

# Scotland, land of the free (almost)

No need to salute your monarch while watching this wee stack of films

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The voting was a fiasco: 100,000 spoiled ballots, new counting machines that didn't work, mail-in delays. But the outcome of the elections in Scotland two weeks ago was beyond dispute: a separatist party won. The Scottish National Party wants to end the Celtic nation's 300-year-old union with England and Wales in a referendum by 2010. On this Victoria Day weekend – in which Canadians, as well as Scots in Edinburgh and Dundee, mark the Queen's birthday – let's turn our eyes to Scotland on film. Here are half a dozen classics on DVD.

**I Know Where I'm Going!** (*Britain, 1945*) Taking a break from wartime propaganda film-making in England, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger journeyed north to shoot this timeless gem about a city girl who takes an unexpected side-trip into passion on her way to be married in the Hebrides. Romance, superstition, stormy seas, a ruined castle – this has it all. Available on an extras-laden edition from U.S. DVD producer Criterion.



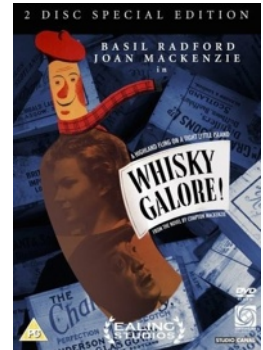
**The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie** (*Britain, 1969*) "All my pupils are the crème de la crème." Maggie Smith got an Oscar for her portrayal of an iconoclastic teacher at an Edinburgh girls' school in the 1930s. Based on Muriel Spark's novel, the film is both an allegory of the rise of fascism and a remarkably entertaining movie. On DVD as part of Fox's Studio Classics series.

**The Wicker Man** (*Britain, 1973*) A teenage girl has disappeared on a bucolic southwest island. Sent to investigate, a police sergeant discovers the place teeming with sex-hungry pagans bent on human sacrifice. Christopher Lee and Britt Ekland star. Restored to a 99-minute director's cut in 2001. Anchor Bay has a two-disc special edition; Optimum, in Britain, throws in an extra documentary and the original soundtrack.

**Culloden** (*Britain, 1964*) My Grade 10 history teacher, Mrs. Weiss, screened this vivid – but entirely staged – "documentary" for our class one afternoon, and I still can't get it out of my mind. Peter Watkins re-creates the Highlanders-vs.-British-army Battle of Culloden (1746) as a "you-are-there" TV reportage, and it's one of

the best anti-war films ever made. On DVD, it's coupled with Watkins's 1965 classic, *The War Game*.

**Whisky Galore!** (*Britain, 1949*) Another Hebrides adventure that ends with a '! In dry, rationed wartime, there's ne'er a wee dram of whisky to be had on the Todday islands – until a U.S.-bound ship laden with 50,000 bottles of the stuff runs aground offshore. The DVD is sold here only as part of Anchor Bay's five-film Ealing Studios Comedy Collection; in Britain, Optimum has a two-disc special edition with copious documentaries.



*And by mail order: Macbeth* (*U.S., 1948*) Orson Welles shot Shakespeare's tragedy entirely on a sunny set at Republic Studios in Los Angeles, but you wouldn't know it from what ended up on screen: a foggy and forlorn corner of 11th-century Scotland, where an army general and his wife plot to murder a king. The British DVD from Second Sight restores the cast's original Scottish accents, dropped after the film bombed on release in '48.

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