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## Book towns world hay wigtown

**Book towns around the world. Wigtown book town. Books town.**

Wigtown is a captivating town in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, that has been settled for at least a thousand years. It was once a royal burgh and had a nearby castle on the River Bladnoch. Today, it's known as Scotland's National Book Town, with an annual book festival taking place from September 22 to October 1. The town is home to over a dozen independent bookshops, making it a haven for book lovers all year round. Visitors can also explore Wigtown Bay, a nature reserve that attracts species such as breeding ospreys. The nearby Machars peninsula and Galloway Forest Park offer stunning landscapes, with the park being an International Dark Sky Park. The forest is home to wildlife like red squirrels, red deer, and golden eagles. For those who prefer not to drive, ScotRail trains operate from Glasgow Central to Barrhill via Ayr, while Avanti West Coast trains stop at Lockerbie. Wigtown has a range of accommodations, including guesthouses like Hillcrest House and Craigmount B&B. The town is also home to the cozy Riverside self-catering cottage, which sleeps four and offers stunning views of the River Cree. Visitors can enjoy good places to eat and bookshops to visit. Wigtown, Scotland is a haven for readers and nature lovers alike. A visit to the Café Rendezvous in Agnew Crescent, where everything is made from scratch using locally sourced ingredients, is a must-try. The café offers specials like fresh salmon and prawn tagliatelle or Ecclefechan tart and apple crumble. Bookworms can also find cozy spots at bookshops like Readinglasses for coffee, cake, and comfortable chairs on Saturdays. For whisky enthusiasts, a tour and tasting at the 203-year-old Bladnoch distillery is an experience not to be missed. The distillery offers insights into how pure Scotch whiskies are crafted. Youngsters can enjoy ice-cream making workshops at Finlay's Cream O'Galloway Farm in Castle Douglas, suitable for ages five and up. There are also several pubs nearby, such as the dog-friendly Galloway Bar or The Bladnoch Inn opposite the distillery, which serve real ale and have a bar menu. Wigtown Parish Church has connections to Christian worship dating back at least 1,000 years. The Martyr's Stake commemorates Margaret MacLauchlan and Margaret Wilson, two Scottish Covenanters executed in 1685. A four-mile trail along Wigtown Martyrs Walk offers stunning views of the River Bladnoch and Wigtown Bay, where one can spot ospreys. Within a 40-minute drive from Wigtown lies the town of Kirkcudbright, with its popular "Walk Round the Buckland" route. The Glentrool area in Galloway Forest Park is another great walking spot. Richard Booth's initiative to fill his hometown with second-hand books has turned it into a thriving literary destination. And so, Hay-on-Wye became the world's first 'book town.' A few years later, Richard declared himself the "King of Hay" and gained followers from other kingdoms and republics. Soon, Redu in Belgium transformed into a "village du livre," followed by Bécherel and Montolieu in France, Bredevoort in the Netherlands, Saint-Pierre-de-Clages in Switzerland, Fjærland in Norway, Sysmä in Finland, and more. Today, book towns thrive worldwide. In 1998, Bredevoort organized an International Book Town Festival, bringing together book sellers from Hay-on-Wye, Wigtown (Scotland), Fjærland, Mühlbeck-Friedersdorf (Germany), Saint-Pierre-de-Clages, Sysmä, and Redu. The event fostered collaboration among the participants. Before the festival, Marit Mauritzen, a founder in Fjærland, visited several book towns to discuss potential collaborations. This led to a European project, UR 4001 "European Book Town Network," which was granted funding and started in September 1998. The project proved beneficial for partners from the book towns, allowing them to become familiar with telematics and each other. Within two years, book sellers learned to use the internet for personal contact, publicity, and book selling. The final meeting took place during the Second International Book Town Festival in July 2000 in Mühlbeck-Friedersdorf (Germany). The participants chose a committee to create an International Organisation of Book Towns, which was registered in April 2001 in the Netherlands. The first board consisted of Miep van Duin (Redu), president; Timo Hänninen (Sysmä), secretary; and Henk Ruessink (Bredevoort), treasurer. Since 2000, we have held an International Book Town Festival every second year, including a General Assembly. The first festival took place in July 2002 in Sysmä, Finland, with Timo Hänninen as the new president. Among the guests was a delegation from Saint-Pierre-de-Clages, which joined the I.O.B. in 2003. Almost every year, we have welcomed one or more new members, sometimes individuals, sometimes municipalities or organizations. The fourth festival took place in May 2004 in Wigtown, Scotland. The fifth festival, held during the summer solstice of 2006 in Fjærland, was a significant event as we welcomed our first non-European member towns and a surprise guest – a wild bear looking for food near the fjord. The General Assembly was pleased to welcome Malaysia as our first member from another continent. Italy in early May, and President Franco Muzzio was dealing with a painful broken leg, considering the mountainous terrain they lived on. Fast-forward to September 2010, our seventh Festival took place in Wunsdorf-Waldstadt, East Germany, under the leadership of Werner Borchert. He showed us Hitler's favorite bunker near the book village. Our eighth Festival was held on a stunning tropical island, Langkawi, home to one of Malaysia's book villages. Mohammed Syairos, as president, invited a delegation from Paju, South Korea's book town, which later joined our organization. The following president was Jan Klovstad from Tvedestrand, Norway, where we hosted the Festival in May 2014. We all stayed at the nearby Bokhotellet (Book Hotel), boasting breathtaking views of the Skagerrak. While a new president was elected every two years, our board members remained consistent: Dominique Fournier as treasurer from Saint-Pierre-de-Clages, Laura Kvamme as deputy board member from Fjærland, and Miep van Duin as secretary. Laura left the Board in 2014, replaced by Peter Bodén from Boråh, Sweden. Currently, Dominique serves as president, with Jan Klovstad as treasurer.