

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?

Celebrating Tartan Day



The Nova Scotia Tartan.
Image: The Scottish Register of Tartans.

Once again Tartan Day April 6th is upon us. This has turned into a wonderful date for all those of Scottish descent. Tartan Day started out in Nova Scotia, Canada, at a meeting of the Federation for Scottish Clans in the fall of 1985. We wanted a date that the younger people would enjoy and feel it was more their own, not one that was brought from the 'Auld Country'. When discussing dates, we realized Scotland had a Tartan Day in July on the date the English restored out tartans, the bagpipe music, and language, back to our ancestors. A Scot at our meeting stated "we will not thank the English for our rights to our culture!" and so April 6th was chosen, the date of the Declaration of Arbroath.

As a one-person committee (for ten years) to promote this date, I was delighted when on April 6, 1986 it was passed in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly and from there it spread Canada-wide with the help of Scottish organizations across Canada. Nothing could have made me happier than when I heard our cousins to the south taking up the cause of Tartan Day. And what a wonderful job the Americans do celebrating Tartan Day. I watch from afar every year the big parades and wish we could do the same.

Unfortunately, although we have dinners and such, we in Canada are still enjoying (or not) our winter and playing the pipes outside is quite difficult this time of year. We enjoy having a good dram of "the water of life" in order to keep the chill away and a hearty evening of music and song. This year we will be at the St. Margaret of Scotland church hall, Robie St., Halifax.

I hope you enjoy the date once again this year, and may we all raise a toast together on that date to our stout-hearted ancestors, who through hard work, faith in God, and determination, helped build our two wonderful countries.

Sincerely,
Jean MacKaracher Watson
President Emeritus, Federation of Scottish Culture in Nova Scotia
Bedford, Nova Scotia
Canada

Ed note: Thank you Jean for your letter and for everything you have done for the Scottish community, your legacy is extraordinary.



Jean with two of her sons Angus and Reg MacKaracher.

The Prince Albert Cairn



Did you know, Scotland is home to a few different pyramids?

The Prince Albert Cairn is nestled amidst the serene beauty of tall, whispering trees and the majestic mountains, this pyramid-shaped cairn is one of Scotland's hidden gems. But it's more than just a sight to behold, it's a piece of history.

Erected by Queen Victoria in memory of her beloved husband, Prince Albert, after his untimely death in 1861, every stone and corner of this cairn echoes the undying love and the royal legacy that is etched in history forever.

Historical significance: The Balmoral Cairns were constructed to commemorate special events and milestones in the lives of members of the Royal Family. The largest and most famous Cairn was erected by Queen Victoria in memory of Prince Albert.

Nature's embrace: Surrounded by lush greenery, this cairn stands as a testament to enduring love and enduring history. The rugged stone texture, the imposing mountains, and the whispering trees create an enchanting atmosphere that invites reflection and awe.

Thomas Lamont
The Kilted Photographer
Falkirk, Scotland

Australian Burns Night

My wife and I have recently returned from Australia after visiting our daughter and her partner in Terranora, NSW (Australia). During our visit my daughter obtained tickets for the Burns/Scottish Night held on 25 January in Pottsville Community Hall. I think we may have gate crashed this event as upon arrival we realised that the event was mainly for Abi Duncan and her friends.

Notwithstanding this, Abi graciously allowed us to stay and enjoy the evening. My wife, daughter and her partner had a fantastic time and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. In view of this I would like to thank Abi for organising a wonderful event and I hope that it will become an annual event and my wife and I will have the opportunity to attend in the future. Once again, thank you Abi and 'long may your lum reek'!

Alan & Helen King, from a cold and frosty Hawick in the Scottish Borders
Scotland

The 75th Glengarry Highland Games



The 75th Glengarry Highland Games is sponsoring a Tune Composing Competition to celebrate the occasion. There will be two competitions: one for a song and one for a 6/8 March suitable for both bagpipes and violins.

All the details can be found on our website: www.glengarryhighlandgames.com/75th/composeatune.

Glengarry Highland Games
Maxville, Ontario
Canada

Family history-Mabey

Hello,
I have recently tried to dive into my family history and was wondering if anyone might be able to help. I live in the USA but historically my family, the Mabey's, are from Scotland. If there's any information anyone might have, I would greatly appreciate the shared knowledge!

Katie Stevens
USA
E-mail: dragonfly740@yahoo.com

Scotland's National Fare

Please find attached a poem in Scots language, *Scotland's National Fare*, which you might like to publish in *the Scottish Banner*.

A Guid New Year.
Archie Smith
Scotland

Scotland's National Fare

By: Kennedy Smith
Gaun cantily doon frae Yarrow's Yaird
Ae Friday nicht, Wee Jimmy Baird
Wi jaunty step, this gallus laird
Felt fine;
For in his pooch guid siller heard
At lousin' time.

And on his way doon Broomilaw,
Temptations many Jimmy saw;
Frae pitch-and-toss tae heid-the-ba'
Fair coaxin' Jim;
Yet, a' the time, there wis his Maw
Awaitin' him.

Intae the pan, she tossed the meat,
Aw red and raw, no fit tae eat;
Yet licht the gas! Turn up the heat!
'Tiz sizzlin' great.
Wi' onions raw tae mak' ye greet;
A canna wait!

As mince aroma cuts the air
Frae Govan Yairds tae Jessie's Lair,
Wee Jimmy thocht, "Tis ma maw's flair,
Her Friday Mince.
Ah dinna ken to last nae mair -
A hale week since!"

They say that Scotland's National fare
Is neeps an' haggis; but beware!
A ken a dish a fancy mair,
(Just richt fur fatties)
An' on the Guid Book a wid swear
Tis Mince an' Tatties.

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



Sent to our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts-send us your photos or letters via social media (#ScottishBanner or #TheBanner):

Stirling Castle



Morning has broken across Stirling.
The Kilted Photographer

Rannoch Moor



Winter at Rannoch Moor.
Mik Coia

Coastal D&G



The coastal views of Dumfries and Galloway.
Colfin Captures

Corpach Shipwreck



Corpach Shipwreck, FortWilliam.
Derek A Grist

Pose your questions on Scottish related topics to our knowledgeable readership who just may be able to help. Please keep letters under 300 words and we reserve the right to edit content and length. Letters can be emailed to info@scottishbanner.com or online at www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us, alternatively you may post your letters to us (items posted to the Scottish Banner cannot be returned). Please ensure you include your full contact details should you require a reply. This page belongs to our readers so please feel free to take part!