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The Scottish Parliament

Did you know...?

Authors Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson were born in Edinburgh – as was Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Architect Enric Miralles created Holyrood and he developed a design that was said to be “sitting in the land.” A walk around the outside of the building will reveal many of the building’s famous stylistic design features including the Debating Chamber, the MSP building and Tower Buildings. The Canongate Wall has stones from around Scotland set in the wall – some are fossils and some have quotations set in them. Scottish flowers have been included in the landscaping and artwork can be seen throughout the Holyrood Building.

Scotland voted in favour of its own Scottish Parliament with tax varying powers on September 11, 1997 by referendum. A devolved government has the power to make decisions on issues such as health, education, police and fire services, and prisons. ‘Reserved matters’, those dealt with by the UK Parliament, include areas such as foreign affairs, defence and national security.

The Scottish Executive is separate to the Scottish Parliament and its members are chosen from the party (or parties) that hold a majority of seats in the Parliament. The First Minister is the counterpart to the UK’s Prime Minister. The Scottish Parliament is made up of 129 MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament) who are voted for by the public with two votes: the first chooses between candidates in a constituency; the second chooses a political party within a larger electoral area (Scottish Parliament Region).

Find out more about Holyrood, the Scottish Parliament, and the Scottish Executive at www.scottish.parliament.uk