

Transcript: Wild for Scotland Podcast
Season 3, Episode 2: Black Scottish History with Lisa Williams
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Hello there, just a quick note before we start to let you know about a wee mistake in today's episode. My guest Lisa Williams and I are talking about Arthur Seat and Lisa mentions a tribe that lived in the southeast of Scotland before the Roman invasion of Britain. She says Icenii tribe, but it's actually the Votadini tribe. They had a large hillfort on Arthur's Seat from where they defend their territory. They also had settlements in East Lothian, along the Berwickshire Coast and dotted around the Scottish Borders. I'll pop a link in the show notes if you want to read more about them. And now, let's get to the episode.

[main theme tune]

Hello there and welcome to Wild for Scotland,
a podcast full of inspiring stories from Scotland.

I'm your host, Kathi Kamleitner.

Wild for Scotland helps you connect with Scotland
and dream about future adventures.

I'll tell you immersive stories to whisk you away,
Share some of my top tips for your own Scotland trip,
Or introduce you to inspiring locals and their stories.

So, lean back and enjoy -
Let's travel to Scotland!

[main theme tune end]

Welcome back for another episode in this new season of Wild for Scotland, which is all about the people of Scotland and their stories.

In last week's episode I took you along on a walking tour of Edinburgh and told you some of the city's Black History. You heard about some of the stories our guide Lisa Williams shared on this tour, and how they can change the way we look at the city - still historic, still beautiful, but overall a more rounded picture of a city with many layers.

Today, I'm speaking with Lisa Williams to hear more about her journey. When I started thinking about potential guests for this season, Lisa was at the top of my wish list. So, I couldn't be happier that she took the time to speak with me.

Lisa is the founder of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association, which promotes Caribbean culture in Scotland, and since 2018 has been running Black History Walks Edinburgh.

If you haven't listened to last week's episode yet, I recommend you go back and do so, before listening to my conversation with Lisa. The interview does make sense on its own, but the story will give you a taste of the walking tour experience that we talk about in this episode.

And now, let's dive in. This is Lisa Williams from Edinburgh.

[jingle]

Kathi Kamleitner - Hello [giggles]

Lisa Williams - Hello

Kathi Kamleitner - I'm sitting here with Lisa Williams, at Egg & Co on George street in Edinburgh. We've just done the black history walk around the new town and a bit of the old town of Edinburgh, and learnt about the black history of the city, of Scotland, and important black people who came and lived here, who are from here or came and visited here as well and a lot of Lisa's research about that.

Erm, can you start off by introducing yourself, your name, your preferred pronouns and what you do.

Lisa Williams - Okay, so, I'm Lisa Williams, my pronouns are She/her, and I am the founder of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association. I set up almost 7 years ago now, to get people together of Caribbean heritage but also to promote Caribbean culture in Scotland.

And one of the things that has really grown out of this is my research into, particularly Caribbean historical connections with Scotland, erm and looking at black people who have been here over the centuries in Edinburgh specifically.

And but we do all sorts of exciting events as well everything from film to poetry to also working in schools as well with everything from dance to music to amazing Caribbean foods that teachers also get very excited about to.

KK - Fantastic before we dive into the Caribbean Association, and also the tours that you are doing, I'd love to learn a little bit more about you and what brought you to Edinburgh, how long you've been here, and kind of what brought you to the point where we are now today.

LW - Sure, well, I grew up actually in the south of England, you probably hear that from my accent. And I lived there 'till I was 22. My mother's from Grenada in the southern part of the Caribbean. And when I was when I was a child and when I was a teenager, I was very

fortunate because my father was a pilot, we used to get the chance to fly to the Caribbean very often. So probably go in and sometimes two, three times a year. I will go and spend time in Barbados and St. Lucia when I was young. We've got family in Trinidad it was good to spend spend time with them probably attended my first Trinidad Carnival when I was three [Kathi - Giggles] and also my uncle shoulders watching the parade.

Erm, so having that connection with the Caribbean growing up was very important for me as a teenager, I've spent many a summer in Antigua as well, which was fantastic. So, erm I think for me going to university at 19, one of the subjects I was studying was African and Asian Studies, which is obviously a huge area. But what was fantastic, I was studying psychology in the context of erm the history, the economics of development, the literature of the Caribbean, and other places in Asia and Africa. So that we're looking at British history with very specific viewpoints. And I was really lucky enough to be exposed to scholars from ex-colonies to get a different perspective on how we think about things here. And that kind of gave me a foundation for going forward when I left university, and was 22. I went out to live in Grenada because my parents had moved back and I decided I was going to go to, wasn't going to be left out that!

And then, having a career and my family in Grenada, one of the things I did was work in primary school and learning about Scottish history, Scottish military heroes as part of that syllabus that I hadn't necessarily come across in my schooling here. Also, one of the things I did was set up a community tourism and heritage organisation. So before Airbnb, we kind of were the Grenada, Airbnb, [Kathi - Giggles] and people would stay in the community. So getting Grenadian people to really value their culture, but also to start to look at some of the historical links with Britain in a lot more detail how that affected Grenada and the landscape. So I used to actually do historical tours in Grenada, I used to take people around buses, we used to go into the countryside. So for me, coming to Edinburgh just over 10 years ago, with my children, one of the things I wanted to do was to set up an association where we're also in contact with people of Caribbean heritage here, because there are not many of us. I kept finding people that are isolated.

One of the reasons we chose Edinburgh, I suppose, was coming here on holiday from the Caribbean being quite enchanted with Edinburgh, to be honest. I remember one day, a man walking through Holyrood Park, and had a very full beard, and had a kilt with walking very confidently along. And in the Caribbean, we always greet people in the street, we always say good morning, and how are you, you never walk past somebody without greeting them. And that was a very normal thing for my kids to do when they first arrived him. And you know, when you get to Scotland, not everybody does that, especially in a big city. So I was so impressed when this man almost like walked out of the mist, like a movie walked out of the mist in Holyrood Park dressed in this kilt with this big beard. And he said "good morning, good morning to you" with a big smile. And I was I really like this place. And I think anywhere I'm going to settle in the UK, come back, erm, also have opportunities for the children too, I really like Edinburgh. Something about it's quite magical, quite special. And then finding out how many Caribbean connections there are to Edinburgh as well. It's been amazing.

KK - What was it like to adjust to living here? I can imagine that the climate is very different.

[Both - laugh]

LW - So, when actually one of my when I first was first living here, and I told him a man on the Royal Mile that we've moved from the Caribbean, he was like "Are you on the run from Interpol? Like why would you leave the Caribbean and come to Scotland? Are you crazy? He said the weather you're not going to be able to deal with it. I said I'll be fine. Absolutely fine.

And then it got to February. The first February was fine. First February was a novelty. Yes, we were cold. Yes, it took two years to adjust to the climate. And then My poor son was probably wearing hats and scarves and full shoes and a whole uniform. And it took him, for the first time, and it probably took him about an hour to get dressed in the morning age of eight because of grappling with mittens and things he'd never seen before. Erm, and asking me, "Mommy, why am I going to school in the middle of the night", because I brought him here in, in December, and pitch black, had to walk to school in the dark with all of this uncomfortable clothing. So it took a little while to adjust and for me to readjust as opposed to those things being back in the UK.

And also adjusting to Caribbean people are quite friendly, quite boisterous, quite loud and very used to like I said, greeting people in the street or walking into a room of people even if you don't know them. So you might walk into a doctor's office and you walk in "Good morning" and everyone replies "Good morning". So sometimes I'd be addressing people in maybe groups that I was teaching or going into a school and saying good morning and not getting that response, and I would sort of make it in to a bit of joke, saying in the Caribbean, people reply and they answer, but that's just not the culture here. So it's getting used to those things.

The other thing is getting used to as well as a certain level of politeness in Edinburg society, and sometimes I'd have a conversation with somebody, or maybe bring out matters or history tour that people found a little bit, erm unusual something I hadn't thought about before, worried about causing offence, and then not saying anything. So being met with silence and taking a while for me to understand where that silence was coming from. So these different kinds of cultural rules that people have. What I love about Scotland, I really enjoy about Edinburgh. And one of the reasons why we chose Edinburgh to live, is because of the culture that the cultural elements here that are still really strong, and that people have fought to hold on to in lots of ways as well. So I think it's exciting that Scotland really, making an effort to bring back Gaelic and that's been even on the tours people telling me how their grandmother was punished at school for not speaking Gaelic and the effort to get that back.

The music here I think is amazing. So one of the opportunities I had when I first came, I was staying with a friend, he used to come and visit us at Grenada, and he was one who encouraged us to come and live in Edinburgh, choosing Edinburgh for us to stay. And he would put on house concerts in his living room. So when I was first staying there, in my first couple of months, we'd have all sorts of traditional Scottish folk bands setting up in the, in the living room. So I had a first hand opportunity to hear those musicians, top class musicians, erm and really understand about traditional Scottish folk culture and the language and the music. And again, I find it very enchanting, and how people here have made such an effort to, to hold on to those things. And then also looking at the connections with the

Caribbean how the Scottish fiddle will show up in certain islands in the Caribbean and be part of Caribbean culture as well.

KK - Oh, that's really fascinating. I didn't know that. I think music is such an interesting element of national heritage and identity as well. And so many things are conveyed and passed on through songs, poems, music. So yeah, that's a really lovely way of meeting or falling in love with Scotland, I guess, was the moment when you walk through Holyrood Park, you mentioned with the man in the kilt was that the moment you knew this was gonna be right, or was there more moments like this where you knew, Okay, this is home. Now this is where I feel like, that's where I'm supposed to be.

LW - There have been a few occasions actually. I think, for example, my son when he was about 12, or 13, and he was on a train going to a concert in Glasgow with my daughter. And people were, somebody asked him, I think, where he was from. And he started to give this very convoluted answer. I was born in Grenada, and I came to Edinburgh. And they just literally, the Scottish people who had asked him turned around and said "your Scottish now your Scottish, you're one of us, and don't let anyone tell you any different". And he felt quite happy about that, you know, that doesn't always happen. Yeah, that kind of openness, that progressive streak in Scottish culture, I really appreciate.

And the fact that, for example, the Scottish Government's really encouraging us to look at our interconnected paths in a way that isn't necessarily encouraged by the government down in England. And it gives us certain freedom up here to have conversations about this kind of history. And also to officially from the top, give a welcome to people from, from other countries, doesn't matter if you were born in Scotland, and if your parents are from Scotland decided you've chosen Scotland as your home, then officially you are welcome to be Scottish. And if you identify as Scottish, you are Scottish.

KK - Yeah, there's this very beautiful term or concept of the New Scot, who it doesn't matter, like you see where you were born, where you're from. You choose, if you live in Scotland, and that's where you feel like you want to be and that's what you've chosen as your home or you ended up here and now have chosen as your home then you're Scottish. I really love that sentiment as well. And I haven't really come across it in many other places. Certainly not where I'm from. I'm from Austria. We wish we had a concept like this, right? Yeah.

LW - It's very, very important.

KK - Absolutely.

LW - And I also think that it's interesting when you hear your children speaking in an accent, it's different from your own. So going to Grenada because my mom's Grenadian I grew up with the accent, it's words I understand. But then when you hear your Children speaking in an accent, that's not yours, it's quite, it takes a little while to adjust to that, sometimes it can feel quite strange. But I suppose when you're growing up in a household, we've got people from different cultures, you often switch from one to the other, depending on who you're talking to. My daughter's accent would change depending on who she's speaking with. But then sometimes hearing my, especially my daughter, speaking to Scottish people in certain contexts, and her accent suddenly becomes very, very strong. The dialect, the word she's

using, like really going into Scots, wouldn't necessarily be speaking that way with, with us in the house. And that's quite an interesting one, realising how much the children have absorbed of Scottish culture and language and how much that is part of their identity. And when, often when we leave Scotland we feel quite patriotic towards Scotland in a strange way, right? So I grew up in England, like I said, lived in the Caribbean for a long time. But when we leave Scotland, we do feel grav-, we gravitate to Scottish people, we get excited when we hear a Scottish accent in London, we kind of miss the accent, and then, so happy to hear it, when you get to the airport, or train station in London, you start hearing folks about to get on the train to Edinburgh or Glasgow, there's my people, you know.

KK - I have exactly the same experience every time I sit at an airport and hear the people you know about to board the flight to Edinburgh or Glasgow, I feel so happy.

LW - Yeah.

KK - And even though I might have not noticed that I'm homesick for Glasgow, I know I'm going home now. And I feel so, so warm inside. And I'm so glad I'm not the only one.

LW - Yeah. And your accent is, has a lot of Scottish inflexion, right?

KK - It does, I'm a chameleon, I've managed to fool quite a lot of people with my accent, I'm not doing it on purpose. It's my, I couldn't do an accent on purpose. Let's put it that way. But living here and being surrounded by Scottish people, working with Scottish people, you know, it's just something I've taken on just like in any other situation. I would probably sound Canadian, If I lived in Canada or something like that. But yeah, there's a lot of, I think you can actually take that on, because there is that openness. And so you can feel patriotic to an extent or proud or, or just very closely connected and tied on an emotional and internal level. That's what I love about it as well.

LW - I mean, maybe patriotic is the wrong word. Because in a way, I probably think of myself as more of a global citizen. Like if anybody asked me, just because I've had experiences and heritage from different, so many different places and our family. And I think sometimes we have to be careful also about potentially dividing ourselves by too much and allegiance to one country over another as well. So we do have to watch that, also.

KK - That is true, that is true.

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KK - Something that I read before our conversation, and you also touched upon there was, you know, the very interesting context of the work that you do about black history, and really highlighting that history and making people rethink what they think they know about our past and our society and culture. And that has a very special context in Scotland, like you mentioned, that has also experienced a form of cultural loss and oppression, you know, certain things being prohibited here that prohibited people from expressing their cultural identity in the 18th and 19th century. And I'm just wondering, what that feels like to do, a to, I don't want to ask you what if questions, but you know, I do wonder, do you think you would have done this kind of work? Or would your work look similar? If you weren't in Scotland, you

know, what does Scotland mean, for the work that you do and that context for the work that you do?

LW -That's a good question, because I do think the context is really unique. I can't think of many other places that have this history of semi colonisation. I wouldn't say totally colonised for a few reasons. But people have gone through experiences that in some ways can connect or be seen as similar to the kinds of experiences that people went through during the Middle Passage, African people in the Caribbean, and struggling to hold on to really important parts of your identity, whether that's religion, whether that's the clothing that you wear, your language, language is a key one. So language and music are key ones. What I don't want to do is make an exact equivalence with those two kinds of experiences because we know that People who got caught up in the chattel slavery system are going through the kind of experience that is the most extreme. Right. But I do think what it can do is encourage empathy in Scottish people. If this history's approached well, it can encourage empathy for people to have a certain amount of understanding for that experience, because, for example, Gaelic was banned, and people were punished, and what kind of what does that do to your psyche? What does that do to your sense of identity, this this, this, these attempts to reclaim identity that has people have struggled to hold on to here, and also the pain that has come from the history of the clearances. People losing their land, people being evicted by force, and put onto boats. So I think that there is a level of understanding that can come because people know about those experiences still, in their consciousness, particularly people in the Highlands, for example, less so around Edinburgh further south.

But I think one of the things that's important to note is that Scottish history itself hasn't really been told fully in schools and other very anglocentric curriculum until a few decades ago. And there's been many efforts to really make it much more relevant to Scotland and tell the story of these things. It's also painful for Scotland's past. So because of that, that also means that a lot of the international connections of Scottish law and colonialism hasn't been taught either. And because people have just gone through a stage of really making efforts to reclaim this culture and history that's been hidden here, or ignored here or omitted here, for whatever reason. It's sometimes, then difficult to be able to talk about the kinds of histories that are involved in Scots who are involved in oppression abroad. So sometimes, that part can be hard. I think it's changing quite a bit because Scottish historians have been working almost for a few decades now, but particularly in the last 10-20 years. There's also many Caribbean scholars who've been working on these connections for years. And I think sometimes where that, that disconnect, because people here and not always exposed to Caribbean scholarship around this history as well.

So, I think one of the things I do, and I want to do, is really encourage conversations in Scotland, and the Caribbean and bring people together so, whether that's school-children, twinning schools, having these conversations with their peers, which I think would be amazing. But also creating opportunities for exchanges, where young people could come from the Caribbean, come to Scotland, maybe go up to one of the castles that has connections with the Caribbean, maybe their ancestors owned plantations in the Caribbean. And now we want to do something that will, erm, help the development of Caribbean people, now. We don't choose our ancestors, we don't choose the past, we've got no control over what happened. But we do have a lot of control over the kinds of things we can do now in terms of telling the truth, whatever that might be, be different perspectives within that. And

sometimes, it's information that's still missing, and still will have to change as new information becomes available. But also, about this work is for healing, it's for reconciliation, it's about creating better relationships. Because sometimes folks in other places will know the history of Scots in the colonies in a way that Scottish people who just really don't know anything about it at all. And often, when you open their eyes, they're quite shocked by or amazed that they didn't know about it before. And interested in finding out, about more. So for me, it's about bringing these conversations together and trying to create opportunities where people can keep these conversations going, but also encourage people to come to Scotland to hear different stories that aren't always told.

So what's exciting for me is that sometimes you'll get people booking all the way from America, there might be an African American person interested in the African American presence in Edinburgh, you might get people of Jamaican descent who come up in a big group from London, they come to Scotland for the very first time. And these are people in their 50s, maybe older, they've never thought about coming to Scotland. And this is something that hooks them, they're like, ah, I want to go up and hear about all the connections with Jamaica, for example. So what's exciting for me is getting a whole cross-section of different people who tend to show up on the walk for all sorts of different reasons, people that maybe we never met otherwise, and have the opportunity to meet one another to have conversations and to be able to even within those two hours change that perspective because they're then exposed to different kinds of conversation.

KK - So with that we're really diving right into the topic of the walks. And I would love for all the listeners if you've not listened to last week's episode yet, you can listen to that last week's episode to hear a story from my perspective about participating in one of the Black History walks here in Edinburgh with Lisa. Erm But Lisa, for anyone who hasn't listened to it yet, can you give us an idea of what these walking tours are all about? How they came into being, how you started them, and what people can expect from a walk with you in Edinburgh?

LW - Absolutely. So the walks take two hours normally, and sometimes there are public walks that you can access, through Eventbrite. Sometimes their commission walks that I do specifically for smaller groups. So we start at the Belfour Monument in the area where the first buildings in the new town went up, the end of the 18th century. So it's famous for being an architectural masterpiece, Georgian masterpiece of architecture. And so many of the statues [siren sound] around there can tell these stories. So we make our way through New Town, we sometimes visit a graveyard. And then we make our way through Princes Street Gardens, which is particularly nice, when it's sunny. The sun does shine in Edinburgh sometimes, it does [Kathi giggles] promise you. And then we make our way up the Mound past the, the National Gallery, and we talk about some of the people who are living around that area in let's say the 18th and 19th century. So we, we have groups limited to 20 people maximum and that normally it's great if we have, I don't know, let's say up to about 15 people, because then we're able to have conversations and ask questions along the way, which is really nice.

And they came about really, erm there's a few factors, I suppose, one being inspired by Sir Geoff Palmer's work and doing talks in Edinburgh to my links to the Caribbean. And that really opened my eyes to the very specific links that we have here, having a general

knowledge, of course, about Britain, the Caribbean and the important things that happen, but linking it directly to here. Then also being part of a programme called recovering Scotland's Black History, which was running with African motion film festival in conjunction with the Coalition for racial equality rights, it was in Glasgow. So there have been walks, talking about Caribbean enslavement, and also slavery in Virginia, been running in Glasgow for quite a while, went on one of those walks has been inspired. That was really interesting. And then I thought, why is no-one doing anything like this in Edinburgh, doesn't make any sense. Because there are so many links. And I had been doing some research on my own. This really inspired me to start the walks. And then I thought I would take maybe 18 months to do research to sketch it out. And then I did lots of test runs with friends as well. So friends who are artists, historians, people who have lived here for ages, lots of different people, different ages. And we did a test run to figure out where would be the most interesting spots, and what would allow us to tell a whole range of story and also be kind of manageable, within the centre of Edinburgh, that we could fit into that two hours. Also bearing in mind, people who don't even maybe have difficulty walking, making sure it's also accessible. So if someone's in a wheelchair, then making sure that you can also take a route where nobody is excluded. That's really important for me, one of the things I want to do, is to employ a sign language interpreter, [Kathi hmmm in acknowledgement] who can also make sure that people from the deaf community who use that as their main form of communication that they are included as well.

So these walks started out really for Black History Month in 2018. And had some support from the Coalition for racial equality rights to help me to create some maps as well with some of the information, photographs of people I will talk about too. And then it really took off. So I did some in Black History Month, people came along and you can see people's minds being quite blown by it. I was very overexcited and the tours went on for quite a long time. I wanted to tell everyone, every bit of information I've mapped out. So it's about trimming them down to something that is erm, you know, manageable. Nice afternoon out, you could do it in the morning, so you finish it lunchtime somewhere, erm in the old town, or maybe, if you do want to in the afternoon, you can get a nice tea afterwards somewhere in Edinburgh. And often in buildings that directly connect to the history where you've got, black people here in Edinburgh from the past who maybe had a business there or maybe they spoke in that place. So that brings another dimension for people who have been spending time in their spaces.

KK - Can you recall any moments where maybe someone came along? You know, you said people had their minds blown by the tour? Was there ever a moment that stands out to you? Where someone came along, and it was just completely unexpected to them? What they heard or how it impacted them, and that you would be comfortable sharing with us?

LW - Absolutely. I mean, all sorts of things. I had a person, erm, a man and a family, a few months ago. And he said he was Edinburgh, born, been to university here, work here, and then he said to me in the middle of the tour. I have to apologise for my silence. And I said, why? I said are you okay? And he said this tour is blowing my mind so much. It's forcing me to go away and reevaluate every single thing that I've learned about my own city. And it's gonna take me a while. But I really thank you for this. Because this is forcing me to have a whole new perspective on everything. And I've had several people say something similar. So at the beginning of the walk, I do tell people at the beginning that it can be quite an

emotional journey for lots of different reasons. And sometimes, it's a sense of surprise for people that have lived here all their life, and they can't quite fathom how they don't know this information. And that can be very impactful for a lot of people. It's nice for me working with young people, let's say, 12 and 13 year olds who are just learning about some of this history in school. They're asking their own questions, and they're also creating their own connections. And they're also not afraid to ask questions, either. They're not, it doesn't matter for them if they don't know, {Kathi hmm} which is really quite nice, refreshing.

KK - Yeah, I think one of the stories that stands out to me and that, you know, I also mentioned in last week's story episode is the story of Melvina Wells and her grief, with a view of Edinburgh Castle, I think it's, it's such an impactful and beautiful spot to be in, in terms of the location of it. But then also the story about her and people like her, you know, it's just stories that are not told enough, and that we don't know about enough. And it's important to hear all the terrible stories, but it's also important to hear the stories of people who've thrived in their lives and in what they were doing. And it isn't all just doom and gloom, but there are also really outstanding people to learn about and hear about that. That was one of the things. I don't think it surprised me, because I had read so much about it in advance, but it was a surprising impact it had on me I think. And I really enjoy it. That's probably one of my favourite stories on the, on the walking tour.

LW - Right. And I think you're not alone. Because that, that story of her life does tend to have an emotional impact, particularly for teenagers, but particularly girls, teenage girls who've been through the same age when she was brought here. And imagine, it's very easy for them to imagine themselves in a situation. But of course, we don't know all of the aspects of her life and story and sometimes, then, you know, I want to make sure that we're also allowing room for knowing that we don't know the whole story, we don't know if she wanted to have her own family. We don't know if she wanted to get married. We don't know what if she wanted to leave. But we do know that she goes back home for a while and spent several months and we know that she decides to then come back to the family, as well as it's very attached to them, they're very attached to her as well. And when she dies, actually, their absolutely. It's very important for the family that she's honoured. So her, the announcement for death goes into the newspaper, and the children, the family who's older by that point, saying, you must make sure that she's respected and honoured in this kind of way. I want to send a bouquet of flowers also to the funeral. And it's unusual for, like you say, to walk into a graveyard, and see somebody honoured in this kind of way, who was born enslaved. And there would have been many people here. Maybe in worse situations who are here, and would have been buried in an unmarked grave, right, I'm sure as many other people as well. But like you say what's interesting about her story is that we do have a beautiful portrait of her for example, we know about within the fact we have paintings, the fact that we there are so many details about her life, makes people able to feel emotionally engaged it humanises the story, which is what I'm trying to do as much as possible.

KK - Absolutely. And I think that's also one of the powerful things that you do on the tour. It's you know, and you see this on the tour, yes, we talk about individuals but we have to contextualise and think about the whole movement and the community around them. But it is very helpful speaking about individuals like you say, to humanise these stories and, and the fate of people and to really start and create empathy and develop an understanding for what was going on. And how, what to do with it now, so to say, from our perspective now.

LW - Yeah, absolutely.

Let's take a quick break to hear a story about our sponsors.

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KK - What are some of the things you want people to take away from a black history walk in Edinburgh

LW - A few things. One, they had a great time tell everyone else about it, two that they, people are aware of how long people of African descent have been present in Scotland. So coming up too close to 2,000 years minimum talking about the Roman period. Because sometimes you talk to folks, and he will ask them, when do you think black people first came to Scotland and some people will say I don't know 1990s, they've got to go much further back. Because again, people don't know, that's really important. And that also gives a sense of belonging, I think to Afro Scots, Scottish people of African descent. So, actually also been here for a very, very long time. The other thing I want people to take away is understanding the level of resistance that came from people in Scotland and people in Edinburgh to injustices, happening around the world, and how often people are working in solidarity with people abroad in really powerful ways that, you know, they're uplifting and respecting those other people. And it's taking a cue from those people rather than assuming that, erm they know best. {Kathi Hmm} And they're assisting them in a quite patronising way. And there were so many people who were from Edinburgh who operating in a completely different way. Erm and I think people are surprised by that, particularly women. And that's something I also want to make sure that, you know, women are obscured, in all different backgrounds in this history, a lot, and we had to look a little bit harder, sometimes dig a little bit further and also make sure that we mention there sometimes are recognised later, this as well, you know.

So that the things I want people to take away are a sense of inspiration from the past, when people come together from all different backgrounds to, to work together for justice and work for freedom, work for the betterment of everybody.

KK - And that's obviously very relevant today as well. To not lose hope and to also find inspiration and yeah, hope, I guess is, is maybe the best word to use, that it's worth doing the work and there is other people who are interested in we're not alone. It's not pointless. There is actually something that can be done. Yes, it's hard. Yes, it takes time. Yes, there will be people who are against it. But like you say it's that sense of solidarity, the combining the community and finding the strength together to work against it to do something about it.

LW - Absolutely. And for me in a way It's a sense of not letting people down from the past who have put their lives at stake to make things better for everybody. And to carry that work forward in whatever way we can.

KK - If we are visiting Edinburgh, we are obviously in a very fortunate situation of having your walks available. And, and hopefully many people can join you in the future going forward as well. But I'm wondering if we were to visit another place where maybe there isn't Lisa Williams? And there isn't a black history walk available? How can we try and engage with black history in those locations? In a new way? Or how can we learn more about black history in locations where there isn't such a valuable resource already existing? Do you have any tips, any resources that you can share, maybe particularly about Scotland, or the UK, but also in general.

LW - One of the things I encourage folks to do here is if they are, I don't know, looking at a particular historical material object in a building, or a particular painting, or if it's something that fits into the time period, where Scots are very much involved abroad, and the colonies and, and the Caribbean, particularly, to use those as opportunities to start to look at the other side of the story. So you might take a particular date, for example, and say, Okay, what's going on in the world on the date, what's going on in India, what's going on in the Caribbean, what's going on in Africa. And if you can start to broaden your perspective, you might very well find links that connect to Scotland. The other thing I think, is becoming more and more easy to do is to access the archives, because the people who run the archives here are very keen to open it up to people who aren't necessarily trained historians and archivists, and there's a great movement towards that at the moment. Erm, I think one of the things you can do, also is, there's a few things that you, could you, could look towards doing. So for example, a game changer has been the slave compensation list that shows all the research that's been done by University College, so, so much this stuff is becoming more and more available online. If you start to look for names, particularly names can lead you down a whole rabbit warren of research, right? So you might check a particular family, there are certain families that will, would have been involved abroad. And you'll, you'll find often in the very same family, you've got one sibling, going off to India, you've got another one going off to the Caribbean, very much these histories are intertwined. So I think it's about maybe just looking at a particular family that's come from a particular place, and then checking to see Oh, where did they go, what were they involved in and following that line. And amazing what you can come up with, even in the tiniest of villages.

KK - One of the ways I think a lot of people connect with Scotland, especially before the trips, is obviously through books. And we'd love to ask you a few of your favourite Scottish books that kind of inspire you and you think would be a good read for people to read up on Scottish history and life and culture and so on.

LW - Absolutely. And I can tell you about some writers that in a way still connects to this history, I suppose. So you have a kind of unsung, Scottish Jane Austen. For those who love Jane Austen, and watch all the, those period films that connect to her stories. There's a woman called Susan Ferrier who comes from Edinburgh. And we're actually just a few doors down from her house here on George street, and the printing press bar. So if you ever get a chance to come to Edinburgh, go to the printing press bar and know that you're in the house of Susan Ferrier, who wrote these really interesting kind of social critiques of middle class life in Edinburgh in the early 19th century, also but like *The Inheritance*, for example. You've also got one writers like Louise Welsh, who's a crime writer based in Glasgow, and I'm excited to read her new book, which also connects to Glasgow's clans and past. And there's also a writer for Jenny Fagan, who I really love actually, who came up with a book last year called

Luckenbooth. And that is set mainly in the Old Town here. So I think that'd be an exciting read for people coming into Edinburgh, hearing about mystery and intrigue that they'll think about as they are walking around the OldTown.

KK - Few titles there to add to my reading list as well. Fantastic. Thank you. And then I have another question and you're probably gonna dive right into research mode and, and give me an answer that is five hours long. But I'm going to ask you anyways, and I'm going to ask you to just see the first person that comes to mind: if there was a historical figure that you could spend a day with, who would it be and why?

LW - You know, I think I would choose Anna Murray, who was the first wife of Frederick Douglass, because her voice is not heard enough. And there's very often we hear about the great men in history. And I pay all due respect to Frederick Douglass, but we don't always hear about the women who were often the backbone of the family, and did very important things as well also unsung. So I think she's the person who I want to speak to about. When Frederick Douglass came to Edinburgh, how was it for her when he was away for almost two years, and how she's trying to keep everything together in his absence? So Anna Murray, who became Anna Murray Douglass, would be my choice.

KK - Fantastic. Thank you very much. That was much easier than I thought, I thought he would, you would spiral and mentioned way too many people that that was very good. {Giggles} And what a beautiful reason as well. And I think you're so right, that, you know, there are people we always hear about, and it's the people I don't want to see behind them, but next to them, or around them, that probably have a lot of interesting stories to tell. And interesting perspectives to share as well. Yeah. I love that idea. {Giggles} Okay, last question. Final question for today, you can talk about somewhere in Edinburgh, or Scotland in general, but I would love to know a place in Edinburgh or Scotland that makes you happy.

LW - Where makes me happy. I think nature makes me happy erm. I tell you what makes me happy is Arthur's Seat. The mountain that we have here right in the middle of Edinburgh. That's one of the reasons I moved here as well. To have a mountain like that in the middle of the capital city is wild. And it's a place when you go there, you can almost feel the spirits of the people, the tribe that the Iceni tribe that was there hundreds of years ago with their reindeer in the park, you can think about the people that have walked through that part over the centuries, erm. And it's a very anchoring, grounding, beautiful place to go is literally right on your doorstep. If you have one day to visit Edinburgh, you can go there very, very easily. If you're going to see the royal palace, you can just step out and you're minutes away from this amazing hill that you can walk up. If you're able you've got the energy, you can get up to the top and you have this fantastic view of Edinburgh. So that is a very special place that always makes me feel good when I'm walking through there. And it's a place that is very easy to get to and enjoy.

KK - I love Arthurs seat as well. It's such a beautiful walk and particularly on a sunny day or for sunset. It's just a perfect place to visit. Get a view of the entire city, the sea, look out to Fiythe and Leith on the coast here as well. Yeah, it's a, it's a beautiful place to visit. So a very, very good choice, I think.

Right, that was it for our conversation with Lisa Williams. Lisa, thank you so much for taking the time, and joining us for a conversation. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

For listeners. I hope you will check out Lisa's tours in Edinburgh, her walks in Edinburgh, Lisa, what's the best way for people to kind of stay in touch with you or find out more about you and your walks in Edinburgh.

LW - Two really easy ways. Those folks who are on Instagram and follow me on caribscot. So if you think of half of the Caribbean, and half of Scotland, for caribscots, you can also go onto www.Caribscot.org, [spells out] c a r i b s c o t.org and you can sign up for a newsletter. So if you're planning a trip to Edinburgh, you can see what events are coming up. You can also see links of where to, to join a tour. Even if a tour isn't happening when you're planning to come, you may be able to put on a special tour fee so please feel free to get in touch.

KK - Fantastic Thank you so much.

LW - Thank you! Brilliant.

[jingle]

A big thank you to Lisa Williams for being the first guest on this season of Wild for Scotland, and of course for all of her amazing work, telling some of the hidden histories of Edinburgh and changing the way we engage with Scottish history.

I hope you enjoyed learning some of this history too and it has inspired you to check out Lisa's Black History Walks whether you're living in Edinburgh or planning a visit.

You can connect with Lisa on Instagram @caribscot and find out more about the Edinburgh Caribbean Association on caribscot.org. There you can also sign up for her newsletter to find out about upcoming tours, talks or special events.

The links are all in the show notes.

[main theme tune]

And with this, I send you off to dream about your own trip to Edinburgh.

We'll be back with another story episode next week and this time we're heading to Scotland's other large city and my hometown - Glasgow. I hope you'll tune in again.

Thank you so much for listening today. Hit subscribe if you want to make sure you never miss an episode, or sign up for our newsletter to get alerts, peeks behind the scenes and additional information about the places and topics we cover on this season. You'll find the links in the show notes.

Wild for Scotland is part of the Tremula Network - adventure and outdoor podcasts off the beaten path. The show is written and hosted by me, Kathi Kamleitner. Thanks to Fran Turauskis who is the co-producer and editor, and does the sound design. And to Michelle Payne who help with transcripts and social media. Podcast art is by Lizzie Vaughan-Knight, the Tartan Trailburner and all original music is composed by Bruce Wallace.

Until next week, when we travel to a different place in Scotland.

[main theme tune end]