

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.

Mary Stewart

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

Send your photos or letters via social media

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