

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 Kelpies, oor Caledonian Colossus



With Halloween fast approaching it's quite an appropriate time to reflect on one of Scotland's "mythical beasts" The Kelpies. When I was back home in Scotland in 2014, I managed to cram in a lot of historical visits, like Bannockburn and the Wallace Monument, but so close, yet so far, I missed out on the Kelpies monuments. Even on paper they look so impressive, it must be quite something to sail under them, it's almost like they're Scotland's modern day take on the ancient "Colossus monument" of Rhodes (only 3 metres smaller I believe). And definitely a candidate for one of the seven wonders of Scotland, but going back to mythical beast of the Kelpies, I would love to share this wee poem I've written with our readers of their origins.

The Kelpies, oor Caledonian Colossus
*In the auld ancient days in oor lochs and burns, in Scotland's deepwater course
 There lived a cursed aquatic beast, that took the form of a horse. Aye and the locals called them Kelpies, and tae the bairns they instilled their fear. And from the youngest age they heard savage tales and were telt tae stay well clear.*

The Kelpie was a cunning beast, some say the devil incarnate, also taking the form of man or maiden, then using themselves as bait. But they would have a giveaway, despite their charming moves. With bits of sea grass in their hair and still keeping their devil like hooves.

*They wid lure their victims across tae them, with deviant charm and wit.
 Then drag them doon in the river, tae*

their murky watery pit. Drowning and devouring them mercilessly, in frantic struggle as they sank. Feeding their demonic appetite, and spitting their entrails on the bank.

In horse like form they grazed the banks, saddled and bridled tae lure. Tae catch the eye of a weary wanderer, aye tae set a trap for sure. And if anyone thought their luck was in, and climbed upon it's back. Again they'd jump into the deepest water, tae begin their grisly attack.

Noo this went on fur centuries, but folk got wise tae their ways. And gradually they disappeared, like Scots mist of the morning haze It's been said they changed their evil ways, when a fine maiden broke their curse. And that all their power ebbed away and ebbed into the Clydesdale horse.

Noo when you gaze upon the Clydesdale, you'd think this could be right. For they pulled us through an Industrial age, that set the world alight with massive strength and endurance, of great power and great heart. And still never far from the waters edge, hauling great barges and carts.

Those days are gone, but remembered noo with great monuments tae oor past. And like Scotland's industrial heritage, standing proudly they will last. Aye but theres none so great and none so bold tae our Kelpies/Clydesdale horses than Andy Scott's Kelpie monuments, oor Caledonian Colossus!

Andy Heaney
 Brisbane, Australia

World Pipe Band Championships



Thanks for a great round up on the 2019 World Pipe Band Championships. I am an ex-piper and continue to have a great interest in this competition each year. I was also so happy to read that so many of the pipers and drummers competing were under 25. The pipe band movement needs young people to keep it going.

It can be unfortunate when kids who get great mentoring in schools leave the pipes and drums behind after they complete their studies. I hope that some, or should I say many, carry on the tradition and take their knowledge learnt with them to teach the next generation. Being involved in pipe bands is so rewarding, both musically and socially. You get to attend some fantastic events, meet great people and at times travel to places you would otherwise not visit.

May the next generation carry on piping and drumming with Amazing Grace!
 Alex MacLeod
 Vancouver, British Columbia
 Canada

SS Waverley



I read in the July edition of *the Scottish Banner*, the sad state of the paddle steamer SS Waverley. My family and I travelled on her when I was only a wee lad. I remember it well, she was a lovely ship, and is worthy of restoring at all costs. Our family moved to Alexandria, Dunbartonshire near Loch Lomond. We had a wonderful time there swimming, boating and camping and I believe Loch Lomond to be the world's most famous lake.

On Loch Lomond was a paddle steamer called the *Maid of the Loch*, a beautiful paddle steamer owned by and operated by, at that time, British Rail. My family could never afford the cost of a trip on her, let alone a meal as the costs were decided on somewhere in England.

On my last return to Scotland, I was appalled at the condition of such a beautiful lady- 'the Lady of the Loch'. On the other side of the world, on Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown, New Zealand is the SS *Earnslaw*, about the same age as the *Maid of the Loch* or the SS *Waverley*. It takes passengers, locals as well as tourists daily, and in the evening takes people on a cruise and a fab three course meal.

So, come on all Scots and non-Scots, support all three famous ships in all three world famous destinations.
 Vince Flynn
 Pegasus Town, Canterbury
 New Zealand

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Blackness Castle



Blackness Castle, film location for the *Outlaw King* & *Outlander* etc.
 Robert Gibb
 Scotland

Black sheep



Lovely Black Sheep up at Tarbert Castle, beautiful beast.
 GN Photography
 Scotland