

# A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder

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A writing experience  
to remember with  
Jesse Blackadder in  
Scotland...



BookShop Travel



# A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder

**Dr Jesse Blackadder is fascinated by adventurous women and forgotten stories. She is the award-winning author of six novels for adults and children, including two major works of historical fiction.**

Her novels use history as their leaping off point, entwining fact and fiction into compelling stories. Jesse drew on the real life story of her Scottish ancestors to write *The Raven's Heart*, in which a teenage girl, disguised as a young man for most of her life, goes into the royal court to regain her family's birthright and honour. The book won the Benjamin Franklin Award for Historical Fiction (USA).

In Jesse's second work of historical fiction, *Chasing the Light*, three women set out to be the first of their

sex to reach Antarctica in the 1930s. Jesse won the Australian Antarctic Arts Fellowship, allowing her to travel to Antarctica, plus the Guy Morrison Prize for Literary Journalism for her historical research.

Jesse's Doctor of Creative Arts thesis explored the role of historical fiction in resurrecting lost stories and silent voices. She has spoken and taught at literary festivals across Australia and internationally.

About  
Jesse



*"Jesse Blackadder has all the hallmarks of a great historical fiction writer."*

– Sunday Telegraph.

*"A wonderful example of painstakingly researched historical fiction from a bright Australian talent."*

– Bookseller and Publisher.



# A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder

## Castles, Cloisters, Quests

Spanning the dawn of human history to recent memory, historical fiction is a rich genre, encompassing human experience across vastly different geographies, cultures and eras. In the past two decades it has boomed, with authors such as Geraldine Brooks, Kate Grenville, Jeanette Winterson, Anna Funder, Khaled Hosseini and Hilary Mantel bringing history alive for their readers.

In this seven-day course, located in the evocative surrounds of Scotland's Borders district, we will plunder the past and delve into the secrets of writing dramatic, powerful historical fiction.

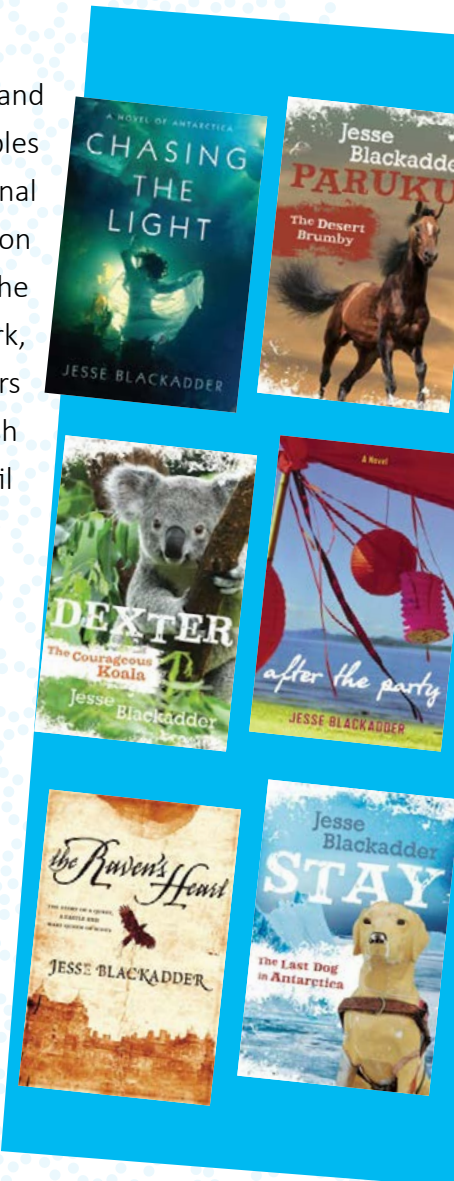
Through hands-on exercises we will explore history as a rich source of stories; the perils and rewards of using real characters, events and settings; how 'truth' and fiction can mingle and enrich each other; and how language can be used to create a sense of time and place.

In a gentle rhythm of daily classes, you'll learn the structures that

underpin successful novels, and how to apply their principles to your own writing in original and exciting ways. Hands on exercises will help you find the best structure for your work, create memorable characters and vivid worlds, and polish your words and sentences until they glow.

You'll learn:

- What is historical fiction and why it's so popular
- Narrative structures and how to use them
- The techniques of fiction and which are best for your story
- How to bring your characters to life
- How to create vivid historical worlds
- How to research historical fiction
- How to edit so your work truly improves.





## The Writing Program

The writing workshop in Scotland will cover the essentials of novel writing through seven structured sessions. Each of these sessions is personally developed by Jesse and will run for approximately 3 hours in the mornings when you will be bright and ready to engage.

There is also an amazing one to one session where you will be able to delve deeper into your personal writing challenges and find solutions with Jesse.

### Day ONE *Meet & Greet*

*Lunch with Jesse in Edinburgh* – Upon arrival in Edinburgh, you will make your way to Central Edinburgh to meet both Jesse and your writing group. You will lunch together and discuss your common love – writing. Listen to Jesse share her vast experience of writing and get to know your fellow writers.

### Day TWO *Session One*

#### *Crossing the drawbridge – entering the creative space*

Our creative journey begins by tapping into our deepest passion and excitement for writing. After learning about each other and discussing what makes historical fiction, we will leap into the adventure of writing through practical exercises that cut to the heart of creativity and inspiration. We'll practice vivid writing that draws on the senses, and use free-writing exercises to generate new ideas and expand on existing ones. This session will set the tone for the week – with an emphasis on hands-on learning, examples from literature, and group discussion.

### Day THREE *Session Two*

#### *Ramparts, battlements and buttresses – the fundamentals of structure.*

Grounded in writing practice from day one, we will move on to explore the different types of structure and how they are used in historical fiction. We'll work through the stages of the hero's journey and the traditional three-act structure that underpins so many successful historical novels. We'll identify the components of plot, including the dramatic question, the protagonist's desire, the importance of conflict, the story crisis and climax, and how to end. You'll discover how to apply these structures to your own work – and when it's time to throw structure out the window.



## *A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder*

### Day FOUR *Session Three*

#### *The castle keep – the centrality of research.*

Historical fiction almost always requires research – usually lots of it. You need to make choices about authenticity, including how much you want to draw real characters and historical events, and your story world needs to be rich in correct period detail. We'll discuss sources for historical research – including archives, interviews, secondary sources and, of course, the Internet. We will work through how research affects setting, plot and character, what to leave in and what to leave out, and how to know when you've done enough research and need to put it aside.

### Day FOUR *Session Four*

#### *Turrets and towers – creating the story world.*

The 'special world' of your story should resonate through every page. Drawing on great opening pages in historical novels, we'll analyse the tools historical novelists use to create their worlds. Through our own exercises we'll practice creating authentic settings and story worlds based on good research, sensory detail and creative use of language.

### Day FIVE *Session Five*

#### *Heroes, allies, enemies – creating or stealing memorable characters.*

Who are the great historical characters who've lived on in your mind? What made them unforgettable? Characters are the core of any story, and their desires drive a narrative from start to finish. How do you think up original characters? Can you take real characters from history, and if so, how much research is needed and what ethical standards should you observe? We'll explore character development tools including dialogue, questions, showing versus telling, and character-in-action.



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## The Writing Program (cont.)

### Day SIX *Session Six*

#### *The holy grail – your first draft*

Finishing the first draft of a novel or story is a huge achievement. But in spite of the accolades your family and friends may give you, it's not an ending. It's the start of a whole new journey – that of revision and rewriting – and it's not always easy! Today we'll discuss how to approach revising your work, including choosing your early readers, how to give and receive feedback, and how to revise from the big picture (structural) level down to the micro (sentence) level, and how to double check your research. We'll use hands on exercises to show how the structures we discussed early in the week come into their own when revising.

### Day SEVEN *Session Seven*

#### *Towers and treasures – taking our lessons home*

How can we take the learning and creativity from this week back into our normal lives? As our week's journey comes to an end, we'll prepare for protecting our creative treasures when we return to the ordinary world. We'll use exercises and discussions to plan how to stay motivated, productive and disciplined for the hard work of bringing a novel to completion. We'll finish up with a discussion of publishing options, and insights into the writing life.



Follow Jesse on twitter @jesseblackadder



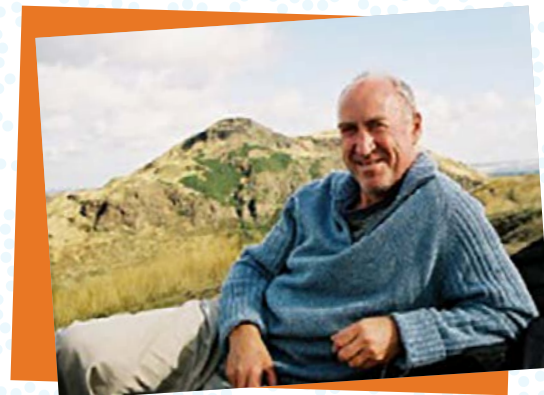
# A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder

## BookShop Travel

BookShop Travel is a bespoke tour company based in Sydney, Australia. Dedication to personal service, access to behind-the-scenes experiences is what makes a BookShop Travel experience unique. BookShop Travel works with the most ethical local providers to benefit local communities. We prepare tours by going to see the countries and to scope and plan activities personally. We always use local people and families as our on the ground support and choose our working partners very carefully. BookShop Travel presents itineraries from direct and relevant experience.

## Douglas Stewart

Dougie Stewart is your local Scotsman who will be there to support and guide you. Dougie was born and grew up in Glasgow, and studied Architecture there. After a failed attempt to learn to love the bright lights of London, he came home in the early 90s, this time to Edinburgh, primarily to give his 2 daughters the opportunity to grow up with access to Scotland's spectacular outdoors. At the same time, he created Make Tracks Walking Holidays, a company that helps people from all over the world to enjoy hiking in parts of Scotland that they would never otherwise reach. 20 odd years and 2 more daughters later, he still enjoys living in Edinburgh, hiking in the Scottish mountains and coast, and has also been known to share some traditional Scottish and Irish jigs and reels on the fiddle.





## The Tour Itinerary

The tour itinerary has been designed for the creative, curious writer, highlighting the magical villages and history of the Borders region and with plenty of chances to walk and explore. It features some of Scotland's favourite accommodation and restaurants, and delightful writing facilities.

### Day ONE *Sunday June 28*

Group arrives separately.

12.30pm – We meet Jesse and Dougie in Central Edinburgh. Meet your fellow writers and enjoy an authentic Scottish lunch at Howies Restaurant in the Old Town. Be tempted by a taste of haggis, neaps and tatties. After lunch head to the Bow Bar, a proper Scottish pub with plenty of ales and a large selection of whiskeys. This is an opportunity to get to know Dougie and to learn the local language.

1.00pm – Lunch

3.00pm – Collection by minibus to St Boswells. Accommodation at the [Buccleuch Arms Hotel](#) at St Boswells.

Free evening

*Package inclusions – lunch, transfer to St Boswells, accommodation.*

### Day TWO *Monday June 29*

9.00am - 12.00pm – Session one with Jesse  
Crossing the drawbridge – entering the creative space

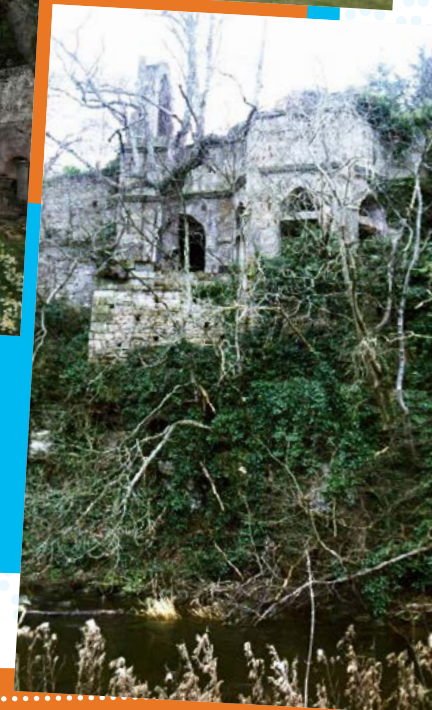
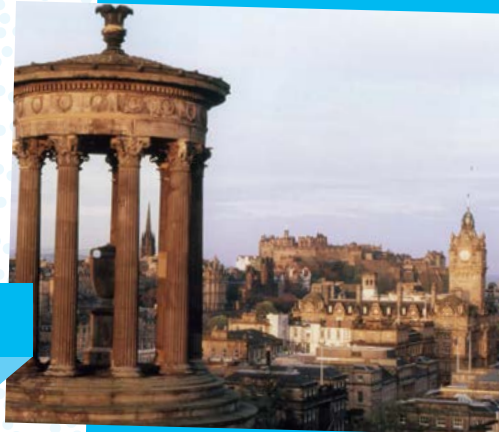
Afternoon at leisure – Suggested Independent Activities:

- Informal lunch in Hotel bar
- [Walk to Dryburgh Abbey](#)
- Walk to Harestanes along Dere Street

7.00pm – Welcome Dinner at [Buccleuch Arms Hotel](#)

Accommodation at the Buccleuch Arms Hotel at St Boswells.

*Package inclusions – Session one with Jesse Blackadder, dinner, accommodation.*



## A journey through history with Jesse Blackadder

### Day THREE *Tuesday June 30*

9.00am – 12.00pm – Session two with Jesse  
Ramparts, battlements & buttresses – the fundamentals of structure

12.30pm – Lunch

1.30pm – Departure for the short minibus transfer (10 mins), and [guided walk from Bowden to Melrose](#). Walk finishes at [Melrose](#).

5.00pm – Check in to [Burts Hotel](#)

Free Evening

Overnight at Burts Hotel

*Package inclusions – Session two with Jesse Blackadder, transfers, guided walk from Bowden to Melrose, accommodation.*

### Day FOUR *Wednesday July 1*

9.00am – 12.00pm – Session three with Jesse  
The castle keep – the centrality of research

12.00pm – On completion of your writing session at 12.00pm, you will be collected with a picnic lunch in tow and accompanied by Jesse Blackadder to Blackadder Castle near Allenton – where Jesse got her inspiration to write Raven's Heart.

Return approximately 5.00pm

Free evening

Overnight at Burts Hotel

*Package inclusions – Session three with Jesse Blackadder, transfers, picnic lunch and private tour by Jesse Blackadder of Blackadder Castle, accommodation.*



## The Tour Itinerary (cont.)

The tour itinerary has been designed for the creative, curious writer, highlighting the magical villages and history of the Borders region and with plenty of chances to walk and explore. It features some of Scotland's favourite accommodation and restaurants, and delightful writing facilities.

### Day FIVE *Thursday July 2*

9.00am – 12.00pm – Session four with Jesse  
Turrets and towers – creating the story world

Afternoon at leisure – Suggested Independent Activities:

- visit Melrose Abbey, Roman site
- Trimontium Museum,
- shops or short walk into the Eildon Hills to see Roman and Iron Age Forts

Free evening

Overnight at [Burts Hotel](#)

*Package inclusions – Session four with Jesse Blackadder, accommodation.*



9.00am – 12.00pm – Session five with Jesse  
Heroes, allies, enemies – creating or stealing memorable characters

1.00pm – Collection and transfer to [Abbotsford House](#) (home of Sir Walter Scott). Lunch provided at Abbotsford House restaurant, and short tour of Abbotsford House and Grounds.

Afternoon at leisure: Suggested Independent activities:

Optional guided walk from Abbotsford on old [Drove Road to Selkirk](#) (first 3 stage, in reverse). Those who don't want to walk can be collected on minibus and taken direct to Selkirk.

5.00pm – Check in at [County Hotel](#)

Free evening

Overnight at County Hotel

*Package inclusions – Session five with Jesse Blackadder, transfers, two course lunch, guided walks and accommodation.*

### Day SIX *Friday July 3*

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### Day SEVEN *Saturday July 4*

9.00am – 12.00pm – Session six with Jesse  
The holy grail – your first draft

Free time in Selkirk

Afternoon at leisure – Suggested Independent Activities:

- [Guided walk to Three Brethren Cairns](#)

Free evening

Overnight at County Hotel

*Package inclusions – Session six with Jesse Blackadder, accommodation.*

### Day EIGHT *Sunday July 5*

9.00am – 12.00pm – Session seven with Jesse  
Towers and treasures – taking our lessons home

1.30pm – Collection from Hotel by minibus for transfer to Edinburgh

2.30pm – Arrive and check in at [Ten Hill Place Hotel](#)

Free time pm in Edinburgh

Afternoon at leisure: Suggested Independent activities:

- Castle
- Arthur's Seat
- Literary Tour

8.00pm – [The Witchery Restaurant](#)

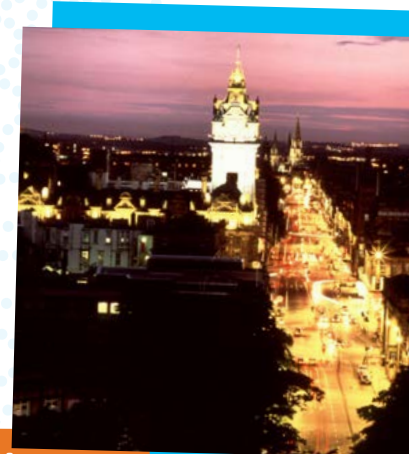
Overnight at Ten Hill Place Hotel

*Package inclusions – Session seven with Jesse Blackadder, transfers, dinner and accommodation.*

## The Tour Itinerary (cont.)

Day NINE *Monday July 6*

Depart Edinburgh after breakfast at Ten Hill Place Hotel.



## Package Details

**Package price:** \$5,880 AUD per person twin share.

Single accommodation upgrade subject to availability.

### What is included in the cost

- Accommodation in Scotland for 7 nights
- 21 hours of tuition in historical fiction with Jesse Blackadder
- Transfers to central Edinburgh on arrival on the 28th June
- All breakfast, all morning teas, 3 dinners, 2 Lunches
- Mini bus driver and hire
- Professional fees and costs for Jesse
- Two guided walking excursions
- Services of a local tour assistant to arrange additional cultural, literary or historical tours and to look after your other queries

### What is not included in the cost

- Airfares from Australia (or your point of departure) to Scotland.
- Travel Insurance. You must obtain your own travel insurance
- Meals and activities not mentioned in the itinerary or listed as Suggested Independent Activities.
- Personal expenses such as laundry, mobile phone and other incidentals.
- Transfers on completion of the tour on the 3rd July.

### Enquiries

Please send enquiries or booking request form to BOOKSHOP TRAVEL

In person Suite 3, 39 Bay Street,  
Double Bay NSW 2028

by mobile +61 419 489 141

by email [carol@bookshoptravel.com.au](mailto:carol@bookshoptravel.com.au)



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# BOOKING REQUEST FORM

Thanks for booking with us. BookShop Travel will record your booking request and contact you via email to confirm. A Tax Invoice will be sent via email with payment options and the amount due.

Your booking is not confirmed until a deposit is paid. If you have additional accommodation requirements we are happy to advise you on who to enquire with but we do not make bookings outside of the dates for the selected travel experience.

When filling in this form, please ensure spelling is correct and your name is written as it is on your passport. Type directly on to the form or print out, scan and complete. Please send the completed booking request via email [info@bookshoptravel.com.au](mailto:info@bookshoptravel.com.au) or post to BookShop Travel, Suite 3, 39 Bay Street, Double Bay NSW 2028. One form is to be completed per person.

We look forward to assisting you.

*"BookShop Travel offer a product that is genuinely unique and not available to other travel providers. I like a mix of experiences. Travel with new skills makes everything more desirable."*

**CAROL CRENNAN,**  
FOUNDER AND CURATOR OF BOOKSHOP TRAVEL

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