

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 online Scotpourri form at 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. This page belongs to our readers so please feel free to take part! Thanks to all our readers from around the world who have made this such a special page.

The 49th Glasgow Boys' Brigade Pipe Band

I was surprised and honoured to read Bill McIntosh's letter in the October issue of *the Scottish Banner*, in which he credited me, when I was bass drummer in the 49th Glasgow Boys' Brigade Pipe Band (BB) and he a 12 year-old laddie and having inspired him with the ambition to become bass drummer in a pipe band. Which he eventually did with the Rockingham City Pipe Band in Australia and that he is still playing at age 75. The 49th BB also had a bugle corps and the first Sunday of each month was church parade, which saw the company march the 20 minute route to Sandford Henderson Memorial Church, alternating between pipes and bugles. The route was between three-storey tenement buildings, whose occupants, I am sure, were somewhat less than thrilled to be awakened from their Sunday morning slumber with the sound of pipes, drums and bugles and the marching feet of about 60 Boys Brigade lads. I have nothing but fond memories of those wonderful BB days and our bands playing for the Kingdom of Fife's citizens of Pittenweim and Anstruther, where we camped each summer. The sounds of the pipes and drums still inspire me. I can only imagine what a thrill it must have been for Bill to march into Glasgow's George Square with his Australian band in the city of his birth on the occasion of the 2008 World Pipe Band Championships. Brings shivers! I hope you are blessed with the excellent health it is my good fortune to enjoy. They reared good stock in the Overnewton district of Glasgow, didn't they? It must have been the fresh air breezes from the River Clyde - which were not so fresh in those bad, good old days. Slainte Mhaith!

We've both "---wader'd mony a weary fitt sin' auld lang syn."

Douglas Cowan
Quebec, Canada

The Italian Chapel, Orkney



The Northern Lights are something to be admired should you be lucky enough to see them fortunately I have. The Italian Chapel was built by Italian Prisoners of War captured in North Africa and brought to Orkney 1942 to build the "Churchill Barriers" being four concrete causeways linking the southern Islands of Orkney together, the causeways were built to block access by the Germans to Scapa Flow. I have visited the Chapel twice very ornate and lovely, was built by joining two nissan huts together and concrete left over from causeways and any other scrap material that was around. This part of Scotland played a big part in the 1939-1945 war, as did Shetland Islands that I have also visited they had the Shetland Bus that transported many people to Shetland from war torn Europe saving their lives, all very interesting history. I left Scotland 55 years ago and live in Melbourne and visit every nook and cranny of Scotland when I go back visiting.

Nancy Kennedy
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

Sent via our Facebook comments.

Ed note: Thanks Nancy for this further insight on a fascinating part of Scotland.

5 Star Family Reunion

We are looking for UK families who have emigrated to overseas/Australia/New Zealand/India/America/Canada/Jamaica/ etc. to take part in The National Lottery: 5 Star Family Reunion for BBC One. 5 Star Family Reunion is a game show where eight family members play across the globe in a series of general knowledge rounds in an attempt to win a family reunion holiday and a cash jackpot. Four family members must be UK based while four family members live overseas. Parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws and close family friends can make up the overseas team. We are looking for lively and fun personalities to take part in the programme. I was wondering if there's any readers who may be UK Expats or have UK Expat friends who may be interested in appearing on the show? Please get in touch with me to discuss by email or phone.

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Looking for Alec and Joy Lawson

Some months ago we had a fire and I lost a two rooms in one was a very good friend's address in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. I am looking for Dr Reverend Alec Lawson and his wife Joy. Alec is a Scottish Canadian piper and anyone that may know Alec and his wife would you please help me reconnect with them.

Thank you for your great newspaper, *the Scottish Banner*.

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Family of Bruce International



Family of Bruce International had their Annual General Meeting at Stone Mountain, Georgia Scottish Games on October 17, 2015. There were 24 in attendance with seven states represented. Family of Bruce International's Board of Directors are pictured - (left to right) Rodney Bruce, Richard Bruce, Allen Bruce, Polly Bruce Tilford, William Bruce, Deborah Bruce Gottlieb, Steven Bruce, Robert Bruce and Don Bruce.
Polly Bruce Tilford
USA

My Somervell ancestors

Each month I enjoy reading the much loved *Scottish Banner*, purchased at my local bookseller Readway Books in Howick, Auckland. Your interesting story in the October 2015 issue of the *Scottish Banner* settlers departing Greenock, immigrating to Wellington, New Zealand August 1840, promoted actions of putting pen to paper. I will relate the story of my ancestors, who braved the high sea embarking into Auckland. Five families took the opportunity-Somervell's from Scotland, Matthews from England, Egan and Healey from Ireland and Thomas from Wales, it has almost been a lifetime comprising my family history, 58 to be exact. At 16 my Somervell grandmother died, prompting the research while senior members, were able to convey family names and details. Initial notes led me to Somervell's, as direct descendants of King Robert the Bruce through William the Conqueror, so my journey was a long one, nine generations down to our present one. Andrew Marshall Somervell with his wife Margaret and seven children departed Greenock and via London arrived in Auckland in 1855. The Somervell Presbyterian Church in Remuera Rd, Auckland is so named after our family.

I hope this information on my Somervell history may be of some interest to fellow readers and I look forward to further news from *the Scottish Banner*.
Patricia Matthews
Auckland, New Zealand

Honouring the Forgotten Scottish Soldier

Thank you for your excellent publication, keeping us in touch with all things Scottish around the world. Regarding the article in the December issue, *Honouring the Forgotten Scottish Soldier*, about Private James Mair who was born in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis in 1886. The last paragraph in the article it states 'we keep hoping that maybe one day we might find family in Scotland.' When I was a young 15 year old, I worked as a van boy on one of the SCWS (Scottish Co-Operative Wholesale Society) grocery vans. One of the managers in Stornoway at the time (1954) was Alex Mair. Later on he opened a shop (The Corner Shop) on Macaulay Road in Stornoway, so there is/was a Mair family there. Maybe if Toni Munday with the archives of Stornoway Town Hall, census papers, etc. she may find out (or not), if the soldier in the article Joseph Mair had any connection with the Mair that I knew in 1954. I have now been in Sydney for 52 years and have made frequent visits back to Stornoway.

I hope this helps in some way.

Yours Aye,
Angus Macleod
Rockdale, NSW
Australia

Ed note: Thanks Angus for giving this extra bit of information and we hope it helps contact Private Mair with his Scottish family.

Saltire Man



Shane Brodie of Atlanta, Georgia shows that you don't have to wear a kilt to love Scotland. Shane is seen here proudly wearing his St Andrews suit at the Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival.

Forest Of Tartans



An interesting way of displaying various tartans was presented at the recent Stone Mountain Highland Games in Georgia, USA. Called the Forest of Tartans, the area was packed with 60 various tartans on display. The idea of the 'Forest' was conceived by Grant Crade, former Georgia St Andrews Society President. The Forest of Tartans, was a welcome and interesting display to the many people who travelled to Stone Mountain to enjoy the Games and their Scottish heritage. Above are shown Don Malcolm (right), who proudly stands next to the Airforce Tartan, while Douglas Grey (left) stands next to the Marine Corps Tartan. The two hope to enlarge the display at next year's gathering, as well as during other events of Scottish interest. Well done gentleman.