

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?

Scottish family ties



MacDonald of the Isles Tartan.

In the April issue of *the Scottish Banner*, you asked readers if they had a favourite tartan and what tartan meant to them. Although a second generation Australian, my Scottish family ties are very strong.

I proudly wear both my MacDonald of the Isles Tartan, and that of my Keppoch branch. To me, it represents my heritage, my family connections, my very origins which are so precious to me. My male line is MacDonald, and my great granny, born a MacDonald, married into my paternal side. Many centuries ago, my MacDonald name came to be changed from MacDonald to Michie, my maiden name. Some time prior to the 16th century, my ancestor Michael MacDonald committed a heinous crime and on finding he lacked the expected

Clan support, fled, with some of his Clansmen in hot pursuit. Upon escaping he changed his name from MacDonald to Michie and from then on, his descendants were Michie's. Well known Scottish actor, John Michie (of *Taggart* fame) made a documentary on all things Scottish and in it he sought confirmation on what he knew of the origin of his name.

The genealogist in Glasgow supported what we knew except left one major detail out. It transpired that my ancestors had been unable to face the truth, and had cleaned up their story somewhat, by recording that Michael MacDonald had been forced to flee the Clan, due to a 'family feud', whereas John Michie knew the correct story. Michael MacDonald murdered his eldest brother in as power struggle. Despite the evil origin for changing the name, most of Michael MacDonald's descendants have made a good contribution to our world, and since I was a wee girl, I have been extremely proud to carry the Michie name.

Love *the Scottish Banner* and look forward to receiving it each month.

Mrs Margaret Michie Benny
Craigieburn, Victoria
Australia

Ed note: Thank you Margaret for sharing your proud family story with us.

The Cloth of a Nation

I read with interest your article in April's paper on the history of "The Cloth of a Nation". Recently I became the proud owner of such a piece of cloth. Whilst visiting family in Sydney, I decided to visit one of your long-term advertisers, the Scottish Accessories Shoppe in Croydon.

Needless to say, 14 weeks later I'm now the owner of a kilt in the Graham of Montrose tartan with accessories. Thanks Steve and Ann for fitting me out as well as *the Scottish Banner* for alerting me to your business.

Alistair Graham
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

The Floral Clock



How wonderful to read about Edinburgh's Floral Clock (*Floral Clock blooms in honour of 100 years of Flying Scotsman, the Scottish Banner*, August, 2023). I will not be able to see it in person this year unfortunately and really enjoyed being able to view the images, as an avid gardener I always make a pit stop to see this lovely agricultural feat each summer I am in Edinburgh. It is such a unique attraction and always so beautiful and lovingly maintained. Of course, Edinburgh is always a great place to visit but the clock is something I really treasure. On top of that I am a railway enthusiast so

this year's honoring the Flying Scotsman is just so fitting and makes me wish I could have seen it in person. I hope to get back to Scotland soon, likely 2025, and will make a beeline for the Floral Clock and enjoy the incredible workmanship that goes into it each and every year. Would you happen to know the theme for the 2025 presentation?

I really enjoy your articles and thank you for sharing so much of Scotland with so many.

Ken Sheppard
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
USA

Ed note: Ken glad you enjoyed the images and hope you return in 2025 to take in the clock yourself, sorry we do not know what theme the clock will be for 2025, but it should be as beautiful as ever.

The Cairngorm Mountain Railway



How wonderful to read about the return of the Cairngorm Mountain Railway (*Back to the Top-The Cairngorm Mountain Railway, the Scottish Banner*, July, 2023). I visited the Cairngorms region some years back and enjoyed riding it then and taking in such a stunning part of Scotland. The region itself, for any who have yet to visit, is absolutely stunning. We drove around various parts around the Cairngorms

National Park, which is not only Scotland's but the UK's largest national park. It is so diverse and scenic with lovely wee towns to also visit. We visited in summer and took the railway up for a bite to eat and walk around. We were so very fortunate to also be up there on a lovely day with blue skies and warm weather. We have always talked about returning and if we do, we will most certainly ride the railway to top of Scotland again.

Enjoy *the Banner* so much.

Eileen Gray
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada

UK adventure

I have always had a dream to visit Scotland, as my grandmother came from Dumfries, and in May this year I was able to make that dream come true. I embarked on a 22-day coach tour which ventured as far north as the Orkney's. After leaving Scotland we made our way across the sea to Ireland where my great grandmother was born then back to Wales and Cornwall. Scenery and history were amazing.

A magical trip and I can now relate, in a more knowledgeable way, when I read articles about different places in *the Banner*.

Wendy Gordon
Alexandra Hills, Queensland
Australia

Ed note: Glad you had a great trip Wendy and hope we can continue to inspire your next visit to Scotland.

Aberdeenshire county flag



I was interested to read in *the Scottish Banner* about the new flag for Aberdeenshire (*Aberdeenshire celebrates new county flag at Castle Fraser, the Scottish Banner*, June, 2023). Though the flag is striking, and I love the purple, but I found the flag to look more like it represents an organisation or attraction more than a whole region. I have family in various parts of Aberdeenshire and am aware of the region being a 'hot spot' for castles. In fact, it is Scotland's Castle Trail with nearly 300 on offer so the place to go if you are after a bit of castle touring. But there is much to discover in Aberdeenshire such as a stunning coastline, Aberdeen itself has much to offer (if it is your thing, I recommend a visit to Trinity Cemetery and read the history in those stones) and of course the incredible Cairngorms and Loch Muick.

I will certainly look out for the flag on my next visit and hold final judgement until then, regardless I simply love Aberdeenshire.

Emily McIntosh
Hamilton, New Zealand

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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Glenfinnan Viaduct



The Jacobite steam train on the Glenfinnan Viaduct.
Mik Coia

Perth



Perth's purple highlights along the River Tay.
IG orsayoban

Arria



Arria holding the moon in Cumbernauld.
@eadietam

Stirling Castle



Sunset at Stirling Castle.
The Kilted Photographer