



# Scot Pourri



Send us your inquiries on life's little question marks.

Ever wanted to know what happened to your old pal from home, how to make your favourite Scottish meal, or wondered about a certain bit of Scottish history? Pose your questions on Scottish related topics to our knowledgeable readership who just may be able to help. Our letters page is a very popular and active one and many readers have been assisted across the world by fellow passionate Scots. Please keep letters under 200 words and we reserve the right to edit content and length. Letters, photos and any other items posted to the Scottish Banner cannot be returned. We prefer letters to be emailed to your nearest office or please visit our on line Scotpourri form at <http://www.scottishbanner.com>, alternatively you may post or fax your letters to us. Please ensure you include your full contact details, when emailing it is best to include your post address for those without internet access.

## A Reminder of Scottish National Treasures

As an expatriate of Bonnie Scotland and an avid devotee of the *Scottish Banner*, as well as an ex-Socceroo, reading the "Scotspeak" column in the September, 2009 *Banner* rather amazed me. Some of the "Auld Enemy" claims to the ancestry of such Scottish treasures, the ilk of which we have, namely haggis, **Rabbie Burns**, kilts, whisky, **Jean Brodie**, **Sean Connery**, that they could not have come or originated from Scotland-up their kilts!

Sour grapes to me, however, what more than amazed me was they never (or have as yet!) claimed **Sir Alex Ferguson**, a Manchester United icon, was indeed born in England!?

Maybe they can't spell Glasgow or know or want to know anything about us that is truly bred, born, made or invented in Scotland. Maybe someone should give them a "bell" and remind them.

From a proud Scot (ex-Glasca Socceroo),

**Alex Beattie**

Marden, South Australia

## A Very "Tyring" Question

In the *Scottish Banner* February, 2009 "This Month in Scottish History" regarding **John Dunlop**, the inventor of the pneumatic tyre being born in Ayrshire. I am sure I saw a notice in Stonehaven stating that he was born there. Can anyone confirm this?

I get the *Banner* from a friend from Montrose and certainly enjoy reading it.

**Muriel Adamson**

New Zealand

## Clan MacThomas: Back on the Map in Scotland and Australia!

Fifty years ago, few people in Scotland and even less around the world would have heard of the Clan MacThomas. This was not surprising as the Clan had no Chief and little connection with its ancient clan lands. Today, the situation is quite different. Since 1967, the Clan has a recognized official Chief, the 19th MacThomas of Finegand, and you cannot be in Glenshee in eastern Perthshire without being aware of the Clan's connection with that part of Scotland.

The Clan takes its name from Thomas, a Gaelic speaking highlander, known as Tomaidh Mor (Great Tommy), a descendant of the Clan Chattan Mackintoshes. Thomas lived in the 15th Century when the Clan Chattan confederation had become large and unmanageable. He took his kinsmen and followers across the Grampian Mountains from Badenoch to Glenshee. Here they settled and flourished on the lush grasslands beside Shee Water. In time they became known by the following variety of names: McColm, McComie, Comb(i)e, McCombe, McCombie, McComie, McComish, MacOmie, MaComish, Tam, Thom, Thomas, Thoms and Thomson.

Today, the Clan once gain owns its legendary Gathering Place, has a bridge in Glen Shee named after it, has active branches around the world and every 3 years descendants of the Clan MacThomas gather to recall, with pride, the role played in the history of Scotland by the children of 'Great Tommy'. Also, the present Chief has been guest of honour at various Scottish events overseas in Australia (1982) Canada, South Africa and the USA between 1975 and 1995.

Interested in tracing your ancestors on heritage issues? Clan website: [www.clanmacthomas.com](http://www.clanmacthomas.com) or below address.

**Ken McColm, Australian Secretary**

Clan MacThomas Society in Australia

350 Whanregarwen Road Alexandra, Victoria 3714, Australia

\* Letters printed at discretion of the Editor. Please keep them short.

## In Search of "Cousin Dougie" Stewart...

About 5 years ago my niece was celebrating her 30th birthday in Toronto, and along with a large group of family, stayed at a Toronto hotel. She had booked a bar within walking distance, and we were all going there for a great party. At our hotel, we met a wonderful guy named **Doug Stewart**. It was his first visit to Canada, and he didn't know a soul. After a few drinks with him, we all decided that we would have him come along to the party and we would pass him off as "cousin Dougie, all the way from Scotland!" We did that, and what a wonderful time we had with that guy! We exchanged letters and phone calls regularly, but somehow lost touch in 2006. He was widowed, would be around 58 or so now, and cared for his mother. The last address I have for him is in Motherwell, Scotland. Mail that I sent to the address, formerly current, was returned marked "not at this address."

We are all saddened to have lost contact with him, and would dearly appreciate any information anyone could provide. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

**Pat Culhane (formerly Pat Soucy)**

255 Charles St.

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## ...and Ms. Betty Stewart

Greetings,

I recently was so very surprised to run across your website. I was instantly drawn to the article entitled "Plez or Ples, What does it mean?" Well, my father's name is Ples Stewart and we recently were sitting around the bed early one morning having coffee discussing this exact thing. My mother was reminiscing about my father's mother saying that he was such a pleasant child it would be a good name for him. I attempted to contact **Ms. Betty Stewart** but it seems she has either passed at this date or moved and my letter was not forwarded on to her but returned to me.

If by chance there is anyone out there that has any information regarding Betty Stewart's family I would be delighted to contact them. She was living in Lebanon, Ohio and my father's family was from East Texas (Cumby, Pleasant Grove area). They were many generations of cotton farmers.

My mother and father live in Watauga, Texas (a suburb of Fort Worth, Texas). My father recently celebrated his 90th birthday on September 27, 2009. He is in good health and still maintains his own home and drives very responsibly with my mother (who turned 89 on October 10, 2009). Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Blessings,

**Cynthia Carol, USA**

e-mail: [Stewart\\_shantieuf@hotmail.com](mailto:Stewart_shantieuf@hotmail.com)

## Discovering the "Banner"

I was delighted to discover the *Scottish Banner* while on a recent holiday in Toronto and Nova Scotia. I wonder if you would publish the following family research request in the 'ScotPourri' page?

I have been doing some family history research and I am keen to hear from any descendats of **John Queen**, who was mayor or Winnipeg. These people are related to me through his wife **Katherine Ross**, a lady who was a 'double' cousin of my grandmother.

Because of this connection, I believe their granddaughter, **Karen Margaret Hamilton**, may be interested in contacting me.

**George Clark**

Fairfield Road, Inverness, Scotland.

e-mail: [george@ardgarryplus.com](mailto:george@ardgarryplus.com)

## The Thistle

In reading my September, 2009 *Banner*, I came across a letter from **Bessie Kelso** of Parkdale, Victoria, Australia. Asking for information on the origin of the naming of the Thistle as the emblem of Scotland.

I would like to give her some information I have in a framed picture of The Thistle.

According to Scottish Legend, the thistle was adopted by the country far back in the dim ages, at a time when the Vikings were ravaging the coastline.

The story is told that one night, as the pirates were creeping toward the Scottish camp, an unsuspecting Dane stepped on a thistle and let forth such a howl of agony that the sleeping Scots awakened and rushed to the defence of their land. The plant that pricked the invaders foot has been ever since dear to the Scottish heart.

I sincerely hope this will be what Ms. Bessie is looking for.

Rebecca Stevens

Newport News, Virginia. U.S.A.

## Keeping Up to Date with Home

Dear Valerie and Staff,

Just wanted to thank you for the many hours of enjoyment I have had reading the *Scottish Banner*. I think I hve been getting it for about 24 years!

I came over to the States in 1969; my American and I got married in 1966. (I came from Edinburgh, Scotland). We came over here then we were shipped out to Okinawa for two tours. We came back to San Antonio and I have been here since 1975.

My husband died in 1989, and your paper keeps me up to date with home.

Thank you,

**Norma Merrill**

Timber Glad, San Antonio, Texas U.S.A.

## Do You Recognize Yourself? Calling All Old Friends...

I have been getting the *Banner* for many years now and look forward to receiving it each month. It's almost a struggle to see who gets to read it first: me or my husband! I especially enjoyed "A View from the Surgery."

Your last issue was close to my heart, as I too was evacuated at age 4 to Lanark and lived with wonderful people. We left Scotland for the USA in 1962, and through moving around, we have lost contact with many of our friends. If anyone recognizes themselves in this picture, I would dearly love to hear from you, or anyone who remembers us. My husband Tommy is from Cardonald, and I, Sophia,



am from Penilee, then Lorne Street after we were married.

**Sophia Barr**

(formerly Langmuir)

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