

The Royal Mile

The Royal Mile forms the main thoroughfare of the Old Town of the city of Edinburgh and as such is part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. From the gates of Edinburgh Castle to those of the Palace of Holyrood the street runs downhill almost exactly a mile between those two significant locations in the royal history of Scotland, hence its name.

Since the castle—at the top or South End of the Royal Mile— has arguably been Scotland’s no 1 tourist attraction for many years it’s no surprise that there are more GB stamps for this ancient Scottish monument than any other : five in fact, in 1955, 1988, 2006, 2011 and 2018. A variety of facets of the castle appears across the five stamps but perhaps the most imposing is the 1988 High Value definitive, whose design is based on a photograph taken by Prince Andrew.



Five hundred yards downhill from the Castle lies St Giles Cathedral referenced in the pre-decimalisation 1969 Cathedrals set. It shows a view of the cathedral taken from the Castle end and, beneath the Queen’s head, a 1911 wooden representation of an angel playing the bagpipes, one of three in the neo-Gothic Thistle Chapel, shown in a photo right. Also known as the High Kirk of Edinburgh, the cathedral is the principal place of worship of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. Its distinctive crown steeple is a prominent feature of the city skyline. The church has been one of the capital’s religious focal points for approximately 900 years.



Situated at the northern end of the Royal Mile, Holyrood House has frequently been used as a royal residence. James IV began building the Palace of Holyroodhouse in 1501 and it underwent a major reconstruction under Charles II who turned it into a Classical style Palace. However construction of the Augustine Abbey, now a roofless nave which can be seen on the left of the stamp (from the GB Historic Buildings set from 1978) began in 1128 on the orders of David I.



Directly opposite the Palace of Holyrood is one of the newest features of the Royal Mile... the Scottish Parliament building.

To mark the 10th Anniversary of the opening of the Parliament Building, designed by Enric Miralles, a cover was signed in October 2004 by The Rt Hon Jim Wallace QC (the then Deputy First Minister in the Lab-Lib Coalition government). A few more signatures of MSPs who had been present on the historic occasion ten years earlier were added. The signatures are from top left : Johann Lamont, Jackie Baillie, Michael McMahon, Elaine Murray, Ken Macintosh, (The current Presiding Officer) Iain Grey and Malcolm Chisholm. The parliament itself was represented in the 2017 GB set Landmark Buildings...

