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Blind Harry's Wallace

By William Hamilton, Elspeth King



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The epic verse of "Blind Harry" (or "Henry the Minstrel") is the main source on the life of Sir William Wallace. It was written around 1477 and based on the now lost Latin book of John Blair, commissioned by 'the fetching bishop' William Sinclair, Bishop of Dunkeld, to send to the Pope. Blind Harry gathered stories and traditions of Wallace from all over Scotland and sang or recited his verse. He was well received at the Renaissance court of King James IV. Blind Harry's "Acts and Deidis of the Illustre and Vallyeant Campioun Schir William Wallace" was one of the first Scottish books printed in Scotland. Hamilton's edition, "wherein the old obsolete words are rendered more intelligible", first published in 1722, had a great influence on Burns (whom it inspired to visit many of the sites mentioned and to write a number of poems including "Scots Wha Hae") and many others, including Wordsworth and Byron. Elspeth King, has long campaigned to bring Blind Harry's work back into print in an accessible form, and argues for its significance and relevance today.



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Blind Harry's Wallace By William Hamilton, Elspeth King Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Blind Harry's 'Wallace' is one of the most popular Scottish books of all time. -- *Scottish Book Collector*

From the Publisher

Which book has been the greatest inspiration to Scots within and outwith Scotland over the last 500 years?

Why has one of the most influential books ever published in Scotland been out of print for almost 140 years, despite the fact that at least 47 editions are known to have been published?

Is the "lost manuscript" on which the book is said to have been based in existence?

How did American writer Randall Wallace come to base his script for Braveheart on this book?

Would a parliament in Scotland have won decisive support without the Braveheart factor?

Why has the poet and minstrel - whose work Burns deemed worthy of Homer - been ignored for so long?

Who was Blind Harry, and what is the significance of his work in modern Scotland today?

About the Author

Blind Harry is thought to have lived from 1440 to 1493. Little is known about him. His one major achievement was to gather and record in writing stories about Wallace. He sang or recited these stories in verse form, and was well received at the Renaissance Court of James IV.

William Hamilton of Gilbertfield was a poet and soldier. All but forgotten now, it was he who brought Wallace back to the attention with his hugely popular 'translation' of Blind Harry's original poem.

Elspeth King is the Director of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum, which has a large collection of Wallace memorabilia and hosted the exhibition 'Scotland's Liberator- The Life and Legacy of William Wallace- throughout 1997 marking the 700 anniversary of the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

Owain Kirby, a recent graduate of the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, is a freelance illustrator and artist who prefers to work in linocut, loves Scottish history and lives in Stirling.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Melanie Tuck:

As people who live in often the modest era should be update about what going on or info even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era which can be always change and advance. Some of you maybe will update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what kind you should start with. This Blind Harry's Wallace is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Roxanne Jimenez:

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