

My love letter to Scotland



The Commonwealth Games, the big vote on independence... Scotland is the place to be this year. But for some it's always at the heart of things - as **Lorraine Kelly** tells us



Shetland's fire festival - a massive blaze of heat and light

The wildlife is just one of Scotland's many attractions

Everyone's saying what a great year it is to be Scottish. And it is - of course it is. But personally, I think it's always a good time to be Scottish. Scotland is where I'm happiest. I've been lucky enough to travel all over this beautiful country. Mum and Dad took us on day trips from Glasgow to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, and on holiday to Ayrshire. And I'll never forget my first girls' holiday when I was 16, touring youth hostels around Scotland with my best friends, Joyce and Lynn. We had virtually no money, lived off chips and chocolate and were eaten alive by midges! Years later, when my daughter, Rosie, was growing up, we spent lots of time exploring the Highlands and

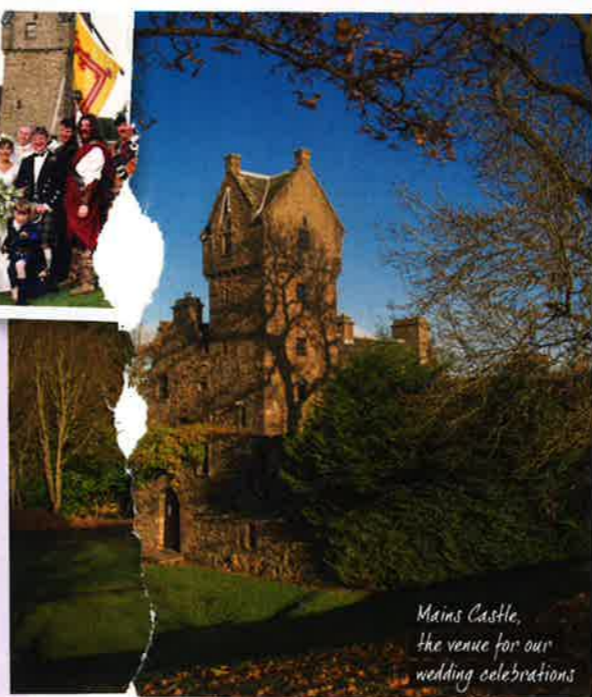
the islands dotted around the coast. I've always wanted to return to those places that mean the most to me, which is why I've written my book, Lorraine Kelly's Scotland. It meant I could work with my husband, Steve, a brilliant photographer. Steve and I met when I was TV-Am's Scotland correspondent - he was my cameraman. The book was the first big project we've done together in all these years - a really magical time. We found wonderful new places but, more importantly, revisited areas we'd been to, like Shetland and Orkney. Rosie first learnt to walk on the white beaches of Scapa Flow, so we dedicated the book to her. The photographs are her heritage. Being able to pass on something like that is very special. It's a love letter to her - and, of course, to Scotland.

DUNDEE

I was born in Glasgow but Dundee has been my adopted home since 1986, when Steve introduced me to his city. We were married here on 5 September, 1992, at Mains Castle. It was a brilliant sunny day and I walked down the aisle to a piper playing 'Bonnie Dundee'. I love living in London during the week for breakfast TV, but home is where you can be yourself. Flying over the Forth Bridge on the way back from London, then seeing the twinkly lights of Dundee, always makes me smile. Time in Dundee is about seeing friends, walking the dogs and having a roast dinner with the family.



Our wedding day was a truly Scottish occasion



Mains Castle, the venue for our wedding celebrations

GLENCOE

Our first-ever holiday after Rosie was born was to Port Appin, staying in a little hotel by the shore of Loch Linnhe near Glencoe, looking out to the island of Lismore. Rosie was just eight weeks old and we were lucky to have the most incredible August weather. We took the ferry across to Lismore, had long walks with Rosie in her sturdy pram, and even saw a couple of elusive pine martens who crossed our path and bounded back into the forest - something you never, ever forget. I've been back to this wild yet peaceful part of Scotland many times.

We stayed near Glencoe on our first family trip



We took Rosie at eight weeks old on the Lismore ferry

ORKNEY

Steve and I love escaping to Orkney for long weekends. We relish the peace and quiet. It's perfect for walking for miles, bird-watching and completely getting away from it all. There are some brilliant restaurants, including my favourite, The Foveran, just outside the main town of Kirkwall. We don't eat out that often at home, but we love to on holiday - we just chat, chat, chat. I always feel sorry for couples you see sitting in total silence, looking at the ceiling...

Orkney is one of those places where, if you go once, you need to return again and again. I could see myself living there and writing novels - but not just yet. I'm talking years in the future here!



Orkney's romantic appeal is a draw for Lorraine



Edinburgh - scene of some of my happiest memories



Rosie came along when I received my OBE at Holyrood

EDINBURGH

Some of my happiest memories are from Edinburgh. I've presented the live New Year TV show from Princes Street - it's always frenetic and fun, but oh-so-stressful as you must hit the bells dead on time at midnight. Also in Edinburgh, I was given an OBE by the Queen at Holyrood Palace in 2012, her Diamond Jubilee. The honour was completely unexpected and it was a day to treasure. I cried through the whole ceremony, and to this day I have no

idea what the Queen said to me! Rosie, who is 20 now, is there at Napier University, so I pop over to see her regularly.



On St Kilda, the 'island on the edge of the world'

ST KILDA

Ever since I became aware of St Kilda over 20 years ago, it's sung to me, siren-like... And our book finally gave me a great reason to visit. It's known as the island on the edge of the world and you really do feel that. The next stop is America! I think part of the appeal is there's only an occasional short window for a safe landing by boat because of bad weather and high winds. And it's a blinking long way away! We were incredibly lucky to have chosen a day when the sea was calm. But if that was the sea at its calmest I don't think I'd ever be able to cope with a rough passage. It was worth it, though. The beaches are incredible, with white, white sand and the sea is brilliant turquoise. An unforgettable place. Lorraine Kelly's Scotland is published by Bantam Books

INTERVIEW: JOANNE FINNEY; MAIN PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE SMITH; OTHER PHOTOGRAPHY: GRANT SANBURY (PORTRAIT OF LORRAINE); PRESS ASSOCIATION (AT HOLYROOD)

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