



the Scottish Banner



North American Edition



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A' Bhratach Albannach

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at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

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The Banner Says...

The Tartan Revolution

A month for tartan to shine



by Sean Cairney

April is upon us and for some comes with it all the wonder of spring and everything newly in bloom. For others the days draw in more and cooler more comfortable days lie ahead.

For Scots though this month is also awash with tartan, which of course is fashionable in any season. In North America Scots will be celebrating all that is great about Tartan Day. April 6th has been proclaimed as Tartan Day since a small Scottish community organisation in Nova Scotia, Canada had some very big ideas to celebrate the achievements of Scots and celebrate many people's shared Scottish heritage by wearing some tartan on this date.

The notion of Tartan Day has grown across North America with the governments of both Canada and the United States officially recognising Tartan Day, in addition to individual states and provinces. This month is also the 20th anniversary of the New York Tartan Day Parade which sees the Big Apple turn tartan with events and of course the main parade enjoyed by tens of thousands of spectators. This year the parade will be led by Scottish singer KT Tunstall, the first female Grand Marshal.

April 6th is a significant date as in 1320, Scot's signed the Declaration of Arbroath, formally declaring their independence from England.

In the Southern Hemisphere Tartan Day is held on the 1st of July, the anniversary of the repealing of the 1747 Act of Proscription that banned

the wearing of tartan. This can be confusing for many not knowing which day to follow and no doubt traction for the day would be improved if globally Tartan Day fell on the same date, regardless of where you are.

However in Australia this month tartan too will be out in full force as Team Scotland lead the international athletes at this month's Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, with millions of people seeing the Scottish athletes in kilts at the Opening Ceremony.

Tartan revolution

Tartan is so much more than just kilts in April of course, it is a worldwide fashion icon which represents quality and craftsmanship. It is such a versatile cloth and has so many possibilities and used by fashion houses across the globe. However one nation will always be synonymous with tartan, Scotland, and today the tartan industry is worth over an estimated £1 billion to the economy.

There is no doubt Scotland will be on show across the world this month, whether it be through the excellence of sport or the passion of the ex-pat community, there will be plenty of ways to don your tartan and celebrate our incredible heritage.

Back in the 1980's when the meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia took place to recognise Scots, initially in just Nova Scotia, they could not have known the 'tartan revolution' they would create. A revolution which celebrates those Scots who have helped form the countries in which we all live and the unique heritage they passed down, which millions of people around the world celebrate today.

Those that worked so hard on getting Tartan Day going, including long-time friend of *the Scottish Banner*

Jean MacKaracher-Watson-we thank them for their Scottish spirit and determination, and no doubt as we all today celebrate the achievements of pioneering Scots they will be included for their passion and dedication.

In this issue

Speaking of passion and tartan we are thrilled to have Scottish designer Siobhan Mackenzie take part in this issue. This cutting edge designer from the Highlands has incorporated tartan into modern fashion and this month her designs will be worn by Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games. Her passion for Scotland and Scottish design just proves how tartan is in safe hands and will continue to be part of the international fashion scene in the future. We also speak to the head of Team Scotland who are heading to Australia this month with hopes of having their most successful international Commonwealth Games ever-we wish them luck and look forward to helping cheer the athletes on.

Anyone who has visited Glasgow in the last twenty odd years will know it's a city of constant change and reinvention. Gone are the industrial grit of ship building and manufacturing and in its place is a creative city boasting a rich mosaic of music, culture and sport. Thirty years ago this month the Glasgow Garden Festival took place, a five month event which quite literally helped the city go into bloom for the future. Locals and visitors loved what the city had to offer and what the city could do and may have helped Glaswegians plant the seed that their city was not a has been of its industrial past but a city of reinvention and regeneration.

A sure sign of spring in Scotland must be daffodils when they pop up across the countryside. I was surprised to learn that Scotland is the biggest exporter of daffodil bulbs to the world. Scotland is in fact a world leader in growing daffodils with large global interest and demand in Scottish exports. The flower industry has been cultivating in Scotland for generations and the much loved flower plays an important role in the Scottish economy.

There is no doubt Scotland will be on show across the world this month, whether it be through the excellence of sport or the passion of the ex-pat community, there will be plenty of ways to don your tartan and celebrate our incredible heritage.

What does tartan mean to you? Share your story with us by email, post or at www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us



Tartan Day will be celebrated on April 6th across North America. Wear some tartan and celebrate no matter where you live. Photo: The Tartan Day Parade in New York City. Image: The Scottish Government.



Gracing our front cover: Team Scotland track and field stars Lynsey Sharp and Andrew Butchart. Photo: Alistair Devine/Team Scotland.

£300,000 upgrade for Urquhart Castle



Work begins to improve access to one of Scotland's most popular tourist destinations.

What to see and do at Urquhart Castle

- Admire the strategic setting of the castle, on a rocky promontory with an open outlook up and down Loch Ness.
- Soak up the atmosphere of one of Scotland's most famous lochs.
- Take in the Grant Tower and the unmissable views from its battlements.
- Imagine splendid banquets staged in the Great Hall.
- Peer into the gloomy prison cell, said to have held legendary Gaelic bard Domhnall Donn.
- See the Urquhart Ewer and other medieval artefacts left by castle residents.
- View the full-sized, working trebuchet (stone-throwing machine).
- If you are lucky, spot Nessie!

Work is underway on a £300,000 upgrade of facilities at Urquhart Castle on the banks of Loch Ness - one of Historic Environment Scotland's most popular sites. The centrepiece of the investment is the creation of a new stairway in the Grant Tower, giving visitors easier access to the existing viewing platform, and its spectacular, iconic view over Loch Ness. The historic spiral staircase will remain in use, providing an alternative for those who want the experience of walking in the footsteps of the medieval lords who once lived in and fought over the castle. The new staircase is being crafted from sustainably sourced oak by a local firm based in Inverness. Access for visitors will also be improved thanks to upgraded non-slip paths throughout the site and the addition of a new,

surfaced path to replace a popular desire path. The Visitor Centre is receiving an £80,000 refurbishment of its toilets, and a refurbishment of the shop planned.

Working at a site which can be traced back to the Pictish people, and which even has associations with St Columba comes with challenges. As a result of some of these, access to the Castle and grounds has been limited, with only the Visitor Centre and café open as normal.

Welcoming the work, Visitor Services Manager Euan Fraser said "We welcomed more than 480,000 people to the castle last year. These improvements mean we will have the best possible facilities to welcome our visitors over the coming years. The new staircase in the Grant Tower will make access easier, giving more people a chance to enjoy the unrivalled view over the Loch."

Loch Ness Monster 10p coin



The Royal Mint has just announced the release of a special set of 26 commemorative 10p coins for 2018. The theme is an A-Z of Great Britain. Each 10p in the A-Z of Great Britain features a different letter to represent and celebrate different British landmarks and traditions. Included in the series is the Loch Ness Monster with its tail wrapped around the letter 'L'. The coins will also feature the ruins of historic Urquhart Castle on the banks of Loch Ness. Other 10p coin icons being released include: The Mackintosh coat, post box, James Bond, tea pots, fish & chips and double decker buses. These coins are the very first commemorative UK 10p coins issued by The Royal Mint and will be released into circulation throughout 2018.

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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?

The tartan turns twenty - A milestone for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police



The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Tartan and the Force's National Pipe Band Program mark their 20th Anniversary on April 27, 2018. On that day, twenty years ago, the Commissioner approved recommendations to adopt the newly minted RCMP Tartan, and to authorize a kilted uniform for community bands of RCMP Pipes & Drums.

This was the culmination of a yearlong national initiative celebrating the 125th anniversary of the RCMP in 1998. The Tartan was created by Mrs. Violet Holmes, the wife of Les Holmes, Assistant Commissioner retired, and former Commanding Officer of "K" Division, Alberta. Princess Anne presented the Certificate of Accreditation for the Tartan, issued by the Scottish Tartans Society, during a royal visit to Fredericton, New Brunswick, in June 1998.

The RCMP Tartan was worn for the first time by a composite band of RCMP pipers and drummers at the Nova Scotia International Tattoo in July-August of 1998. Since then, the National Program has logged tens of thousands of hours of voluntary time performing within their various provinces and gathering

on occasion to travel nationally and internationally to represent the Force and Canada. The RCMP Pipes & Drums proudly performed at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2015 and are expected to return in 2019.

The Program is currently comprised of eight bands across Canada, several of which incorporate teams of highland dancers. Numbering more than 350 performers, the RCMP Pipes, Drums and Dancers have earned their place as part of the RCMP's 'extended regimental family'!

The writer would like to thank Mrs. Margaret Struth-Gaff, proprietor of Burnette's & Struth Scottish Regalia in Barrie, Ontario. Hailing from Edinburgh, Scotland, she has been with the Program since the beginning. She and her staff have hand made every RCMP regimental kilt in service to date.

*R. Graham Muir
Assistant Commissioner retired
RCMP Pipe Band
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada*

Ed. note: Congratulations to the RCMP and this stunning tartan doing Canadians proud.

Bagpipes and a sense of humour

Recently in a daily Melbourne newspaper there was an article about a busker who is dressed as the Cookie Monster and played the bagpipes at Southbank in Melbourne. There was a report to council about him 'playing too loudly at night'. At the meeting in town hall to discuss the issue, our Lord Mayor—in a vain attempt at humour—cracked a 'joke'—"do you know the difference between bagpipes played very well and bagpipes played badly? The answer is "not much" he said. Well, as you can imagine Cookie Monster got fired up on hearing this and retaliated. "To say the bagpipes are not a good sound is just damn ridiculous. The comment attacks multiculturalism and leads one to think that the council will push for the Anzac Day service to remove the lone piper and the pipe bands during the St Kilda Road march"—not a happy chappie. By the way a compliance officer said only one complaint had been made. As my daughter Liz remarked when I was telling her this.

"He lives in a busy precinct which is even busier when the footy crowds come out, it's close to the railway and he thinks a lone piper is noisy—really?" She has seen a few times after the footy and reckons he's very good—of course.

During my spring cleaning I rediscovered an old book published in 1946. It is the story of Glasgow, the second city of the empire but I have no recollection of where it came from. Inside there was part of an old Melbourne newspaper dated 21st February 1945. As this was very near the end of WW2, the war news was certainly more uplifting than it had been previously. On the next page was the racing results at Newmarket—typical—but life goes on whatever.

However an article at the bottom of the page caught my eye—it was headlined: *Nazis "terrorised" by bagpipes*. This article was first published by a North American correspondent—L Shapiro. "Scottish troops had terrorised the Germans defeated at Goch with skirling bagpipes" complained the captured Nazi

Commander (Colonel Paul Mutushek). He said the Scots were the most inconsistent troops who "Sometimes attack yelling like cannibals. At other times they sneak forward like thieves in the night". Shapiro adds "Apparently it must have been the Scot's 'sneaking night' as they caught the colonel in his fancy striped pyjamas. The colonel was awakened by scuffling in the hall and before he could get out of bed, the room was filled with 'scowling Scots'". Obviously he had no sense of humour.

This famous regiment has now made an addition to its collection of captured battle flags—Mutushek's fancy striped pyjamas!

*Anne Koomen
The Patch, Victoria
Australia*

Memories of a Glasgow girl



Two items in the January 2018 edition of *the Scottish Banner* brought back many memories. Firstly, Robert Burns and secondly, Glasgow Citizens Theatre. Unrelated? Not to me, I spent many happy hours in Alloway School hearing Burns poems and singing his songs. The Headmaster, Mr Campbell, was an ardent Burns admirer and instilled a great love and admiration for Robert Burns, in the heart of a Glasgow girl spending some of the war years in the safety of Ayrshire.

Leaving Alloway and returning to Glasgow, I left school there at 14 and started work in the office of a chartered accountant. I worked there from 1942 to 1946. One of the partners, Mr Robert G Laing, was (I think) secretary of the society which became the Citizens Theatre. I remember sending out lots of papers to members of the society, also going to the theatre on many occasions handing out programmes and watching many of their early plays. Since then I recognise many of the names of actors who appeared there in the earliest days.

It seems so many issues of *the Scottish Banner* take me back to my early life in Glasgow, where I started school in the (now gone) London Road School.

Bringing in 2018 with a wee bit of Scotland

Greetings and a Happy New Year from Adelaide, South Australia!

Before the bells I watched the Countdown Show and was interested to see that three of the lead singers were Scottish Diaspora - namely, Jimmy Barnes (Dennistoun, Glasgow); John Paul Young (Bridgeton, Glasgow) and Colin Hay (Saltcoats). Nice to see Scottish culture alive and very well in Australia. Must say I really enjoyed Jimmy singing with Mahalia!

I also watched the Edinburgh Tattoo on New Year's Day which I thoroughly enjoyed except that, bearing in mind it is a Scottish event, and seeing the statues of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce; hearing a

band playing Robert Burns' *Scots Wha Hae* and the Lone Piper playing *The Leaving of Lochaber* wondered why we were repeatedly seeing the Union Jack flying in the breeze above the Saltire.

Feeling rather nostalgic I also watched David Ross' 2005 'Walk for Wallace' on the 700 Years Anniversary of Wallace's death. (I was fortunate enough to see David off at Robroyston and caught up with him in Westminster Hall and then the six mile march through the streets of London). David, Scottish author and historian, passed away before his time, at the age of 51 on 2 January, 2010. I believe that every single Scottish politician should receive a copy of the DVD as well as every single Scottish school child.

To top everything off, I also read the January online edition of *the Scottish Banner* which made fascinating reading. I must say I thoroughly enjoyed Sean's conversation with Len Murray, Dean of the Guild of Robert Burns Speakers.

*Rosemary McKay
Adelaide, South Australia
Sent via Scottish Banner Facebook page.*

Scandinavian DNA

The What's in a Name in the November issue mentioned that some Scots could have Scandinavian DNA. I just had a DNA test done. This revealed that there is more to my roots than I knew. Apart from Southern English, Scottish, and German, I have a percentage of Scandinavian in my DNA.

*Scott McPhee
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia*

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

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Plockton, Highlands



Stunning capture of Plockton.
Justin Nugent

Frosty Coo's



Coo's amongst the frost. Did you know that Highland Cows have two layers of hair? An inner layer provides warmth, whilst the outer is oiled to keep them dry.
Lucy Kobayashi

Team Scotland to step out in style at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games



Photo: Alistair Devine/Team Scotland.

Team Scotland is set to step out in style at the Opening Ceremony of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games this month, with its new parade uniform created in collaboration with bespoke tartan manufacturers House of Edgar and multi-award winning Scottish fashion designer Siobhan Mackenzie. Following

the tradition of creating a distinctive new tartan for each Games, the 2018 tartan was designed by Team Scotland in collaboration with House of Edgar of Perth and woven at their Isle Mill in Keith, Moray. It reflects Team Scotland's brand colours (blue, purple, magenta and green) with the use of green also an acknowledgement of Australia's traditional sportswear colour.

The men's kilts have also been manufactured by House of Edgar, who previously made the 2014 Team Scotland and Glasgow 2014 official tartans. However to ensure that the women's outfit showcases a mix of tradition but with a modern twist, Team Scotland commissioned 24 year old Siobhan Mackenzie – named 'Best New Scottish Designer 2016' to create a stunning new look.

Brings everyone together

Siobhan trained in kilt-making with master kilt maker John Culbert at Glenisla and after finishing her degree she worked as an alteration technician for the technical officials at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, which sparked her interest to become involved further with Team Scotland. Now well established on the international fashion scene, her brand's womenswear and menswear is stocked in the elite luxury store Bergdorf Goodman in New York. She has also collaborated with a host of celebrities, including '2017 Team Scot of the Year' Judy Murray OBE.

Siobhan has been particularly keen to demonstrate how the contemporary kilt she has designed, with the tartan cut on the bias on the front and vibrant purple pleats on the back, not only creates a fabulous parade uniform for Team

Scotland's women, but will work well afterwards as a beautiful evening outfit and for on-trend casual wear.

Siobhan Mackenzie said: "I'm truly honoured as a young female entrepreneur to have had the opportunity to design for the women of Team Scotland. I have injected my innovative design style into the womenswear look with the end goal in mind being not only that I want to represent a modern day Scotland but also that I want the female athletes to walk out into the Opening Ceremony feeling great in their outfit! Watching Team Scotland walk into the stadium will certainly be a very proud moment in my career."

Lynsey Sharp, who memorably battled back from illness to win silver in the 800m at Glasgow 2014 was thrilled to model the new women's kilt and said: "It's absolutely beautiful and I think it's definitely something I will wear again. I love Siobhan's designs so I was really excited to hear she was designing the women's outfit for Team Scotland. The parade uniform is always a huge talking point, everyone is going to be excited to see it and try it on, and I am sure they're going to be really proud of it. The parade wear brings everyone together and makes you feel like one team and it will be fantastic to see everyone wearing it together at the Games."

Tourism boost for Small Isles



A tiny Scottish island off the north west has big plans to become a prime Scottish holiday destination. Tanera Mor, the largest of the Summer Isles, lies 1.5 miles off the main land near Ullapool. The miles 1.6 mile long and 1.2 miles wide privately owned island would like to see the historic buildings redeveloped, holiday accommodation opened and three individual communities established.

A report, lodged with Highland Council, said: "It is designed to welcome guests to something entirely special, where the attention to detail and delivery of services is outwardly effortless and utterly charming. It is not a hotel, but a place of reflection which transcends the traditional hospitality mode. We intend to create a clear sense of identity, that truly complements Tanera's unparalleled natural beauty, designed to celebrate and bring to life the island's illustrious past,

but firmly looking to its future. Tanera can become a beacon for sustainable and sympathetic redevelopment and land management in the community and as such play an important part in the economy of the local area and the Highlands in general."

The island is home to various protected species including the European otter, and it has flora which is unusual for the area as there are no sheep, rabbits or deer to feed on it. The island's private postal service was inaugurated on September 1, 1970, and in return for administering the postal service to and from the mainland, the owners were allowed to issue private Summer Isles postage stamps, which are sought after by collectors, with past issues reflecting the flora and fauna of the island. The development hopes the island would enjoy 100 year round residents plus up to 30 more seasonal job residents.

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SCOTSPEAK

Scotspeak is a selection of quotes which made headlines in Scotland last month on a variety of current Scottish affairs.

"We know that the Sound of Harris ferry is always a bottleneck. The ferry is pretty much fully booked all the way through summer. This would really enhance the visitor experience."

Ian Fordham, chairman of Outer Hebrides Tourism, said as plans for a road system linking the islands of Outer Hebrides was being considered. The 175 mile road/bridge proposal would alleviate the need for more ferry services and improve access to the island region for both locals and visitors. A proposal is now being developed to be submitted to the Scottish Government and local agencies.

"North-East Scots and Doric are mostly thought of as being a language for home and family, but its use is far more widespread than that. Large numbers use it in their everyday lives, but one of our aims is to promote and celebrate its use in areas where it isn't often visible, such as in our civic life, in the media, and education. It's important that young people see themselves – and the language they speak – reflected back at them in public life. Just as children need to see diverse gender and race role models, they need to know that someone who speaks their native language can be a success in any walk of life."

Dr Thomas McKean, of the Aberdeen University, said that a new body has been set up to help protect Doric. The North-East Scots Language Board will be looking to have the language protected much like English and Gaelic. It is hoped the Scots language of Doric can be more widely used in schools and businesses and protected as a cultural asset of Scotland.

"Robert the Bruce was a giant figure in Scottish history. That is never going to change. He's one of the Scots who has achieved global status because of his achievements. He was the outstanding medieval monarch of Scotland, the



Dunfermline Abbey. Photo: VisitScotland.

greatest incumbent of the Scottish throne. He seized it in a coup d'état when much of the country was against him. He fought to make good his family's claim on the throne and rescue it from English overlordship. He was very inclusive in the style of monarchy he practiced and was possessed of a significant amount of humanity and compassion. I believe he would have approached the refugee issue from that style of monarchy."

Dr Martin MacGregor, a senior lecturer of Scottish history at the University of Glasgow, said on the 200th anniversary of finding the remains of Robert the Bruce at Dunfermline Abbey. Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland in 1306 and remains a pivotal part of Scottish history.

"This is an absolutely fantastic moment for the Shiant Isles and everyone involved in the project is delighted that they are now officially rat free. With so many of Scotland's seabird populations in decline it's vital that we do all we can to help them. Making these islands a secure place for them to breed is really important. Over the next few years we're really looking forward to seeing the full impact of the islands' restoration flourish with the seabirds enjoying improved breeding successes, and other species beginning to breed there as well. We'll also continue to work with the local community to ensure this special place remains free of rats."

This project has paved the way for more island restorations to take place around Scotland and give our threatened seabirds the best possible chance for the future."

Dr Charlie Main, senior project manager for the Shiant Isles Recovery Project said as a four year long project to remove rats from the Shiant Isles has successfully concluded. The Shiant Islands are located five miles east of the Isle of Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides and is considered one of the most important seabird breeding colonies in Europe. Nesting's had been devastated by rats on the island, however sightings of rats have not taken place in 2 years.

"Daniel Craig scored poorly because he has very thin lips, a bulbous nose and his face is very wide. Meanwhile Sean Connery has been feted as the most handsome Bond for years - and it is great this has now been proved by science. He has beautiful facial symmetry and gets closer than any other Bond to having what the Greeks considered the perfect face. Connery has an almost geometrically perfect chin of 99.8 per cent, his eye spacing was almost perfect and his lips are beautifully shaped. Across the 12 key markers he had the highest combined score."

Centre For Advanced Facial Cosmetic And Plastic Surgery in London owner Dr De Silva said Edinburgh born actor Sir Sean Connery was the most handsome James Bond in history according to facial mapping. Connery played Bond seven times in the hit franchise. After Sir Sean was Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan, George Lazenby and the latest Bond Daniel Craig.

"It's satanic because it's just so destructive. If I saw someone throwing acid at my wife's face I'd be absolutely livid. It's like that if we see people doing things which are injurious to Jesus. They hate Sunday and Jesus. If they did not, why would



The quiet of Lewis. Photo: VisitScotland.

they be insisting on this? The Sabbath is a thing to experience here. There's a wonderful stillness; it's therapeutic. If you have all these activities – cars, buses, people moving around – it's disturbing. I think we know very clearly where we stand. They're not going to budge and we're not going to budge."

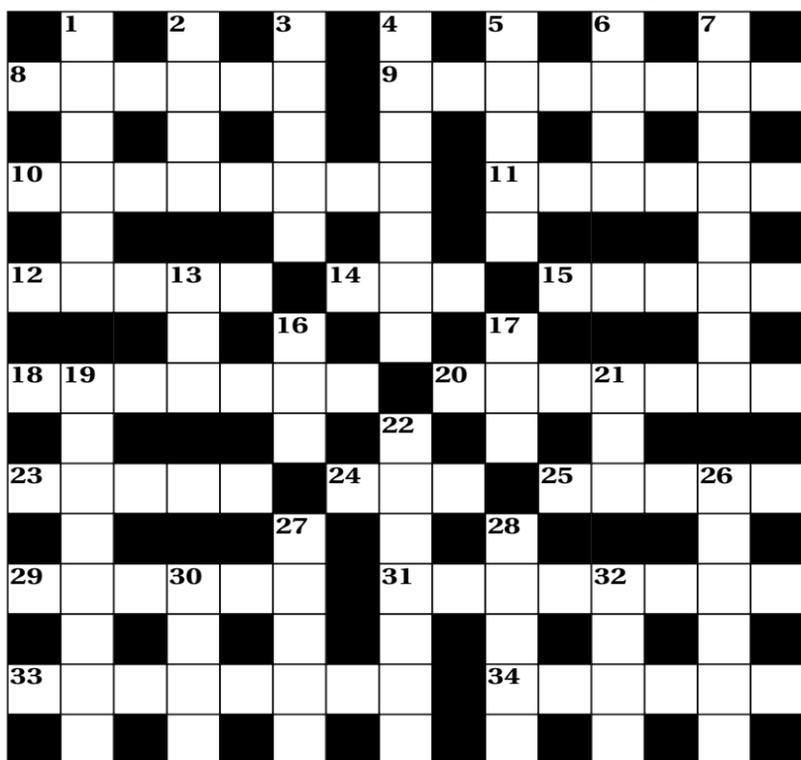
Reverend David Fraser said as local campaigners push for more things to be available to the community on Sunday's on the Isle of Lewis. Lewis is the largest island in the Outer Hebrides and has long held on to the tradition that Sunday is the Sabbath and shops and community facilities all close on this day, much to the disappointment of some on the island.

"I am honoured and delighted to join the impressive line-up of worthy Glaswegians as a patron of the campaign to build a statue to Nelson Mandela in Glasgow. I met Mr Mandela in Oslo, Norway, where he received the Nobel Peace Prize. He left an impression on me that I will never forget."

Glasgow native Sir Billy Connolly said as he has backed a campaign to erect a statue of South African leader Nelson Mandela in Glasgow city centre. Nelson Mandela was awarded the Freedom of the City in 1981, it was the first major city to do so. It is hoped a statue of Mandela would be placed at Nelson Mandela Place in the heart of Scotland's largest city.

SCOTWORD

Here is a fun crossword for you to try with a few of the answers to be found in Scotland! If you are in doubt, you may need a wee peek at a Scots dictionary or a map. Or, if you are really stuck, the answers can be found on page 21!



CLUES ACROSS

- 8) Bonnet accessory (6)
- 9) Often called the mayflower (8)
- 10) With 11 Across, The North-east admin area (8)
- 11) See 10 Across (6)
- 12) Scots serving plate (5)
- 14) He'll know Scots! (3)
- 15) Scottish lakes (5)
- 18) Scots get-together (7)
- 20) Argyll peninsula (7)
- 23) Town near Elgin (5)
- 24) Of the same name (3)
- 25) Staggers through the dances (5)
- 29) The "Bridie" town (6)
- 31) A Scots commotion (8)
- 33) Theatrical pose (8)
- 34) Rangers rivals (6)

DOWN

- 1) Town near mouth of River Findhorn (6)
- 2) Whisky measure (4)
- 3) Largest Outer Hebridean island (5)
- 4) Part of the Pipes (7)
- 5) A Highland dancer needs it! (5)
- 6) Scots name for Hugh (4)
- 7) Village at head of Long Loch (8)
- 13) Old Scots measure (3)
- 16) Bustling activity (3)
- 17) Another whisky measure (3)
- 19) Border fishing town (8)
- 21) Driving aid (3)
- 22) Highland hose accessories (7)
- 26) Town near Glenrothes (6)
- 27) Freshwater fish (5)
- 28) An amazing lass! (5)
- 30) Glasgow's annual summer holiday (4)
- 32) Its capital is Tobermory (4)

The Gaelic Society of Toronto



Last month, the Gaelic Society of Toronto welcomed Gaelic speakers from across Southern Ontario to its annual ceilidh and Young Piper's Championship.

Scots know how to throw a party, and this year's ceilidh included highland dancers, pipers, poetry, song, games and, of course, tea and traditional foods. Members and guests were happy to take refuge from the snow and winds outside to spend a few hours basking in the warmth of Gaelic hospitality.

The Young Piper's Championship

The Young Piper's Championship took place the following week and provided a day of fierce competition, resulting in wins for Caleb MacPherson of Oshawa Ontario (grade 3-4) and Colin Johnstone of Aurora Ontario (grade 1-2.) For 131 years, Toronto's Gaelic Society has provided community to Gaelic speakers living in and around Canada's largest city, and today boasts over 300 members who regularly gather to take language courses, attend events and celebrate a rich cultural heritage. In summer, attendees of Southern Ontario's many highland games will see the Gaelic Language Booth set up front and centre, and are encouraged to pop by and say hello.

For more information on how the Gaelic Society of Toronto is preserving, celebrating and sharing Gaelic language and culture, please visit their website at: www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com

Tartan of the Month - *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Tartan*



The Scottish Banner is pleased to be offering the Tartan of the Month series highlighting a variety of different, unique and colourful tartans from around the world which are registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans in Edinburgh. The Scottish Register of Tartans was established by an act of the Scottish Parliament in November 2008 and promotes and preserves information about historic and contemporary tartans from Scotland and throughout the world. Text and image use is courtesy of the Scottish Register of Tartans.

Celebrating 20 years this month the design of the tartan was undertaken to mark the 125th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1997-98. The tartan colours are as rich and varied as the heritage they represent. They are true to RCMP tradition as they are derived from the colours of the Force's uniform and

badge. The colours weave into a perfectly balanced tartan design. The over-all effect is pleasingly subtle, reflecting a harmonious interplay of colour that provides an excellent complement to the Force's world-renowned Red Serge tunic.

The Colours:

Dark Blue. The background or theme colour of the tartan is dark blue. It is the colour of the riding breeches traditionally worn by Mounties and is also characteristic of the shabraque or saddle blanket used by the Musical Ride. The dark hue of this blue lends a subtle character to the tartan and complements the Red Serge tunic.

Scarlet Red. Scarlet is the colour of the tunic for which the RCMP is known the world over. The rich red recalls the early years of the Force and Canada when scarlet was worn in the service of Her Majesty manifesting the presence of the Monarchy throughout the British Empire.

Yellow. Yellow represents the cavalry stripe of the RCMP's distinctive ceremonial uniform. It also adorns the regular working dress, on both the hatband and trousers, of the dedicated men and women who serve Canadians on a daily basis. This yellow is also taken from both the crown and gilt letters of the Force badge. It is, in many ways, as distinctive to the RCMP uniform as the scarlet tunic itself.

Sienna Brown. Sienna is taken from the bison, which is the centrepiece of the RCMP badge. It is symbolic of Canada's expansive western plains and the heartland of the RCMP.

Forest Green. Green is the colour of the maple leaves, which surround the scroll and bison on the RCMP badge. The maple leaf, itself, is distinctively Canadian. It symbolizes Canada as a nation. The dark green of the tartan is a link to the land, the country, and the people served by the Force from coast-to-coast.

White. The fine white accent of the tartan is representative of the lanyard worn as an accoutrement to the RCMP's ceremonial uniform. White is also intended as a link to Canada's First Nations people. It has special spiritual significance, symbolizing strength and endurance - traits that are the legacy of the RCMP in Canada.

Sky Blue. The bison on the RCMP's badge is set into a background of sky blue. This same hue of blue is readily associated with the United Nations and has special significance to the Force, given its newfound role in international peacekeeping.

Scott Monument to impose visitor restrictions



For the first time in its 174 year old history, the iconic Edinburgh attraction Scott Monument will limit visitors to just 24 an hour. The attraction, which is the largest monument to a writer anywhere in the world, will bring in the limits this June to help ease congestion at the landmark attraction. A spokesman for the City of Edinburgh Council said: "The majority of reviews we receive are positive, but where we've experienced negative feedback it's been about congestion in the upper levels. The biggest issue is meeting other visitors coming up and down the stairs, as there is very limited space to pass by. We'll be restricting the number of visitors to the top of the monument by having maximum tour sizes of 12 visitors. And by conducting visitors from level one to the top, we will be ensuring that none pass by each other on the stairs in the upper levels."

Entry fees are also going up for entry to the 200 foot tall monument which has 100 steps. The attraction which offers sweeping views of the Scottish capital had over 80,000 visitors in 2017.

Scottish singer KT Tunstall announced as Grand Marshall of the New York City Tartan Day Parade



Photo: Conor McDonnell.

Award-winning Scottish singer-songwriter KT Tunstall has been chosen to lead the annual NYC Tartan Day parade as Grand Marshal, the first woman to lead the Parade. The NYC Tartan Day Parade will be held on April 7, 2018. The Parade starts at 2:00 PM at 44th Street and marches up Sixth Avenue to 55th Street. Last year, the event drew more than 3,500 participants and 30,000 spectators.

"I'm delighted to participate in this twenty-year tradition and very proud to be the first female solo Grand Marshal," said Ms. Tunstall about her appointment. "It is especially meaningful to step into this role with the movement for gender equality

picking up great speed all over the world. I'm always happy to celebrate my roots as a Scottish musician, and I've never felt more empowered in my own career than I do now, it's an exciting time."

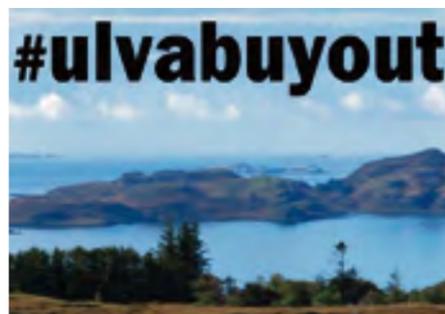
National Tartan Day

April 6th has been designated as National Tartan Day in the United States, a day for celebrating Scottish heritage and pride. The NYC Tartan Day Parade is held annually on the second Saturday of April. The parade features Bagpipe Bands playing Scottish music, people dressed in kilts with tartans that represent their Scottish Clans, groups that celebrate Scottish heritage and associations, and even the popular four-legged participants of the Celtic Canines. The days before and after the Parade are called "Tartan Week" and are filled with a full range of Scottish-themed events. In 1998 the U.S. Senate declared April 6 to be National Tartan Day to recognize the contributions made by Scottish-Americans to the United States. In 1999, two pipe bands and a small but enthusiastic group of Scottish Americans marched from the British Consulate to the UN --the first New York Parade. Since then, the parade has grown to include hundreds of pipers, thousands of marchers and many more thousands cheering from the sidelines.

For more details see: www.nytartanweek.org



Ulva SOS - Buyout update



The good news is that a Scottish Land Fund have granted the Ulva Community an award of up to £4,415,200. This means that under the Land Reform Act they can

open negotiations and make a fair and serious offer for the whole estate. But the Ulva Community aren't home and dry yet. Fund raising must be stepped up to ensure not only the purchase of this beautiful isle, but to fund its high priority developments, including visitor facilities. All supporters so far are warmly thanked, but many more are needed if Ulva is to thrive again. So, will you help? Your name can be added to over 500 others who have helped so far.

Log on to www.justgiving.co/campaigns/charity/northwest-mull/ulvabuyout to help save an historic and unspoilt Scottish island.



Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming

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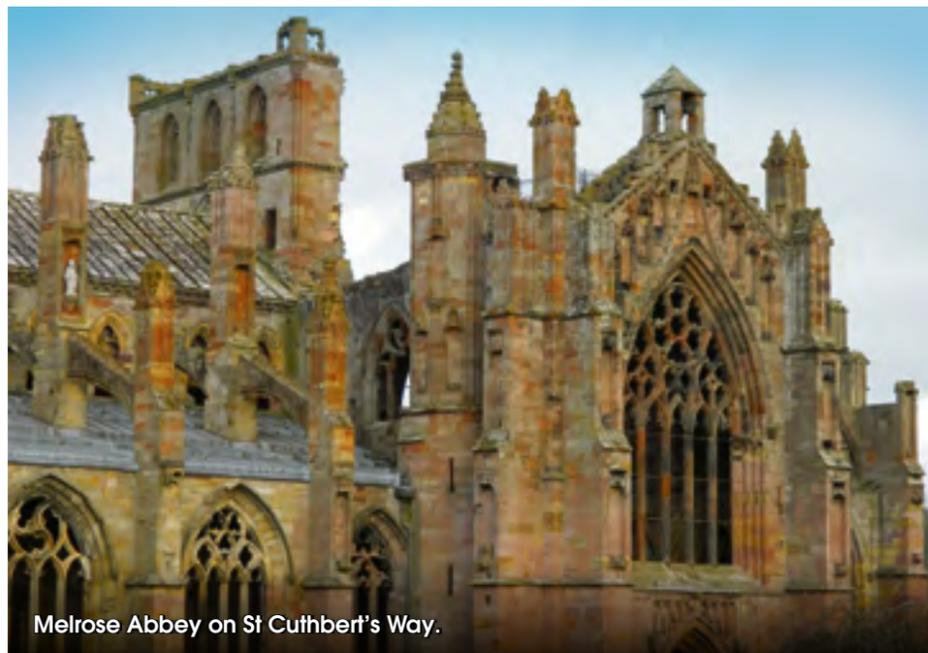
For more information visit... www.bagpiping.org

Whithorn Way - Stepping in the ancient footsteps of Scotland's pilgrims



By: Nick Drainey

Steeped in Medieval history people have taken spiritual pilgrimages in Scotland for centuries. The Whithorn Way is a 143 mile/229 km long distance trail that visits many holy, historic and scenic sites across the south-west, as a pilgrimage revival is taking place in Scotland which blends spirituality, history and the enjoyment of the great outdoors. New technology is now being used to bring people from around the world to Whithorn and the grave of St Ninian, Scotland's first saint, who brought Christianity to Scotland as Nick Drainey explains.



Melrose Abbey on St Cuthbert's Way.

They were routes trodden by thousands of feet over hundreds of years by those in search of cures from horrible diseases, those paying spiritually for terrible wrong-doings - and those hoping to knock a few years off their time in the fires of purgatory. But pilgrim ways fell out of use and favour after they were outlawed along with the other *trappings* of the Roman Catholic Church towards the end of the 16th century. Now, however, pilgrimage in Scotland is undergoing a revival with a major route opening this Easter, joining another five which are in the planning stages.

And while 21st century pilgrims still walk a designated route to a holy shrine, those who embark on the Whithorn Way from Glasgow to Whithorn will be able to follow a drone-filmed route on a smart phone app which will also recreate in 3-D ruined abbeys and other historic sites along the journey.

Those planning the routes hope to emulate the success of the Camino de Santiago, the pilgrim paths to Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain, where traditional has it that the remains of St James are buried. Numbers walking the routes - The Way of St James in English - have rocketed in recent years, from 50,000 in 2000 to more than 277,000 in 2016. Its success has transformed the economic fortunes of rural communities along the routes, a success which those planning



The coast at Dunbar on the Forth to Farnie Way.

the Scottish routes hope will transfer here, given the current vogue for long distance walks, such as the John Muir Way, and interest in history and heritage.

St Ninian

This Easter will see the release of the app and a more traditional guidebook for the Whithorn Way, with way markings due to follow next year. The 143-mile route to Whithorn, the shrine of St Ninian, is spilt into 12 roughly 12-mile sections, enabling walkers to complete it at weekends.

Julia Muir Watt, development manager for the Whithorn Trust, said: "This has been a pilgrim route for at least 1300 years. St Ninian became a super cult in Scotland and beyond. Whithorn was an immense centre that was responsible for drawing the road networks that we still have today. Towns were founded on the pilgrim route. For a lot of its life, Whithorn Cathedral was a building site as they just kept expanding it. It was the most almighty visitor experience across the whole of the south-west of Scotland."

But an Act of Parliament in 1581 banning pilgrimage hit Whithorn and communities along the route hard and the area dwindled into a quiet backwater. Organisers are hoping the new route will help to change that. The idea is to appeal beyond those walking for religious reasons, with a route that passes the remains of Medieval leper hospitals, Neolithic standing stones, nature reserves, abbeys, castles and coastal scenery but with the historical and spiritual giving it an added dimension.

"People are getting quite addicted to these long distance walks. They change your perspective of how you can get across Scotland - a very different experience to getting in your car and driving. I think people want to shed our fast but sedentary lifestyles. When people have time off they

want to do something very different. So there's definitely an interest in getting fit, in getting to know nature," said Julia.

Replicated across Scotland

But she said there was also a spiritual side to walking even for those with no religious beliefs. "Outside, you get hot, you get cold, you feel the wind on your face, you're in touch with nature in a way most of us no longer are because we're not out in the fields. Walking is a great equaliser - you have none of the marks of your socio-economic status with you, your house, your car, when you are walking."

It's a picture that's being replicated across Scotland, with the Fife Pilgrim Way, a 70-mile route linking three of the major pilgrimage shrines in Scotland (Culross, for St Serf, Dunfermline for St Margaret and St Andrews) is due to be waymarked by this spring and formally launched with a website and information boards at seven key points along the way next spring. It will join the Forth to Farnie, a 72-mile route from North Berwick to the holy island of Lindisfarne in Northumberland which opened in the autumn. The 55-mile St Magnus Way on Orkney, which traces the route the murdered St Magnus's body made from Evie, where it was brought ashore on Mainland, to Kirkwall where it was laid to rest, is being fine-tuned.

And while 21st century pilgrims still walk a designated route to a holy shrine, those who embark on the Whithorn Way from Glasgow to Whithorn will be able to follow a drone-filmed route on a smart phone app which will also recreate in 3-D ruined abbeys and other historic sites along the journey.

More ambitious is the Iona to St Andrews route, which is still in the planning stages. That is more than 200 miles long and will incorporate another planned pilgrim route, the Three Saints Way, and part of the Fife Coastal Path. There are also plans for an Aberdeen to Tain walk, where the early native Scottish saint St Duthoc died, and for three or four routes in Argyll which will be grouped and branded together.

Revival of pilgrimages

Organisers say there are a multitude of reasons which combine together to make pilgrimage popular. Clearly many are doing it for purely religious reasons. John



Culross Abbey on the Fife Pilgrim Way.

Henderson, of the Scottish Pilgrims Routes Forum, said: "There has been a revival of pilgrimages, possibly driven by Camino de Santiago. We have seen that to a lesser extent. I have been involved with the St Cuthbert's Way (a route from Melrose to Lindisfarne) for 15 years and seen the growth of pilgrims groups walking it. That's not to say the majority of people walking these long distance routes are doing it with a faith focus but I think there are many people trying to satisfy a spiritual void and are finding it in the open air and in the companionship."

Alex Simon, of the website www.santiago-compostela.net, agreed: "As one pilgrim put it to me: 'I spent last year over an hour in line to see the Notre Dame and another hour to visit the Chartres Cathedral. They became devoid of any meaning and commercialized.' I am not surprised that people looking for a religious experience would choose the Camino over, let's say, the Vatican. There is a sense of space and meditation that you can't find in urban areas with thousands of other tourists wishing to take a selfie in the spot you stay. I also think Scotland is set to have a big growth in the area."



The ruins of St Andrews Cathedral, the end of a proposed 200-mile route from Iona.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By: Ron Dempsey



Have a name that has you stumped? Scottish Banner readers can send in their name queries direct to Ron via the Scottish Banner via our website at www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us, by post or email: info@scottishbanner.com. Ron will do his best to help you with your name query and may just add that extra piece to your genealogy puzzle.

We have fond memories for each month of the year and when we look back at our childhood April is no different. For me, it was time of sunny days, daffodils and Easter. At Easter, we painted hard boiled eggs and rolled down the brae on Easter Monday, I never quite understood the reason for that. The climax of Easter was the chocolate egg on Easter Sunday. This time of year was the time to change the clocks and nothing said spring like an extra hour of daylight in the evening. The clocks have sprung ahead in most places north of the equator while Australia and New Zealand set their clocks back in April.

Tartan Day

On a historical note April 3rd 1603, King James VI of Scotland travelled south to London to become King James I of England. This was the first steps of uniting the two nations to become the United Kingdom of Great Britain which didn't become a reality until over a century later in 1707.

April 6th is Tartan Day. A day to recognize Scottish origins by wearing the tartan. It originated in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1987 and soon spread to other countries such as the United States, Argentina, (Galicia) Spain and parts of Scotland. April 6th was chosen as the day to commemorate the time when the Declaration of Arbroath was sent to the Pope John XXII to declare historical independence for Scotland on this date in 1320. Scotland had endured for twenty years an invasion by King Edward I of England who tried claim overlord ship of Scotland.

Tartan Day is also celebrated in Australia and New Zealand but on a different day that notes when the proscription of wearing tartan was lifted in July 1, 1782. An act proscribing the wearing of tartan had

been in effect for 35 years. The proscription act was enacted in 1747 after the battle of Culloden, when Prince Charles Stuart's lost to the Hanoverian forces.

Thomson

Mr. Jeff Thomson emailed the office of *the Scottish Banner* asking if the surname Thomson had its own tartan and possible clan affiliations. His family originated from the Paisley area. Thomson like so many other surnames such as Wilson and Johnson are names that were found in the length and width of Great Britain. Even confining these names to Scotland they are to be found in almost every village, hamlet or community, no matter whether the origin of the family is highland or lowland. The name originated as the son of Thomas or Tom and was fairly prolific as a boy's forename over the centuries. Since we are looking for a clan connection, Thomson and Thompson could be Anglicized versions of highland names. There are more than a few names from the highlands that fit the bill. MacTavish (son of Tames), MacCombie (son of Tommie), MacThomas, MacComas or MacTomais and MacThom.

Mac Thomas and other spellings are part of Clan Chattan a confederation of clans. Clan MacTavish seems to have been aligned with Clan Campbell. There was also Thomson family in the Borders region. However, a common name such as this would have many Lowland family bearers with no Highland connection at all. It is a popular surname which fits amongst the ten most common surnames in Scotland.

So unless one does a paper trail genealogy of one's own Thomson family it difficult to ascertain. In the case of the highland families this may be difficult to make a clan connection especially after

the decimation of clan culture in 1746, records would be scarce to prove a clan association for any bearers of the a name or what clan or what tartan is appropriate other than a direct having a direct line to aristocracy. There are Thomson and Thompson tartans of recent designs.

DNA

As mentioned previously, more people are taken ethnicity DNA tests. While we can normally predict to a point what our ethnic background from our known family history there can be some surprises. So many of us who perceive ourselves as having British and/or Irish backgrounds are usually not surprised to see a small percentage of Scandinavian genes in the mix. Our personal DNA can reflect genetic makeup over millennia, it would make sense that some Viking ancestry may show. The Vikings arrived on British and Irish shores between 800 and 1000A.D. and soon settled in certain areas adding to the native gene pool. In Scotland this branch may even show in our surnames such as MacCorquadale meaning son of Thor's kettle. Personal names such Magnus which shows up in the surname Main and son of Ivor seen in MacIver.

This northern genetic show more specifically to a family by arriving in other ways such as some northern sailor on a trading ship full of timber and amber arriving in Scotland and meeting a local lass that made him want to stay. There is also the reverse where Scottish lad on ship trading wool meets a blond beauty in the Baltic and brought her back to Scotland.

Now if I were mention good Scottish names such as Bruce, Comyn (Cumming), Bissett and Fraser you may ask what is the Scandinavian connection

with these names when we know that these names originated in Normandy and were the result of bearers of these names coming north from England a few generations after the Norman Conquest in 1066. While there may have been some French or other West European genes in their makeup having spent two hundred years in Normandy. The Normans were descended from Viking rovers that settled in northern France and took the dukedom of Normandy. So this would be another source of Scandinavian genes for those who have those surnames in the ancestry.

MacGreusach

Upon researching my surname resources, I find the odd name that intrigues me at that particular viewing even though it may not have anything to do what I was researching initially. This month the name is MacGreusach which sounds like a mouthful and translates as son of the shoemaker. The Anglicized version Grassick is what caught my eye. I first saw the name in the pseudonym of Leslie Mitchell. He published under the name of Lewis Grassick Gibbon. Gibbon was his mother's maiden name and Grassick was his maternal grandmother's maiden name. Mitchell was born in Auchterless, Aberdeen but was raised in Arbutnott parish, Kincardineshire. He was an accomplished author who wrote novels about the rural and small town life at the beginning of the last century. He is best known for *A Scots Quair*, a trilogy on that same subject matter.

If the Irish and "wannabees" Irish can wear green on March 17th then us good Scots must wear the tartan on April 6th. Alba gu bràth. All we have to do is found out how make tartan beer!

Don't forget we love hearing from you so send in your queries to *the Scottish Banner*.

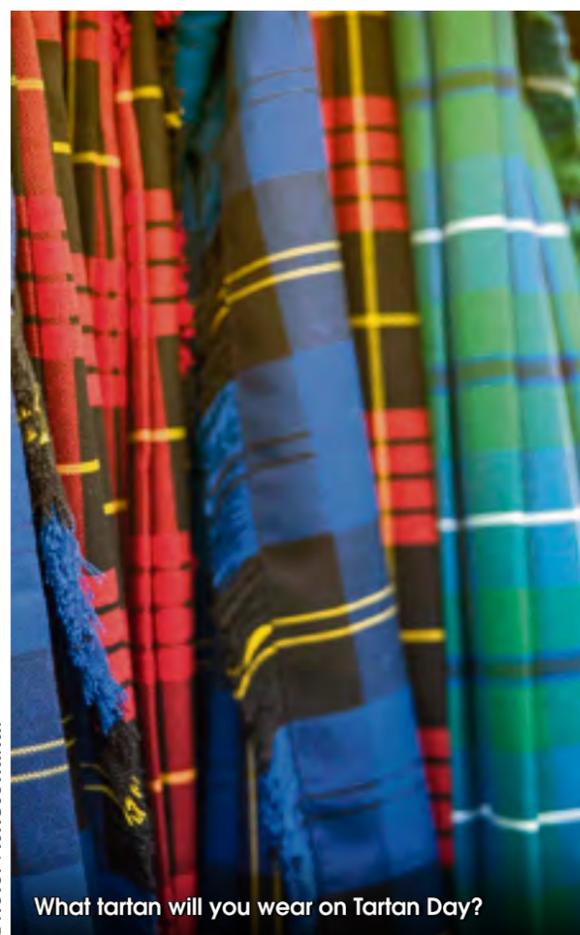


Photo: VisitScotland.

What tartan will you wear on Tartan Day?



Glasgow's great garden gala



Thirty years ago this month the city of Glasgow literally began to bloom as it hosted the Garden Festival, 50 years after the highly successful Empire Exhibition was held in 1938. The 1988 event was one the only one of the five National Garden Festivals to take place in Scotland and attracted 4.3 million visitors over 152 days. The southbank of the River Clyde came alive for five months, attracting visitors from far and wide and showing Glaswegians just what a Dear Green Place they lived in, as David McVey explains.



Some people within Scotland's wider family will scarcely believe that 2018 marks the thirtieth anniversary of Glasgow's famously successful Garden Festival. The event still feels recent; I've kept my official souvenir guide and when I open it up it even smells new.

The festival opened on 28 April 1988. My own first visit was just a day or two later. The souvenir guide is full of photographs of a crowded Festival already in progress. How did they manage to get these pictures in advance of the opening? Well, a few days before, local people from Govan had been welcomed for a sneak preview. While they enjoyed themselves, photographers dashed about, snapping away for the souvenir guide. Happily, it was a sunny day.

Regeneration

National Garden Festivals were originally intended to boost the nursery and horticultural industries and to promote urban regeneration. The first two took place in Liverpool in 1984 and Stoke-on-Trent in 1986, but by Glasgow's turn the vision was growing. The 1988 Garden Festival was often compared to the Glasgow's legendary 1938 Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park. In fact the architecture wasn't a patch on the spectacular modernism of that event, but the festival occupied a huge site, on the south bank of the Clyde opposite the Scottish Exhibition Centre (or 'SEC', which back then had no hotel, Armadillo or Hydro alongside).

Some people were concerned that a mini-Disneyland was being built on disused industrial sites that had once provided real jobs for Glasgow's people. The organisers argued that the Festival would be the first stage in a regeneration of a derelict part of the city. So we swallowed

our misgivings and bought our season tickets (I've still got mine). Anyway, Glaswegians always love a party.

There were two main entrances to the festival site; at the eastern end, you took the Underground to Kinning Park Station and then a little road train carried you to the gate. But the best approach was from the main gate opposite the SEC. You got the train to Exhibition Centre Station (the stylised murals depicting Glasgow's history opposite the eastbound platform date from this time), followed the covered walkway to the SEC and crossed the Clyde by the newly-opened Bell's Bridge. On the south side you arrived at the main entrance.

Once over the river, you could smell the donuts from the stall just inside the main gate. Nearby was the festival 'High Street' where you could buy souvenirs, food, books and lots more stuff. Not far off was the western end of the short festival tram line. Glasgow folk had loved their trams and the closure of the system in 1962 had been a sore blow. Now, for five months, you could hop on a genuine preserved Glasgow tram and trundle along the waterfront. Some grown men of mature years kept getting grit in their eyes...

Festival railway

The other main internal transport was the miniature festival railway. Trains travelled anti-clockwise round a circular route with three stations. One of these stations was at the far end of the High Street, and the best advice for festival newbies was to circle the site on the train to get their bearings and identify places to visit; the official Festival Map (I still have that, too) used a baffling coding system and was difficult to use. The three locomotives were diesel-powered but decorated to look like historic Scottish railway steam engines.

The festival ran until 26 September and clocked up over four million visits, the greatest of any of the Garden Festivals. Queuing became a great festival ritual, and I never experienced the two great highlights, the Coca-Cola Roller Coaster and the Clydesdale Bank Anniversary Tower, simply because the queues were always forbidding. So many visitors needed a lot of feeding and the site had dozens of cafes, restaurants, food stalls and takeaways. I'm no vegetarian, but a wonderful veggie restaurant run by Green City Wholefoods showed me that it needn't all be birdseed; so, honestly, I didn't just live on donuts during my visits.

The arts were also central to the festival programme. Sculptures and installations were everywhere. There were also performing arts venues throughout the site, varying from tiny little bandstands to huge amphitheatres, including the Scottish Amicable Arena at the festival's eastern end; an edition of the BBC's *Songs of Praise* was recorded there.

Glasgow folk had loved their trams and the closure of the system in 1962 had been a sore blow. Now, for five months, you could hop on a genuine preserved Glasgow tram and trundle along the waterfront. Some grown men of mature years kept getting grit in their eyes...

Today's young people will struggle to comprehend an event on such a scale that didn't have its own website or Facebook page or Twitter account. For information about the festival, you checked the Scottish daily papers which printed programmes of the day's events. However, at the festival, you could use one of the 22 IBM 'Infopoints' positioned around the site. These had screens with interactive maps and regularly updated information; a sort of local Internet, if you like (of course, there were always queues to use them). Festival staff communicated with each other using enormous cellular handsets with dangling antennae. The souvenir guide featured two adverts for hefty mobile phones. By 1988, we could see the way the world was moving.

Important milestone

A small green space called Festival Park, maintained by Glasgow City Council, is one of few tangible reminders of the Garden Festival. All of the buildings have all been removed, the loch is reduced

and the festival railway no longer runs past it (the track and rolling stock were sold to Japan). The artificial waterfall that once fed the loch is dry and now survives only as a rock garden.

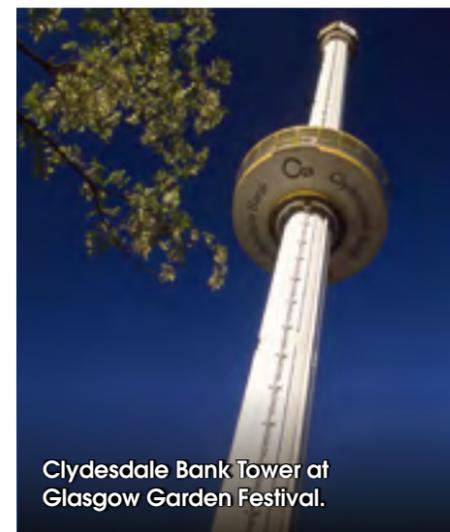
You can still cross Bell's Bridge (though there were post-festival attempts to close it) but on the south side, instead of donuts and the High Street, you are now confronted by the BBC's austere Scottish HQ. The site of The Rendezvous, one of the larger performance venues, lies somewhere beneath the BBC car park. I took part in a short drama there, so it's a galling sight. Huge blocks of flats and a leisure complex now obscure the eastern end where the trams ran.

Gateshead in 1990 and Ebbw Vale in 1992 hosted the last two National Garden Festivals after which the idea seems to have run its course. Perhaps questions arose about how effective the events were in regenerating cities; 25 years on in Glasgow, the area between the BBC and Festival Park remains derelict. In planning the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the organisers were keen to avoid the legacy mistakes made with the Garden Festival site.

Most of the festival buildings were designed to be temporary, but some survive elsewhere; there's a greenhouse in the grounds of Mount Stuart House on Bute and a festival gazebo now graces Miller Park in Preston, Lancashire. The Clydesdale Bank Tower went to Rhyl in North Wales. Tracking down surviving Garden Festival buildings and sculptures can become an absorbing pastime.

In Glasgow, everyone who attended the Festival has a fund of happy memories. Yes, there were mistakes made in redeveloping the site afterwards, but it was an important milestone in convincing the rest of Scotland and the world, and convincing Glaswegians themselves, that this was a truly great city with a tremendous cultural and artistic heritage. If we believe it now - and who doesn't? - the 1988 Garden Festival is at least partly responsible.

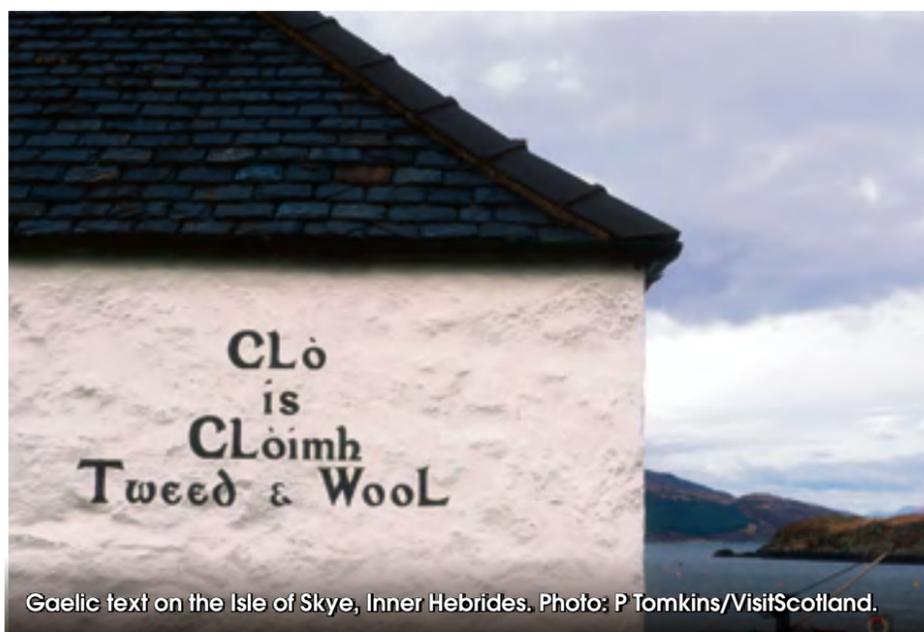
Did you attend the Glasgow Garden Festival? Share your story with us by email, post or at www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us



Clydesdale Bank Tower at Glasgow Garden Festival.

The Gaelic language: Past and present

Text courtesy of: www.Scotland.org



Gaelic text on the Isle of Skye, Inner Hebrides. Photo: P Tomkins/VisitScotland.

Recently both Lorient (France) and Rudolstadt (Germany) music festivals featured the highest representation of Gaelic artists in mainland Europe, ever! Promotion of Gaelic language, music and culture is placed firmly at the heart of Scotland's presence at both these festivals. With that in mind we thought we would take you on a journey of the language's significance in Scotland's past and present.

Strong identity

The Gaelic language has been part of the Scottish consciousness for centuries. It's the ancient tongue of Scotland, and considered to be the founding language of the country. The origins can be traced back as far as the 10th century and is believed to have been brought to Scotland by way of Ireland. From these beginnings, Gaelic spread throughout the country. It became the main language of the medieval kingdom of Alba and remained that way right through until the 18th century.

Though in past times the language was spoken across all of Scotland, from the largest cities to the smallest islands, it did eventually fall into decline. After the union of England and Scotland, English quickly began taking over as the main language of Scotland. This was because many of Scotland's rulers and noblemen embraced English as their language to better interact with their counterparts south of the border.

This gradual adoption spread throughout the rest of the country, although Gaelic remained dominant in more remote areas. Amazingly, despite over 200 years of suppression, Gaelic still retains a strong identity through the mediums of folklore, literature and music. Thanks to the determination to hold on to the Gaelic language, it remains a vibrant contributor to modern Scottish life.

Holding its own

Although the number of Gaelic speakers has dwindled in modern times, parts of the country still have a deep connection to the language. The 2011 Census revealed that just over 57,000 people are fluent in Gaelic - that's only 1.1% of the entire Scottish population. However, The Highlands and Islands remain a stronghold for the Gaelic language. In some of these areas

the number of Gaelic speakers jumps massively. In the Outer Hebrides, for example, a massive 61% of the population speak Gaelic.

The language is also thriving far beyond the shores of Scotland, with Gaelic speakers found throughout the world. Nova Scotia in Canada, for example, has an estimated 2,000 people that can speak Gaelic. The language has remained in use here since colonial times, where it did not face the same level of suppression as in Scotland. As well as Nova Scotia, you can also find proud Gaelic communities in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. This shows how important Gaelic is to Scots; holding onto it as they settled in the far reaches of the globe.

Today in Scotland, the Gaelic language is celebrated at a variety of events and festivals. Traditional Gaelic song and poetry can be heard at the competitions of the Royal National Mod, as well as at local Fèisean, festivals of the Gaelic language, held annually across the

Highlands and Islands. Gaelic is also sung by internationally popular contemporary musicians, such as the Hebridean folk singer Julie Fowlis and the renowned six-piece Mànran. Teaching festivals such as Fèis Rois also aim to bring Gaelic music to a whole new generation of musicians.

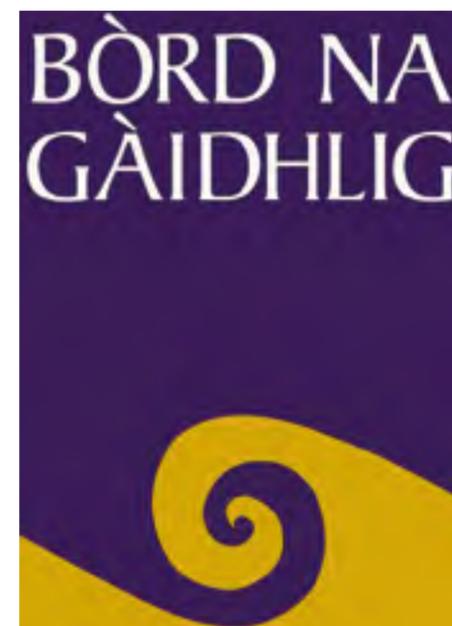
The Gaelic Renaissance

Chances are, if you are visiting Scotland, you will encounter Gaelic in one form or another. For example, motorists travelling through the Highlands of Scotland encounter bi-lingual road signs along their routes. The Scottish Government formally introduced these signs in 2001, which now show Scottish towns and cities in both English and Gaelic. Also, in 2008, the BBC introduced a dedicated Gaelic language television channel, named BBC Alba. The channel, which airs throughout the UK, is further helping to increase the awareness and popularity of the language.

In 2005, Bòrd na Gàidhlig was created in order to further promote the development of Gaelic throughout Scotland. They provide support for people who want to learn more about the language. Gaelic education and learning are at the heart of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's aspirations. Because of this they offer a vast array of options covering everything from pre-school education right through to post-graduate studies. As a result, there have never been so many ways to learn Gaelic, and every year the resources to support this continue to grow and adapt as Gaelic continues its modern renaissance.

Creative Scotland have an excellent introduction to the Gaelic language, if you want to learn more about it, then you can visit the Creative Scotland website. As well as this, if you are interested in learning some Gaelic, then www.learnghaelic.scot is a great place to start. We thought we would get you started on your Gaelic journey with a few handy words and

phrases. We've given a couple of what we think are some of the most important words and phrases if you ever find yourself in the company of a Gaelic speaker...or at a pub in the Highlands! You can join the growing number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland and around the world and ensure this beautiful language stays around for another 10 centuries.



Gaelic introduction-getting started:

Welcome-Fàilte

I love Scotland-tha gaol agam h-Alba

How are you?-Ciamar a tha thu?

Whisky-Uisge Beathe

Cheers! (To toast when drinking)- Slàinte mhor!

Thank you-Tapadh leat

I want to learn Gaelic-Tha mi airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh



Gaelic and English road signs on the Isle of Eriskay, Outer Hebrides. Photo: P Tomkins/VisitScotland.

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Lady MacGregor's Scotland By: Lady Fiona MacGregor

Lady MacGregor of MacGregor – otherwise known as British broadcaster Fiona Armstrong. Fiona is currently news reading for the BBC, but she also leaves the studio to report on all matters Scottish. Fiona lives in Scotland with her husband, Chief of Clan MacGregor, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor, and is also an active member of Clan Armstrong, so their lives are interwoven with all things tartan. The couple have moved from the borderlands to the lowlands, home is now a white tower house between Perth and Dundee, although filming and writing takes Fiona all over Scotland.



Dumfries the happiest place to live in Scotland.

Greetings from Scotland where we have had masses of snow. Which is an unusual state of affairs for us here in the Borderlands. It is normally the Highlands that gets the worst of the white stuff. The thing is, it is all rather unexpected, as we were just congratulating ourselves for stumbling nicely into spring.

This time the wild weather affects the whole country. Shops and businesses are shut. Delivery of a new bed is cancelled. Snow ploughs work round the clock to keep roads clear. Train travel is disrupted.

The MacGregor and I suddenly find ourselves blocked in for days. Which is frustrating. Although, on the bright side, being housebound is a chance to catch up on all those tedious jobs you have been putting off for another day.

Now that day has arrived and there is nothing for it. Large Victorian wardrobes are scaled and their tops are dusted down. A pair of over-long bedroom curtains is taken up and carefully hemmed. I may not be a seamstress, but I can do the basics with a needle and thread.

There is more. The silver gets a good polishing. A back door runner that is there to cope with dirty dog's paws is washed and laid to dry in the boiler room. The freezer is defrosted and re-organised.

Scottish invention

At least we still plenty of food – and we still have power. What did they do when days were dark - and there was not a single solitary light bulb in sight? We have much to thank Thomas Edison for, born in the USA, a self-taught man and the inventor of the first commercially viable light bulb.

Edison would go on to have more than a thousand US patents to his name. It is a remarkable achievement and I look for clues that might suggest he has Scottish origins.

Another inventor that most certainly has Celtic roots is John Logie Baird – and this is the person who gave us the television: born in Helensburgh near Glasgow, the son of a clergyman, he suffered from poor health most of his life. Yet in 1926 he proudly showed a room full of fifty scientists the first true flickering images on a screen.

We have much to thank John Logie Baird for at this time of extreme weather. Unable to get out, when jobs are done, we can catch up with that box set that arrived at Christmas time and has not yet been viewed.

The doggies sit by the fire with us. For the MacNaughties these blizzards are a

blessing. It means the chief and I must stay at home - with them. They love pootling about in the snow. But they are not so keen when I stand them in the back kitchen sink to hose fat ice balls off hind legs.

Dumfries

When we do eventually manage to get out of the house we set off for Edinburgh. It is an official clan do – and the chief puts on full Highland uniform. He wears his thickest socks, knitted by his grandmother back in the 1950s. But it is still not enough. When we get to the capital, his legs are red-raw.

A British king once arrived in Scotland wearing a pair of flesh-coloured tights under his kilt. George IV was taking no chances when he crossed the border to visit his northern kingdom back in 1822.

I quietly suggest he might consider buying a pair of woollen tights. And when he looks horrified I remind him that royalty has not always been averse

to the idea. A British king once arrived in Scotland wearing a pair of flesh-coloured tights under his kilt. George IV was taking no chances when he crossed the border to visit his northern kingdom back in 1822.

But that was then - and this is now. And a twenty-first century Scotsman is nothing if not hardy. Hey ho. As long as your lums are reeking (your chimneys are smoking), then at least you will be warm in your home...

Meanwhile, as I write this, the weather appears to be picking up. The frozen drifts are still there. Some are the size of hedges along the back roads. But at least most routes are now passable and trains are once again running on time.

Delicate purple crocus on the lawns seem to have survived two weeks of being blanketed by a foot of snow. Bouncy daffodils on the drive are in bud and look like they are none the worse for wear.

Yes, things are looking up. Dumfries, the town of which I have the honour to be Her Majesty The Queen's Lord Lieutenant, has just been voted the nicest place in Scotland.

And that is on top of last year being designated the happiest place to live. We should not speak too soon, but spring may just be properly on the way. Household jobs are done. Cheer is here. What more can we ask for?

History of Tartan Day in Canada

Text courtesy of Scotland.org

The Maple Leaf Tartan. Image courtesy of The Scottish Register of Tartans.

Tartan Day (6 April) has become an annual celebration of Scottish culture and heritage in Canada. In 2003, Tartan Day became an annual celebration of Scottish culture and heritage in Canada. The concept of Tartan Day began at a meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia on 9 March 1986. Members Bill Crowell and Jean MacKaracher-Watson put forward the following motion to the Federation: "That we establish a day known as 'Tartan Day'. This to be a day chosen to promote Scottish Heritage by the most visible means. The wearing of the Scottish attire, especially in places where the kilt is not ordinarily worn, i.e.: work, play or worship."

Starting originally as "Tartan Day in Nova Scotia", Jean Watson approached every provincial Legislative Assembly in Canada, as well as other Scottish-cultural societies across Canada, to help get such a date established. After ten years of work,

Tartan Day in Canada was approved in every Provincial Assembly from sea to sea by Premier's proclamation or Members' Bill, the last being in the National Assembly at Québec City, where it was finally proclaimed in December 2003 - 16 years after it the first such proclamation in Nova Scotia.

On October 21, 2010, the Government of Canada announced that April 6 will be formally recognised as Tartan Day Here are the Provinces of Canada, in order, on which Tartan Day was proclaimed:

- Nova Scotia** - 6 April, 1987
- Ontario** - 19 December, 1991
- British Columbia** - 25 March, 1992
- Prince Edward Island** - 2 April, 1992
- Saskatchewan** - 6 April, 1992
- Manitoba** - 6 April, 1992
- Alberta** - 6 April, 1992
- New Brunswick** - 6 April, 1993
- Newfoundland & Labrador** - 6 April, 1995
- Quebec** - 18 December, 2003

Royal Patron for The Scottish Tartans Authority



The Scottish Tartans Authority (STA), a registered charity and the only organisation dedicated to the promotion, protection and preservation of Scotland's iconic national cloth, is delighted to announce that His Royal Highness The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay has agreed to become its Patron.

Founded in 1995, the charitable purposes of the Authority are to protect, preserve, conserve, promote and explain the culture, traditions and uses of Scottish Tartans and Highland Dress; and to advance and promote the education of the public about Scottish Tartans and Highland Dress and their respective origins, manufacture, use and development. This is a wide remit for a small charity and as well as fielding hundreds of enquiries every year, the STA provides expert support to the Scottish Register of Tartans, having gifted its core tartan database to allow the Register to be set up by National Records of Scotland in 2009.

Rich history

Recent STA collaborations have included working with the Braemar Royal Highland Society in developing a Highland Games

Exhibition and advising The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo on their "Splash of Tartan" theme for 2017. The Authority is also collaborating with a wide range of tartan stakeholders to deliver two ground breaking projects. The first will see the creation of a National Tartan Centre in Stirling, within sight of the Highland boundary and the district in which Wilsons of Bannockburn were the most prolific of tartan weaving businesses from the 18th to 20th centuries. The second will help pursue a long-held ambition of Scottish weavers to establish a "tartan marque" for tartan woven in Scotland.

John McLeish, Chairman of The Scottish Tartans Authority, said: "The rich history and cultural traditions associated with tartan help to attract millions of visitors to Scotland every year. Whether on the catwalks of Milan or at a Highland Gathering, our iconic national cloth has a distinct style and evokes strong feelings of belonging, making it the best-known and best-loved fabric in the world. The Duke of Rothesay is a true ambassador for tartan, Highland Dress and the traditions of the Highlands. We consider it a great honour that His Royal Highness has agreed



to become our Patron and we are very grateful for his support and encouragement as we seek to enhance the profile of tartan and secure its legacy for future generations".

Let the Games begin



The Scottish Banner speaks to Jon Doig OBE, Chief Executive/Chef de Mission, Team Scotland

This month sporting teams from across the Commonwealth will be heading to Australia for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Queensland. Team Scotland is headed by New Zealand native Jon Doig who leads the team as the Chef de Mission for Team Scotland. Jon took the time to speak to the Scottish Banner's Sean Cairney on what his role involves, why Team Scotland marches under their own flag and the important legacy of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.



Chef de Mission Jon Doig holding the flag for Scotland and the Team Scotland flagbearer nominees in the background.

SC: Thanks for taking the time to speak to *the Scottish Banner*. Can we begin by you telling us briefly just what the role Chef de Mission entails?

JD: The role is basically an overall in charge of the team. It is a term used at multi-sport games such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games, it is a French term for Head of Mission or the overall team manager.

SC: The Commonwealth Games is certainly a unique international sporting event for Scottish athletes as they compete for Scotland, rather than Great Britain. Can you tell us briefly how this came to be and what that means for Scottish athletes?

JD: The first Commonwealth Games were in 1930 and Scotland is one of only six nations that has competed in every edition of the Games since they started. It is a record we are very proud of and for Scotland it is the only multi-sport event Scotland competes under the Saltire. We do have a number of sports who compete internationally for Scotland but in terms of a multi-sport team this is the only time where all Scottish athletes across various disciplines can come together. It is something the athletes are very proud and it is also a very unique experience for them.

SC: Can you give us an insight in just what it is like to plan and prepare the logistics for hundreds of athletes and staff that make up Team Scotland to travel to the other side of the world for an event such as the Commonwealth Games?

JD: It really starts from the time a Games gets awarded, and Gold Coast was

awarded seven years ago. We really start preparing for each Games in advance of the next one coming up. Whilst we were obviously heavily involved in developing everything that made our event for Glasgow 2014, we were already planning and engaging with the Gold Coast organisers at that time as well. It really is a seven year process and I have been to onsite visits to Australia six times for these Games, it was the same for the Games in India. So the preparation is going and seeing where the Games will be located and getting to know the local culture and making local contacts. The more information we get the more we can prepare the athletes and ourselves. We also engage with the organisers and help them shape the Games. This is the first time the Gold Coast has held the Games and we have been able to come in give our advice and experience with Scotland holding those successful Glasgow Games in 2014. What makes a good Games great is the attention to detail and the focus on the athletes and that's what we do with our team and is what we helped with so the Gold Coast Games organisers could do the same thing.

SC: Team Scotland is coming into the Gold Coast Games after having its most successful medal count at Glasgow 2014 with 53 medals. Does that put pressure on the team to match such a stellar performance or does that further boost the team moral as they have shown the world what they can achieve as they aim to have their most successful overseas Games?

JD: It does show the team they can be and are successful on the world stage and the Commonwealth Games is certainly a world stage. We set our goals from a Games

to Games perspective and our target for these Games is they become the best overseas Games Team Scotland has. This would look for us to better the 29 medals we got in Melbourne in 2006 and the Games program for these Games is almost identical to Melbourne and this is the bench mark for us to beat. It is important as well that we have raised the standard of what is required to be in Team Scotland progressively and everyone selected on the Gold Coast team based on the ability to be a top six performer or better. Once you are in the top six you really are then looking at the medal zone and that is what every one of our athletes is targeting to do.

SC: The last Commonwealth Games was held in Glasgow and was a huge success, not only for Scotland having their most successful medal count, but also for the city with the sporting legacy it has left behind. What do you feel Glasgow 2014 has done for the city of Glasgow and the broader sporting community across Scotland?

The first Commonwealth Games were in 1930 and Scotland is one of only six nations that has competed in every edition of the Games since they started.

JD: I think it has benefited both Glasgow and Scotland as a whole. What people will see when they come through Glasgow are the physical changes within Glasgow with the absolutely fantastic athletes village in Dalmarnock and the Emirates Arena which was built and stimulated by the Games coming in. The catalyst for the SECC Hydro on the Clyde Side is now a phenomenally successful arts and music venue. What it also gave was a tremendous confidence for both Glasgow and Scotland that this was a major national project that everyone pulled together to deliver which was internationally successful in terms of showcasing everything that was great about Glasgow and Scotland. The tools and experience that was learned to promote your city and country is something in which the Game gives, pulling it off can be more difficult than it sounds, but when it works it is amazing and it really worked in Glasgow.

In Glasgow we had the best on the field from our athletes but we also showed off the best of modern Scotland and what that did was for those who had not been to

Glasgow or Scotland, or had not been for a while, had their perceptions of Scotland turned on their head in terms of what a fantastic place it is. The whole city and country really came alive over that period, and we even had fantastic weather!

SC: Across Australia there are millions of people with Scottish ancestry. As a Kiwi representing Scotland in Australia what advice do you have for the many Australian, Canadian or New Zealand Scots that want to support both Scotland and their home country?

JD: Scotland is everybody's favourite second team. For Scots travelling to the Gold Coast we are their number one team but for everybody else, especially those with Scottish ancestry, they are proud to show their support for Scotland. Team Scotland provides an opportunity for everyone to rally around and celebrate all that is great about Scotland and certainly for Australian Scots this gives them very much a second team to cheer for.

SC: And finally Jon as the last Commonwealth Games hosts, Scotland will be the first team to walk out into the Opening Ceremony at the Carrara Stadium this month. Can you tell how proud that makes the team and what the reaction has been on the amazing new 2018 Team Scotland uniforms?

JD: We were so privileged to be the last team to enter the stadium in Glasgow and that huge roar from the crowd was incredible, you could actually feel the sound as you entered the stadium. That was a phenomenally special experience and having been the previous hosts we now have the honour of leading all of the nations in at the opening ceremony in the Gold Coast. It really is a chance for us to show off the fantastic new tartan we have developed for the Gold Coast in the specially designed kilts. Our uniforms are rooted in tradition but have that modern feel and our tartan has also been incorporated within the shirts the athletes will be wearing. We are very proud to show off our heritage and for Scotland to be the number one country to enter the stadium is a phenomenal experience. We always say people can pay to go into the stadium but you can only earn the right to walk into the stadium with the Scottish team and that's earned through people's talent and dedication. It really is an honour very few athletes get and one that they will cherish for the rest of their lives with both the eyes of the stadium and the world on them.

For more information on Team Scotland see: www.teamscotland.scot

Bringing tartan to the world

The Scottish Banner speaks to Siobhan Mackenzie

Hailing from The Black Isle in the Highlands of Scotland, Siobhan Mackenzie has created her own fashion label which uses ancient tartan and kilt heritage with a distinct and vibrant modern flair. This month over a billion people will see her work as Team Scotland struts their stuff at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast of Australia. Siobhan took the time to speak to the Scottish Banner's Sean Cairney on how she got into fashion, blending traditional Scottish dress with 21st style and just what it is like to dress the athletes of a nation.



Team Scotland members Andrew Butchart and Lynsey Sharp, wearing Siobhan's uniform design. Photo: Alistair Devine/Team Scotland.



SC: Siobhan thank you for taking the time to speak to *the Scottish Banner*. Can we begin with you telling us a bit about your journey from growing up in the Highlands to international fashion?

SM: I grew up in Fortrose in The Black Isle which was a beautiful place to grow up- I knew from the age of ten that I wanted to become a fashion designer. Which was a far-fetched dream for a little girl from a small village but my thinking was "someone's got to do that job, why wouldn't it be me!" At the age of thirteen I bought my own sewing machine and my home economics teacher taught me to sew. By the age of seventeen I had completed school and moved to Glasgow to begin my Fashion Design and Production degree, which I graduated in with First Class Honours in 2014. During my final year I trained with Glenisla Kilts in traditional kilt-making and then started innovating ideas from there to form my Graduate Collection. I must say I was naïve when I launched my graduate collection because I was unprepared for people wanting to buy it, so very naturally I realised I had a business and five days after I graduated I incorporated my company at the age of twenty-one!

SC: Part of your fashion degree allowed to design your own collection which you took inspiration from both your Highland roots and from the Clan Mackenzie. Can you tell us just how much Scotland and your sense of home inspires you with your work today?



The Ancient Culloden Tartan, a cloth steeped in Highland history, first worn at The Battle Of Culloden in 1746.



Designer Siobhan Mackenzie.

SM: My Highland roots and my family are a huge sense of inspiration transcending throughout the brand- from colour palettes, fabric choices, styles of design right through to working with my family within the brand- we did a photoshoot where my cousin who is a photographer took the photographs and my other cousin who is a model wore the collection. Something I'm passionate about is retaining traditional Scottish craftsmanship but reworking it into modern day fashion so supporting Scottish Textile Mills & Scottish Manufacturers is a key ethos in my brand.

SC: You launched your own label in 2014 and in 2016 you were named Best New Scottish Designer. Today you have the likes of singer Justin Bieber and Scottish tennis royalty Judy Murray wearing your designs, how does your much earned success make you feel and how important is it for you to have Scottish design recognised on the international stage?

SM: My designs are so iconic to Scotland and the message behind my brand of supporting local industries is incredibly important to me so when celebrities chose to wear the brand I feel proud on that respect where I feel they are too getting behind the brand ethos.

SC: For some tartan is quite a traditional cloth relating to family heritage however you have stepped outside of tradition and brought an unique and vibrant modern

flair to your work. How important is it for you to keep tartan not only relevant, but an important part of 21st century fashion?

SM: Tartan is a vital part of Scotland's history but with this said that is the exact same reason as to why it is so important to re-invent it as tartan and the kilt is not something I would ever want to die out, it is our identity. Scottish textiles are used by some of the world's biggest fashion houses so we absolutely have the potential to utilise these on our doorsteps and create some of the world's biggest fashion houses from Scotland.

SC: Being a Scottish designer and rewriting the rules on kilts could lead to possible disaster for some. How do you mix respecting tradition with being bold with one of the most iconic symbols of national dress in the world?

SM: I completely agree, you are essentially playing with fire. I'm respectful to the original craft as I worked with Glenisla Kilts whilst a student to learn the ins and outs of kilt-making before taking a stab at changing anything about it, understanding the construction of something is always important to me as a designer as I can design better if I understand how it is manufactured. I never want to disgrace the kilt, I want to create beautiful works of art in kilt form and I take great care when designing for clients that the fabrics I'm contrasting compliment each-other and work well for that individual person's style.

SC: Starting any business at young age can have its challenges. Have you faced any hurdles being a woman in the male dominated kilt making business?

SM: Absolutely, I'm aware I cut a rather unusual figure in this industry, often being so young and a female you aren't taken seriously but that just makes me more determined to succeed.

SC: Tartan Day is celebrated this month across North America on April 6th (and in Australasia on July 1st). How important do you feel it is that Scots both at home and across the world celebrate the "Cloth of a Nation"?

SM: It's important it is celebrated but I think tartan is celebrated much more than people realise, continuously we see tartan on the catwalks across many top fashion designers' collections including Versace, McQueen, Westwood- and it's a continuous nod to our nation's beautiful trademark.

SC: Also this month the world will see your work first hand as Team Scotland enters the arena at the Commonwealth Games in front of an estimated audience of 1.5 billion people. Can you tell us how you got involved with the project, a bit about the design and just how exciting this has all been for you?

SM: At the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games I had just finished my coursework for my degree and worked as an Alteration Technician for the technical officials of the games. My graduate collection had just launched and I was in the early stages of setting up my business, the spirit and atmosphere of the games was exhilarating and it was then I decided I would make it a career goal to design for Team Scotland. I am entrepreneurial and believe if you don't go for opportunities then they certainly won't come to you- I simply emailed Team Scotland my work and expressed my interest to work with them and to my delight they wanted to work with me, too! I think it's brilliant that they chose to work with a Young Scottish Designer on such a huge project and hopefully they will lead by example on other large organisations getting behind working with young talent in our country! It's truly been an honour to design for the athletes of my country and I am extremely excited to see Scotland be the first to enter the arena wearing my design.

SC: And finally Siobhan can you tell us where you would like to take tartan to next?

SM: I will continue developing the brand product range always keeping a nod to contemporary Scotland throughout and my focus is on growing my global distribution chain throughout luxury retailers.

For more details see: www.siobhannmackenzie.com



Photographer: George Monaghan. Model: Sophia McCarvey. Hair & make up: The Hair & Make Up Lounge Glasgow.

IN SCOTLAND TODAY



A resting Goldfinch.

Scotland's woodland and farmland birds increase, as upland birds decline

Scotland's woodland and farmland bird numbers have increased over the past two decades, but during this time, upland birds have faced decline. This is according to a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) report published, *The Official Statistic for Terrestrial Breeding Birds*.

The latest results reveal varied trends for Scotland's terrestrial breeding birds, with woodland birds increasing by 67% between 1994 and 2016, farmland birds increasing by 13%, but upland birds decreasing by 16%.

Woodland specialists, such as great-spotted woodpecker and chiffchaff, have shown the largest increases. Great-spotted woodpeckers have expanded across Europe, possibly as a result of increased forests and woodlands becoming more connected.

For farmland species, goldfinches have continued to increase and are now a common sight in most gardens. Whitethroat, a small migratory warbler, has also bounced back from their historical lows associated with droughts in their Sahelian overwintering grounds in Africa.

Upland birds are the most concerning group, with declines for 10 of the 17 species. Among the largest declines are breeding waders, including curlew, golden plover and lapwing. Major work is underway to help tackle these declines, including extensive peatland restoration and the Working for Waders project.

Simon Foster, SNH's trends analyst, said: "It's wonderful to see that woodland and farmland birds are not only holding their own in Scotland, but that many are thriving. However, with some upland birds struggling, there are a lot of people and projects working hard to improve

conditions for waders – some of which have seen worrying declines. We and many of our partners are hoping to see these birds fare better in the coming years."

Plans to refurbish Edinburgh's North Bridge



Edinburgh's historic North Bridge is set to undergo a major £22m programme of refurbishment. A series of structural repairs will help safeguard the long-term use of the Grade A-listed bridge, built in 1896, as a vital city centre link between the Old and New Towns. Transport and Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley MacInnes, said: "This historic bridge is a familiar and much-loved focal point in the city centre, and it's clear that it requires some much-needed restoration. I am delighted that, thanks to prudent financial management, we will be able to progress with a series of repairs, ensuring the longevity of this iconic structure."

Inspections to North Bridge carried out in 2014 identified a number of defects, resulting in the removal of loose material and installation of netting to make the underside of the bridge safe. Assessments have confirmed that there has been no impact on the bridge's load carrying capacity.

A major contractor with experience of similar projects was engaged early in the process in light of the complexity of the scheme, which is due to the bridge's location over a working railway station, with the refurbishment expected to begin in the summer. A report prepared for the council warned that weight restrictions would have to be put in place if work were not carried out on the bridge. The report said little maintenance work had been done on the bridge in its 120-year history.

First commercial gold mine approved for Scotland

Proposals to develop Scotland's first-ever full-scale commercial gold and silver mine have been approved. Scotgold Resources Ltd has been given consent to extract more than half a million tonnes of ore from the underground Cononish mine, near Tyndrum in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, over a 17-year period. The company says it hopes to produce 12,000 ounces of gold a year initially. Scotgold chief executive Richard Gray said he was "convinced the project will meet both the highest environmental standards and provide a significant boost to the local economy around Tyndrum." There was a history of exploratory mining activity at Cononish before the national park was established, with exploratory mining carried out in the 1980s.

Palace of Holyrood House restoration begins



Photo: The Royal Collection.

Work has begun on the restoration of the historic Abbey Strand buildings in the Canongate and the creation of a Learning Centre within them at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. For centuries these buildings have been closely associated with the Palace's dramatic history, and some of Edinburgh's most colourful characters have passed through their doors – from medieval monks and royal courtiers to debtors hiding from the law. The first part of the works, to remove the harling and dry out the exterior, will be carried out behind a nine metre-high scaffold wrap that tells the story of the close relationship between the Palace, Abbey Strand and the City of Edinburgh.

The Learning Centre, which will provide spaces for school groups, families and adults to explore the history of the Palace of Holyroodhouse and the Royal Collection, will occupy the majority of the ground and first floors of the Abbey Strand buildings. Royal Collection Trust will develop the upper floors into holiday apartments, bringing these historic buildings back into full use. This is just one of a number of projects that will enhance the visitor experience at the Palace. Other include the creation of a public garden behind the Abbey Strand buildings, inspired by the lost 17th century physic garden at the Palace; a new ticketing and

welcome space; and renewed displays of works of art from the Royal Collection and vis part of a £10m investment.

Archaeologists unearth amazing finds on Aberdeen bypass

Artefacts and structures found during archaeological excavations on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/ Balmedie to Tipperty (AWPR/B-T) project are shedding light on land use and settlement in the north east over the past 15,000 years, including Mesolithic pits, Roman bread ovens, prehistoric roundhouses and a cremation complex. Since the archaeological excavations were completed, specialists have been analysing the artefacts and samples recovered from the various sites and will be detailing the results in a new limited edition book due to be published later this year.

Bruce Mann, Archaeologist for Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council, explained: "There has been a range of fascinating discoveries from the archaeological works carried out on site. Some raise more questions than they answer about what we thought we knew about the north east. For instance, a very unexpected discovery was the presence of Roman activity at Milltimber, likely dating from around 83/84 AD. Ninety bread ovens were uncovered, which were probably constructed by the Roman army at a time of invasion led by the Roman General Agricola. However, no evidence of an associated camp was found, which is unusual for these types of features. We can only speculate as to why the ovens were at this specific location, and what it says about what was happening in the area at the time. Going back to the very earliest finds, there was also evidence of stone tool production dating between about 13,000 and 10,000 BC at Milltimber, a near unprecedented body of evidence which pushes back our understanding of human activity in north east Scotland by several thousand years. The same site revealed spreads of flints along with large pits dating between 10,000 BC to 4,100 BC that could have been used by hunter-gatherers to trap deer, elks or aurochs (an ancestor of modern bison). What is particularly exciting is that these finds have been made in an area where our knowledge is rapidly expanding through research projects such as Mesolithic Deeside."

The discoveries made during the works were not confined to the environs of the River Dee. A structure dating between 7,000 BC to 6,700 BC was also found at Standingstones, in the hills to the west of Dyce. This tent-like shelter was likely only used for a few nights by a small group of people while they collected nuts, berries and tubers or hunted animals in the immediate area. Bruce continued: "Bronze Age activity was identified from Nether Beanshill in the form of a roundhouse and contemporary cremation complex dating from around 1,600 to 1,250 BC. The burial comprised of an urn in which the cremated remains of an individual in their 20s had been placed. This urn was placed in a pit which was then marked by a horseshoe-shaped arrangement of timber posts. Two other similar burials were covered by miniature mounds and surrounded by small ditches."

Pipes, drums and Celtic ensemble music - *The Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming's 2018 Summer Music Sessions*



Instructors Gordon Bell, Robert Mathieson and Terry Tully.

This summer the Balmoral School will run an intensive summer program for pipers and drummers, in Indiana and Pennsylvania, over four separate weeks. Both beginners and accomplished musicians will immerse themselves in weeklong sessions with some of the best pipers and drummers in the world. During the fourth session, the school will offer ensemble music for students who play other instruments. Program Director Colin Bell will compose custom arrangements of Celtic traditional music and participating students in various ensembles will unveil their work in performances throughout the week.

Sessions include:

June 24-June 19: University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
Piping Instructors: Jimmy Bell, Duncan Bell – Drumming Instructor: Gordon Bell

July 8-13: Shady Side Academy, Fox Chapel, PA (5 minutes north of Pittsburgh)
Piping Instructors: Robert Mathieson, Terry Tully – Drumming Instructor: Gordon Bell

July 15-20: East Stroudsburg University, East Stroudsburg, PA
Piping Instructors: Jimmy Bell, Robert Mathieson - Drumming Instructor: Gordon Bell

July 22-27: East Stroudsburg University, East Stroudsburg, PA
Piping Instructors: Jimmy Bell, Robert Mathieson - Drumming Instructor: Gordon Bell
Director of ensemble music, Colin Bell

Instructors include:

Terry Tully: Pipe Major (former) of 2010 World Champion St. Laurence O'Toole Pipe Band, based in Dublin, Ireland. Accomplished solo piper, composer and author.

Rob Mathieson: Led Shotts & Dykhead to over 30 major Grade One championships; five wins of the World Pipe Band Championships. Published 3 books of his compositions.

Jimmy Bell: Professional grade piper, EUSPBA, SUSPBA judges panels, director and principal instructor of the Scottish Heritage Program, PM of Lyon College Pipe Band.

Duncan Bell: Professional grade piper; Judges panel EUSPBA; PS for Parlin and District. Founder of "51 Ash" Celtic Rock band. (PA-ESU)

Gordon Bell: EUSPBA Overall Champion 1979-1987, over 30 year's experience instructing, veteran of many top Grade One Pipe Bands (IN, PA-Pgh, PA-ESU)

Colin Bell: Music educator, percussionist and composer, Colin Bell, teaches band and orchestra in several schools, composes percussion music for marching band and percussion ensembles, and is acting director of the Old Bridge High School jazz band.

Students, both individuals and pipe bands, will receive instruction on the Great Highland pipes, smallpipes, snare, tenor drum and bass drum, in small classes of five or less, while making friendships that last a lifetime.

For more details of the Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming: 845-389-1774 or www.bagpiping.org

Borders Railway success



Passenger numbers are up by 10% on the £353m Borders Railway linking Edinburgh with Tweedbank. A recent report carried out for the Scottish Government found the 30-mile route has been a major factor in most people's residential and career choices. Some 58% of those surveyed who had recently moved house cited the line as being an influence on their decision, as did 52% of those who had changed jobs. Danny Cusick, chairman of the Borders Railway Blueprint Group, added: "The line has already opened up the region along the route and provided opportunities for jobs and investment, helping to deliver sustainable growth and social benefits for the whole region. This research shows that the Borders Railway region is an excellent location to do business, to visit and to live in, and we hope to see continued growth year on year."

Another report on the railway, looking into the case for extending the Edinburgh-Tweedbank track to Carlisle in England, is due out soon.

Funeral held for skeletons discovered in Edinburgh playground



A funeral service has been held for a series of 17th century plague victims discovered underneath an Edinburgh playground. The former inhabitants of Leith were discovered within the grounds of St Mary's RC Primary School in April 2016 during an excavation by Morrison Construction to build a new classroom. The City of Edinburgh Council has confirmed the remains were reburied during a closed service in Rosebank Cemetery, where a memorial stone was also laid. Archaeologists from Wardell Armstrong, on behalf of Edinburgh City Council, identified the remains of almost 80 individuals belonging to 54 adults and 23 children, including 6 infants, who are believed to have fallen victim to the bubonic plague which devastated the population of Leith in 1644-1645.

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "An ancient city like Edinburgh never fails to amaze and bring new discoveries. Indeed, there is almost as much history to be found under the city as above ground! When these remains were unearthed in 2016, the discovery provided the school with a fascinating teaching resource and the pupils at St Mary's have had a great time learning about archaeology and the history of their local area. The findings have also added to our archaeological understanding of Leith, and the whole community has been very engaged in the excavation. We are looking forward to arranging a proper burial and lasting memorial to ensure they aren't forgotten."

John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeologist, added: "Leith and the surrounding area has a rich archaeological history and the school excavation has been a fascinating project for everyone involved. Analysis of the remains has helped us to understand life in Leith at this time and shed light on the devastating bubonic plague which wiped out over half of the Port's population. These discoveries have helped us establish where this plague cemetery in Leith Links was - as until now its location had been lost, with only 19th century accounts hinting at its location in this area."

Scotland out-performs rest of UK for 6th year running



The annual release of visitor figures from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) has seen Edinburgh Castle leap four places in the rankings to be named the 12th most-visited attraction in the UK for 2017. Recording a 16% increase in footfall as it welcomed 2,063,709 visitors last year, the iconic castle cemented its place as the top paid-for attraction in Scotland.

The release of visitor figures also showed a number of other Historic Environment Scotland (HES) managed sites performing strongly throughout the last year. Stirling Castle and Urquhart Castle both welcomed record numbers of visitors in 2017, with 18% and 23% increases in footfall respectively. Glasgow Cathedral joined these sites in the UK top 100 for the first time, as it saw visitor numbers increase by 36% to 389,101.

These historic attractions were closely followed by sites such as Doune

Castle, which continued to celebrate the 'Outlander effect' throughout 2017 with a 38% surge in visitor numbers to 124,341; Skara Brae in Orkney, which witnessed an 18% increase in footfall as it recorded 110,028 visitors; and St Andrews Castle, which saw an 18% increase in footfall bring its visitor tally for the year to 90,617.

Bernard Donoghue, Director of ALVA, commented: "2017 was a remarkable and record-setting year for Scottish attractions. The fact that Scottish visitor attractions are outperforming the rest of the UK in visitor growth reflects years of strong investment by central and local government in Scotland, and by organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, in Scotland's visitor economy and cultural landscape."

The latest figures from ALVA show that 2017 was a record year for Scottish tourism, with attractions in Scotland seeing an overall 14% increase in footfall – out-performing the UK as a whole.



Clan Montgomery Society International
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Leonard Montgomery
President
president@clanmontgomery.org
www.clanmontgomery.org



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of the United States
David Ross of Ross, Baron Balmagowan,
Chief of the Clan

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www.clan-ross.org
Contact: L.O. Ross 105 S. Graham Ave. Orlando, FL 32801
ClanRossoftheUnitedStates@gmail.com



Clan Young Society Australia Inc.

Ian J Young
Convener
10 Cedric Street
Parkdale VIC 3195
M: 0409 670 055
E: iyoung@alphalink.com.au

Find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/groups/youngsofaustralia



The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne Inc.

- Promotes interest in the works, life and milieu of the Scottish Poet Robert Burns
- Celebrates Scottish Culture
- Conducts Annual Burns Supper, Poetry Afternoons & Plesant Sunday Afternoon

For Membership Information contact:
Secretary: Noel Wright (03) 9306 7495
Email: noelwright@netspace.net.au



Clan Morrison Society of North America

Arthur G. Morrison
220 South Orchard Drive
Burbank, CA 91506

June Alvarez-Fetzer
Membership-Treasurer
8516 Lookout Cliff Pass
Austin, TX 78737-8539
www.clanmorrison.net

Membership cordially invited from those who are connected with this great Clan, i.e., Morrison, Morison, Gilmour, Gilmer, Gilmore, Murrison or descendants of eligible name.



CLAN SCOTT AUSTRALIA GROUP

Clan Chief: The Duke of Buccleuch K.B.E
Commissioner: Heather de Sylva

Membership welcome from Scotts and Septs:
Balwearie, Harden, Laidlaw, Geddes & Langlands.
Info: Secretary, PO Box 320, Maclean, NSW, 2463

E: heatherdesylva@bigpond.com
W: clanscottaustaliagroup.moonfruit.com



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Clan Munro Association, U.S.A.

We are the only national organization of Munro in the U.S.A. affiliated with the Clan Munro (Association) of Scotland.

COME JOIN US!
Web site: www.Clanmunrousa.org
Write: Heather Munro Daniel
4600 Lloydrown Road
Mebane, NC 27302



Clan Scott Society

Membership is invited from all descendants of the surname Scott; associated families Balwearie, Bucklew, Geddes, Harden, Laidlaw, and Langlands (however spelled); as well as those who have an interest in the heritage of the Middle March of the Borders of Scotland.

Clan Scott Society
PO Box 13021
Austin, TX 78711-3021
USA
Info@ClanScottSociety.org • www.ClanScottSociety.org

Scottish Associations and Societies



Australian Scottish Community (Qld) Inc.

Promoter of International Tartan Day, Brisbane, Queensland
PO Box 3188, South Brisbane 4101
Bi-Monthly Newsletter, All things Scottish
All persons of Scottish Descent welcome. www.aussie-scots.org.au, Email: secretary@aussie-scots.org.au, Ph 07 3359 8195



The Scottish Australian Heritage Council

Founded at a meeting held in Sydney 18 June 1981
Welcomes membership from all Australians of Scottish descent.
Applications for membership can be obtained from:
The Hon Secretary, SAHC
Susan Cooke tel: 02 6355 4158
Email: alfredhcooke@gmail.com
www.scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au



Murray Clan Society of North America

Applications for membership are invited from Murray's and the following allied families: Balneaves, Dinsmore, Dunsmore, Fleming, Moray, Murrie, Neaves, Piper, Pyper, Small, Smale, Small, Smeal, and Spalding.

In Canada contact: William J.M. Murray 1001 Cordero Crescent Campbell River, BC V9H 0C3
In the U.S. contact: Robert W. Murray 2000 Cambridge Ave #329 Wyomissing, PA 19610-2738



Clan Shaw Society

Invites membership or inquires from all: Shaw, Ayson, Adamson, Esson, MacAy, MacHay, Shiach, Sheach, Sheath, Seith, Seth, Skaith, Scaith and Shay.

Mike Shaw
Secretary
2403 West Cranford
Denison, TX 75020



Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia (The Scottish Gaelic Association of Australia) is a non-profit organisation which supports the language and culture of Scottish Gaels.

Ruaraidh MacAonghais, Neach Cathrach (Convener)
Phone: 04 0482 2314 E-mail: fros@ozgaelic.org
Web: www.ozgaelic.org
Mail: PO Box A2259, SYDNEY SOUTH 1235

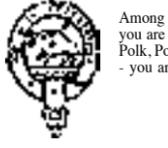


Scottish Gaelic Society of Victoria
www.scottishgaelicsocietyvic.org
Founded in 1905

Scottish Gaelic Choir:
Wednesdays 10:30 am to 12:30 pm during school terms at The Kildara Centre, rear of 39 Stanhope Street, Malvern.

Language Class: Wednesdays 7:00 to 8:30 pm during school terms at the Celtic Club, 420-424 William Street, West Melbourne.

Contact Maurice Fowler 0408 223 277
Email: scottishgaelicsocietyvic@gmail.com



Clan Pollock

Among the most ancient families of Scotland. If you are a descendant of Pollock, Pollok, Pook, Polk, Polke, Paulk, Poalke, Pouk, Poolke, Pogue - you are cordially invited to contact:

A. D. Pollock, Jr.
PO Box 404
Greenville, KY 42345
e-mail: apollockis@comcast.net



Clan Sinclair Australia

Membership and enquiries from all Sinclairs, Sinclair Septs and Sinclair descendants

For further info contact

President: Wayne Sinclair 0417 146 174
Secretary: Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263

E: clansinclairaustralia@hotmail.com



CALEDONIAN CLUB OF FLORIDA WEST (SARASOTA, FL)

2017 Spring Schedule:
Feb. 4: Scottish Games
Mar. 25: Thistle Ball
Apr. 2: Kirkin' O' Tartans
May 6: Annual General Luncheon
Summer Socials: TBA

Contact: Robert Howard, President 941-376-5514
Email: roberthoward200@gmail.com
Web site: www.caledonianclub.org



The Society of St. Andrew of Scotland (Queensland) Limited
ABN 30 093 578 860
Invites membership of all people of Scottish descent or association.

The Secretary, P.O. Box 3233, South Brisbane, BC, QLD, 4101, Australia. www.standrewsociety.com



Clan Pringle Association (North America)
Membership cordially invited from Pringle/ Prindle descendants and other interested parties.
www.clanpringle.org.au

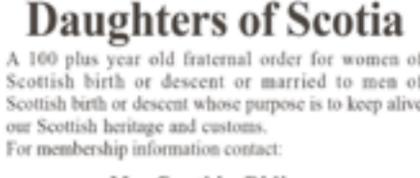
William L. Pringle, III
e-mail: williampringle3@gmail.com
Clan Pringle Assoc. (North America)
6538 140th Ave., Holland, MI 49423



Clan Skene Association, Inc.

Invites membership from Skene and septs Cariston, Carney/Carnie, Currehill, Dyas, Dyce, Dyer, Hall, Halyard/Hallyard, MacGalliard, Rennie, and Skains.

Al McGalliard
President
273 Amy Clegg Drive
Gray, GA, 31032
Email: alrx95@gmail.com



Daughters of Scotia

A 100 plus year old fraternal order for women of Scottish birth or descent or married to men of Scottish birth or descent whose purpose is to keep alive our Scottish heritage and customs.
For membership information contact:
Ms. Cynthia Ridings
Grand Recording Secretary
2566 Galloway Road
Blue Ridge, GA 30513
706-632-8510
cynthiar5@yahoo.com http://www.daughtersofscotia.org



St. Andrew's Society of Vermont

P.O. Box 484
Essex Junction, VT 05453

Invites membership inquiries.
David Campbell - President (802) 878-8663



Clan Ross in Australia
for information contact Commander Des Ross
(By appointment David Ross Bt Chief of Clan Ross and Balmagowan)

We would be pleased to hear from anyone with Ross Clan heritage and interest.

Contact: Commander Des Ross at lonepiper.ross@gmail.com M 0403 830 853
Ken Duthie JP Director of Publicity M 0418 806 172



The Stewart Society

Welcomes Stewarts, however spelled, by name, birth, or descent, from all over the world. Annual Gathering in historic, Stewart-related properties in Scotland. Newsletter. Annual magazine.

Please inquire:
The Secretary
53 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HT,
Tel/Fax 0131 220 4512 www.stewartssociety.org



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708-447-5092 or www.chicago-scots.org

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Established 1905

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Ballarat Highland Dancing	Geelong Scottish Dance
Balmoral Highland Dancing Society	Glenbrae Celtic Dancers
Begonia City Highland Dancing Society	Glenmaggie Scottish Folk Festival
Brunswick Scottish Society	Kilmore Celtic Festival
Clan Donald Victoria	Maryborough Highland Society
Clan Grant	Mornington Peninsula Caledonian Society
Clan Macdonald Yarraville Inc	Scottish Country Dance Victoria Society
Clan Mackenzie of Australia	The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne
Clan Maclean Australia	Warrambool & District Caledonian Society
Clan Sinclair Association	Warrambool Caledonian Highland Dancing Society
Clan Sutherland Australia	Robert Burns Club of Camperdown Inc

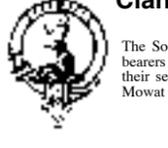
Jan Macdonald: Secretary
Victorian Scottish Union
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E: secretary@victorianscottishunion.com
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Liz Ross, President
Robert Aumiller, Membership Secretary
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River Forest, IL 60305
www.clanross.org



Clan Sutherland Society of Australia

The Society welcomes membership of all bearers of the Sutherland name and any of their septs- (Cheyne, Duffus, Frederith, Mowat (or any variation of the spelling).

Marie Hodgkinson
212 MacKenzie Street
Toowoomba, 4350
Queensland, Australia
e-mail: william.hodgkinson@bigpond.com.au
http://goldenvale.wix.com/clansutherlandaus



Clan Sutherland Society of North America, Inc.

The Society cordially invites membership of all Sutherlands (however the name is spelled) and of the associated families: Cheyne, Duffus, Gray, Frederith, Mowat and Oliphant.

Richard Langford
1106 Horseshoe Lane
Blacksburg, VA 24060
e-mail: richard@langfordmail.net

SCOTTISH BANNER EVENTS

Having a Clan event? Know of a highland games? Know where the pipes will be playing? Let Scottish Banner readers know of Scottish events both near and far with the Scottish Banner events page. Send us your community event, concert, meeting or anything with a Scottish twist! Please submit events either online at www.scottishbanner.com/events or email info@scottishbanner.com. Please ensure you submit your event in the exact format we use below, events not submitted in this way cannot be guaranteed to be printed. Events will run both in print and online and is a free service.

CANADA

APRIL 2018

6 - 8 Red Deer, AB - Red Deer Scottish Country Dance Workshop & Ball
Classes will be available in two levels - beginner/intermediate and social. Info: www.reddeerscottishcountrydancers.weebly.com

6 Nationwide - Happy Tartan Day
Tartan Day is a celebration of Scottish Heritage that is held on April 6th, the day on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320. The concept of Tartan Day began at a meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia on 09 March 1986 by Scottish Banner reader Jean Watson.

6 North York, ON - Tartan Dinner
Celebrate Tartan Day, presented by the St. Andrew's Society of Toronto at Armour Heights Officers' Mess, 215 Yonge Blvd. Info: www.standrews-society.ca

6 Fergus, ON - National Tartan Day Concert
Destined to be a wonderful evening with a brilliant blend of traditional Scottish song, pipes, drums and more at Fergus Grand Theatre, 244 St. Andrew St. W. Info: 519 846 9691.

7 Victoria, BC - Vanisle Workshop and Ball
Scottish country dance events presented by the Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society. Info: 250-598-0207 or www.viscds.ca

7 Ottawa, ON - A Ceilidh at Cartier Square
Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the RCMP Tartan, and the National Pipe Band Program at Cartier Square Drill Hall, 2 Queen Elizabeth Dr. It will be a lively and memorable evening of Celtic entertainment featuring The Brigadoons. Info: www.eventbrite.ca

22 Ottawa, ON - National Tartan Day Celebrations
Join the Sons of Scotland Pipe Band and their many guests - dancers, singers and more - in a wonderful concert marking heritage and tradition on the front steps of Parliament Hill at 12 noon. Info: www.sospb.com

28 Kingston, ON - First Capital Highland Gathering Concert
The Grade 1 Toronto Police Pipe Band takes the stage with the Breck School of Highland Dance. This will mark the grand unveiling of The Kingston Police Pipe Band, and any proceeds go towards assisting the Kingston Police Pipe Band in its teaching efforts at The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King Street West. Info: www.queensu.ca/theisabel/performances

MAY 2018

19 - 21 Victoria, BC - 155th Victoria Highland Games & Celtic Festival
The celebration of Scottish and Celtic music, arts, and culture at Topaz Park. Info: www.victoriahighlandgames.com

19 - 20 Regina, SK - Saskatchewan Highland Gathering & Celtic Festival
Bagpipes, Scottish dance & heavies and more at Victoria Park. Info: www.saskhighland.ca

19 Nationwide - World Whisky Day
A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and celebrate the water of life. Info: www.worldwhiskyday.com

25 - 27 Peterborough, ON - 34th Annual Stoney Lake Scottish Country Dance Workshop
RSCDS Peterborough invites you to dance with guest teacher Rebecca Blackhall-Peters and musician Fred Moyes. Enjoy the beauty and recreation of Pine Vista Resort. Info: www.pscds-on.org

26 Kingston, ON - Kingston Scottish Festival
Pipe bands, Scottish dance, vendors and more. Info: www.kingstonscotfest.com

USA

APRIL 2018

6 Nationwide - Happy Tartan Day
Tartan Day is a celebration of Scottish Heritage that is held on April 6th, the day on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320. The concept of Tartan Day began at a meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia on 09 March 1986 by Scottish Banner reader Jean Watson.

6 Winter Springs, FL - St. Andrew's Society of Central Florida Tartan Day Celebrations
April 6th marks the 20th anniversary of the recognition of National Tartan Day in the US. Wear your clan tartan or your favorite kilt out to Fiddler's Green, 544 W Fairbanks Ave. Drop by and share a pint or two and celebrate your Scottish heritage and love for tartans. Info: www.standrewscfl.com

6 Bethlehem, PA - Scottish National Tartan Day Celebration
The Celtic Cultural Alliance will be celebrating National Tartan Day, which recognizes the contributions of Scottish Americans to our culture and our way of life and marks the Declaration of Scottish Independence at Life in Christ Church, 51 E. Hillmond St. Info: www.celticfest.org/national_tartan_day

7 - 8 Helotes, TX - San Antonio Highland Games
A weekend of Scottish music, culture fun and friendship at Helotes Festival Grounds 12210 Leslie Rd. Info: www.sahga.org

7 Dunedin, FL - 52nd Dunedin Highland Games
A great day of Scottish events, entertainment, fun and friendship at Highlander Park Info: www.dunedinhighlandgames.com

7 Los Angeles, CA - Saint Andrew's Society Los Angeles Tartan Day Celebrations
Celebrate Tartan Day at the InterContinental Hotel, 2151 Avenue of the Stars. Info: 310 284-6500 or www.saintandrewsla.org

7 Tullahoma, TN - 6th Annual Piping on the Green, a Celtic Musical and Craft Faire
Featuring The Highland Rim Scottish Society Kilted Honor Guard, Highland and Celtic entertainment such as bagpipers, bands, dancers, and more at The Green of The Celtic Cup Coffee House, 106 N. Anderson St. Info: Desiree Porter, 931-581-3076 or www.facebook.com/PipingOnTheGreen

7 New York, NY - New York Tartan Day Parade
Celebrate Scotland with thousands of people enjoying Clans, tartan, dogs, pipe bands and much more. One of North America's premier Scottish events. Info: www.nytartanweek.org

7 Houston, TX - Dressed to Kilt
Considered the largest and most prestigious Scottish fashion show in the world, Dressed to Kilt will again earn the attention of A-List celebrities and world-class athletes from both sides of the Atlantic with its enchanting evening of Scottish culture. Info: www.fromscotlandwithlove.net

7 Saint Paul, MN - A Scottish Ramble
Celebrate Scottish culture, music, dancing, history, food and merchandise at Landmark Center, 75 5th St W. Info: www.scottishramble.org

7 Nashua NH - Scottish Arts Indoor Festival
A day of solo Piping, drumming, fiddle, Highland Dance and Pipe Band competitions along with Scottish vendors, foods and "try it" sessions. Admission \$20.00 Friday night Piobaireachd competition and Saturday Night concert featuring Bruce Gandy at Nashua High School South. Info: www.scottisharts.org

13 - 15 Batesville, AK - 39th Arkansas Scottish Festival
A weekend full of piping competitions, delicious food, and unique handmade crafts at Lyon College, 2300 Highland Rd. Info: www.lyon.edu/arkansas-scottish-festival

14 - 15 Las Vegas, NV - 14th Annual Las Vegas Highland Games
A massive festival for the community featuring Celtic music, food, vendors, and athletics at Floyed Lamb Park. Info: www.lasvegascelticsociety.org

20 - 21 Philadelphia, PA - Robert Burns Association of North America AGM & Conference
A weekend conference for the Robert Burns Association. Info: RBANA2018@aol.com or www.rbana.org

21 - 22 Ormond Beach, FL - Ormond Beach Celtic Festival
Celtic music and events at Ormond Beach. Info: www.ormondbeachcelticfestival.com

28 - 29 Woodland, CA - Woodland Celtic Games & Festival
Enjoy the caber toss, Highland dancing, pipe bands, historic groups, entertainers and more at the Yolo County Fairgrounds. Info: www.woodlandcelticgames.org

28 St. Leonard, MD - 40th Southern Maryland Celtic Festival
The oldest Celtic celebration in Maryland at the Jefferson-Patterson Park and Museum. Info: www.cssm.org/events/festival

MAY 2018

5 Savannah, GA - Savannah Scottish Games
A day of Scottish celebration at Bethesda Academy Main Campus 9520 Ferguson Ave. Info: www.savannahscottishgames.com

19 - 20 Albuquerque, NM - Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival
Two days of food, drink, live music, athletic competitions, Celtic vendors, and more. Info: www.celtfestabq.com

19 Nationwide - World Whisky Day
A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and celebrate the water of life. Info: www.worldwhiskyday.com

19 Elkton, MD - 58th Annual Fair Hill Scottish Games
A day of athletics, music, dancing, food, and arts celebrating Scottish and Celtic culture at Fair Hill Race Track, 4600 Telegraph Rd. Info: www.fairhillscottishgames.org

26 - 27 Alma, MI - 51st Alma Highland Festival
A great weekend of Scottish entertainment, Clans, dance and more at Alma College. Info: www.almahighlandfestival.com or 989 463-8979.

26 - 28 Greenville, SC - Greenville Scottish Games
Celebrate a great weekend of Scotland at Furman University, 3300 Pointsett Highway. Info: www.gallabrae.com

26 Eugene, OR - 16th Eugene Scottish Festival
Scottish family day with music, Clans and more at Irving Grange, 1011 Irvington Dr. Info: www.eugenescottishfestival.com

SCOTLAND

APRIL 2018

2 - 13 Isle of Skye - Sabhal Mòr Easter Gaelic Courses
For over 40 years Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has offered courses in the Gaelic language and in traditional music with instruction in Gaelic, Gaelic song, fiddle, button-box and accordion, photography and a range of other specialised subjects offered by a talented team of instructors. Info: www.smo.uhi.ac.uk

7 Dundee - Dougie MacLean Live
Scotland's foremost folk/roots troubadour, renowned for his meaningful, haunting music at Dundee Rep, Tay Square. Info: www.dougiemaclean.com

14 Melrose - Melrose Sevens Rugby
Scottish Borders Rugby Sevens events. Thousands of spectators come every year to see rugby played at its traditional home. Info: www.melroseryugby.org

20 - May 7 Glasgow - Glasgow International Festival of Contemporary Art
Exhibitions, seminars, talks and events in this festival showing the best of contemporary visual arts and artists. Info: www.glasgowinternational.org

26 - May 6 Edinburgh - TradFest Edinburgh/Dùn Èideann
Edinburgh's TradFest kick starts the summer season with a feast of folk arts - music, storytelling, dance, folk film, literature, talks, crafts and visual arts - across Scotland's capital. Info: www.tracotland.org/festivals/tradfest

28 - 29 Isle of Colonsay - Colonsay Book Festival
A book festival hosted by the beautiful inner Hebridean isle of Colonsay. As well as readings and performances, the emphasis is on meeting and chatting with the writers, and debate and good craic in the pub. Info: www.colonsaybookfestival.org.uk

29 Stirling - Stirling Scottish Marathon
Take in the sights of Stirling Castle, Blair Drummond Safari Park, University of Stirling and the historic Wallace Monument. Info: www.princeandprincessofwaleshospice.org.uk/event-article/challenges/stirling-marathon

29 Balloch - Glasgow Kiltwalk
Wear your tartan with pride and join in with your fellow walkers, as this event aims to raise money for charities. This year there are three distances to choose from; 26 miles, 13 miles or the Wee Walk of 6 miles, all of which finish at Moss O' Balloch Park. Info: www.thekiltwalk.co.uk

30 Edinburgh - Beltane Fire Festival
Join hundreds of performers and thousands of revellers as they come together on Calton Hill to celebrate the death of winter and the birth of summer by casting off the darkness and celebrating the light on one of the most magical nights of the year. Info: www.beltane.org

MAY 2018

3 - 7 Speyside - The Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival 2018
One of the world's biggest whisky festivals with a programme of almost 500 whisky-inspired events at various venues. Info: +44 7789 671 635 or www.spiritofspeyside.com

3 - 7 Hawick - Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival
Attracting some of the most innovative filmmakers from around the world, the experimental film festival will again transform the town into a creative hub as it screens more than 120 films from over 20 different countries. Info: www.alchemyfilmfestival.org.uk

19 Nationwide - World Whisky Day
A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and celebrate the water of life. Info: www.worldwhiskyday.com

19 Paisley - British Pipe Band Championships
Paisley comes alive with the skirl of the pipes and the beat of the drums. Expect over 150 of the finest bands from across the world competing for some of the most prestigious titles in bagpiping at the St James Playing Fields. Info: www.paisley2021.co.uk

20 Fochabers, Aberdeenshire - Gordon Castle Highland Games and Country Fair
Held in the historic grounds of Gordon Castle, the event brings together the traditionally Scottish and the quintessentially country to offer visitors a plethora of entertainment. Info: www.gordoncastlehighlandgames.co.uk

24 - 27 Dumfries and Galloway - Knockengoroch World Ceilidh 2018
The World Ceilidh returns for 2018 to celebrate with the best music, the best audience and the best atmosphere at Knockengoroch Farm, Carsphairn, Castle Douglas. Info: www.knockengoroch.org.uk

25 - June 3 Dumfries & Galloway - Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival
Scotland's largest rural multi-artform festival, with more than 170 artists performing at 82 events in 42 venues across the full breadth of the region for 10 days at the end of May. Info: www.dgartsfestival.org.uk

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Answers to Scotword on Page 6

ACROSS: 8) Toorie; 9) Hawthorne; 10) Grampian; 11) Region; 12) Ashet; 14) Ken; 15) Lochs; 18) Ceilidh; 20) Kintyre; 23) Keith; 24) Ilk; 25) Reels; 29) Forfar; 31) Stramash; 33) Attitude; 34) Celtic.

DOWN: 1) Forres; 2) Dram; 3) Lewis; 4) Chanter; 5) Sword; 6) Shug; 7) Arrochar; 13) Ell; 16) Ado; 17) Nip; 19) Eyemouth; 21) Tee; 22) Flashes; 26) Leslie; 27) Trout; 28) Grace; 30) Fair; 32) Mull.

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IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN



Black pudding sausage rolls

Ingredients:

For the shortcut puff pastry:

600g/1lb. 5oz plain flour
pinch salt
300g/10½oz. butter, 100g/3½oz chilled and cut into cubes, 200g/7oz. frozen

For the filling:

300g/10½oz. chestnut mushrooms, trimmed
2 tbsp. thyme leaves
1 tbsp. sunflower oil
25g/1oz unsalted butter
2 red onions, thinly sliced
2 tsp. soft brown sugar
1 tbsp. sherry vinegar
300g/10½oz. good-quality sausage meat
100g/3½oz. black pudding, cut into 2cm/1in pieces
1 free-range egg, beaten, to glaze
1 tbsp. sesame seeds

Method:

For the shortcut puff pastry, mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Rub in the chilled butter using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Gradually add enough water to form a dough (about 4-6 tablespoons of water).

Roll the dough out into a rectangle on a lightly floured work surface.

Coarsely grate the frozen butter over the bottom two-thirds of the dough. Fold down the top third and fold up the bottom third as if folding a letter.

Turn the folded dough 90 degrees on the work surface and roll out into a rectangle again.

Fold again in thirds, wrap the dough in cling film and set aside to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes. Repeat the rolling, folding and turning process a further two times, chilling in between each turn. In total you will have done four turns. Rest the pastry in the fridge while you make the filling.

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.

For the filling, put the mushrooms in a food processor and season with salt and pepper. Pulse until the mushrooms are broken down to a rough paste. Add the thyme and give the mix a final pulse.

Put the mushroom mixture into a dry frying pan set over a medium-high heat and cook, stirring often, until all the moisture has evaporated from the mushrooms. Remove from the pan and leave to cool.

Meanwhile, using the same pan, heat the oil and butter over a medium-low heat. Add the onions and sugar and cook slowly until the onions are very soft and sweet. This will take at least 20 minutes. Once caramelised, stir in the sherry vinegar.

To assemble, roll out the pastry into a 60x45cm/24x18in rectangle, and cut into 12 squares.

Divide the mushroom mixture into 12 portions and spread a portion down the centre of each square of pastry, leaving a 2cm/1in gap at the top and bottom.

In a bowl, mix the sausage meat with the black pudding and mould into 12 sausage shapes. Place on top of the mushroom paste and then spread the caramelised onions on top of each sausage.

Make two small diagonal cuts from each corner of the pastry, to remove a small triangle. Then fold the top and bottom 'wings' over the ends of the sausage meat. Cut a 1cm/½in fringe all the way down the pastry on each side of the filling. Bring one strip over the filling from one side, then one from the other and so on, crossing the strips over to form a plaited effect. Tuck the ends of the pastry under the plate, trimming off any excess if necessary.

Repeat with the remaining squares of pastry until you have 12 mini sausage plaits. Place the plates on a baking tray, brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake for 20 minutes, until the pastry is golden-brown. Leave to cool for five minutes or so, then serve hot or cold.

Super salad

Ingredients:

For the salad:

12 Jersey Royal potatoes
10 green asparagus spears, sliced on an angle
150g/5½oz. young broad beans, podded
150g/5½oz. peas, podded
150g/5½oz. fresh or frozen soy beans
3 spring onions, sliced on an angle
drizzle of olive oil
4 purple asparagus spears, sliced using a peeler
1 lemon, juice only
2 shallots, cut into rings
15 mint leaves, 10 torn, 5 shredded
small bunch of chervil
handful watercress
punnet of pea shoots
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the dressing:

1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
5 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. walnut oil
300ml/10½oz. extra virgin olive oil

Method:

Bring a large pot of water to the boil and blanch the potatoes, drain and carefully slice in half.

Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Drop in the green asparagus, broad beans, peas, soy beans and spring onions and cook for a couple of minutes. Drain

and run under cold water to stop them cooking but not to cool them.

Spread on a tray with the potatoes. Sprinkle with a little olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Put the purple asparagus in a bowl and sprinkle with lemon juice and salt to cure and soften.

For the dressing, whisk together the mustard and vinegar in a bowl, slowly adding the oils. It should have a thick consistency, like a sauce. Season with a good amount of salt and black pepper.

Mix all of the vegetables with the shallots, mint, chervil, watercress and pea shoots and pour over the dressing.

Divide between four plates and dig in.

Easter biscuits

Ingredients:

110g/4oz. caster sugar, plus extra for dusting
110g/4oz. butter, softened at room temperature
1 free-range egg, separated
225g/8oz. plain flour, sieved
good pinch mixed spice
55g/2oz. currants
30g/1oz. candied peel
3 tbsp. milk

Method:

Preheat the oven 160C/325F/Gas 3. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.

Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolk until well combined.

Fold the flour into the mixture, then stir in the mixed spice, currants and candied peel. Stir in enough milk to form a stiff dough.

Roll the dough out onto a floured surface and cut out the biscuits with a fluted cutter. Place onto the baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes.

Remove the biscuits from the oven, brush with the reserved egg white, sprinkle with sugar and return to the oven for 5-10 minutes, or until pale golden-brown.

Remove the biscuits from the tray and set aside to cool on a wire rack.

Hot cross buns



Ingredients:

For the buns:

625g/1 lb. strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. ground mixed spice
45g/1.5 oz. unsalted butter, cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing
85g/3oz. sugar
1 lemon, zest only
1½ tsp fast-action yeast
1 free-range egg
275ml/10fl oz. tepid milk
125g/4oz. mixed dried fruit
For the topping
2 tbsp. plain flour
vegetable oil, for greasing
1 tbsp. golden syrup, gently heated, for glazing

Method:

For the buns, sieve the flour, salt and ground mixed spice into a large mixing bowl, then rub in the butter using your fingertips. Make a well in the centre of the mixture, then add the sugar and lemon zest and yeast.

Beat the egg and add to the flour with the tepid milk. Mix together to form a soft, pliable dough.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Carefully work the mixed dried fruit into the dough until well combined. Knead lightly for 5 minutes, or until smooth and elastic.

Grease a large, warm mixing bowl with butter. Shape the dough into a ball and place it into the prepared bowl, then cover with a clean tea towel and set aside in a warm place for one hour to prove.

Turn out the proved dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knock back the dough. Shape it into a ball again and return it to the bowl, then cover again with the tea towel and set aside for a further 30 minutes to rise.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball, then flatten slightly into a bun shape using the palms of your hands. Cover the buns again with the tea towel and set aside to rest for 5-10 minutes.

Grease a baking tray with butter and transfer the buns to the tray. Wrap the tray with the buns on it loosely in greaseproof paper, then place inside a large polythene bag. Tie the end of the bag tightly so that no air can get in and set aside in a warm place for a further 40 minutes to rise.

Preheat the oven to 240C/475F/Gas 8.

Meanwhile, for the topping, mix the plain flour to a smooth paste with 2 tablespoons of cold water.

When the buns have risen, remove the polythene bag and the greaseproof paper. Spoon the flour mixture into a piping bag and pipe a cross on each bun.

Transfer the buns to the oven and bake for 8-12 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. As soon as you remove the buns from the oven, brush them with the hot golden syrup, then set aside to cool on a wire rack.

Marmalade Cake

Ingredients:

8 oz./one cup self-raising flour/all-purpose flour with baking powder
2 beaten eggs
3 oz./3 tbsp. caster sugar or granulated sugar
4 oz./4 tbsp. margarine
1 drop vanilla essence/extract
2 tablespoons orange marmalade
1 teaspoon orange rind, finely grated
2 tablespoons milk
Pinch of salt

Method:

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the margarine until the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, half the orange rind and then add the eggs, marmalade, milk and vanilla. Mix well to achieve the consistency of thick batter. Grease a 6 inch round cake tin and bake in the centre of a pre-heated oven at 350F/175C/Gas Mark 4 for around one hour and twenty minutes until golden brown. If you have one, you can check with a skewer until it comes out clean. Sprinkle the rest of the orange rind on top and allow to cool for a few minutes before you turn out on a wire rack to cool.

Muriel Spark: 100 Years of one of Scotland's greatest writers

In 2018, an exciting programme of events will take place across Scotland to mark the 100th anniversary of Muriel Spark's birth.

Text courtesy of Scotland.org



With a vast writing career that spanned six decades, Muriel has captivated readers around the world with her beautiful writing. Known as 'Muriel Spark 100', this programme will be an amazing year-long celebration of one of Scotland's best-loved authors.

The celebration will be led by Creative Scotland and the National Library of Scotland, in collaboration with several other partners, groups and organisations. One of the highlights of the year will be at the National Library of Scotland, where they'll be unveiling Muriel's incredible archive in a landmark exhibition. Muriel once famously stated that: "Since 1949 onwards I have thrown away practically nothing on paper".

The result is one of the largest archives in the National Library of Scotland and for this first time ever this extraordinary

collection will be opened to the public. The exhibition traces Muriel's life from Edinburgh, to Africa, London, New York, Rome and Tuscany, where she spent her final years. As well as this, a full republication of all 22 of her novels will be issued by publisher, Polygon.

Muriel's work continues to inspire new generations of readers and writers with its incredible originality. Her skills were internationally recognised throughout her career, winning her several prestigious awards. She also received an impressive eight honorary doctorates from universities around the world. To top it all off, Muriel also became a Dame in 1993, in recognition of her services to literature.

The early years

Muriel Spark was born in Edinburgh in 1918 and was educated at nearby James Gillespie School for Girls. She showed a natural gift for writing from an early age and by the age of 12 years old she'd already won several awards and had some of her poems published. Muriel went on to study Heriot-Watt College, before briefly spending time teaching English and working in a department store.

In 1937, at the age of 19, Muriel left Scotland for Africa with her new husband, Sydney. Just one year later she gave birth to a son, but her marriage was failing and she longed for a return to Britain. Unfortunately, the onset of World War II made travelling difficult and

it wasn't until 1944 that she managed to return home. On her return to the UK, Muriel began working for MI6 during the latter years of the war, in the political intelligence department.

Though Muriel's difficulties during her time in Africa weighed on her mind, they also provided her with excellent creative inspiration, which would form the basis of much of her later writing. After the war ended, she began to write more seriously, beginning first with literary criticism and poetry. She published her first collection of poems in 1952 and also released literary biographies of iconic figures like William Wordsworth and Emily Brontë.

Hitting the big time

In the latter part of the 1950s, Muriel embarked on one of her most prolific periods of writing. *The Comforters*, her first novel, was published in 1957 and received rave reviews. From this, Muriel published a further five novels in a five-year period. The last of these, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, published in 1961, is arguably Muriel's most widely-recognised piece of writing. The story was steeped in Muriel's own past, with both the title character and the setting based on her own previous teacher and school.

By 1966 *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* had been adapted for both stage and screen. Hollywood legends Vanessa Redgrave and Maggie Smith portrayed the incomparable title character. Maggie Smith would actually

go on to win the Oscar for Best Actress for her performance and few would argue that her spell as Harry Potter's Professor McGonagall didn't have an uncanny resemblance to a certain Jean Brodie.

Life in Italy

The unparalleled success of *Brodie* catapulted Muriel into new levels of fame and recognition, but did not get in the way of her further writing. After several years in New York, Muriel moved to Italy, dividing her time here between Rome and Tuscany. It was here that Muriel wrote what she considers to be her finest works. Chief amongst these was the 1970 novel, *The Driver's Seat*, which was her own personal favourite.

Muriel became enamoured with life in Italy, finally settling in Tuscany with her close friend, Penelope Jardine. Her time here was spent creating many more timeless characters and stories to delight her millions of avid readers. Her 22nd and final novel was published in 2004, a whopping 54 years after her first work was published. Muriel was working on her 23rd novel when she died in Florence in 2006.

The celebrations of 'Muriel Spark 100' are a fitting testament to Muriel's enduring legacy and a chance to secure her place on the pantheon of literary greats. A website has been created especially for the year, which provides information on all of the exciting events taking place.

Visit www.murielspark100.com to keep up to date with everything that's going on.



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THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - Hunt the Gowk - Scottish equivalent of April Fool's Day (gowk is a cuckoo). **1926**

1 - The birth of Sir William, Mr Justice MacPherson of Cluny, the noted Scottish jurist and the 27th Chief of Clan Macpherson. **1926**



2 - The College of New Aberdeen was founded. The college was founded by the Earl Marischal of Scotland, George Keith of Inverugie, and became known as Marischal College. Marischal College was the second university in Aberdeen, following the foundation of King's College in 1495 by Bishop William Elphinstone. The two universities were united in 1860 as the University of Aberdeen. **1593**

2 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian province of Prince Edward Island. **1992**

3 - Murder of Duke of Rothesay, heir of Robert III. **1401**

3 - King James VI travelled to London to take up the English throne. James moved his court to Whitehall Palace in London, where they settled around the palace in an area which became known as "Scotland Yard". On his way to London he knighted 300 people, and in the space of four months in England had knighted more people than Queen Elizabeth had in her entire reign. James returned to Scotland only once, in 1617, and he liked to boast that he now ruled his northern kingdom with a stroke of his pen. **1603**

4 - Parliament held by King Robert II at Scone, resolved that his son, the Earl of Carrick should succeed his father as King (as Robert III although he was baptised John). **1373**

4 - King Robert III died and James I ascended the throne (but was not crowned until 1424 as he was a prisoner of the English). **1406**

4 - John Napier, inventor of logarithms, died in Edinburgh. **1617**

5 - Birth at Lesmahagow of composer Alexander Muir, creator of Maple Leaf Forever. **1830**

5 - Disaster at English/Scottish football match at Ibrox Stadium when part of the flooring collapsed, killing 20, injuring 200. **1902**

6 - Declaration of Arbroath - "For we fight not for glory nor for riches nor for honour, but only and alone for freedom, which no good man surrenders but with his life", was drawn up by the monks of Arbroath Abbey. The Declaration of Arbroath is widely regarded as being the inspiration behind the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. **1320**



6 - Nova Scotia officially proclaims Tartan Day. Started originally as "Tartan Day in Nova Scotia," founder and *Scottish Banner* reader Jean Watson approached every provincial Legislative Assembly in Canada, as well as other Scottish-cultural societies across Canada, to help get such a date established. **1987**

6 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. **1992**

6 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian province of Newfoundland & Labrador. **1995**

6 - The U.S. Senate declared April 6 to be National Tartan Day to recognize the contributions made by Scottish-Americans to the United States. **1998**

7 - Jim Clark, Duns farmer, twice World Motor Racing Champion, killed in crash, Hockenheim. **1968**

7 - The Scottish National Party was founded. The SNP was created out of the merger of a number of parties; the National Party of Scotland, formed in 1928 from an amalgamation of a number of small parties following the rejection of a Home Rule bill, and the Scottish Party, a breakaway section of the Cathcart Conservative Association. The party enjoyed its first success in 1945, when Robert MacIntyre was elected to represent Motherwell. **1934**

8 - Radical prisoners were taken from Paisley to Greenock jail under escort. The citizens of Greenock fought their escort, the Port Glasgow Militia, until they reached the jail. Still coming under attack, the Militia opened fire on the stone-throwing crowd. Eight were killed, including an eight year old boy, and ten wounded, before the militia retreated from Greenock. In the evening, the angry Greenockians stormed the jail and freed the prisoners. **1820**

9 - Second Treaty of Durham in which David I is recognised as King of an independent Scotland by King Stephen of England. **1139**

9 - Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, the leading Scottish Jacobite rebel was beheaded on Tower Green, London. Lovat has the unwanted notoriety of being the last man to be publicly beheaded in Britain. **1747**

10 - King James V born.

10 - Sandy Lyle becomes the first Scottish (and British) golfer to win the US Masters tournament. **1988**

11 - Scottish settlement in Darien, Panama, abandoned. **1700**

11 - Scotland won the final Five Nations Rugby Championship. Scotland became champions by default when Wales beat England 32-31 at Wembley. If England had won the last game of the championship they would have been the champions. Both teams had won the same number of games, but Scotland won the title on points scored. The last time they won the championship was in 1990. The following season, Five nations became Six when Italy joined the competition. **1999**



12 - Union flag adopted as the flag of England, Wales and Scotland. **1606**

12 - The SNP won their first electoral victory. Dr Robert D. MacIntyre won the Motherwell and Wishaw by-election in a straight fight with Labour by a majority of 617 votes. MacIntyre later became Provost of Stirling. **1945**

13 - The Stone of Destiny, which had been removed from underneath the Coronation Chair by Scottish nationalists on 25 December 1950, was returned to Westminster Abbey after being found at Arbroath Abbey. **1951**

13 - Scots entertainer, actor and comedian Jimmy Logan died. **2001**



14 - University of Edinburgh founded. **1582**

14 - Aberdeen Football Club was founded. **1903**

15 - Prof Joseph Black chemist, researcher, teacher, first to identify carbon dioxide, died. **1799**

15 - Actor and comedian Rikki Fulton born in Glasgow. He was best known for his double act with Jack Milroy as Francie and Josie and as the Rev I M Jolly in Scotch and Wry. **1924**

15 - Infamous passenger liner the *RMS Titanic* sank in the Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg. Several Scots died on the ship including musician Jock Hume who played as the ship sank, First Officer William Murdoch, and several staff members. 1500 people perished on the maiden voyage to New York. **1912**

16 - Charles Edward Stewart defeated at Battle of Culloden. **1746**

16 - *Royal Yacht Britannia* launched at John Brown's shipyard, Clydebank. **1953**



16 - The Battle of Culloden took place at Culloden Moor, where British troops defeated the Scottish Jacobite army for the final confrontation of the 1745 Jacobite Rising. It was the last ever battle to be fought on British soil with over 1500 Scottish fatalities. **1746**

17 1937 - A British record attendance at a football match was set when 149,547 watched Scotland play England at Hampden Park, Glasgow. Until 1950, this was a world record.

17 - Alexander Mackenzie, the Scottish-born Canadian statesman, died. Mackenzie was the first Liberal Prime Minister of Canada, serving from 1873-78. **1892**

18 - Remains of David Livingstone interred in Westminster Abbey. **1874**

18 - Harbourne Stephen, the Scottish World War II fighter pilot, was born. Stephen was a Battle of Britain fighter ace who went on to forge a career for himself as a newspaper executive. On his way to a tally of 23 registered kills (though it was almost certainly higher) he shot down five enemy aircraft in a single day in August 1940. **1914**

19 - Robert II, grandson of Robert the Bruce, died at Dundonald Castle. **1390**

19 - Jim Mollison, the pioneering Scottish aviator, was born. Mollison held many individual records for distance, endurance, and speed flying, he became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic from East to West. **1905**

20 - The first public meeting of the Scottish National Party was held. The meeting was held in the Central Hall, Tollcross, Edinburgh. The Scottish National Party was formed by the amalgamation of The National Party of Scotland and The Scottish Party. **1934**

21 - John Muir, the Scottish-born American naturalist, was born in Dunbar. Muir was responsible for the creation of Yosemite and Sequoia national parks in California. The 550-acre Muir Woods National Monument is named after him. **1838**

22 - Sculptor and artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzi died. Born in Leith, he was a founder of the Independent Group, which is seen as a precursor to the '60s British pop art movement. **2005**

23 - King Alexander I died at Stirling Castle, succeeded by David I. **1124**

23 - Blackout restrictions lifted as World War II heads to a conclusion. **1945**

24 - 15 year old Mary, Queen of Scots, married French Dauphin, Francis Valois (aged 14) at Notre Dame in Paris. They had no children and Francis died in 1560, ruling France for just eighteen months. **1558**

24 - Novelist R M Ballantyne, who wrote 90 books, the best known of which was *The Coral Island*, was born in Edinburgh. **1825**

25 - Malcolm III (Canmore) crowned. **1058**



25 - The Royal Navy's last battleship, *HMS Vanguard*, was accepted for trials by the navy. The ship was built at John Brown's in Clydebank. It was originally intended to be part of the Far Eastern Fleet fighting the Japanese but was not completed until after the war, and so became the only British battleship never to fire her guns in anger. **1946**

26 - Philosopher David Hume born. **1711**

27 - The Scottish army was routed in the Battle of Dunbar by Edward I, King of England. Hostilities started when the King of the Scots, John Balliol, renounced his allegiance to the English Crown. The battle became known as the "Dunbar Drive". **1296**

27 - James Bruce, the Scottish explorer, died. Bruce became the first European to discover Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile, in 1770. **1794**

28 - Henry Dundas, powerful politician, known as "Uncrowned King of Scotland", born. **1742**

28 - Glasgow Garden Festival opened by Prince Charles and the Princess of Wales on the south bank of the River Clyde. The festival would welcome 4.5 million visitors over five months. **1988**

29 - Stephen Hendry, aged 21, becomes the youngest world snooker champion by beating Jimmy White 18-12 in the final. **1990**

29 - Lonnie Donegan, the Scottish skiffle singer, composer and guitarist, was born. Considered by some to be Britain's first pop superstar, James Anthony Donegan burst onto the scene in the mid-1950s with a distinctive, lively sound called skiffle. **1931**

30 - Royal Bank invents first overdraft, Wm Hogg overdrafts by £1,000 (£75,000 at today's money). **1728**



30 - An Comunn Gaidhealach was formally instituted as a vehicle for the preservation and development of the Gaelic language. **1891**

30 - David Livingstone, the renowned Scottish missionary and explorer, died. Born in Blantyre, Livingstone was famed for his exploration of central and southern Africa. He was the first European to see Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. **1873**

KINGS CASTLES AND “DURTY” WEE RASCALS

Australian Jim Stoddart was born in a Glasgow Tenement and raised in a Glasgow Housing Scheme 1943-1965. Jim will be taking readers on a trip down memory lane, of a time and place that will never be the same again, and hopes even if only a few people in the Scot's Diaspora have a dormant folk memory awakened, then he shall be more than delighted.



The canal banks in Paisley.

The Canal

*“Wi fire tey mak ta coach pe rin
Upon to railman's raw, man:
Nainsell will saw him took ta road,
An' teil a horse to traw man:
Anither coach to Paisley rin,
They'll ca' him Lauchie's motion:
But och she was blawn a' to bits,
By rascal rogue M'Splosion.*

With shades of fellow poet MacGonnagal, this one by Old Sandy Rodger, the Glasgow poet, is waxing lyrical upon the disaster at the Half-way House pub. (There is no evidence to say that Sandy had been in the pub for any length of time).

I found out in later years that the canal that my grandfather and my teacher, Mr McGeachan, was referring to was built at the beginning of the 19th century and during most of the 1800's it had made its way through Corkehill, Mossbank and Cardonald carrying goods and passengers. It was used to export coal to Ireland and in turn import grain from there to the mill in Cardonald. An early plan to build a branch canal to the Hurler and Nitshill was shelved after much deliberation, and instead minerals and coal were brought to the Rosshall Quay by horse-drawn wagons, along a wooden track, all the way from the coal mines at the Hurler and the Haugh Hill, where I now lived, and from the quarries at Nitshill.

The Glasgow to Paisley canal

The Glasgow to Paisley canal got an unexpected boost in passenger traffic after a tragic accident occurred at the Three-Mile House, the public house that stood near the stone that marked the halfway point between Glasgow and Paisley and along the thoroughfare that was to be later called Paisley Road West. There once stood a little crow-stepped cottage that became a tavern where shadowy tradition says that Mary Queen of Scots occasionally imbibed and rested on her journey from Crookston Castle to her stables in Govan. The successor to this same public house, eventually called the Halfway House, was where both my grandfather's drank and learned to call their local, when both moved to Cardonald and Mossbank to live, probably in the late 1920's.

What happened was that on Tuesday 26th July In 1834, the 2.00 o'clock steam carriage travelling from George Square in Glasgow to the Tontine Hotel in Paisley stopped as usual at the top of the hill, just outside the pub, so as to take on fuel and water. Suddenly after restarting its journey one of its right-hand wheels gave way and fell off. The vehicle immediately toppled over and the boiler exploded in a mass of steam and flying metal. Five unlucky passengers died from their injuries and a passing pedestrian received a serious scalding and fractures to his body. This accident was to eventually lead to a ban on steam carriage use throughout Scotland and was to greatly boost canal passenger numbers.

The canal barges were a very efficient means of transport for their time with one horse able to pull a barge up to a speed of twelve miles an hour.

The canal barges were a very efficient means of transport for their time with one horse able to pull a barge up to a speed of twelve miles an hour. During 1839 the canal company carried over 400,000 passengers on thirteen of these passenger barges that made their way daily between Glasgow and Paisley. The well-designed barges for passengers and freight were pulled by about eighty horses, employed and stabled by the company.

Unspoilt countryside

A favourite ramble of the time, and undoubtedly one very familiar to my great grandparents, was a stroll along the seven miles of canal banks between Port Eglinton and Paisley, with the walk as far as Ross Hall Quay from Port Eglinton through Pollokshields being likely the most familiar segment. As late as the mid 1800's, contemporary writers could still revel in describing scenes of great natural beauty along the banks of the canal which supported a profusion of wild flowers, picturesque woodland and plentiful wildlife. Reapers in the fields

were described as making up picturesque groups of workers, together with anglers hopefully trying their luck in the waters of the canal, and groups of youngsters enjoying an exuberant exploration of the countryside looking for brambles.

About four miles out from the city the canal approached within a few feet of the River Cart and here ramblers were further treated to one of the best parts of this rural landscape. The river at this point was found to be covered in the broad green leaves and bright yellow flowers of the Water Lily, (*nuphar lutea*) and the banks covered in a mass of Wood Crane Bill (*geranium sylvaticum*), with thistles and bur-reed providing shelter and nesting places for water hens and other wildfowl. On the opposite side of the Cart lay the extensive Crookston Wood, lying on the Pollok Estate and well stocked with game and wild birds. At this point passengers on the barges travelling at a leisurely pace to Paisley, and ramblers slowly strolling along the banks of the canal toward the farm steading in Cardonald, were treated to fine views of the ruins of Crookston Castle as they travelled through what must have been for my great grandparents some very attractive and unspoiled countryside.

The big wood

In the 1950's, I envied these passengers from the 1800's, enjoying their delightful seven mile journeys to and

fro', between Paisley and Glasgow, and able to appreciate the beautiful and largely unspoiled countryside along the canal, and especially at this place where river and canal almost met. On my journeying with my childhood friends down Linthaugh Road to this spot between Mossbank Railway Station and the weir on the Cart, there still remained some of the last remnants of the Crookston Wood for us to play in. Houses had been built on the former woodland and very close to where my wife, Jean, was to spend much of her childhood, living on Bargaran Road. To her and her friends there was also a remnant known as 'the big wood', but it was a sorry final part of what had once been an extensive woodland rising from the canal banks all the way to Crookston Castle, standing impressively on the skyline.

As it turned out, even for the canal passengers of the 1800's, things were to change dramatically. By 1840 the Glasgow and Paisley Joint Railway Company was in serious competition with the canal company for its passenger trade. The canal was still able to carry freight until 1869 but it was finally bought out by the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company and ignominiously filled in to lay lines for the Paisley Canal Line. It was the railway lines that we were left with and not the sylvan waters of the canal.

Did you know? - Fife



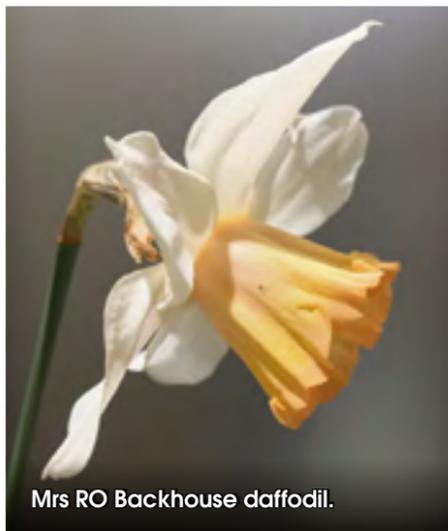
The closing hole at St Andrews' Old Course has been voted the Best Golf Hole in Scotland. Photo: Kenny Lam /VisitScotland.

- Fife is the Home of Golf and you can choose to play on one of 50 golf courses including the famous Old Course in St Andrews.
- The Fife Coastal Path is Scotland's longest continuous coastal path and listed as a Great Trail.
- Fife Flyers, established in 1938, are the oldest professional ice hockey team in the UK. The team has a history of success through the ages, with over 60 Scottish and British cups and titles to their name.
- Fife has the highest number of national attractions in Scotland – Knockhill Racing Circuit, British Golf Museum, National Waterski Centre, Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Scottish Fisheries Museum, Deep Sea World, Scottish Deer Centre.
- West Lomond is the highest point in Fife at 1713 ft.
- Filming for the highly-acclaimed TV drama series *Outlander* was filmed in Fife including Culross Palace, Aberdour Castle, Dysart harbour, Falkland Palace and Limekilns.
- Fife is the doocot (a miniature tower for housing doves or pigeons popular in the 16th & 17th centuries) capital of Scotland. It has been claimed that there were no fewer than 360 doocots in Fife during the 18th century, with over 100 listed examples remaining

By: Judy Vickers

Flowering of Scotland-*The Scottish daffodil*

A sure sign of spring across the Scottish countryside is carpets of daffodils filling the landscape. Scotland is in fact the world's biggest exporter of daffodil bulbs thanks to the ideal Scottish weather conditions. This month the doors of Backhouse Rossie Estate in Fife will celebrate Scotland's Daffodil Festival, highlighting importance of the daffodil and Scotland's botanical heritage as Judy Vickers.



Mrs RO Backhouse daffodil.

They usually conjure up images of a poet in the English countryside in romantic raptures over a golden host or Welsh rugby fans in floral inspired hats but the organiser of Scotland's daffodil festival wants to put this country on the map for the iconic spring flowers.

Caroline Thomson has spent ten years in a race against time collecting rare daffodil bulbs from around the UK and bringing them back to her estate in Fife. This month she will throw open the doors of the Rossie Estate to celebrate the importance of the flower, both past and present, to Scotland. "This is about flying the flag for Scotland's daffodils. Scotland grows bulbs excellently because of our cooler weather and longer light – there are so few things that the weather does well up here and this is one. Our bulbs are wanted around the world," she says.

Biggest exporter

Scotland is the biggest exporter of daffodil bulbs to the world. Co-operative Grampian Growers, which will appear at the festival, exports 4000 tonnes – around 80 million bulbs – to countries such as the US, Sweden and even Holland, traditionally the home of flower-growing.

Mrs Thomson is a direct descendant of the Backhouses, a family of wealthy Quakers, who, having made their pile in banking during Victorian times, devoted themselves to botany – in particular daffodils. Generations of Backhouses managed to transform the daffodil from



Caroline Thomson.

a small woodland bloom into the robust garden favourite, creating a host of multi-coloured varieties along the way.

The Backhouses' work took daffodils from the wild to the elegant Victorian drawing rooms of the UK for the first time as a commercial product, revolutionising the cut flower industry.

"I think it would be fair to say that every street of houses that has gardens there will be a Backhouse plant or a descendant of a Backhouse," says Caroline. "Before they began breeding, daffodils were little wild flowers, as in William Wordsworth's poem. What they did was make them larger and stronger. They became garden worthy. They were in the greatest demand – Victorian gardeners were always looking for something new."

Weardale Perfection

The first prominent Backhouse daffodil breeder was William who in the mid-19th century created the Weardale Perfection, a larger stronger version of the wild daffodil. What he'd actually done was increase the number of chromosomes from 14 to 28, though he had no idea of that at the time. What it meant in practice was to open up the key Covent Garden market in London to growers from the north of Britain as the more robust flowers could now make the journey unscathed.

His son, Robert Ormston, continued the daffodil breeding work creating new varieties, such as the rosy trumpet, while his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Dodgson, was described at the time as a "genius" for her botanical knowledge and created a famous pink daffodil. "She really was the most extraordinary woman," says Caroline. "She was once offered the equivalent of £18,000 for three of her seedlings for her red cup daffodil so highly prized was her work."

Their son, William Ormston, a Cambridge University trained geneticist, took daffodil breeding to a new level, bringing out the first red trumpet daffodil. "It was seen as the peak of hybridising," says Caroline. His bulbs sold at £400 a pop in the 1960s but when he died in 1962, the daffodil dynasty came to an end.

The scattered family members, though, were always conscious of their family's floral heritage and Caroline grew up aware of the tales from her mother, Lady Georgina Buchan-Hepburn. But it was only when she and her husband Andrew bought the Rossie estate and began to renovate the rundown walled garden that Caroline decided she had found the perfect place to preserve her family's heritage.

By now, though, time was running out to find examples of the Backhouses' original bulbs – once there were more than 900 varieties registered - in the grounds of homes which had changed hands many times and where head gardeners had long since come and gone, before the memories were lost forever. "All my elderly relatives are in their 80s and 90s," says Caroline. "Andrew and I have driven hundreds of miles in a race against time, collecting



Robert Ormston Backhouse.



Sarah Elizabeth Backhouse.

daffodils in horizontal rain, sleet and sunshine – on occasion we have found bulbs growing up to 45cm deep."

Most memorable was the evening when, over dinner at her home in St Andrews, her mother told the couple about the day Sarah Dodgson's prized pink daffodil, the Mrs RO Backhouse, was planted with great reverence in a garden in Herefordshire in England. "It had been a long tiring day already but when we got into the car we decided not to go home. Instead we drove hundreds of miles through the night and got there in the early hours of the morning. But all the landmarks which my mother had talked about were gone. Nothing. The whole place had been completely refigured, probably by several people. There wasn't a single daffodil in sight, let alone a Backhouse heritage one. We started to walk up towards the woods where the east wall might have been. The sun was shining as it was morning by then and there they were, this clump of glittering pink daffodils. I was almost moved to tears with relief."

National Collection Status

Now her efforts have been rewarded with the award of National Collection Status by Plant Heritage. She says: "We now have full National Collection Status for the daffodils and would like to work towards Scientific Status. It never ceases to amaze me that three of the daffodils bred by William Backhouse changed daffodil breeding in this country forever, and still forms the basis of so many daffodils we see today."

This year's daffodil festival, on April 14th and 15th, will celebrate Scotland's Year of Young People with a music competition.

Under-18s in Fife and the rest of Scotland are being invited to submit a demo track relating to the theme of daffodils. Shortlisted tracks will be heard by a record scout from a major label and listened to by a music management company. "It's a great opportunity to be put forward and heard by the right people," says Caroline.

Winners of a photographic competition and a selfie competition in two categories - Fife under 18s, and under 18s in Scotland – will have their work exhibited in the Backhouse Heritage and Education Centre, which also details the history of Caroline's green-fingered forebears.

The festival will also offer visitors the chance to see modern and historic daffodils in a walled garden and on walks through woodlands, as well as the opportunity to chat to horticultural experts, such as alpine guru Ian Christie, who will be talking about spring bulbs, as well as a vast array of stalls and stands.

"Daffodils are such well-loved flowers, featuring in so many of our gardens but few of us realise just how important they are to Scotland's economy – and how important Scotland is to them, thanks to our weather. It will be great to see Caroline and Andrew's festival develop so that more people can learn the extraordinary history of their development and appreciate these blooms all the more," says Alistair Bruce, chairman of the Fife Tourism Partnership. "There aren't many things we can say we are world leaders at and I want folk to really understand why Scotland is so good at daffodils," says Caroline.

Scotland's Daffodil Festival takes place on April 14 and 15, 10am to 4pm, visit www.backhouserossie.co.uk for more details.



Rossie Estate.

The Cairngorm Creature

The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui



Photo by Andreas Praefcke, Public Domain.

Wild Man, c.1521/22, bronze, by Paulus Vischer (c.1498-1531), in the Bode-Museum, Berlin.

Scottish folklore is full of tales of spooky sights and this includes up in the mountains of Scotland. The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui is a fearsome legend which dates back to the 18th century with various witnesses spanning generations in the scenic Cairngorm region. Could the second highest peak in Scotland actually be haunted?

With an elevation of 1309m (4295ft), Ben Macdhui is the tallest peak in the Cairngorms, and the second-highest in the UK after Ben Nevis. At the western end of the Grampian Mountains, on the boundary between Moray and Aberdeenshire, Ben Macdhui stands on the southern edge of the Cairn Gorm plateau. The mountain perhaps takes its name from the family of Donnchad II (1154-1204), Earl of Fife, Clan MacDuibh.

Supernatural inhabitant

Since at least the 18th century, there have been rumours, reports, stories and legends about a 'something' which haunts Ben Macdhui: Am Fear Liath Mòr, or 'The Big Grey Man'. Usually claimed to appear to be between 10 and 20 feet high and covered in hair, the Grey Man of Highland folklore was regarded as a supernatural inhabitant, perhaps guardian, of Ben Macdhui. But the creature's hirsuteness, combined with enormous snow prints discovered in the 1960s, fed the idea that the mountain is home to a Sasquatch- or Yeti-like relict

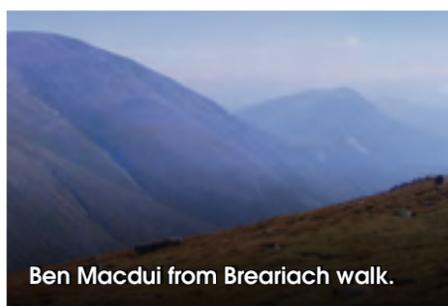


Photo by Alexander Reuss, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

Ben Macdhui from Breariach walk.

hominid. Possibly supporting this theory are the references to woodwoses, or wild men of the woods, in Scotland and Europe at least as far back as the 13th century. Other Grey Man reports offer a description of a figure over 10 feet tall, with broad shoulders, long arms, and olive skin.

The Grey Man is said to instil panic in wayward hikers, sometimes causing feelings of hopeless depression and urgings of suicide. This sensation of dread is a characteristic common to all of the reports, whether the creature is seen, heard, or simply felt as a presence. The Big Grey Man is sometimes sighted near the Lairig Ghru pass, where one tradition has it that the creature intends to drive panicked walkers over the edge of Lurcher's Crag. The legend gained credibility when respected scientist, mountaineer, and head of University College of London's chemistry department, J Norman Collie, recounted his 1891 experience to the amazed audience of a 1925 gathering of the Cairngorm Club. While alone near the misty summit of Ben Macdhui, Collie began to hear crunching footsteps pacing him, one step to every three or four of his, suggesting a much larger walker with an enormous gait (and eliminating the theory that the sounds were echoes of his own steps). Collie was stricken with horror and ran like the devil down the mountain through the boulder fields until he neared Rothiemurchus Forest, five miles away.

"Whatever you make of it I do not know, but there is something very queer about the top of Ben Macdhui and I will not go back there again by myself I know." This Collie insisted on to the end of his days, and he never did go back to that peak in the Cairngorms. Mountaineer and naturalist

Since at least the 18th century, there have been rumours, reports, stories and legends about a 'something' which haunts Ben Macdhui: Am Fear Liath Mòr, or 'The Big Grey Man'.

Alexander Tewnion's narrative of his October 1943 encounter on Ben Macdhui appeared in the pages of the June 1958 issue of *The Scots Magazine*. Tewnion's experience led to three shots fired from his revolver at an eerie, advancing and menacing shape in the brume, before his headlong retreat to Glen Derry.

Otherworldly

Another World War Two-era story came from Cairngorms RAF Rescue Team Leader Peter Densham. Densham's job was to provide search and rescue to RAF pilots downed in the mountains. Densham was lurching atop Ben Macdhui when a thick fog began to envelope the peak. The crunching footfalls which Professor Collie reported likewise came to Densham's ears,

accompanied by a conviction that he had company nearby. The distinctive feeling of terror gripped Densham, and he started to race down the mountain, with a sensation of being pushed as he fled.

In describing the episode, Densham wrote of "the mysterious dusk time when day and night struggle upon the mountains", the "night wind" which was "crying amid rocks", "the desert uplands consumed before the racing storms", when, he said, "you will be acquainted with that fear without name, that intense dread of the unknown that has pursued mankind from the very dawn of time."

Two reports from the 1990s which might be connected to The Grey Man came from a forest near Aberdeen, where three men recounted seeing a humanoid with

a sinister, otherworldly face. The being reappeared to the men several weeks later when one night it sprinted beside their vehicle at up to 45mph, while apparently trying to gain access to the cabin of the car!

What spooky thing has happened to you in Scotland? Share your story with us by email, post or www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us



Summit cairn & trig pillar atop Ben Macdhui.

Photo by lemenelgen, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

Phantoms, footballs and fears

To dismiss the sightings of a large humanoid shape in the mist, 'hallucination' is claimed, with the explanation that overtired climbers are prone to illusions.

Another theory presented to rationalise such an appearance is the 'Brocken spectre'. With this phenomenon, an individual's shadow is projected onto clouds. The magnified image gives the impression of a giant-like figure. Scottish poet James Hogg witnessed a Brocken spectre on Ben MacDhui as early as 1791. However, experienced mountaineers are familiar with this effect; and those who aren't would eventually notice how, reflection-like, the form moved in lockstep with one's own motions. The following day Hogg, by taking off his hat and observing the form's corresponding action, soon realised that the 'spectre' was his own shadow.

The crunching tread some explain as something sloshing or rattling in a knapsack in time with one's own step. If this were the case, the hiker would hear it on every, or every other, step. For those who recount hearing one footfall to every three of their own, the rhythm-ratio of three-to-one would be incompatible with a jangle or clatter from packed equipment.

To justify the dread described in the reports, the pretext of fatigue- and solitude-induced panic is invoked. Perhaps only seasoned hikers who have experienced any or all of these spectacles on the mountain can explain the mysteries of Ben Macdhui.

Cairngorm castles

The remnants of Castle Roy at Nethy Bridge date to Norman times. There is a tradition which holds that treasure is secreted somewhere amongst the ruins, and that a hidden passage connects to nearby Old Kirk. But the plague is said to be somehow concealed in the walls, a deterrent to those pondering trying their luck at uncovering the castle's mysteries.

Called the 'Pearl of the North', Ballindalloch Castle is situated just outside the Cairngorms National Park boundary. One of the finest examples of a Scottish baronial castle, it is now a stately home open to the public during the summer. Built in 1546, the castle was restored in 1645 after being sacked by James Graham, the First Marquess of Montrose.



Loch an Eilein Castle.

Construction of Blair Castle at Blair Atholl is believed to have started in 1269. In the siege of 1746, the Duke's son Lord George Murray fought alongside the Jacobites to recapture the castle – his own residence – then occupied by government forces. An Edwardian hydro-electric system powered the castle from 1908-51. In garrison at the castle is the only legal private European army, the Atholl Highlanders.

The ruins of Loch an Castle Eilein in Rothiemurchus (Aviemore) rest on an island. Some portions of the remains date to the 1380s when the Wolf of Badenoch, Alexander Stewart, grandson of Robert the Bruce, built a fortified hunting lodge here. The Jacobites besieged the castle in 1690 after the Battle of Cromdale. Fugitives from the Battle of Culloden sheltered behind its walls in 1745.

Through its history, Corgarff Castle at Strathdon guarded the shortest route between Deeside and Speyside. In the 16th century, the feud between the Forbes and Gordon clans led to a conflagration at the castle in which 28 people died. The castle is said to be haunted by their spirits.

Ben Macdhui. Photo by Graham Lewis, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

YOUR "RIGHT" TO OWN A TARTAN

"Often over the years one has heard people say they have the right or that they are entitled to own this or that tartan.... in fact no such right, in any legal sense, exists for them or anyone elsethe only considerations which govern the wearing of a particular sett are usage and good taste"



In fact.... ex Presidents George W Bush, Barrack Obama and Apollo 12 astronaut crew all have their own bespoke Scottish Tartan and you too could be the proud owner of a Scottish Tartan, designed and commissioned to meet your exact requirements.

ALLOW US TO DESIGN YOUR OWN BESPOKE CELTIC HERITAGE TARTAN AND SUPPLY A SUPREME QUALITY 17oz FABRIC (HAND FINISHED) KILT, THE FINEST KILT THAT CAN BE BOUGHT AND ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE BY SHOWCASING YOUR NEW TARTAN DESIGN IN ONE OF OUR BREATHTAKING EXHIBIT FRAMES.

Display your new tartan design, complete with Certificate of Registration from The Scottish Register of Tartans in our selection of beautifully crafted frameworks. These exhibits are a fitting tribute to any stately home, VIP office, organisation, sporting facility or can be proudly displayed as a centre piece within any family home creating a heirloom for family generations to come.

Our kilt maker has designed tartan for George W Bush, Apollo 12 astronaut crew and created the American National Tartan, to name but a few.

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Investment in a family, corporate or organisational tartan design will likely occur only once in a lifetime, so it is important that we guide you through the design process carefully to ensure the end product meets your full satisfaction and is a product you will be proud to wear and showcase your celtic heritage.



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