

with things to see and do. Dominating the attractions of the area are the Border Abbeys of Melrose, Jedburgh, and Dryburgh. These abbeys alone would be reason enough to visit the region.

Starting at the most southerly of the abbeys, the **Jedburgh Abbey** is just ten miles north of the border with England. The 12th Century Augustinian priory was founded by King David I, and is the best preserved of the Border abbeys. The visitor centre has an educational short video presentation of the history and significance of the abbey. Even on a very rainy day, a tour of the abbey ruins is worth the effort. Driving north seven miles brings the tourist to the remains of **Dryburgh Abbey**, actually visible from St. Boswell Golf Club. This Premonstratensia-, or White Canon-, founded abbey occupies a very beautiful grounds which contrasts the red hues of its stonework with green lawns, white-barked beeches, redwoods, and vivid-colored cedar trees. These ruins, though in a beautiful setting, are much less substantial than the others, but that doesn't diminish their historical significance. Buried in the grounds of the Abbey Church are Sir Walter Scott and Field Marshal Haig (the World War I commander), among others. Traveling north about five miles brings us to the most striking of the Border abbeys, **Melrose Abbey**. It would not be hard to call this abbey, founded by King David I in 1136, the heart of the Border's abbeys. It might be appropriate as well because it is here that the heart of Robert the Bruce, responsible for uniting factions into the real nation of Scotland, is rumored to be buried. In full or muted sunlight, the red stonework at Melrose Abbey takes on different hues. Bright sunshine might be best, but regardless of the weather, there is no bad time to explore Melrose Abbey. Scottish author/poet Sir Walter Scott said about Melrose:

*When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go - but go alone the while -
Then view St. David's ruined pile;
And home returning, soothly swear,
Was ever scene so sad and fair*
[“Lay of the Last Minstrel”]

And while wandering the grounds, look for the gargoyle of the pig playing bagpipes on the south side of the nave.

Next to Melrose Abbey is the delightful, walled Priorwood Garden specializing in orchids and flowers for drying (available in the dry flower shop). But for spectacular gardens we suggest a visit to the **Dawyck Botanic Gardens** (pronounced “doe-ick”) about eight miles southwest of Peebles (A72 to B712). This 60 acre garden has been part of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) since 1978. The garden has over 300 years of tree plantings, making it one of the world's finest arboreta.

Among Dawyck's most historic plantings are California giant redwoods, Douglas firs, and cedars sent back to Scotland by botanical explorer David Douglas in the early 19th Century. Dawyck has a number of “champion” trees—the stoutest or tallest or oldest of their kind in the UK. There's a pleasant visitors shop and tearoom at the garden as well. You could enjoy an hour or a day visiting Dawyck Gardens.

Heading a different direction out of Peebles, you'll soon encounter two not-to-miss locations. The first, just 3 miles east of Peebles on B7062, is **Kailzie Garden**, a fifteen-acre ground containing tearoom, gift shop, trout pond (with tackle available for rent), and a walled garden. It is the walled garden which rightly attracts the most attention. Though not as large as Dawyck, Kailzie Garden makes up for it in variety of flora. Be sure to take time to look at the spectacular tropical and semitropical plants housed in the large greenhouses. This garden, tucked away on a small back road, is the stereotypical *Alice-in-Wonderland*-type walled garden.

Back on the B7062, it's just four miles to **Traquair House**. One of the Great Houses of Scotland, Traquair is acknowledged to be the oldest continuously inhabited house in Scotland, tracing its heritage back to 1100 when it was built as a hunting lodge. Traquair Castle, as it was originally known, has played host to as many as 15 Scottish Kings or Queens including the tragic Mary Queen of Scots. Currently, Catherine Connstable Maxwell Stuart is the twenty-first in the Stuart line to oversee Traquair. Traquair (from *tra* meaning a “dwelling” or “hamlet”; and from the *Quair*, a tributary of the River Tweed, which runs near the back of the house) is now both a museum and guesthouse. Traquair's museum grounds contain a crafts workshop, a cottage tearoom (built in 1745), picnic area, maze, wooded walk, operating brewery, and the house itself. Several interesting rooms are open to visitors to the main house. There is a Priest's Room, where the family could secretly practice Catholicism, and which has a secret panel that reveals a hidden staircase, which allowed the priest to escape. The library was particularly fascinating. Created between 1700 and 1740, the library houses over 3000 volumes. The cataloguing system is unique: portraits of philosophers and writers indicate the various sections, and all the books in each section are labeled and numbered under the portrait. For instance, all the books under the philosopher Aristotle are labeled with ARIS, then a number indicating the shelf, and a second number indicating the book's position on that shelf. ARIS 8-20 would be a book under Aristotle's portrait, eight shelves down, 20 books over. Ingenious! As a guesthouse, Traquair has three rooms that are let as a B&B. Our first year in Scotland, Anne and I had booked a night at Traquair without knowing too much about it except that it was a special place. At the ticket kiosk, we told the lady attendant that we were booked in for the night, and she said, “Oh,