

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?

Bannockburn

Gosh, it hardly seems like four years ago since I returned to my native Scotland for a holiday. 2014 was a great year to go back as it was a homecoming year. We had the Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow, the Ryder Cup being held at Gleneagles and with the referendum vote coming up Scotland was definitely brimming with anticipation and excitement. The biggest highlight as always is to see your family once more, I caught up with my father on the morning of 23rd of June and he politely asked where do you want to go? Without hesitation I replied "Bannockburn!", so off we went. The Bannockburn Visitor Centre was brilliant, the battle is historically presented using the very latest state of the art 3D technology in a format that really gives you a feel for this pivotal point in our history and outside it was so good to have my picture taken under the statue of King Robert the Bruce 700 hundred years to the very day of the battle commencing. The only thing the visitors centre never mentioned was the use of the Monymusk Reliquary (Scotland's equivalent to the Ark of the Covenant) which is now housed in the National Museum of Scotland, for those of you who may not know of its story I would like to share this poem I have written about it.

The Monymusk Reliquary

Of awe the jewels 'n finery, in Scotland's land sae fair We've got a precious little box, of wood and steel quite rare Carried and cared for doon the centuries, of Scotland's history's track But this is nae ordinary trinket box, for its St Columbo's Brechnebach!



A reliquary so precious, from Scotland's ancient past From a time of intercession, and when her history was cast Like the Ark of Covenant it was carried forth, to battles from Forglen Revered, believed, and trusted in, by Scotland's fighting men

So many finger prints on its exquisite frame, from craftsmen's days of old A montage of priceless antiquity and of Scotland's story's told With Pictish and Gaelic grand design's and forged from Iona's heart It's a master craft of metal work and of Hiberno- Saxon art

Clad in bronze and silver, with the ancient Celtic crest Brought by "the Bruce" tae Bannockburn, tae aid his victory quest With the precious relics of St Columba, inside this ornate shrine The Scottish army knelt and prayed, for intercession from the devine

As a hush fell over the Scottish troops, a wave of faith swept through In the spirit of strength and courage, they knew what they must do This point of contact tae The Lord, was felt in Scotland's sons And they fought on tae victory, on the fields of Bannockburn!

This ornate jewel of Scotland's past is still thair for Scots tae see As reminder of our distant past and how we came tae be Aye this ancient beacon of heavenly might, still gleams bright today Our precious piece of history, our Monymusk Reliquary.

Andrew Heaney

Brisbane, Queensland
Australia

homerun won the pennant for the Giants, and put them in the World Series.

Thank you,

Rich Dickson

Hamilton, New Jersey

USA

Ed. note: Thanks for the suggestion Rich, another great Scot from history.

Culloden Battlefield

In 2014 I visited Culloden Battlefield, which was a heart tearing experience, and as I stood at the Cairn I shed a tear for the souls that were lost there, both Highlanders and government men. So when I read in your January issue they were seeking to build houses on Culloden I was shocked, I can understand why Inverness Council would approve, yes I understand people need housing, but considering it was the last massed conflict on British soil you would think from historical value they would not allow this. Look at Bannockburn, there is still debate where the battle took place, my ancestors are McDonald's and Farquharson's and I would not like there resting place disturbed. If Inverness Council want land to build houses, why don't they demolish Forth George and use that land, after all it was built to house Government troops so they could police the Highlands in fear of future uprisings, so come on ex-pats send a letter to Inverness Council showing your disgust.

Yours aye,

Duncan Quinn

Waiekeke Island, Auckland

New Zealand

The Gaelic language: Past and present

I refer to your article on the above subject in volume 41, the April edition of *the Scottish Banner* regarding the Gaelic language. The article claims that in past times this was spoken across all Scotland, and I would point out that this is not strictly accurate. Scotland was divided up over a number of peoples including Anglo Saxons who ruled the Kingdom of Northumbria running from the Humber to the Firth of Forth. They have left many words in our language still in use to-day. Their kingdom lasted from the 7th century until the 11th. Their language was an Old English Northumbrian dialect known as Early Scots.

Then there was the Scandinavian influence which introduced us to such words as Ness and Wick in the 12th and 13th centuries. As well as this there was Latin, Parisian French, Dutch and Middle Low German. The Doric of Mid Northern Scots refers to the Scots language as spoken in the North East of Scotland and there is an extensive body of literature, mostly poetry, ballad and songs in this language.

Also King David introduced a number of Norman knights to Scotland in the 11th century and gave them grants of land. Among them was Robert de Brus, a name famous to all of Scottish background. He and the others would not have known a word of Gaelic.

James IV and I spoke the broad Scots as did his court, a language still used in

parts of Scotland to-day, not Gaelic, and his mother Mary Queen of Scots spoke French and English.

For my part my paternal ancestors who resided in Edinburgh for many many years were from an Anglo Saxon Norman French background and spoke pure English, although my grandmother who came from Glasgow spoke in the broad Scots tongue with a dash of French thrown in.

Yours,

June Laws,

Little Mountain, Queensland

Australia

Scotland

I have written several songs, none of which have been published but thought your readers would like this one. I always enjoy reading *the Scottish Banner* and look forward to my wife receiving it.

Scotland

The symbols of Scotland, kilt, thistle and pipes, With the beauty of Scotland, they instil in us pride; Glens purple with heather, the lochs so serene, While the eagles and deer, we admire and esteem. We're inventive, resourceful, progressive and sound; A friend of all nations whom honour has bound; We're valiant in battle, of that we have proved, Our courage renowned and our spirit endures. For the spirit of Scotland in our hearts will reside, With honour and justice and courage and pride; Aye, Scotland will flourish, we're inspired and assured, By all its attributes and love that endures.

Allan S Hamilton

Ed. Note: Thank you for sending in your first published song Allan, which sums up the magic of Scotland wonderfully.

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



Send your photos or letters via social media

Loch Voil



Lovely Loch Voil, worth a visit no matter what the weather.

Robert Gibb
Scotland

Loch Lochy



Loch Lochy looks stunning under a beautiful blue sky in Scotland.

Prim Morris
Scotland

Robert Burns Essay Competition 2018 Australian Award Ceremony



On Friday 16th March, three Rochester Secondary College students received award certificates and medals from the Robert Burns World Federation after entering the 2017 Robert Burns essay writing competition which was based

around the lines 'Thou, Liberty, thou art my theme' from the poem *On Glenriddell's Fox Breaking His Chain*.

Councillor Rod Fyffe of Bendigo and Jim Millar of the Bendigo and District Caledonian Society Burns Club presented the awards. All three students wrote well and demonstrated a good understanding of this year's theme. The winner of the 2017 competition was Grace Bubb a Year 10 student. Details of the 2018 competition will be available from the Robert Burns World Federation website later in the year.

Jim Millar

Bendigo, Victoria
Australia

Ed. note: Thanks for sending Jim and it is wonderful to see these students inspired by Robert Burns today.

Bobby Thomson

I have a suggestion for *This Month in Scottish History* for October. Bobby Thomson was born in Glasgow on October 25, 1923. In 1951, while playing for the New York Giants, he hit "The Shot Heard Round the World". It is one of the most famous homeruns in baseball history. The walk off