

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?

Congratulations on 45 years

Firstly, let me congratulate you on 45 years of publication. Reading the July 2021 edition of *the Scottish Banner* (Vol 45 Number 1) gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own association with *the Banner* over the years. My family emigrated from Dundee to Australia in 1967. I turned 11 years old a month after our arrival in Sydney. My parents, my father in particular, were proud Scots but had chosen to test the waters elsewhere in an effort to improve their chances in life. My parents were always striving to maintain their Scottishness and meet with like-minded souls and immerse themselves in Scottish culture and contact.

My father first discovered a copy of *the Scottish Banner* in a local newsagent sometime in 1980. It was not unusual in the following years for a copy to be found in the house each month. During my visits home I took time to read it and this gave my father the opportunity to continue his efforts to inculcate me with knowledge of all things Scottish (to my benefit I may add!). As my own children grew up, I became an occasional buyer of the paper and the paper was an invaluable resource for teaching them about their Scottish heritage, culture and history.

It was thanks to *the Scottish Banner's* *Calling the Clans* pages that I made contact with the Clan MacLaren Society of Australia (CMSA). During a family visit to Scotland in the mid-1990s we had collected some stones from the area around the Boar's Rock, the clan gathering place at Balquhiddie in Stirlingshire. In the following years I had discussions with my father about having some of the stones placed in the Clan Wall at the Australian Standing Stones at Glen Innes. He suggested *the Banner* as a likely source of contact information and so my association with the CMSA began. I contacted them with a view to having a representative of the CMSA to preside over the unveiling of a plaque and embedded stone at the 2002 Celtic Festival. The CMSA executive suggested that I could officiate if I accepted a position of Northern NSW representative on joining the society. I believe the



CMSA gained several new members that year and I became a more frequent buyer of *the Scottish Banner*.

Over the years *the Banner* has proved an invaluable resource for me in keeping up with news from 'home' and the Australian Scottish community and for accessing (often hard to find elsewhere) books, music and Scottish 'hingmies' either from *the Banner* shop or their business advertisers. Now as the Deputy Chair of the CMSA my association with *the Scottish Banner* has never been closer. I have had the pleasure of meeting Sean on several occasions (at various Highland Gatherings) and liaised with him regarding publicity for and introductions to the Chief of Clan Labhran, Donald MacLaren of MacLaren and Achleskine during his 2019 visit to Australia. (see SB Vol 44 #1 July 2020 interview). Sean has been most helpful and obliging in regard to our own (CMSA) needs as a cultural organisation.

For several years now I have a digital subscription to the paper and my partner, Lorna (also an expat Scot), still buys a hard copy (she likes to read the paper version) from the local newsagent each month. We wouldn't be without it. My children and grandchildren are more than familiar with *the Scottish Banner* and its place in our own family history. *Keep up the good work.*

Regards,
Bill Law
Rutherford, NSW
Australia
Deputy Chair, Clan MacLaren Society of Australia
Life Member, Clan MacLaren Society (Scotland)

Ed note: Thank you Bill for such a lovely note and we are so happy to know our publication has been part of so many generations of your family. Thank you for your support.

Happy birthday Scottish Banner

How marvellous to see the cover of your July issue. 45 years is something to be immensely proud and a great deal of love and passion has clearly gone into this fine publication. My parents were long time subscribers and they simply loved it, they subscribed when we did not have the internet and it really was a lifeline to so many, something I am not sure many can even relate to today. Sadly both my mother and father are now gone but every time I get a copy of *the Banner* it is like a little bit of them also comes and says hello. I love my Scottish roots and even after all

these years *the Scottish Banner* continues to deliver each issue filled with such interesting content and the Scottish community is blessed to have *the Banner*. I have no doubt the pandemic has been very hard on the publication, as it has with so many papers and magazines, and thank all those involved for giving us a wee bit of Scotland every month that cannot be found anywhere else.

Jan McRae
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Ed note: Thank you Jan for your note and for being a loyal long time reader.

Stirred up memories



Well once again *the Banner* has stirred up memories for me. I don't always get around to making contact with you, but the May and June issues took me back in time. I have attached some photos for your distillery collection. As I was born in Inverlochly I lived around the corner from the Ben Nevis Distillery and visited regularly with my mother (actually she visited a lady who lived in the cottage attached to the site in the '50s). In 1989 the distillery was purchased by Nikka a large Japanese Company. The other distillery is Dallas Dhu in Forres (now a Museum) just up the road from my cousin's house.

Inverlochly got a mention again in the June Issue with your story of Inverlochly Castle and the destruction of the Castle by Robert the Bruce. Inverlochly Castle and Fort William Castle both featured in the *Outlander* series. When you look at the thickness of the Castle walls you have to wonder what could have penetrated these structures.

Keep well and hopefully we will meet again soon when the Highland Games return.
Best wishes from,
David and Trudi Mackenzie

The spirit of Scotland



Like yourself, every time I set foot on Scottish soil I feel so at home. I can't really put it into words as to exactly how I feel, but I really do. I must have been Scottish in a former life or something!

I have so many wonderful memories of visiting Scotland, including from the very first time in 2004 on a whirlwind trip of the UK to the most recent back in October, 2019. I was also planning on coming back - this time to the Speyside area. My favourite city in the whole world is Edinburgh - its buildings, its history, but more importantly its people are so friendly and welcoming. I could easily fit in. It also helps that my favourite pub in the whole world is also here - The Guildford Arms. One of my other favourite places is Islay - a stunningly beautiful piece of paradise where I could easily live too (my favourite single malt is also made here - Laphroaig). Scotland has it all - stunningly beautiful scenery, history, whisky and much more!

I enclose a photo from my recent trip which I think encompass my love of Scotland.
Rachel Hopkins

Ed note: Thanks Rachel for your note and we hope you manage to get back to Scotland for another visit soon.

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Send us your photos or letters via social media



Kilchurn Castle



The Kilted Photographer
Scotland

Cove



Some really beautiful beaches, coves, harbours and coastline on the SE coast of Scotland. Another beautiful, warm day with clear waters at Cove.

Gary Chittick
Scotland

Balachulish



St. John's Balachulish lay me beneath the bluebells and the soaring mountains above forever in my beloved ALBA.
Ronald Stokes

Islay



The coast of Islay.
Tommy Hamilton Photography