the foreground, you can see a young man in a green cloak. This is Tamlane. Years ago, he was abducted by the fairies and since then has become the lover of the Fairy Queen. But every seven years, they have to pay a forfeit to hell...

Male Voice (cry of desperation): **GEORDIE**

“And I am sae fat, and fair of flesh,
“I fear ‘twill be mysell.

Narrator: **BILLY**

Only the girl at his feet, Janet, the mortal who is expecting his child, can save him. It is the night of Halloween, and as the fairies ride by, she’ll have to snatch Tamlane from his white horse and hang on to him, whatever the spell of transformation the fairies have cast.

Male Voice (singing): **GEORDIE**

“They’ll turn me in your arms, Janet,
“An adder and a snake;

“But had me fast, let me not pass,

“Gin ye wad be my maik. (...)

“They’ll shape me in your arms, Janet,

“A dove, but and a swan;

“And, last, they’ll shape me in your arms,

“A mother-naked man:

“Cast your green mantle over me –

“I’ll be mysell again.”

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

Gloomy, gloomy was the night,

And eiry was the way,

As fair Janet, in her green mantle,

To Miles Cross she did gae.

The heavens were black, the night was dark,
 And dreary was the place;
 But Janet stood, with eager wish,
 Her lover to embrace.

Betwixt the hours of twelve and one,
 A north wind tore the bent
 And straight she heard strange elritch sounds
 Upon that wind which went (...)

Fair Janet stood, with mind unmoved,
 The dreary heath upon;
 And louder, louder, wax'd the sound,
 As they came riding on. (...)

And first gaed by the black black steed,
 And then gaed by the brown;
 But fast she gript the milk-white steed,
 And pu'd the rider down. (...)

They shaped him in fair Janet's arms,
 An esk, but and an adder;
 She held him fast in every shape--

To be her bairn's father.

They shaped him in her arms at last,
A mother-naked man;
She wrapt him in her green mantle,
And sae her true love wan.

Narrator: **BILLY**

And Tamlane is in Janet's arms, for ever delivered from the
fairies.

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button
now.

14. The Queen O'Fairies (from The Young Tamlane)

Narrator: **BILLY**

You may already have listened to the ballad of the Young Tamlane, number 13 in this room. This is the Queen of Fairies who's just lost her human lover to a mortal girl.

Female Voice (singing): **ALISON**

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies,
 Out o' a bush o' broom -
 "She that has borrowed young Tamlane,
 Has gotten a stately groom."

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies,
 Out o' a bush of rye -
 "She's ta'en awa the bonniest knight
 In a' my cumpanie.

"But had I kenn'd, Tamlane," she says,
 "A lady wad borrowed thee—
 "I wad ta'en out they twa gray een,
 "Put in twa een o' tree.

"Had I but kenn'd, Tamlane," she says,

“Before ye came frae hame-
“I wad tane out your heart o’ flesh,
“Put in a heart o’ stane.

“Had I but had the wit yestreen,
“That I hae coft the day—
“I’d paid my kane seven times to hell,
“Ere you’d been won away!”

Female Voice (reciting – overwhelmed, more and more dramatic, angry): ALISON

She’s taken away the handsomest knight I had in my company.

Had I known that I would loose him, I’d have taken out his eyes.

I’d have taken out his heart and put a stone there.

Narrator: BILLY

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button now.

15. Thomas the Rhymer

Male Voice (singing): **GEORDIE**

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
 A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
 And there he saw a ladye bright,
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle o' the velvet fine;
 At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
 Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

Narrator: **BILLY**

Much like the ballad of Tamlane, which you may already have listened to, the ballad of Thomas the Rhymer tells the story of a young man's abduction by a fairy. But unlike Tamlane, Thomas the Rhymer is a real historic figure.

Thomas Learmont was a 13th century poet and seer, said to have lived in a towerhouse in Earlston. Even today the fragments of Rhymer's Tower can be seen. *Music fades slowly under next sentence* The first composers of the Border ballads drew no clear distinction between history and

legend, allowing them to merge into each other, and it is typical for ballads to link even supernatural events to real people and precise geographical locations. Thomas and the Elfin queen are said to have entered the Eildon hills.

Female Voice (singing) ALISON

“O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

“And see not ye that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

“And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?

That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

Male Voice (singing): **GEORDIE**

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And, till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Narrator: **BILLY**

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button now.

16. The Twa Corbies

Male Voice: GEORDIE

As I was walking all alane,
 I heard twa corbies making a mane;
 The tane unto th'other say,
 "Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"

Narrator: BILLY

Two crows are picking over the remains of a fallen knight.
 Only three other creatures know about his death: his hawk,
 his hound, and his lady fair.

Male Voice: GEORDIE

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
 "His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
 "His lady's ta'en another mate,
 "So we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause bane,
 "And I'll pike out his bonny blue een: (...)

"O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
 "The wind sall blaw for evermair.

Narrator: **BILLY**

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button now.

17. The Wife of Usher's Well

Narrator: BILLY

In the corner here, a woman sits hunched over, draped in a blue cloak.

Female Voice (singing): ALISON

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word came to the carline wife,
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fishes in the flood,

Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood!”

Narrator: **BILLY**

And her wish, it seems, gets granted. On Martinmas, her three sons come home. They seem young and sprightly, and the mother asks the maid to bring wood and make a good fire.

Female Voice (singing): **ALISON**

“Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a’ my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.”

Narrator: **BILLY**

But on their hats, the three sons wear birch twigs. And birch twigs, in Scottish folklore, always signify death and the hereafter.

Female Voice (singing): **ALISON**

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,

Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates of Paradise,
That birk grew fair enough.

Narrator: **BILLY**

The three sons are dead. And in the morning, when the
cocks crow, they will have to go back to the underworld.

Female Voice (singing): **ALISON**

Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byrne!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass,
That kindles my mother's fire."

Narrator: **BILLY**

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button
now.

Music fade out

18. The Daemon-Lover

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

'O where have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and more?'

Male Voice: GEORDIE

'O I'm come to seek my former vows,
Ye granted me before.'

Narrator: BILLY

A young married woman is lured away by her former lover
who promises her riches and eight ships upon the sea.

Male Voice: GEORDIE

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kiss'd them baith cheek and chin;

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

'O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again.

Male Voice: GEORDIE

She set her foot upon the ship

No mariners could she behold;
 But the sails were o' the taffetie,
 And the masts o' the beaten gold.

She had not sail'd a league, a league,
 A league but barely three,
 When dismal grew his countenance,
 And drumlie grew his ee. (...)

She had not sail'd a league, a league
 A league but barely three
 Until she espied his cloven foot,
 And she wept right bitterly

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
 That the sun shines sweetly on?'

Male Voice (reciting): GEORDIE

'O yon are the hills of heaven,' he said,
 'Where you will never win.'

Female Voice (reciting): ALISON

'O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said,

‘All so dreary wi’ frost and snow?’

Male Voice (reciting): **GEORDIE**

‘O yon is the mountain of hell,’ he cried,
‘Where you and I will go.’

He struck the tapmast wi’ his hand,
The foremast wi’ his knee;
And he brak that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

Narrator: **BILLY**

If this is your last stop in this room, press the play button now.

XX 200

200. Viewpoints

Narrator: **BILLY**

We’ve almost come to the end of our tour, but there is one last thing to see ... the Border country itself. From this room you can step out to two viewpoints – depending on where the wind comes from, we open one door or the other – and

from there you'll have a glorious view over reiving country.
Step outside now, and press the play button when you're
ready to hear more.

XX 2000

2000. Panorama and Farewell

Narrator: **BILLY**

The Border Marches extended from the Solway Firth and Carlisle in the South-West, to Berwick on Tweed in the North-East. Overlooking the landscape around Smailholm Tower, you'll be able to appreciate its position as a fortified stronghold in a dangerous environment. The lives and possessions of the Border reivers were precarious, and the people who lived here would have made sure to be able to defend themselves against sudden raids.

If the weather permits, you may want to take some time to survey the area and identify some of the geographical spots pointed out on the panel. Towards the West lies Sir Walter Scott's house of Abbotsford, and towards the South West you will find Dryburgh Abbey, another property in the care of Historic Scotland, and the site of the Scott family vault and Sir Walter Scott's own tomb.

And so it is with the words of Sir Walter Scott that we would like to end this tour:

Male Voice (Sir Walter Scott): **HAMISH**

And still I thought that shatter'd tower
 The mightiest of human power;
 And marvell'd as the aged hind
 With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
 Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
 Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse. (...)
 And home returning, fill'd the hall
 With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl,
 Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
 Glared through the window's rusty bars,
 And ever, by the winter hearth,
 Old tales I heard of woe and mirth,
 Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
 Of witches' spells, of warrior's arms;"¹

Narrator: **BILLY**

We hope you've enjoyed your visit to Smailholm. Don't forget to return your audioguide downstairs in the shop. Thank you for listening and goodbye.