

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.

Edinburgh's Canine Son



Greymfriars Bobby statue, Edinburgh. Photo: VisitScotland/Kenny Lam.

Happy New Year to all our readers and staff at *the Scottish Banner*, have we all got our New Years resolutions sorted out? Aye the coming of the New Year always brings great forward looking optimism in the depths of winter (or here doon under in the sweltering heat of summer), as Valerie stated in a recent editorial we have got so much to be grateful for, and a lot to take pride in as Scots. This month puts the global spotlight on one of the world's greatest poets oor very own Rabbie, all throughout Scottish history we have so many legends and hero's to look up to in pride, one of my favourites is not actually a person it's a dog Greymfriars Bobby to be precise, it was good to read in last January's *Scottish Banner* how the George Heriot School pays tribute to him every January and even play a bagpipe tribute to him, it reads on his memorial 'let his loyalty and devotion be a lesson to us all', what a great talisman to take with us into the New Year eh? Anyway I've written a little tribute to him that I would love to share with *the Banner*.

Edinburgh's Canine Son

Ach, it wiz lang ago, but no sae lang, in Edinburgh's cobbled streets, There lived a Bonnie Skye terrier, the nicest you e'r could meet, And auld Jock called him Bobby, his closest faithful friend, Aye, this wee terrier wiz by his side, right tae the bitter end.

As sadly auld Jock passed away, and wiz laid in Greyfriar's Church,

And wee Bobby could herdly leave his grave, 'cause he missed auld Jock so much, But the locals looked efter Bobby, tae make sure he would eat, And wi' the one o'clock gun, wee Bobby would come, wagging his tail doon the street.

On cauld winter days, through Auld Reekies haze, he'd come tearing right oot of the mist, And look up tae be fed, through his black shaggy head, with eyes ye could nae resist, Then they'd gee him a feed and clap on his heid, then back tae the graveyard he'd go, But ye'd have tae feel sorry fur this poor little mite, laid oan Jock's grave in the snow.

Thin came the day, tae own a dog ye must pay, ten shillings or so fur its keep poor Bobby wiz a stray, but somedae must pay, or the wee soul would be pit doon tae sleep,

But the Mayor did pay, fur this loveable stray, saving wee Bobby fae the chop, And there wiz great cheer and joy, fur wee Bobby boy, fae his friends at the Candle Row shops.

Thin fur fourteen lang years, wee bobby steid near, and made Greymfriars Kirk his abode, And right tae the end, he called oan his friends, at the shops at Candle Row Road, But wan bitter night, in Greymfriars twilight, he slept fur the very last time, So icy it was, oan his wee frozen paws, and nae mair fur Auld Jock he would pine.

He wiz true tae the end, tae his beloved best friend, in life and in death come whit may,

And right fae the start, he touched many a heart, and brought sunshine tae the dreakest a days,

Fur the hearts that he won, Edinburgh's dear canine son, looks lovingly doon through the crowds,

As his legend lives on, though Bobby has gone, fur his wee statue stands noble n' proud!

By Andrew Heaney
(Formerly Glasgow)
Brisbane Queensland
Australia

Family of Bruce International



Family of Bruce International, Inc. (USA) had their AGM at the Stone Mountain, Georgia Highland Games 15 October 2016. The 22 in attendance represented members from Indiana, Minnesota, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland and Kentucky.
Polly Bruce Tilford
National Secretary of Family of Bruce International
USA

Magnificent Andy Murray

I think recognition should be given to a special Andrew-Andy Murray the renowned Scottish tennis player. Born in Glasgow, schooled in Dunblane, where he was a pupil in the school, the day of the great tragedy. When in 1996 a gunman killed 16 students and their teacher, and a whole grade of students was killed. He has been working his way up the ranks over the past 8 years but in the autumn of 2016 he surpassed the other members of the big four Djokovic, Nadal and the great Federer establishing himself as no.1 in the world. This week he has been playing in the year end ATP competition in London and there in the final match beat the former no1, the seemingly unbeatable Novak Djokovic in straight sets. So at the end of the 2017 tennis season, he is now ranked number 1 and Great Britain has never had a tennis player of this calibre. Our own 21st Century, magnificent Andrew Murray.

Andy, the pride of Scotland and Great Britain.

Sincerely,
Janette Calder
North Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada

Ed note: We agree with you Janette, Andy does Scots across the world proud.

Hogmanay Bonfire at Biggar



It was great to see the Hogmanay Bonfire at Biggar, my home town, mentioned in the December issue of *the Scottish Banner*. They start collecting on December 1st and it's already building up to be a great one again this year. It is many years since the oldest citizen was chosen to light it and it's now by popular vote. My dad, John Rae, had that honour in 1977 and then his sister Jenny Rae in 1993. I'm sending two photos which I hope can be included with this letter.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your readers.
Edie Wlodarczyk
Gilgandra, NSW
Australia

Kings Castles & Durty Wee Rascals

I always enjoy Jim Stoddart's column, *Kings Castles & Durty Wee Rascals*, which conjures up many happy memories of my own childhood.

In a past issue he reminisces about his holidays at Largs and it made my mind go back to our own family holidays while we lived in Scotland during the 1950s. There were seven of us at the time – Mum,

Dad and five weans. We didn't have a car, but my Dad would borrow his father's 1934 Morris to take us our holidays to Croy Shores, near Dunure. We felt like real "toffs" heading out in Grandpa's car. During the months preceding our holiday my mother would knit us new bathing suits which we were so proud to sport. We spent our days building sand castles and playing in the water, and sometimes we would all get a "pokey hat" and stroll down the beach so happy with our good fortune. Sometimes my aunt and my two cousins would come with us so our wee cottage would be overflowing, but oh the fun we had and the memories we created.

Thank you Jim Stoddart for bringing all these joyous memories alive again.

Helen W. Eade
Little Current, Ontario
Canada

Ed note: Thanks for your note and memories. Jim certainly brings back some great memories back for many.

Skye

I have only just returned from my first trip to Scotland with my daughter, where we spent an amazing week in beautiful Skye, in October. I have Skye ancestry, hence the trip was very special to me. So am very interested in any stories, legends of the region and I have had a copy of Otta Swires book *Legends of Skye* (written a long time ago - so was thrilled to see some more stories of the Island- as I was not aware of any other authors.) I am slowing trying to learn the Gaelic as well and was able to visit Sabhal Mor Ostaig, with future plans to learn long distance.

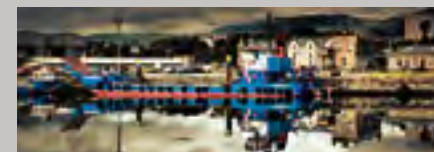
I live in Christchurch, New Zealand and only just recently bought a copy of *the Scottish Banner* at our local Highland Games. I had not seen any copies of the paper here for a few years, after our earthquakes and would also be keen to subscribe!

Brendan Paris
Woolston, Christchurch
New Zealand

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(Send us your photos or letters via social media)

Burntisland



Jenny Dingwall
Scotland



Greetings from the Independent MacGregors of Germany from The German Clan Gregor Society.
Jürgen MacGregor
Germany