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the Scottish Banner

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Volume 48 Number 9

NEWS FOR GLOBAL SCOTS

March 2025

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The Banner Says...

Pipes and Drums for all



by Sean Cairney

In the lead up to International Women's Day, on March 8th, I was recently interested to read about a ground-breaking study that was undertaken by The National Piping Centre in Glasgow, in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

I wrote about this six-month study just under two years ago when it was announced an online survey would be made available to women in the piping and drumming community designed to gain a better understanding of a female's perspectives and experiences within piping and drumming in Scotland.

Women in Piping and Drumming: Equality, Inclusivity, and Diversity

Results of the study have now been published. The research survey, entitled *Women in Piping and Drumming: Equality, Inclusivity, and Diversity*, was first launched in April 2023. It aimed to understand women's perspectives and experiences and any obstacles they may find within the pipe band community, a community in which they make up 20-30% of.

The study did not include members of the international piping community, rather it focused on piping and drumming within Scotland itself. Hundreds of women took part to have their say. I have met people from the pipe band community all my life and I have witnessed what an incredible fraternity it is. The friendship and community pipe band life involves is something that is evident for any outsider to see. Being a part of a pipe band brings a wealth of experiences and opportunities to the band members, from being part of incredible events to travel all over the place.

I was however surprised to read over half of the respondents had noted they not only have experienced sexism within their piping and drumming community, but had felt their gender was a factor in them retiring from the community. Whilst a quarter of respondents had personally experienced behaviour they would consider to be inappropriate at a band event and also that a senior band member had used or tried to use their status to take advantage of them due to their gender.

New initiatives

I do not know if there may be similar perspectives outside of Scotland, but the survey findings have led to two new initiatives which aim to promote more equality, diversity and inclusion and take meaningful steps to help create a more equal and inclusive piping and drumming community. The Maket Collective and The Stand Project, each seek to place equality for women firmly on the agenda across the piping world in both Scotland and across the globe. The Maket Collective is an online community which was launched last year and promotes women in piping. It is a place for women to share stories, videos, performance opportunities and more. The name for this project is inspired by the first named piper in history, Lady Maket, who lived in Egypt over 3,000 years ago and was buried with her pipes alongside her.

The other new initiative is The Stand Project. This is open to all people in the piping and drumming community and allows members to pledge to stand with all members of the community. It signals an acceptance for all people involved in the pipe band movement, regardless of their sex, race, religion or orientation. Free pin badges are available from the National Piping Centre which allows you to show your support for everyone having a place in the piping community.

In this issue

Some may not be aware that some incredible Scottish women where pioneers in the fields of archaeology and ethnology, without whom much crucial knowledge of places like

Kilmartin Glen and Atholl would not exist. This month we highlight Marion Campbell, who discovered and excavated hundreds of sites in Mid Argyll; Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray, the youngest daughter of the Duke of Atholl who collected and wrote down, in many cases for the first time, hundreds of folk stories from Highland Perthshire in the local dialect of Perthshire Gaelic; and Dorothy Marshall, a naturalist and archaeologist who founded societies in Bute and was instrumental in uncovering much of that island's historic past.

Scotland's 'Live Act of the Year' recipients Skerryvore have evolved from their humble beginnings twenty years ago to become one of the country's most popular bands. Skerryvore bring a modern sound to the world but keep their West Coast sound close to their core and have embraced their traditional roots, and have some great performances coming up in Australia, Scotland and the USA this year. We are fortunate to have spoken to the band's singer-songwriter and guitarist Alec Dalglish as they embark on this incredible 20th anniversary year.

The mass breakout of Allied airmen from Stalag Luft III, a high security prison camp run by the Luftwaffe, during WW2 in March 1944 was made into a 1960s Hollywood film, which both became known as 'The Great Escape'. A daring Scottish RAF pilot named Alistair Thompson McDonald was part of the plot which shook the Nazi regime to their core and was one of the few to make it back to Britain alive. On the anniversary of that extraordinary March night, we are so honoured to again share their incredible story.

Important part of our culture

Piping and drumming is still dominated by males across the world today, as it has been through history. There is however no doubt women not only have an important place in the pipe band world but also make it a better community (and I am proud to know many of them). So, it is welcoming to see the pipe band community looking inwards and creating ways for women to remain engaged in this important part of our culture, as thankfully they are here to stay. 🍷

Do you have any comments from the content in this month's edition? Share your story with us by email, post, social media or: #ScottishBanner, #TheBanner.

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We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy this edition.



Gracing our front cover:
Piper Martin Gillespie
of Skerryvore.



The Stand Project pin badge available from The National Piping Centre.

Warwick Thistle Pipe Band to represent Southern Downs on the global stage

Warwick Thistle Pipe Band, an inspired group of musicians from the Southern Downs, is preparing for the adventure of a lifetime—the most momentous journey in its illustrious 100-year history.

Known for their impressive performances at events such as the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (REMT) in Sydney, the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Parade, the Australian Celtic Festival in Glen Innes, and as a key partner and performer at CelticFest Warwick, the band is now ready to entertain audiences on the world stage. In 2019, the Warwick Thistle Pipe Band transformed from a small band, struggling with numbers, into a proud ensemble of 50 musicians performing at the Sydney Olympic Stadium for the REMT Saturday main event. With members ranging in age from 10 to over 80, the band became the largest single group in the opening ceremony's massed band—a truly inspiring display of passion, dedication, and community pride.

Now, the band is gearing up for its biggest performance yet. Pipe Major, Chris Donaldson, has announced that the band has been invited to take part in Piping Live! 2025 in Glasgow, Scotland. He says it is the world's premier piping festival, drawing over 30,000 attendees during a music filled, week-long celebration in August. But that's not all. In addition to Piping Live!, Chris is excited to share that the band will perform at iconic Scottish venues such as Stirling Castle, the Crieff Highland Games and The Kelpies, showcasing the band's talent.

Drum Sergeant, Alexander Manfield, said that this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity isn't just about representing



Band marching in Yangan for Anzac Day 2024.

Warwick on an international stage, it's also about honing the skills of our musicians, fostering a legacy of excellence, and sharing the vibrant culture of the Southern Downs with the world.

Part of the fabric of the Southern Downs

The band is quite special, as it is very much a family band where we have all ages and even several generations from a number of families represented, says Pipe Sergeant, Megan Mauch. However, turning this dream into reality comes with significant costs, shared Megan, with band members having tirelessly fundraised over the last couple of years. She said they shall continue to fundraise until the trip especially with the current state of the exchange rate. To shine on this global stage, the band requires additional uniforms and essential gear, including Inverness rain capes, moisture control systems for pipes, durable travel cases for instruments, drum skins, chanter reeds,

and specialised equipment. On top of this, transport to airports and within Scotland adds to the financial challenge.

For a century, the Warwick Thistle Pipe Band has been a part of the fabric of the Southern Downs' community, performing at cherished events like ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day commemorations, the Killarney Bonfire Night, Apple and Grape Festival Parade, Untamed Border Run, Allora Christmas festivities, and more. Now, the chance to represent Warwick in Scotland is a shining moment of pride for this community band punching above its weight.



Band at the Sydney Olympic Stadium before performing at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2019.

Edinburgh among top cities for entrepreneurs



Scotland's capital is the third most attractive city in the UK to establish a new business in, a new report has confirmed. Published by asset finance brokerage firm Approved Business Finance, key data from the UK's 60 largest cities was reviewed to identify the cities offering the most potential for new businesses in 2025. The analysts found the city holds three key factors in attracting new companies and business to make their home in Edinburgh, including competitive commercial property costs, wide-spread, high-speed internet coverage and a potential pool of highly educated workers. With the cost of goods, energy and materials remaining high, and commercial property prices rising, Edinburgh's provision of high-quality services, competitive costs and a thriving business environment secured its high placement and attractiveness for prospective business owners.

This positive news echoes Edinburgh's reputation as a centre of finance, business, and innovation, and one which continues to welcome aspiring entrepreneurs across a range of industries and ideas.

DANNY BHOY

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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?

Bribie Island Golf Club Burns Night



On Saturday 25 January 2025, the Bribie Island Golf Club Restaurant - Vernazza Ristorante - hosted a Burns Supper.

The evening commenced with guests arriving to the familiar tunes being performed on bagpipes by piper Jim Lowe. Rhonda Binnie, daughter of two Scottish migrants from Glasgow and Kilsyth, MC'd the evening and commenced with a short history of the Bard. This was followed by the *Selkirk Grace* read by the Head Chef Brian Stott, who hails from Dundee. As the guests were enjoying their Cock-a-Leekee Soup, they were entertained by a lovely dup of dancers from Scotia Highland Dancing.

The girls performed the *Highland Fling*, *Sean Truibhas* and *Wilt Thou Go To The Barracks Johnnie*. Following the dancers, Jim Lowe piped in the Haggis accompanying the chef and then Stuart MacPherson delivered the *Address to the Haggis* followed by our distinguished guest - Lord Steven Burns - a direct

descendent of the Bard, giving the Toast to the Haggis. Many of the Scots present said it was the best haggis they had ever had and those who chose the sausages were equally impressed with their meals.

After the main course, Jean (of Clan Gordon) & Jim Binnie (of Clan MacBain) proposed the *Toast to the Lassies* and the *Toast to the Laddies* and they were followed up by the beautiful young singer - Neve Wintersgill - who had the whole crowd singing along to *Loch Lomond*, *Flower of Scotland* and *Scotland the Brave*. Stuart MacPherson (of Clan MacPherson) and Ally Hannon (of Clan Sinclair) read a few of Burns best known poems including *Ae Fond Kiss*; *A Man's a Man for a' That* and *McPherson's Farewell*. A scrumptious dessert of raspberry trifle was served and then Neve was back and with all guests upstanding, she led them all in a rendition of *Auld Lang's Syne* to end the formal part of the evening.

For those who chose to stay on, a selection of Highland country dancing tunes were played.

To see footage from the evening, head to Bribie Island Golf Club Vernal Ristorante Facebook page. If you would like to join in on the celebrations in 2026, please follow the Facebook and get in early as this year's event was sold out back in November.

Kind Regards
Rhonda Binnie CSTD
Queensland, Australia

Happy Saint Patrick's Day

I am sending you my Saint Patrick's Day poem for everyone to read, thank you and keep up the brilliant work you all do.

Happy Saint Patrick's Day

*It's Saint Patrick's Day and
Everyone is Irish today
And we'll have some fun along the way*

*Green shamrocks and a colourful rainbow
In the clear blue sky
And the shiny pots of gold are in sight
And we'll sing and dance
All through Saint Patrick's night*

*From Tokyo to New York to old
Wicklow Town and on to Australia*

*With classical Irish
Music fills the air
And all the little leprechauns
Are dancing and jumping
Up in the air and the little children
Are having so much fun*

*And I love Saint Patrick's Day and
I'm playing the fiddle on
This special Irish day and
The people are matching through the
Streets celebrating Saint Patrick's Day*

*And the little children
Are running up and down
And chanting Saint Patrick*

*And we'll drink Guinness
And whiskey
All through the night*

*So may the love and luck
Of the Irish be
With you all today on this very
special and loving
And peaceful happy Saint Patrick's Day.*

David P Carroll

Annie Lennox



What a joy it was to read about one of my favourite singers of all time, Annie Lennox (*the Scottish Banner*, January, 2025). I very much knew Annie hailed from Aberdeen however did not know she suffered from agoraphobia. Annie Lennox is clearly in a class of her own when it comes to her commitment to social issues and Scotland should be proud of one of their great daughters, perhaps those values she has were instilled in growing up in Scotland? The music of Annie Lennox and the Eurythmics is still as great today to listen to as it was in the 80s and 90s, even my kids have told me she is 'not that bad', which is a massive compliment from my teenagers!

I feel privileged to have Scottish ancestry and enjoy reading *the Scottish Banner* to keep connected to my roots.
Jennifer Clark
Calgary, Alberta
Canada

Starry nights



Stars can't shine without darkness... Went out to attempt to get the Northern Lights, instead ended up doing some astrophotography. Not bad for the first attempt in a long time (and thanks to my sidekick brother for giving me some tips).
*Colfin Captures
Portpatrick, Scotland*

Glasgow

Just to say I have been to Glasgow three times in my 90 years. It was also the home of my great grandfather for a short time, before he came to the USA in 1860's, I remember him well. Once on a ship up the Clyde and twice into the airport for a trip around all of Scotland. And I have also been a member of St. Andrews Society for many years here in USA.

Ronald Esler
USA

Cambuskenneth Abbey



The historic Cambuskenneth Abbey- founded in about 1140 by King David I to serve Stirling Castle, which stands a short distance to the west. It was the scene of Robert the Bruce's parliaments in 1314 and 1326, and the burial place of James III and Margaret of Denmark in the 1480s.

Jamie Taylor Photography
Scotland

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Calton Hill



Calton Hill on a sunny day in Edinburgh. Yes, we do have a couple of sunny days here in Edinburgh every year!
Craig Duncan Photography

Horsing around in the Highlands



Blending in, in the Highlands.
Fly - Caledonia

Forth Bridge



Above the rails of the Forth Bridge.
Kilted Photographer

Glencoe



Black Rock Cottage blending in with the winter landscape of Glencoe.
Soul of Alba Photography

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New runic translation reveals community ownership of the Galloway Hoard



Runic inscriptions on the Galloway Hoard.
Photo: © National Museums Scotland.

Recently unveiled in Adelaide on the first leg of an international tour, the first translation of a runic inscription on an arm ring from the Viking-age Galloway Hoard has cast fascinating new light on who might have owned the famous treasure. Since its discovery in 2014, various theories and possibilities have been put forward, suggesting that the Galloway Hoard may have been buried by four owners based on four arm-rings inscribed with Anglo-Saxon runes. Three feature Old English name elements, but the fourth and longest had confounded experts and remained undeciphered as there was no recognisable direct translation.

Communally held

However, a new theory proposed by the team at National Museums Scotland who have been studying the hoard runs, in translation, “this is the community’s wealth/property”. Martin Goldberg from National Museums Scotland said: “This is another really interesting and significant development in our understanding of the Galloway Hoard. The idea that the wealth this hoard represents would be communally held is fascinating. It does still leave us with unanswered questions around the circumstances in which a community’s wealth would come to be buried, and also which particular community. Some material within the hoard, such as the pectoral cross and the rock crystal jar made for a Bishop Hyguald, would support this being a religious community.”

Carved inside the curved half of the arm-ring the runes read: DIS IS ȝIGNA F. The main issue was the word ‘ȝIGNAF’, which did not correspond to any language spoken in early medieval Britain or Ireland. The discovery that the final rune, F, was marked out with puncts, or dots, to either side, indicating it could be understood as the name of the F-rune itself ‘feoh’ [wealth or property] unlocked the new translation. ‘ȝIGNA’ could then be interpreted as the Old English word ‘higna’ (community) with the first letter spelled in an unusual but comprehensible way.

The first word also seems to be misspelled if as seems likely it represents “this” – perhaps it was pronounced DIS, much as it would be in some parts of modern Ireland. Despite these apparent spelling (or pronunciation) mistakes, the full inscription can be translated as “this is the community’s wealth/property” with the word ‘higna’ often used elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon documents to indicate a religious community.

Quite compelling

Leading runologist Dr David Parsons (University of Wales) who has previously translated other runic inscriptions from the Galloway Hoard said: “This is a difficult and unusual inscription, and the proposed translation is challenging. There are a number of things which are technically ‘wrong’ when we compare it with what we know about ‘correct’ runic writing. However, if we think about both spoken and written English today, there are a huge range of regional and idiomatic variations and, if we allow for this, then it becomes possible to accept this as a plausible reading. And in the context of what can deduce about the Galloway Hoard it becomes really quite compelling.”

The new finding comes at the conclusion of a three-year research project, *Unwrapping the Galloway Hoard*, which was supported by the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), led by National Museums Scotland in partnership with the University of Glasgow.

AHRC executive chair Christopher Smith, said: “It has been fascinating to see the succession of significant discoveries over the life of the *Unwrapping the Galloway Hoard* project, from the exotic



The Galloway Hoard.

origins of some of its star pieces to the presence of named individuals and now this latest exciting discovery. We’re delighted to have supported this work and in particular welcome the volume of public interest and engagement it has so frequently generated. It serves as a prime example of how the power of arts and humanities research to shine a light on past cultures and the people who lived within them resonates in our own world.”

Ancient world

The arm ring will be on display at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide as part of a new international touring exhibition, *Treasures of the Viking Age: The Galloway Hoard*, which opened in February. The exhibition shows how the Hoard was buried in four distinct parcels and as the visitor is drawn further into this ancient world each parcel becomes richer and more unusual. The top layer was a parcel of silver bullion and a rare Anglo-Saxon cross, separated from a lower layer of three parts: firstly, another parcel of silver bullion wrapped in leather and twice as big as the one above; secondly, a cluster of four elaborately decorated silver ‘ribbon’ arm-rings bound together and concealing in their midst a small wooden box containing three items of gold; and thirdly, a lidded, silver gilt vessel wrapped

in layers of textile and packed with carefully wrapped objects that appear to have been curated like relics or heirlooms. They include beads, pendants, brooches, bracelets, relics and other curios, often strung or wrapped with silk. It was recently revealed that the origins of the vessel itself could be traced to the Sassanian Empire and indeed to a specific mine in modern-day Iran.

Decoding the secrets of the Galloway Hoard has also been a multi-layered process. Decorations, inscriptions, and other details hidden for over a thousand years have been revealed through careful conservation, painstaking cleaning, and cutting-edge research by a team of experts led by National Museums Scotland. Many of the objects are types that have never been seen before in Britain and Ireland. Some had travelled thousands of miles to reach Scotland. Some items are now too fragile to travel long distances, particularly those which still have rare traces of textiles that have survived for more than 1,000 years. The exhibition employs audio visual and 3D reconstructions to enable visitors to experience these objects and learn more about the detailed research that is being done.

Treasures of the Viking Age: The Galloway Hoard is now on at the South Australian Museum to 27 July 2025. For details see: www.samuseum.sa.gov.au

Port Fairy Folk Festival PRESENTS...

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MAR 6 BURRINJA CULTURAL CENTRE, UPWEY	MAR 16 THEATRE ROYAL, CASTLEMAINE
MAR 7 BIRREGURRA HALL	MAR 17 MELBOURNE CELTIC FESTIVAL
MAR 8 - MAR 10 PORT FAIRY FOLK FESTIVAL	

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SCOTSPEAK

Scotspeak is a selection of quotes which made headlines in Scotland last month on a variety of current Scottish affairs.

"Three days after the worst of Storm Éowyn, we can see how the sheer scale of the damage continues to impact Scotland's return to normal. I want to thank everyone who is playing their part, day and night, to get services back up and running. Utilities companies are working as fast as possible, in often challenging in weather conditions, and have reconnected over 280,000 properties. While trunk roads and ferries are largely operating as normal, the railway continues to recover and Network Rail has experienced over 500 incidents."

Justice and Home Affairs Secretary Angela Constance said as Storm Éowyn brought dangerous conditions and disruption throughout the country on January 24th, including danger to life from flying debris, large waves and structural damage, such as roofs blown off and power lines brought down. The Met Office issued a rare red weather warnings for wind brought by Storm Éowyn for Scotland's central belt and ScotRail cancelled all trains nationally.



"The Lighthouse is a fantastic example of the built heritage which defines Glasgow, a Charles Rennie Mackintosh class right

in the heart of the city. But it's been an architectural treasure in search of a purpose for a number of years. The proposal to bring the Lighthouse back into use as a space for hi-tech start-ups is exactly the type of project which can revitalise this wonderful building, bringing new purposes and new agendas to Glasgow's historic core."

Glasgow City Council Ruairi Kelly, convener for development, built heritage, housing and land use, said that the Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed the A-listed Lighthouse building could be reopened as a hub for start-up firms working on climate technology. The building, designed in 1895, was Charles Rennie Mackintosh's first public commission.

"We're all absolutely thrilled to be in this position. From almost giving up any hope of acquiring this collection, to now have welcomed specialist fine art movers carrying the artefacts here to Orkney is simply wondrous – we're still pinching ourselves! The intention is for the collection to be on display to the people of Orkney from May 2025 - following the necessary conservation assessments, careful mounting of the artefacts, and the production of a display worthy of this spectacular acquisition."

Nick Hewitt Culture Team Manager for Orkney Council said as centuries-old exquisitely crafted weapons owned by Captain James Moodie, known locally for his dramatic murder in Broad Street,

Kirkwall, have been gifted to the people of Orkney by his modern-day family and have arrived in the county and into the care of Orkney Islands Council's Museums service. The three stunning Ottoman weapons – a sabre and scabbard, a mace, and a dagger and sheath - date from the 1600s. Now, more than 300 years after they were presented to Capt. Moodie, they have returned to Orkney as part of a wider collection known as 'The Moodie Treasures'.



"Robert Burns painted vivid portraits of a landscape he knew intimately as both a poet and a farmer; its topography, flora, fauna and wildlife. From 'To a Mouse' to the powerful natural imagery of 'Ae Fond Kiss', Burns's poetry and song was inspired by nature, but he also shaped his environment in very practical ways. In recent months the Centre has hosted research workshops and conference panels with academics, industry, artists and cultural heritage partners to contemplate Burns's engagement with and impact on his natural surroundings, and the ways in which this should be reflected in present day commemorations and celebrations of Burns, as part of a sustainable approach to Burnsian heritage."

Dr Pauline Mackay, the Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies based at the University of Glasgow's College of Arts & Humanities said the Centre will delve deeper into the bard's environmental consciousness through an innovative three-year PhD research studentship. Burns's creative and practical engagement with the environment as a writer and farmer, and his profound connection to the land, offers a unique lens through which to view modern environmental challenges.

"Hearing the children singing, signing and using Gaelic phrases at such a young age is excellent. The practitioners involved in this project had varying levels of Gaelic, including complete beginners. Collective Gaelic

learning is a powerful tool. A welcoming, Gaelic ethos is in place in Stornoway Childcare Centre and embedded into daily interactions and it is wonderful to see everyone fully engaged in this project."

Elaine Poke, an Early Years Curriculum Teacher, said that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Education and Children's Services Department has announced the launch of a new digital book of Gaelic songs which was developed and trialled at Stornoway Child Care Centre. Current research shows the brain connections being made in the very early years of a child's life have an impact on their childhood development. The benefits of bilingualism and learning two languages are also evident in research.



"Glasgow 850 is a significant milestone in our city's journey, and I am excited to see and get involved in some of the incredible programme of events and activities we have planned for this year-long celebration. This curated programme, which spans all 23 wards of our city, truly has something for everyone—from arts and culture and sports to food and drink, and from music festivals to historical exhibitions, and smaller community led events. And I know that through partners, local groups and businesses, events and activities are still being added for later in the year, which shows the support there is for us coming together, to celebrate our city."

Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, said they have officially launched its Glasgow 850 programme for 2025, a spectacular year-long celebration marking 850 years since the city gained Burgh status, in 1175, a pivotal moment that shaped the vibrant and unique city we know today. The year-long, curated, programme promises to engage and inspire people of all ages and backgrounds, reflecting the make-up of the city.



Savoy Opera Company
presents the Australian
première of
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SCOTWORD

Here is a wee Scottish crossword for you to try!
If you're stuck, answers can be found on page 22.

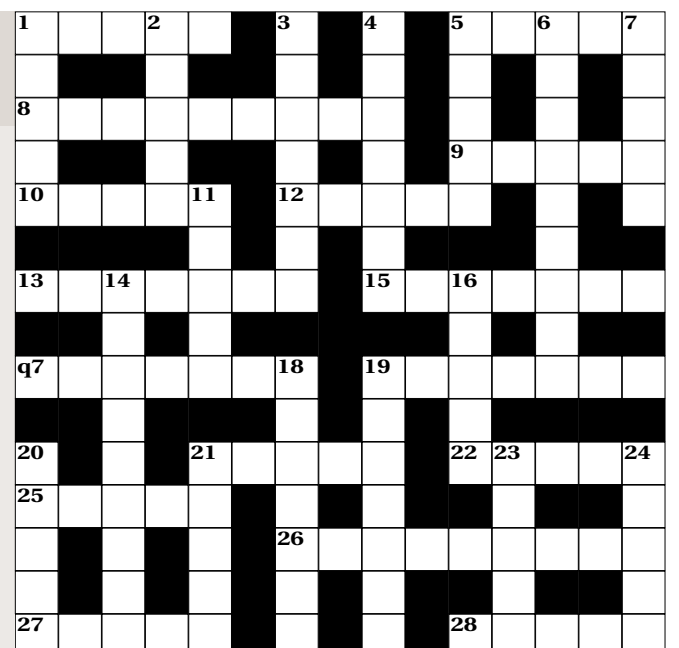
CLUES ACROSS:

- 1) Village west of Golspie (5).
- 5) Scots bonnet (5).
- 8) Grey Mare's Tail is one (9).
- 9) Peaceful branch (5).
- 10) Razor cut (5).
- 12) Stony landmark (5).
- 13) Dribble in Scots (7).
- 15) Bridge near Inverness (7).
- 17) Bookkeeper (7).
- 19) Old Scots shoe (7).

- 21) Town east of Dumfries (5).
- 22) Clarsachs (5).
- 25) Art supporter (5).
- 26) Birds nests (9).
- 27) Wader! (5).
- 28) England - the auld . . . (5).

CLUES DOWN:

- 1) Largest Hebridean island (5).
- 2) Smokes in Scotland (5).
- 3) Old transport (7).
- 4 and 19 Down) Border delicacy (7, 7).
- 5) Port north of Ayr (5).
- 6) Scot to keep you dry! (9).
- 7) Peasant (5).
- 11) Nun gets used to it! (5).
- 14) Town east of Nairn (9).
- 16) Scots street gutter (5).
- 18) Town west of Glasgow (7).
- 19) See 4 Down.
- 20) Town south-east of Elgin (5).
- 21) Central water (5).
- 23) Front of kilt (5).
- 24) Kilted Scot isn't this! (5).



National Library of Scotland unveils landmark Centenary programme



National Library of Scotland. Photo: Eoin Carey.

National Librarian Amina Shah has announced plans to mark the National Library of Scotland's 100th birthday with a year-long programme of events and initiatives.

The National Library was established by an Act of Parliament in 1925, and since then has amassed and cared for a collection of more than 50 million items spanning many centuries on behalf of the people of Scotland – all of whom are entitled to free access to the collections. National Librarian Amina Shah said: "A century ago, we were established in the spirit of egalitarianism, where our founders – including Sir Alexander Grant – held the firm belief that the people of Scotland deserved a national library to call their own, one which anyone living here could access. The Act of Parliament states that we exist to collect and preserve the national collections, and make them accessible to the public through our reading rooms, exhibitions and other means of engaging people with Scotland's culture and heritage. We increased our efforts to reach more and new people with the collections in recent years with great success, and our intention is to accelerate this during the year of our 100th birthday by working in partnership with Scotland's network of amazing libraries. And so, I'm delighted to announce our centenary programme – a nationwide libraries campaign, our major exhibition, our national tour – all of which have the potential to connect with every individual across the country. It is our ambition that the impact our centenary programme will have on communities throughout Scotland will continue far beyond 2025."

When it was established, the National Library was endowed with the non-legal aspects of the Faculty of Advocates'

collections, ultimately making it the holder of the largest collection of antiquarian books north of Cambridge. The Library was also established as a 'legal deposit' library, meaning it has the right to claim a copy of everything published in the UK. This right remains today, and includes digital publications. While the National Library was awaiting a home, it started life in the Faculty of Advocates building.

The National Library is one of Scotland's most precious national institutions.

Work began on the George IV Bridge site in the 1930s, but due to the Second World War, most of the building work took place in the 1950s. Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the new National Library building in Edinburgh in July 1956.

A cornerstone of our nation's cultural life for a century

Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, said: "The National Library of Scotland has been a cornerstone of our nation's cultural life for a century, preserving and sharing Scotland's remarkable and complex history. For 100 years, through successive Acts of Parliament and the continued support of the Scottish Government, it has safeguarded our written and recorded heritage, from ancient manuscripts to the digital content of today. With more than 50 million items in its expert care, freely accessible to everyone, the National Library is one of Scotland's most precious national institutions. Supporting our languages, reflecting our communities, and protecting our past and present for all those who will come after us. As we mark this centenary, we celebrate not just a building or a collection, but a century of protecting our national library and sharing the knowledge, creativity, and memories of Scotland for generations to come."

Now in its 100th year, the National Library will use its centenary as a platform to celebrate and promote libraries of all kinds, beginning with a nationwide campaign encouraging people to support and champion their local libraries. Speaking about the importance of libraries, author and Centenary Champion Val McDermid, said: "My parents couldn't afford books but they understood they were the passport to better life chances than they'd had. But it's not just writers who have their doors opened to the wider world by libraries. Engineers, lawyers, builders, artists, geographers, mathematicians, musicians... the list is endless. Libraries open windows that let us all fly."

Outwith: National Library around Scotland

The National Library will be hosting celebrations at its Edinburgh home on George IV Bridge, beginning on 28 March 2025 with a Curtain Raiser event. To mark the Library's centenary with communities around the country, selected treasures from the collections will be leaving Edinburgh to go on display outside of the central belt. 'Outwith: National Library around Scotland' will begin in Aberdeen Art Gallery in September 2025 with a loan of an early edition of Scottish secular music, John Forbes' *Songs and Fancies*, published in Aberdeen in 1682.

This display will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Art Gallery's concert venue, the Cowdray Hall. Celebratory events for both cultural centenarians are due to

be announced in the summer, along with an engagement programme taking place in and around Aberdeen Central Library with National Library colleagues and partners.

Then in January 2026, Mary Queen of Scots' last letter will leave the National Library for the first time in a generation to go on display in the heart of the new Perth Museum, close to the Stone of Destiny. Written by Mary Queen of Scots the night before her execution on 8 February 1587 to her brother-in-law, Henri III of France, this nationally prized item was last publicly exhibited at the Library's George IV Bridge building in 2017 where queues formed to see the item during its one-day display. Shetland Museum and Archives will also be taking part in the 'Outwith' programme, with island-related loans and other activities taking place from late March 2026.

To find out more about what's on at The National Library of Scotland in its centenary year, please visit: www.nls.uk





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One Scots Greatest Escape

By: Neil Drysdale



A scene in The Great Escape.



On the night of March 24, 1944, scores of Allied POWs crept their way through a cramped tunnel ten metres underground in one of the most incredible escapes of World War II, the 'Great Escape' from Stalag Luft III, in Nazi-occupied Poland. Scottish RAF pilot Alistair Thompson McDonald was amongst the 76 escapees and one of the few to make it home. Eight decades on Neil Drysdale remembers these brave men who were unlike any other Tom, Dick and Harry.

He was the Scot who survived one of the most famous prison break-outs of the Second World War. Indeed, there can't be many people who haven't watched *The Great Escape* since it was released in 1963, not least to marvel at Steve McQueen's motorbike stunts. Yet, the real-life story of the 76 Allied PoWs, who devised a daring scheme to tunnel their way out of Stalag Luft 3, was every bit as nail-biting. And it had a tragic climax when the Nazis murdered 50 of the escapees after they had been recaptured and only three eluded their captives and gained their freedom.

Alistair Thompson McDonald

Alistair Thompson McDonald was among those in the escape bid and despite his liberation being short-lived, he used his wits to escape yet again and safely returned to Blighty. Yet mystery still surrounds this tough-as-teak character, born in Bishopmills near Elgin in 1907. There are precious few photographs of him, nor tributes to his heroism. And, when he was killed in a commercial air disaster in 1965, there was only one brief obituary which failed to mention that he had been part of the original Great Escape. So, who was this enigmatic Scot with a passion for flight? The youngest of three children - with an older brother and sister, Ian and Mildred - Alistair grew up in Moray and relished playing rugby and golf, but had a restless streak. At just 18 years old, he enlisted in the Tank Corps of the Territorial Army, to whom he gave his occupation as apprentice land surveyor.

However, three years later, he set off on a P&O steamship called the *Naldera* bound for Malaya. At this point, he listed his occupation as civil engineer and worked on a tea plantation. But, soon enough, Alistair was back in Britain and, continuing this tale of the unexpected, became the manager of the Regal Cinema in Southport in the mid-to-late 1930s. We would probably still be in the dark about his activities after he joined the RAF in 1940, but for the meticulous research carried out by Scottish history teacher, Bill Robertson, whose own great-grandfather, John Conway, was also in Stalag Luft 3. Bill was fascinated by how McDonald lied about his

age - claiming he was born in 1913 - so that he would be eligible to take part in flying missions against the Luftwaffe.

Craggy little Scot

He was transferred to Coastal Command where he flew Spitfires on reconnaissance sorties and rapidly made a name for himself for two distinct reasons. Firstly, he was a "hell of a pilot". Secondly, he had the reputation of being a "craggy little Scot" who wouldn't take nonsense from anybody. In March 1942, McDonald's fortunes changed in the space of a few hours. On his way back from a mission, his unarmed plane was intercepted by a Messerschmitt (German fighter aircraft). He bailed out successfully in the last minutes before the aircraft crashed, but was picked up near a farmhouse and taken prisoner by the Germans.

He was escorted to the Luftwaffe HQ in Amsterdam and met up with a few other RAF prisoners. Then, after being kept in solitary confinement for 18 days, he was interrogated three times and transferred to Stalag Luft 3. Mr Robertson said: "As a POW, he took part in nine escape tunnels and what he described as 'an abortive gate crash.' He also attempted to get out by cutting through the wire along with a New Zealand pilot called Ernest Clow. McDonald was active on the escape committee. According to the camp history, he was one of the prisoners who was involved in receiving and sending coded letters back to the UK. Prisoners asked, in coded letters home, for particular items that would help them to escape such as maps, money, and clothes."

Tom, Dick and Harry

There was no shortage of ingenuity as the mass escape initiative cranked into gear. Cigarette packets were deployed to carry vital information. Radios were manufactured from basic materials. In 1943, under the leadership of Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, known as Big X, the PoWs started digging three large tunnels known as Tom, Dick and Harry. These were 30ft deep in an attempt to avoid German detection and were designed to run more than 300ft into woods outside the camp. The prisoners

begged, borrowed and stole equipment that enabled them to line the tunnels with wood and ventilate the tunnels with primitive air conditioning. They also made civilian clothes, maps, compasses and German passes to help them escape. Everything went well for several months, but tunnel Tom was discovered by the Germans in September 1943 just as it had reached the woods. Dick was abandoned for storage, but the prisoners pushed on with Harry, which was ready in early 1944. And, on the night of March 24, 76 RAF personnel broke out of the camp. A few hours later, it was being discussed by Hitler and the German High Command. The Fuhrer demanded retribution. But what was McDonald doing amid this clamour?

In his testimony about the murders of the escapees, he subsequently confirmed he was one of the later men out of the tunnel which the prisoners codenamed Harry. Most of the PoWs headed to the nearest railway station, intending to catch trains from there, but several of their comrades resolved to see how far they could travel on foot. Unfortunately, the knee-deep, slushy snow forced the escapers onto the roads. Cold, hungry and disorientated, the majority were rounded up fairly quickly. McDonald said: "I was carrying false papers and wearing civilian clothes. I was recaptured by the Landwacht, who made a half-hearted attempt to beat me up."

A sad postscript

These men were now in a desperate position. Hitler had been outraged on discovering the extent of the breakout and demanded swift retribution. It was obvious to many in the German ranks that their adversaries would never accept their incarceration and keep striving to escape: the latter was in the Allies' DNA. Mr Robertson said: "The



Alistair Thompson McDonald with a younger officer.

men were interrogated by the Gestapo and those who survived recalled the threats made against them. Other officers were told they would be made to disappear. For his part, McDonald said: 'I was able to eat my false papers and sew RAF buttons onto my greatcoat (which meant he was regarded as a military prisoner); and this may have been the reason why I was not shot'. After he was returned to the camp, McDonald was eventually evacuated along with the rest of the men to begin marching west ahead of the advancing Russians. After reaching Marlag Nord near Bremen, he managed to escape while disguised as a labourer, using clothes he had acquired from a French woman. She had supplied him with 'a complete outfit of French worker's clothing'. Suitably attired, he made his way to British lines where he was eventually picked up by a unit of King's Own Scottish Borderers from the 52nd Lowland Division in April 1945."

He was able to return to Blighty to celebrate VE Day the following month and must have imagined life would never be as tumultuous again. But there was a sad postscript. For a while, he thrived on civvy street and rejoiced at being reunited with his sister and brother, the latter of whom had served with the RASC in the Middle East and Italy. McDonald married in 1947 and lived in Edinburgh, where he and his wife had three children and ran a self-service laundry business in Leith. But, as Bill said: "In October 1965, he left Edinburgh to fly to London Heathrow aboard a Vickers Vanguard operated by BEA. There was reduced visibility due to fog at Heathrow. After two unsuccessful attempts to land, the pilot requested to circle the airport hoping for a break in the fog. At this point, the pilot and co-pilot made a series of errors, and the Vanguard hit the runway about 2,600 feet from the threshold. All 36 people on board were killed. McDonald's participation in the Great Escape - which had recently become a big-budget success - barely merited a mention. The *Coventry Evening Telegraph* described him simply as a 'Battle of Britain pilot'. He was shot down over Holland and helped organise a mass escape from a German prisoner-of-war camp."

And that was it. Thankfully, 60 years after his death, this hero is finally being remembered.



Alistair Thompson McDonald (in the dark-coat) talking to two war correspondents.



Steve McQueen in the film The Great Escape.

Tartan of the Month

Scottish Wildcat Conservation Tartan

The Scottish Banner is pleased to be offering the Tartan of the Month series highlighting a variety of different, unique and colourful tartans from around the world which are registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans in Edinburgh. The Scottish Register of Tartans was established by an act of the Scottish Parliament in November 2008 and promotes and preserves information about historic and contemporary tartans from Scotland and throughout the world. Text and image use are courtesy of the Scottish Register of Tartans (SRT).

This tartan was designed to raise awareness of the work that Saving Wildcats (UK) and Saving Scottish Wildcats (USA) are doing to prevent the extinction of one of Scotland's most iconic species. The thread count includes numbers that reference significant dates - 1988, the year that wildcats became legally protected and 2020, the start of the Saving Wildcats project. The shades used represent the colours of the Wildcat and the charity's brand colours of orange and dark green.

This tartan (SRT #14635) was designed by Kinloch Anderson and registered in January, 2025.

Ken your country

This Dundee landmark was designed by Kengo Kuma.

How well do you know Scotland? To test your knowledge, we have assembled ten fun questions on its geography, history and culture. So, get your map of Scotland out and start, but if you get stumped, the solutions can be found underneath. Good luck!

- 1) Which Scottish city hosted the world's first international football match ever?
- 2) What is the most northerly city in the UK?
- 3) Opened in Dundee in 2018, which £80m building was designed by the architect of Tokyo's new Olympic stadium Kengo Kuma?
- 4) What links Edinburgh with the main city of Otago in New Zealand?
- 5) Which Scottish driver was Formula 1 world champion 3 times between 1969 and 1973?
- 6) What was the name of the Scottish rebellion against English rule in 1296, led by William Wallace?
- 7) Which Scottish actor played James Bond in seven films?

- 8) What Islands in Scotland are best known for some of the oldest and best-preserved Neolithic sites in Europe?
- 9) Which stick-and-ball game resembling hurling, is popular in the Scottish Highlands?
- 10) Where would you find a chanter and a drone?

Answers

- 1) The first official international football match was played in Partick, Glasgow between Scotland and England. Officially recognised by FIFA as the first international football match ever played, held on St Andrews Day 1872.
- 2) Inverness, dubbed the Capital of the Highlands, and the regions only city.
- 3) The V&A Dundee which is the first design museum in Scotland and the first Victoria and Albert museum outside of London.
- 4) Dunedin, New Zealand is the sister city of Edinburgh, Scotland. The two cities have been officially linked since 1974. Dunedin is the Gaelic name for Edinburgh.
- 5) Sir Jackie Stewart.
- 6) The First War of Scottish Independence lasted from 1296 to 1328.
- 7) Sir Sean Connery.
- 8) Skara Brae, located on the Orkney Islands is often referred to as the "Scottish Pompeii" due to its remarkably well-preserved stone houses, furniture, and passageways, offering a unique glimpse into Neolithic life over 5,000 years ago.
- 9) Shinty is a team sport played with sticks and a ball.
- 10) On bagpipes.

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IN SCOTLAND TODAY



The tallest tree at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden, which was 166-years-old, was destroyed by high winds during Storm Éowyn. Photo: Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Storm Éowyn batters Scotland

Storm Éowyn (pronounced 'Ay-oh-win') tore through Ireland and Scotland on January 24th causing damage and shutting down transportation. ScotRail suspended all trains across the country, and all ferries were also cancelled. Shops, businesses and schools were closed as the rare red weather alert was the day prior for potential threat to life in what has been called a 'once-in-a-generation storm'. The storm – described as one of the strongest to hit the UK in the past decade by the Met Office – brought widespread damage to large parts of Scotland with the majority of the Scottish population being in the red warning area which included all of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Red Warnings were issued for central and southwestern areas of Scotland, these were accompanied by wider Amber and Yellow Warnings for wind, as well as Yellow Warnings for rain and snow.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist Paul Gundersen said: "We reserve the issuing of Red Warnings for the most severe weather which represents a likely danger to life and severe disruption, and that is the case with Storm Éowyn. The strongest winds and most significant impacts are likely in Northern Ireland and central and southwestern parts of Scotland within the Red Warning areas, where winds could gust 80-90 mph quite widely for a time, and potentially up to 100 mph for exposed coasts in particular." Sadly a 19-year-old was killed after his car was struck by falling tree in Ayrshire. Over 4.5 million people across Northern Ireland and Scotland received an Emergency Alert on their phones the evening before the storm hit. Emergency Alerts is a UK government service that will warn you if there's a danger to life nearby. It was the largest real-life use of the tool to date.

University of Glasgow Gaelic professor discovers lost Scottish Gaelic manuscripts



A University of Glasgow professor has uncovered 56 historically significant Gaelic manuscripts that had been missing for over half a century. The collection, which includes a significant number of important 18th and 19th century documents, was discovered by Professor Rob Ó Maolalaigh while examining a private collection. The manuscripts, which had been missing since the late 1960s, were originally part

of the collections of two prominent Gaelic scholars: the Rev Dr Donald MacNicol, minister of Lismore (1735-1802), and Rev Dr Alexander Irvine, minister of little Dunkeld (1773-1824), both notable collectors of Gaelic poetry and song. Professor Ó Maolalaigh, Professor of Gaelic based at the University's School of Humanities | Sgoil nan Daonnachdan said: "These manuscripts represent a vital piece of Scotland's literary and cultural heritage. Their absence created a significant hiatus in Gaelic scholarship over an entire generation, and their rediscovery opens up exciting new opportunities for research and teaching."

Among the collection's highlights is a unique notebook containing songs by the eighteenth-century Sutherland poet Rob Donn Mackay, recorded from his daughter Janet's recitation in Edinburgh on December 22, 1800 in the presence of Duncan Ban MacIntyre (1724 – 1812) one of Gaelic's most renowned poets. The manuscripts also include previously unexplored correspondence, sermons in both Gaelic and English, and an extensive collection of Gaelic poetry ranging from Ossianic verse to contemporary works of the period. Following their discovery in November 2022, Professor Ó Maolalaigh worked to ensure the manuscripts' safe return to their rightful home at the National Library of Scotland, where they are now available for consultation by researchers. The collection comprises 33 manuscripts from the McNicol Collection and 23 from the Irvine Collection.

This discovery represents a significant contribution to Scottish cultural heritage and opens new avenues for research in Gaelic studies. The manuscripts are now accessible to scholars and researchers at the National Library of Scotland's reading rooms, ensuring their preservation for future generations. Professor Ó Maolalaigh added: "These rediscovered manuscripts fill a significant gap in our primary resources for these periods. I am delighted that scholars and students will now be able to access them once again for research and scholarship. They will enable us to gain further valuable insights into the role Gaelic and Gaelic scholars contributed to the broader Enlightenment period."

Edinburgh declares Scotland's first visitor levy



Edinburgh City Councillors have formally agreed to introduce Edinburgh's Visitor Levy scheme. Hailed as a 'historic moment for Edinburgh', the decision was taken during a special meeting of the Council held in January. From 24 July 2026, a 5% fee will be applied to the cost of overnight accommodation in Edinburgh, capped at five nights in a row. Businesses will need to apply the levy to any advance bookings made as of 1 October 2025 for stays on or after 24 July 2026. The levy is projected to raise up to £50 million a year once established, for the city to invest in

protecting, supporting and enhancing Edinburgh's worldwide appeal as a place to live and visit. The final proposals for the scheme have been updated to provide accommodation providers and booking agencies with extra time to prepare systems for advance bookings ahead of next summer's launch.

Responding to the decision, Council Leader Jane Meagher said: "What an historic moment for Edinburgh. Introducing this ground-breaking visitor levy means realising a once in a lifetime opportunity to invest tens of millions of pounds towards enhancing and sustaining the things that make our city such a great place to visit – and live in – all year round. The scheme has been many years in the making and I'm grateful to Council officers, businesses and residents who have helped shape it, every step of the way. It's introduction is declared today with a huge amount of backing, not least from local residents. At all stages we've listened to and taken account of the views of industry and other stakeholders. It's in this spirit that we've also extended the amount of time hoteliers and small businesses will have to prepare for the changes that are coming in. It's vital that we continue to work closely as we get ready to launch this scheme and deliver the many benefits it is going to bring. We've always said this is a city fund and spending decisions need to be taken with a whole city mindset, and we'll soon be establishing a Visitor Levy Forum with an independent Chair."

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act was passed in the Scottish Parliament in May 2024. It received Royal Assent in July 2024. The legislation allows councils in Scotland to tax overnight accommodation if they wish to do so. Glasgow City Council is currently holding a public consultation over also introducing a 5% visitor levy on overnight stays in Scotland's largest city.

Scotland's population projected to grow



Scotland's population is projected to grow to 5.8 million people by the middle of 2047 according to new statistics from National Records of Scotland. The latest report shows that, based on recent trends, people moving to Scotland would continue to fuel population increase. Statisticians project a population increase of 4.4% in the ten years from the middle of 2022. The longer-range projection to 2047 is for a 6.2% increase.

Without migration, Scotland's population would fall as deaths are projected to continue to outnumber births. NRS head of population and migration statistics Andrew White said: "The country has an ageing population, and this is projected to continue. It is projected that there will be around one third of a million more people aged 75 and older by mid-2047, as the 1960s baby boom generation gets older. Our projections suggest that by the middle of 2047 people of working age will make up 64% of the population, just a little less than now. In the same time period, the number of young

people aged 0 to 15 is projected to fall by 9% or almost 80,000 people. The number aged 16 to 29 is projected to fall by 6% or more than 57,000 people."

The population of the UK as a whole is projected to grow more quickly. By mid-2047 it's projected to be 76.6 million, up 13.2% on the 2022 figure. According to these figures Scotland's share of the UK population could fall from 8.1% to 7.6% in the same time period. The national population projections are produced on a consistent basis across the UK. They are commonly used for planning and providing public services, fiscal forecasting and developing policy for the future. They are based on past trends and assumptions of future levels of fertility, mortality and migration. They are not intended as a forecast or prediction.

Support for Scottish women's football booming



Women's Sky Sports Cup Final 2024 – Rangers v Partick Thistle. Image courtesy of Scottish Women's Premier League.

A new study shows a fifth of clubs in the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) have doubled their average attendance at match-days between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons. The survey, by the University of Edinburgh's Academy of Sport, also finds 83 per cent of respondents were highly satisfied with their match-day experience at SWPL games. Researchers used focus groups, surveys and social media analysis to assess what fans enjoy and want from SWPL football. Findings show that positive attitudes towards women's club football is significantly higher and online engagement has more than doubled between 2021 and 2024. The report reveals more than 2 million people watched the SWPL on television or online during the 2023/24 season. The most recent data for the current season also points to that number rising significantly in 2024/2025. Some 55 per cent of respondents were female and 53 per cent were aged 41 and above.

Ebru Köksal, Chair of Women in Football UK, said: "This report reinforces what I have long championed - women's football is on an exciting trajectory, and this report shows just how engaged and passionate SWPL fans are. The surge in attendance, online engagement, and positive match-day experiences highlight the sport's immense potential. The increasing numbers reflect a deeper cultural shift, proving that when women's football is given the platform it deserves, the appetite for the game flourishes. Now is the time to build on this success, ensure sustainable investment, and expand opportunities to amplify the sport's impact even further." The Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) was formed in 2022 to help to further accelerate the professional development and opportunities for women and girls in Scottish football.

Push to secure HMS Unicorn's future



Project Safe Haven Visitor Centre Concept. Photo: LDN Architects.

HMS Unicorn, one of the most historical ships in the world, has taken a major step towards securing her future thanks to a vital £796,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

As wider fundraising continues to raise a crucial additional £650,000 by April 2025 to unlock grants worth £10 million, the Heritage Fund grant will support urgent preservation work with a potential further £3.3 million later in 2025. The initial award from The National Lottery Heritage Fund will go towards the total cost of moving and securing HMS Unicorn within Dundee's repaired East Graving Dock, ensuring a stable environment for the long-term preservation

of Scotland's oldest ship. This move is an essential part of the Unicorn Preservation Society's vision of Project Safe Haven, an ambitious plan to help transform Dundee's historic docks with a purpose-built visitor centre that will enhance community engagement and celebrate HMS Unicorn's maritime heritage.

Work has already begun to safeguard the future of the 200-year-old vessel, run as an accredited museum and popular visitor attraction, returning strength and robustness to HMS Unicorn's hull. This will be achieved by cutting edge structural reinforcement, improving her resilience at her current berth and readying her for her move to the East Graving Dock.

A symbol of Dundee's rich maritime history

To realise the pressing need to move HMS Unicorn to Dundee's dry East Graving Dock, the Unicorn Preservation Society urgently need to match The National Lottery Heritage Fund's investment by April 2025. This will unlock some £10 million of strategic grants required to finance this work, including from Tay Cities Region Deal. The necessary and vital work includes the emptying of the dock, repairing it with a new caisson and making it structurally sound and refilled to receive HMS Unicorn floating over a supportive cradle. The delivery of this work is expected to support further funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund of up to £3.3 million, ready for the next stage of Project Safe Haven.

Executive Director, Matthew Bellhouse Moran, said: "This incredible pledge from The National Lottery Heritage Fund is a massive boost to our fundraising efforts; finance is urgently required to secure the future of this 200-year-old ship for future generations to enjoy. This grant is both a recognition of HMS Unicorn's immense historical significance and a vote of confidence in our vision to secure her future, namely Project Safe Haven. However, the clock is ticking. We urgently need the support of individuals, businesses, and organisations to raise the finance needed for the next stage of Project Safe Haven, moving HMS Unicorn into Dundee's East Graving Dock, ensuring she doesn't succumb to the wear and tear of time. £650,000 is required to unlock

£10 million of strategic grants for the next stage of works to save this national treasure and create an inspiring legacy for future generations. Without support, HMS Unicorn, a symbol of Dundee's rich maritime history, may not survive."

Caroline Clark, The National Lottery Heritage Fund Director for Scotland, said: "HMS Unicorn is a spectacular surviving relic of our maritime heritage. Holding nearly 200 years of history within its hull, it is not only the oldest ship in Scotland but one of the oldest in the world, and incredibly one of the last remaining warships from the age of sail, still afloat. We are extremely proud to support the Unicorn Preservation Society to take their ambition plans forward. Making vital progress to creating a permanent Safe Haven for this historic vessel and developing its potential as a major heritage attraction for Dundee and Scotland."

Project Safe Haven is one of the most ambitious maritime conservation projects in Scotland. To donate to help the Unicorn Preservation Society raise the necessary £650,000 by April 2025 to unlock £10 million of critical funding, please visit: www.hmsunicorn.org.uk



HMS Unicorn.

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Skerryvore

Celebrating 20 years of Scottish traditional music

The Scottish Banner speaks to Skerryvore's Alec Dalglish

Skerryvore at Floors Castle. Photo: Kevin Kerr.

Scotland's Skerryvore are bringing their reinvented traditional Scottish sounds and high energy performances to Australian audiences. Lead singer Alec Dalglish took time to speak to the Scottish Banner about the bands 20th anniversary celebrations, the importance of live performance and Scottish traditional music.

For those that do not know can we begin by you telling us what Skerryvore means?

AD: Skerryvore is a famous lighthouse, which is a few miles off the coast of the Isle of Tiree in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland. Tiree is where two of our band members are from, the brothers Daniel and Martin Gillespie. The band started with the four of us, the two Gillespie brothers, me and Fraser West the drummer. And that is kind of what we're known as, two of us are from Livingston in West Lothian and two from Tiree. Tiree is a very beautiful and interesting place to be from, and Livingston's not quite as interesting a place to be from, so we are kind of known as being a Tiree band.

To be honest we had been a band kind of casually, and doing it for fun for a while and then we started to get a bit more serious and we were getting ready to release our first album. We literally needed to call ourselves something because we were going to have an album and we really honestly couldn't think of anything until another friend of ours suggested, why not Skerryvore? It is a really majestic and interesting name that really links us to Tiree. So, we went ahead and chose Skerryvore, and that has worked well for us. However few people really know what we're saying when we say it, which is part of the mystic of the name.

Skerryvore has won 3 times Scotland's Live Act of the Year award. For those who have yet to see the band live what can they expect at your shows?

AD: Our music's kind of a fusion of a few things. We obviously have the traditional Scottish element that's kind of there in the sense that we do some sets which are completely instrumental with bagpipes, fiddles, accordions and whistles and stuff like that, which is fused with a more contemporary pop/rock sound.

At the same time, our songs are essentially a kind of pop or rock sound which incorporate an element of the Scottish sound through them as well. These are the kinds of things we try to fuse together in a sort of stylistic sense and our live shows certainly showcase that.

Skerryvore have grown from their early, four-piece, ceilidh band origins and now perform as an eight-piece outfit. Can you tell us how traditional Scottish music has played a part in the Skerryvore story?

AD: That's how we started. We were a ceilidh band to begin with, so we played all music from the repertoire of traditional music. We didn't even write our own tunes at that point and that definitely sort of forged what we're like as a band.

We always said that we as a band would keep our roots and we might do things that are more pop sounding because we like pop music, but we will always have that West Coast of Scotland ceilidh band as part of our DNA. That's what we really are and how we started, and that traditional sound is definitely really important to us.

The band's song *Take My Hand* was featured during the finale of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2024, how did that make you feel to have your music incorporated into one of Scotland's most iconic live events?

AD: We were incredibly proud and as the songwriter, I was just chuffed to bits that our music was being put on such a huge platform. It's a really big deal, people all over the world that know something about Scotland seem to know that there's this big thing called the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. It is such an event and such a spectacle, and it attracts people from all over the world. So, we were really proud to have our music featured and be a part of such a incredible Scottish global production.

Trad music is incredibly popular today around the world. What is it about incorporating traditional instruments and rhythms to your modern sound that you feel has found so much appeal?

AD: I kind of wonder that sometimes myself, because it does seem to be true that our Scottish traditional music and Irish traditional music, really does capture people. I think if someone brought certain types of other native music it just wouldn't be quite as popular. Like English folk music, for example, is not necessarily anywhere near as popular as the Irish and Scottish stuff is. I think partly it is the rhythmic sound about Celtic music because it was all originally to be danced to. It's literally in the rhythm of the tune for you to be able to dance to it, which is always appealing to humans, I suppose.

And on a really specific musical sense, it's almost always pentatonic the scale made-up with five notes, and really that that sort of scale is ingrained into people. It is a really primal sort of scale and most of our tunes are made up of that, so it is really easily musically accessible to most people's ears. Traditional songs also tell a great story and there's loads of songs that tell a really interesting history about Scotland and Ireland. All the horrible things that have happened to people, people can understand the heartache through the music.

2025 is the bands 20th anniversary and you have a special concert lined up at Floors Castle in the Scottish Borders. This will be your biggest show to date, can you tell us more about this milestone performance?

AD: We are really excited for it. We did a similar thing, a special a one-off event for our 10th anniversary and that really sort of shocked us as to how big it gets and it kind of grew arms and legs. We thought we were going to manage to get a couple of thousand people there and ended up with five or six thousand. We are really excited to do something like that again and make it even bigger. We have grown through the years and to be able to make this happen is special for us. I think we are also just kind of shocked that the time has gone by so quickly and I can't believe



Skerryvore. Photo: Elly Lucas.

that we're all old enough to have been in a band for 20 years as adults-it doesn't seem quite right! We are incredibly grateful to have fans that have supported us for that long and kept the whole thing going. And it's an exciting prospect to do our own show to that scale and on home ground.

The early days of Skerryvore had the band working out whether the west coast ferries could actually deliver them from one island to another in time for the next gig. Today the band travel across the UK and Europe and are regular visitors to North America and are now returning to Australia. How important is touring for the band and how much do you enjoy connecting with your international fans?

AD: The touring part is a major part of us as a band. We have made albums, but we really are mostly a touring band. That is where we feel like we can get things across the best, we have always really struggled, especially stylistically, with what we do to capture that energy on an album. So, I think it's really important for us to be a touring band and get to connect with

Scottish communities all over the world and it is amazing just how homesick Scottish people get abroad and how proud they are to be a part of our shows.

Our congratulations to you Alec as you won Composer of the Year at the recent MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards.

What does it mean to you to be recognised at Scotland's most prestigious night of the traditional music calendar?

AD: I was delighted and surprised, to be honest. I am so used to being part of the band, and that's usually where all the success is, it's all about Skerryvore. It's not usually about individuals, so it was nice to have something that was in my own name that I'd been given an award for. The Scots Trad Music Awards is a really special night that is important to the Scottish music community. It's not really just like a wee token, it's kind of a big deal for those who are part of it, I have always written our music by myself, and I am chuffed to have been recognised in this way.

Skerryvore are touring Australia now. For full details see: www.skerryvore.com/tour



Alec Dalglish. Photo: Elly Lucas.



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THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - The Advocate's Library (known as the National Library of Scotland since 1925) opened by its founder, Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate in Edinburgh. **1682**

1 - Actor David Niven was born, roles included *The Pink Panther* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Niven had claimed several times that he was born in Kirriemuir, but according to his birth certificate, was born in London. **1910**

1 - Scots voted in favour of Devolution, but failed to reach the required 40% of the population in favour of implementing it - due to 36% of the electorate not voting. **1979**

1 - Authorities confirm the first case of the global COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland, the index case of coronavirus being a traveller having returned from Italy. **2020**

2 - King Robert II born in Paisley, the first monarch of the House of Stewart. He was the son of Marjorie Bruce, daughter of Robert the Bruce, and Walter, High Steward of Scotland. Robert acted as regent three times during the reign of his uncle, David II, and acceded to the throne in 1371. He died in 1390 and was succeeded by his son Robert III. **1316**

3 - Robert Adam, architect, died. Among his many works were Culzean Castle, Fort George, The Town House, Inveraray and Glasgow Trades Hall. **1792**

3 - Alexander Graham Bell born Edinburgh. Bell was scientist, inventor, engineer, and innovator who is credited with patenting the first practical telephone and died in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1922. **1847**

4 - Forth Rail Bridge opened by Prince of Wales. The bridge spans the Firth of the River Forth to link Fife to Edinburgh by railway, was the world's earliest great multi-span cantilever bridge, and remains one of the longest. It is considered a symbol of Scotland, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **1890**

4 - Jim Clark, Formula I World motor racing champion, born Fife. **1936**

5 - King David II born. **1323**

5 - Flora Macdonald, who helped to save Prince Charles Edward Stewart during his flight after the defeat at the Battle of Culloden, died in Kingsburgh, Skye (in the same bed in which Bonnie Prince Charlie had slept during his escape). **1790**



5 - The *Maid of the Loch* paddle steamer was launched, she was built in Glasgow and was the largest ever vessel to be built for an inland waterway in Britain, this was also the last of a series of steamers to sail on Loch Lomond, dating back to 1818. **1953**

6 - King James II decreed in an Act of Parliament that there should be regular target practice and military parades and that "football and golf be utterly cried down and not used". This was the first time that the games had been mentioned in Scottish documents. **1457**

6 - Scotland's first radio broadcast took place. The broadcast took place from Rex House, 202 Bath Street in Glasgow. By the summer of 1924, stations had opened in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and, by the eve of the Second World War, over 90% of the Scottish population were served by BBC transmitters. **1923**

7 - The world's first golf club was founded in Edinburgh. The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers held their first meeting on Leith Links and petitioned the Edinburgh Council to provide a silver club for competition. **1744**

8 - Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows* born in Edinburgh. **1859**

8 - The *Oor Wullie* cartoon strip first appeared in *the Sunday Post*. **1936**

8 - The creators of Widdle, a Shetland dialect version of the Wordle game, announce the game's withdrawal following legal threats from *The New York Times*, owners of the original game. **2024**

9 - David Rizzio, Mary Queen of Scotland's secretary, murdered by Lord Ruthven in the Palace of Holyrood. **1566**

9 - *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith published. **1776**

9 - Scottish faith healer John Alexander Dowie died in Illinois, USA. Edinburgh born Downie believed in the power of prayer only for curing ailments and banned followers from eating certain food, drinking and smoking. **1907**

10 - St Kessog, the Irish missionary in the Lennox area and southern Perthshire, was killed. Kessog was Scotland's patron saint before Andrew, and his name was used as a battle cry by the Scots. Son of the king of Cashel in Ireland, St Kessog is said to have worked miracles, even as a child. **560**

10 - Birth of James Herriot, author of *All Creatures Great and Small*. **1916**

11 - The birth of Binkie Stuart, the child film actress, in Kilmarnock. Born Elizabeth Alison Fraser, she was hailed as Britain's answer to Shirley Temple and enjoyed huge fame as a child star. **1932**



11 - Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, died. **1955**

12 - The last salmon was caught in the River Kelvin. The salmon population in the river had been in decline due to the rise of industrial pollution in the area. However, in February 1999, after £43 million of investment, salmon again spawned in the river and anglers were allowed back. **1852**

12 - Miner's strike at Polmaise Colliery. It is the first mine in Scotland to witness a walkout of its workers. **1984**

13 - Death of poet and historian John Barbour, author of *The Bruce* recounting the history of King Robert I. **1395**

13/15 - Blitz of Clydebank by German Luftwaffe. **1941**

14 - The birth of Scottish lawyer, Dame Margaret Kidd. Not only was Kidd Scotland's first woman advocate, but she was also the first woman King's Counsel in Britain and the first woman to plead before the House of Lords. **1900**

14 - First television programmes broadcast in Scotland. 2024 marks Stirling's 900th anniversary as a Royal Burgh. **1952**

14 - Stirling is granted city status in the United Kingdom by the Queen to mark her Golden Jubilee. **2002**

15 - Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh founded Advocates' Library "equipped with works written by lawyers". **1689**



15 - The end of two nights of heavy German bombing of Clydebank. The Clydebank Blitz, as it became known, destroyed a third of the buildings of Clydebank, leaving 35,000 people homeless. A thousand German bombers were used in the raid and the devastation of the town was so complete that only eight buildings remained entirely unscathed after the bombing. To further compound Clydebank's misery, only two enemy planes were shot down. **1941**

16 - King Robert the Bruce convened his first parliament, at St Andrews. **1309**

16 - Death of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, chief of the Fraser clan. He developed the Commando force in the British army and was active in the Dieppe Raid (1942) and the D-Day landings (1944). **1995**

16 - Scientists identify a gene variant that is known to increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and trace it to people with Orkney Island heritage, more specifically those with ancestry on the island of Westray. **2023**

17 - Treaty of Edinburgh between King Robert I and Edward III which recognised Scotland's independence, ending the 30 years of Wars of Independence. **1328**

17 - Scotland won Rugby "Grand Slam" at Murrayfield Stadium- the first time in 59 years. **1984**

18 - Earl of Leven raises a Border regiment to hold Edinburgh against the Jacobites. It later becomes the King's Own Scottish Borderers. In 2006, the Kings Own Scottish Borderers Regiment was amalgamated with the Royal Scots to form the Royal Scots Borderers, which became the 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland. **1689**

19 - King Alexander III died after crossing the river Forth to Fife at Queensferry. **1286**

19 - David Livingstone, missionary and explorer, born Blantyre. **1813**

20 - King Malcolm IV born. **1141**



21 - National Gallery of Scotland opened in Edinburgh. It is located on The Mound in the heart of the capital. **1859**

21 - Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh opened, becoming the home of Scottish rugby. Scotland marked the occasion by beating England 14-11 and winning their first Grand Slam. Unfortunately, the Scottish rugby team have only managed to repeat this success twice more, in 1984 and 1990. **1925**

22 - Neil Gow, first of a famous family of fiddle players and composers, born at Inver, near Dunkeld, Perthshire. **1727**

22 - Last fully public hanging in Scotland - that of Joseph Bell in Perth. **1868**

23 - The Free Church of Scotland settlement at New Edinburgh, New Zealand was founded under Rev Thomas Burns, a nephew of the poet Robert Burns. The settlement later became Dunedin, one of the largest towns in the country, and one which still retains a distinctive Scottish character. **1848**

23 - Roddy McMillan, the Scottish stage and TV actor, was born. His credits include the TV series, *The View From Daniel Pike*, and the play, *The Revellers*. However, he will be most fondly remembered for his portrayal of Para Handy, the captain of the *Vital Spark* in the much-loved television series of the 1960s. **1923**

24 - Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland on the death of Queen Elizabeth I and the succession of King James VI of Scotland. **1603**

24 - An estimated one million people watched the *Queen Mary* leave the Clyde for the first time. However, the sailing did not quite go to plan: despite extensive dredging having taken place, the liner ran aground twice on the way to Gourrock. **1936**

25 - King Robert I ("The Bruce") crowned at Scone. Bruce was crowned by Bishop William de Lamberton in front of the banner of the kings of Scotland, wearing royal robes which had been hidden from the English. **1306**

25 - The Commercial Bank of Scotland was founded in Edinburgh by John Pitcairn, Lord Cockburn and others. **1810**

26 - Car driving tests introduced for the first time. **1934**

27 - King Robert II crowned at Scone. **1371**

27 - King James VI died at Theobalds Park, Hertfordshire and buried at Westminster Abbey. Succeeded by his son, King Charles I. **1625**

27 - Scottish chemist Sir James Dewar, inventor of the Dewar Flask, which later became known as the Thermos flask, died. **1923**

27 - David Coulthard, Grand Prix racing driver born in Twynholm, Dumfries and Galloway. **1971**

27 - Humza Yousaf is elected as the Leader of the Scottish National Party and subsequently, First Minister of Scotland. He is the youngest holder of the position in history at just 37 years of age upon entry to office, the first from an ethnic minority background, the first Muslim to hold the office and the first First Minister with facial hair. **2023**

28 - King Robert the Bruce captured Berwick on Tweed. **1318**



28 - The Scots Guards Regiment was formed when King Charles I issued a commission to the Marquess of Argyll, Chief of Clan Campbell, authorizing him to raise in Scotland a regiment of 1,500 men. The King's 'Lyfe Guard of Foot' became the Scots Guards. **1642**

28 - The Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill, a bill to legalise assisted dying in Scotland and drafted by Liberal Democrat MSP Liam McArthur, is introduced into the Scottish Parliament. **2024**

29 - The Royal Society of Edinburgh incorporated by charter. **1783**

29 - Longannet, Scotland's last deep coal mine, closed, ending centuries of mining tradition. The Fife mine was put into liquidation after being flooded on the 23rd, when a dam separating old workings from new seams under the river Forth collapsed. **2002**

30 - Edward I of England sacked the Scottish town of Berwick. The English army destroyed the town and decimated the population of around 15,000. This act was retaliation for the widespread carnage perpetrated in the north of England, and what Edward considered to be the treacherous stab in the back of the Scottish-French alliance. Berwick was rebuilt by Northumbrians, and the Scottish-English border forever after remained north of this town. **1296**

30 - King James I captured by English near Flamborough Head on his way to France. **1406**

31 - General Patrick Gordon was born. Gordon led a remarkable life. Upon leaving Scotland, he entered the Russian army as a major and soon rose to become a close advisor to Russian Tsar, Peter the Great. Gordon rose to the rank of General-in-Chief and was made an admiral of the Russian navy. **1635**

31 - Scottish Regalia (crown, sceptre and sword) saved from invading army of Oliver Cromwell by James Granger, minister at Kinneff, Aberdeenshire, after they had been smuggled from Dunnottar Castle which was under siege. **1652**



31 - Buchanan Galleries shopping mall opened to the public in Glasgow city centre, part of Glasgow's Style Mile shopping precinct. **1999**



This January the National Galleries of Scotland kicked off the 250th birthday of much-loved artist, Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775- 1851), with a special celebration. Visitors to the treasured Turner in January exhibition marvelled at a new selection of over 30 watercolours that had never been seen before in Scotland, in an exchange with the National Gallery of Ireland. The most famous British artist of the 19th century, Turner's career spanned over 50 years and the Turner in January exhibition is a popular annual tradition that has been taking place since 1901, as David McVey explains.

The Scottish National Gallery occupies an imposing and complex building rising out of Princes Street Gardens, with the castle soaring nearby and trains rattling past from Waverley Station. The building dates from 1859 but has frequently been modernised and freshened up. As recently as 2023, several bright new galleries for displaying Scottish art were opened. The Gallery works closely with the adjacent Royal Scottish Academy, the impressive classical building that opens out onto Princes Street. In the National you can marvel at paintings by Titian, Rembrandt, Constable, Gainsborough, Monet and van Gogh alongside local lads like Raeburn and Allan Ramsay. For the pleasure of viewing these works that are of quite incalculable monetary value, you won't pay a penny. This is the National Gallery. It belongs to us, and so do the works of art. And the same is true of the satellite galleries; the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in nearby Queen Street and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, a short bus journey away.

The Vaughan Bequest

Of course, charges sometimes apply when special exhibitions are held that bring in works of art from other places and cost a great deal to put on. However, there's one annual show that you can view at no additional cost; the Vaughan Bequest, featuring watercolours by the great English artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851). At the beginning of January these 38 works are put on display and then at the end of the month put in storage again. Why?

To find out we need to know a little more about the man behind the Vaughan Bequest. Henry Vaughan was born in the London borough of Southwark in 1809. He came from a wealthy philanthropic Quaker family: his father was a manufacturer of hats - in an era when everybody wore hats. Vaughan inherited a huge fortune from his father and never needed to work. When he died in 1899 he left £237,000; unimaginable wealth for the time, even though, for much of his life, he had tried to give away as much as he could.

Vaughan also spent considerable sums of money assembling a breathtaking collection of art. He acquired and displayed (in his home at Cumberland Terrace near Regent's Park) works by Rembrandt and Michelangelo and Rubens, and was particularly known for his holdings of works by Constable and Gainsborough. But he also collected contemporary art - and he was a contemporary of Turner. In particular, he accumulated a large number of Turner's watercolours, buying them from art dealers. It's likely that he never actually met Turner. Much of his collection he bequeathed to public galleries. Of his Turner watercolours, six went to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, 23 to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square (although they are now displayed in Tate Britain), 31 to the National Gallery of Ireland, and the biggest hoard, 38, to the National Gallery of Scotland. Turner visited Scotland several times and found a great deal of inspiration here.

Turner watercolours should be treated especially carefully

Vaughan looked after his art and his bequests stipulated that the Turner watercolours should be treated especially carefully. Yes, they should be freely accessible to the public, but they should only be exhibited in the dark, gloomy month of January to protect them from the harsher lights of spring, summer and autumn. And that's why his bequest is displayed in the Scottish National Gallery for only a month at the gloomiest time of year.



The examples bequeathed to Edinburgh cover a wide geographical range of subjects from Italian lakes to English rivers. There are views of historic cities such as Durham, Venice and Heidelberg and also harbour and seafaring scenes, as you'd expect from the artist of The Fighting Temeraire. Among the Alpine scenes are three views of the Falls of Rhine at Schaffhausen, but there is also an affecting view of the humble Falls of Clyde and two scenes from near Sir Walter Scott's home of Abbotsford. Perhaps the most striking and Turneresque of the Scottish watercolours is Loch Coruisk, Skye which communicates the wild grandeur of the scene with characteristic drama and colour. Oddly, there are no views of Edinburgh in the SNG's bequest.

In January 2025, the Edinburgh Vaughan Bequest exhibition was different. To mark the 250th anniversary of Turner's birth, items from the Edinburgh bequest were displayed in the Irish National Gallery in Dublin, while examples from the Irish collection (which includes a watercolour of Edinburgh from 1801 that has never been displayed in the city before) appeared in the Edinburgh exhibition. The Edinburgh show took place in one of the rooms of the Royal Scottish Academy building.

The Dublin collection actually includes a view of Edinburgh, so it seemed a rather fitting exchange. So popular was the 2025 Edinburgh exhibition that the waiting time to even get into the room was sometimes ninety minutes or more! Obviously, the appeal of seeing a different selection from the usual had brought out the crowds. I tried to visit on two occasions but I had meetings to attend and couldn't spare the waiting time. Disappointing, perhaps, but it was also encouraging to see so many people excited about seeing art.

Next January, the Scottish National Gallery's own Turner watercolours from the Vaughan Bequest will all be back on display. If you're in Edinburgh then, they will provide a great escape from the bleak January streets. But I recommend that you get there early...



THE HAYLAND GATHERING

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**Saturday
12th April
2025**

Street Parade - 10am - Lachlan S

Riverina Highland Dancing Titles

Highland Muscle

Pipe Bands

Athletics

Stalls

Clans

Ceilidh with Auld Alliance

**Hay Oval,
NSW**

IN THE CELTIC KITCHEN

Leek soup

**Ingredients:****For the vegetable stock:**

1 carrot, grated
1 onion, grated
2 sticks celery, grated
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
salt and pepper
stalks from a small bunch of parsley

For the leek soup:

olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
200g/7oz floury potatoes, peeled and chopped into cubes
350g/12oz celeriac, peeled and chopped
1 sprig thyme, leaves only
4 leeks, finely sliced
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 small bunch chives, finely chopped

Method:

To make the stock, put the grated carrot, onion, celery and garlic into a large heatproof bowl. Add a pinch of salt and pepper and pour over 1 litre/1¾ pints of boiling water. Set aside to steep for 10-15 minutes while you prepare the soup. Heat a large heavy-based saucepan or casserole

dish over a medium heat. Add a dash of oil and, once hot, add the onion, potatoes, celeriac and thyme leaves. Cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened. Strain the stock through a sieve into the pan of celeriac.

Simmer gently for 10-15 minutes until the celeriac is nearly tender. Add the leeks, cover the pan and cook for a further 5-7 minutes, or until the leeks are wilted and tender but still bright green. Remove from the heat and blend in batches until really smooth. (Blend for a minute or longer for a really velvety texture.) The soup can be stored in the fridge or frozen at this stage. Transfer the blended soup to a clean pan. Reheat the soup if necessary, taste and season with salt and pepper to taste. To serve, spoon into bowls and garnish with chopped chives.

Scotch pancakes

**Ingredients:**

115g/4oz. self-raising flour
2 free-range eggs
100ml/3½fl oz. milk
2 tbsp. icing sugar, sifted
sunflower oil, for brushing
115g/4oz. blackberries, to serve
maple syrup, to serve

Method:

Preheat a large heavy-bottomed frying pan. Place the flour into a bowl and make a well in the centre. Break in the eggs and whisk, adding a little milk as you go, to form a smooth batter, then whisk in the icing sugar. Brush the pan with a little oil then add large spoonfuls of the batter.

Cook for 1-2 minutes, until small bubbles appear on the surface, then turn over and cook for another 1-2 minutes, until lightly golden. Divide the pancakes between two warm serving plates. Top with the blackberries, drizzle over the maple syrup and serve.

Irish beef stew

**Ingredients:**

1½kg/3lb 5oz. stewing beef, cut into cubes
175g/6oz streaky bacon
3 tbsp. olive oil
12 baby onions, peeled
18 button mushrooms, left whole
3 carrots, cut into quarters or 12 baby carrots, scrubbed and left whole
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp. chopped thyme
2 tbsp. chopped parsley
10 cloves of garlic, crushed and grated
425ml/15fl oz. red wine
425ml/15fl oz. chicken or beef stock

For the roux

50g/2oz butter
50g/1¾oz flour
champ, to serve

Method:

Brown the beef and bacon in the olive oil in a hot casserole or heavy saucepan. Remove the meat and toss in the onions, mushrooms and carrots, one ingredient at a time, seasoning each time. Place these back in the casserole, along with the herbs and garlic. Cover with red wine and stock and simmer for one hour or until the meat and vegetables are cooked. To make the roux, in a separate pan melt the butter, add the flour and cook for two minutes.

When the stew is cooked, remove the meat and vegetables. Bring the remaining liquid to the boil and add one tbsp. of roux. Whisk the mixture until the roux is broken up and the juices have thickened, allowing to boil. Replace the meat and vegetables, and taste for seasoning. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with champ.

Irish soda bread

Ingredients:

170g/6oz. self-raising wholemeal flour
170g/6oz. plain flour
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. bicarbonate of soda
290ml/½ pint buttermilk

Method:

Preheat the oven to 400F/200C/Gas 6. Tip the flours, salt and bicarbonate of soda into a large mixing bowl and stir.

We celebrate our Celtic cousins of Cornwall, Wales and Ireland who will be celebrating St David's, St Piran's and St Patrick's Day this month. People in Wales and those of Welsh origin celebrate the life of their patron saint, St David, and the Welsh culture on March 1st. Saint Piran's Day is celebrated each year on 5th March as the national day of Cornwall. The Irish Saint Patrick will be celebrated across the world on March 17th by the Irish community. Also, March 4th is Pancake Day! As our Welsh cousins would say, Iechyd da or good health!

Make a well in the centre and pour in the buttermilk, mixing quickly with a large fork to form a soft dough. (Depending upon the absorbency of the flour, you may need to add a little milk if the dough seems too stiff but it should not be too wet or sticky.)

Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Form into a round and flatten the dough slightly before placing on a lightly floured baking sheet. Cut a cross on the top and bake for about 30 minutes or until the loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a wire rack.

Welsh Rarebit

**Ingredients:**

50g/2oz. flour
50g/2oz. butter
250ml/9oz. strong beer, warmed
250g/9oz. strong cheddar, grated
2tsp. English mustard
2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
black pepper
4 large slices granary bread

Method:

In a small saucepan melt the butter and make a roux with the flour. Cook for a couple of minutes, stirring to prevent the roux from burning. Stir in the warm beer by degrees, until you have a thick but smooth sauce. Add the grated cheese and stir until melted. You should now have a thick paste. Mix in the mustard and Worcestershire sauce and season well with black pepper.

Lightly toast and butter the bread, then pile up the cheesy mixture on each slice. Cook under a hot grill for a few minutes, until browned and bubbling.

Cornish Garden

Ingredients:

50ml/2 oz dry gin
25ml/1 oz. elderflower liqueur
75ml/2.5 oz. apple juice
15ml/0.5 oz. lime juice
To garnish:
Mint sprig
Cucumber ribbon

Method:

Add all ingredients to a shaker with lots of ice and shake until deeply chilled. Double strain into a high-ball glass filled with ice. Garnish with a cucumber ribbon & a sprig of mint.

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The exceptional women who illuminated Scotland's past *Marion Campbell, Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray, and Dorothy Marshall*

By: David C
Weinczok



Glenvoidean Cairn in Bute
excavated by Dorothy Marshall.



The hillfort of Dunadd seen
across the Mhòine Mhór.

Popular depictions of archaeology would have you believe that it's the quintessential man's game – look no further than the archetype of Indiana Jones, or the renowned stories of the men who discovered the likes of the city of Troy, Egypt's Valley of the Kings, or the Sutton Hoo burials.

However, right from the field's inception women have been among the most influential and important contributors to it. Far too often these formative figures have been overlooked, and it was not until well into the 20th century that many professional societies even permitted women to join as members. Scottish archaeology, and the related field of ethnography, has benefitted from the grit and genius of pioneering women working at all levels since day one. Three in particular have emerged again and again in my own research into Scotland's past, and it is they I wish to celebrate here – Marion Campbell of Argyll, Lady Evelyn Murray of Perthshire, and Dorothy Marshall of Bute.

Marion Campbell (1919 – 2000)



Marion Campbell and Mary
Sandeman at home in Kilberry Castle.

Kilmartin Glen is among the most significant archaeological landscapes in northern Europe, and no one has done more to reveal and revel in its wonders than Marion Campbell. Marion's own life is a history book in itself. She served in the Second World War and suffered an injury from the bombings of the Clydebank Blitz, which left her in often acute pain for the rest of her days. This did not stop her from carrying out tireless manual excavations of archaeological sites throughout Kilmartin Glen and Mid Argyll, often in very hard to access places. She served as a district councillor for the Scottish National Party for twenty years, and her donation of various discoveries established the invaluable collection now held at Kilmartin Museum.

Along with Mary Sandeman, with whom Marion lived at Kilberry Castle for forty years, she identified over 350 sites of interest in the first systematic survey of Kilmartin Glen. Their work together created a blueprint for future research in Mid Argyll, including investigations into key sites like the hillfort of Dunadd, the Nether Largie standing stones, and the extraordinary Neolithic rock art panel of Achnabreac. Marion possessed not a gift for scholarship, but of lyrical writing. Her description of the

vast peat bog of the Mhòine Mhór as "...a quaking salt-bog barely above the tidemark" has stayed with me ever since reading it, as has the description that follows: "...the name has the sough of winds in it. Veils of sleet drive over withered grasses and hang in cold walls of glass around the highest rock." She wrote several children's books, a rare feat for someone so involved in academic research. Each morning, Marion woke early to feed the animals in her garden, who she referred to as "the friends". If we all aspire to even half the talent, determination, and kindness which Marion embodied, the world would be a much better place, indeed.

Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray (1868 – 1940)



Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray.

Lady Murray's life on paper sounds a fairytale. Daughter of the 7th Duke of Atholl based at Blair Castle, had she walked a conventional path for someone of that status she could have led a very charmed and untroubled life. However, her fierce will and intellect compelled her to completely eschew the social expectations of the time – marriage, childbearing, and the social graces – in favour of adventure and obsessive study. In all seasons and weathers, the young Lady Murray could be found wandering Highland Perthshire in search of stories told in Gaelic, which was then fading from everyday use. She collected 241 tales told by native speakers, many of which had never been written down before. Her work is a veritable treasure trove of ethnology, folklore, and historical memory, some of it preserving a local dialect of Gaelic which does not survive anywhere else.

In her teens she suffered a severe illness, likely typhoid, whose symptoms followed her throughout her life, leading to periods of severe physical and mental distress including partial paralysis in her legs and arms. Still, Evelyn refused to limit the hours of her studies, often working late into the night at breakneck pace. She worked so assiduously that, fearing for her eyesight, her caretaker (for her parents had long since given up trying to reign her in) forbid her from reading and writing by gaslight – which she continued doing anyway. My own lived experience has given me great admiration for Evelyn's impassioned spirit. Chronic health issues have sometimes waylaid me, but despite this I have visited thousands of historic

sites across Scotland and have put a few oral historians' tales to writing for the first time. A calling is a calling, and whenever I need a little inspiration in the face of limitations, I think of Lady Murray and all that she achieved in spite of them.

Dorothy Marshall (1900 – 1992)



Dorothy Marshall in Bute.

Dorothy Marshall is to archaeology in Bute what Marion Campbell is to it in Kilmartin Glen – definitive. Her parents, Jean Binnie and John Marshall, encouraged all their daughters to pursue higher learning in the sciences. Dorothy's sisters, Margaret and Sheina, were awarded OBEs, and Dorothy was awarded an MBE in 1981.

Dorothy served as a 'Lumberjill' in the Women's Timber Corps during the First World War before studying archaeology in London and excavating in Cyprus, Jericho, Petra, and Jerusalem. She served as a multi-time President of the Buteshire Natural History Society, delivered Meals on Wheels well into her 80s, and participated in excavations in Bute right into her very final years. Her most famous excavation was of the cist burial of a high-status woman on

the island of Inchmarnock off Bute dated to around 2,000 BCE, whom Dorothy dubbed the 'Queen of the Inch'. Her grave yielded a stunning jet necklace, a type of status symbol found in elite graves throughout Argyll.

Other excavations include the Norse houses at the hillfort of Dunagoil in southwest Bute, the Neolithic cairn of Glenvoidean in rugged northwest Bute, and numerous finds of the ever-enigmatic prehistoric carved stone balls. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, of which Dorothy was a Fellow, awards the Dorothy Marshall Medal every three years to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to Scottish archaeology.

Many in Bute today fondly remember Dorothy, for she was no ivory tower-bound researcher but an active and beloved member of the community. This was illustrated to me most vividly while conducting research at Bute Museum in Rothesay. I asked curator Anne Spiers, who knew Dorothy personally and worked closely with her, to describe her legacy. "The spirit of Dorothy is very much with us here", she said. "She loved the idea of what future technologies would make possible, excavating a site without laying a finger on it. Any time something is found here in Bute, I wonder what Dorothy would make of it." When I asked Anne what Dorothy's favourite archaeological site in Bute was, she gave an answer which will ring true for anyone who finds inherent joy and meaning in their vocation: "Whichever one she was at, at the time!"



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Clan Baird Commander

Richard Baird of Rickarton, Ury and Lochwood
Rickarton House, Stonehaven, Scotland.

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Clan Bell North America

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Membership is invited from Clan Chisholm descendants of all spellings of the name (Chisholm, Chisolm, Chism, Chisum, Chisam, etc)
Contact: Kim Polley OAM

PO Box 84, Longford, Tasmania, 7301

Email: kim.polley13@gmail.com

www.clanchisholmsociety.org/public/AUSmembership.php



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Email: Ih100@tpg.com.au

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Visit our website for more information on the Society, our Clan Museum and Struan Kirk in Scotland, our DNA project, and to locate a branch near you.



Website: www.donnachaidh.com

E-mail: admin@donnachaidh.com

Facebook: Official Clan Donnachaidh page (Robertsons, Reids, Duncans and others)



Clan Galbraith Society

Includes name variations such as Galbreath, Culbreath, Gilbraith etc.

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www.clangalbraith.org



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Membership inquiries should be directed to:

Donald E. Bruce	Polly A. (Bruce) Tilford, Secretary
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Stillwater, Minnesota 55082	www.familyofbruceinternational.org



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CHIEF Grant Davidson of Davidston cordially invites to membership all who bear one of the Clan Names, and all who can trace their descent from an ancestor bearing the name Davidson or one of the Septs shown on the member application form available from the Clan's Facebook Group link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/360160657504253/> or by contacting the Hon. Secretary:

Dennis Hill, PO Box 519
Baulkham Hills NSW 1755
E:dhill1@bigpond.net.au, P: 0431 527 662



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Website: www.elliotclan-usa.com



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All MacGregors and Septs of our clan are invited to join the Clan Gregor Society Est 1822 If you live in Australia or New Zealand, please contact our clan representative:

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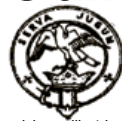
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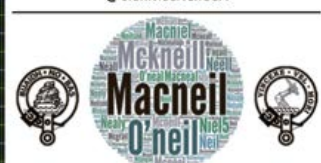
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Contact: Secretary Mal Nicolson

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Clan Macpherson Association

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African.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +265 999 512 620

Canada. Denise Lagundzin
Canada.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +1 519 507 4465

Europe. Bodo Bernd Schmitz
Europe.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
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The **Clan Macpherson Museum** is located in Newtonmore, Inverness Shire PH20 1DE, at the junction of the A86 and B9150 It is open from 1st April to 31st October. Ph + 44 1540 673 332. See <http://www.clan-macpherson.org/museum/>



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If your surname is MacRae, or you are descended from a person having the surname MacRae (any spelling) or that of a Sept of the Clan then you are eligible to join our Society.

Australian Contact: Roslyn MacRae 0412 291 054
email: clanmacraeausnz@gmail.com

NZ Contact: Sue Tregoweth

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Australia: Amanda Maitland
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12 Settlers Way, Westleigh, NSW, 2120

New Zealand: Judette Maitland judette@xtra.co.nz
33 Disley Street, Highbury, Wellington 6012. NZ

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Membership cordially invited from those who are connected with this great Clan, i.e., Morrison, Morison, Gilmour, Gilmer, Gilmore, Murrison or descendants of eligible name.

www.clanmorrison.net

 **Clan Ross in Australia**

for information contact Commander Des Ross
 (By appointment David Ross Bt Chief of Clan Ross and Balnagowan)

We would be pleased to hear from anyone with Ross Clan heritage and interest.

Contact: Commander Des Ross at
 lonepiper.ross@gmail.com M 0403 830 853


 THE AMERICAN-SCOTTISH FOUNDATION, INC.

Through our platform of projects and events ASF helps share and strengthen the heritage and cultural message of Scotland's past and future. A bridge between the United States and Scotland.

www.americanscottishfoundation.org


 **The American-Scottish Foundation**

Scottish Gaelic Society of Victoria
 Founded in 1905
www.scottishgaelicvictoria.com

Scottish Gaelic Language Classes
 Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:30 pm during school terms at Kathleen Syme Community Centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton and on Zoom.

Scottish Gaelic Choir of Victoria
 Tuesdays 7:00 - 9:00 pm during school terms at Kathleen Syme Community Centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton and on Zoom.

Enquires: scottishgaelicvictoria@gmail.com

Clan Muirhead Society

 A NON-PROF. CORP.
 Muirhead, Muirhede, Morehead, Moorhead and all Variant Names

www.clanmuirhead.com

Rev. Ret. Chev. Raymond L. Morehead, GOTT, FSA Scot,
 Chief Officer Elect Clan Muirhead Society
 Email- raymondktj@msn.com or raymond@clanmuirhead.com

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Michael Ross, President
 Nancy Ross-Anderson, VP Membership
 18865 Cooper Street, Apple Valley, CA92308
membership@clanross.org
info@clanross.org

www.clanross.org


Caledonian Society of WA Inc.

Promotes Scottish Culture and Traditions in Perth, Western Australia

For further details contact John: 0427 990 754
 Email: caledoniansocietyofwa@gmail.com

www.caledoniansocietyofwainc.com


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We would be pleased to welcome as a member, anyone interested in their Clan heritage with the names; Munro, Monro, Monroe and the septs, Foulis, MacCulloch, Dingwall, MacLulich and Vass.

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www.clanmunroassociation.org.au
memberships@clanmunroassociation.org.au


Clan Sinclair Australia

Membership and inquiries from all Sinclairs, Sinclair Septs and Sinclair descendants.

For further info contact
 President: WayneSinclair 0417 146 174
 Secretary : Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263
 E: clansinclairaustralia@hotmail.com

www.clansinclairaustralia.com


Hunter Valley Scots Club Inc

Promotes and supports all forms of Scottish culture in Newcastle, Hunter Valley and surrounding areas.

Members and interested people are welcome to attend activities such as Burns Night, Caledonian Night, St Andrew's Day, and other social functions.

Web: hvscots.org Email: hunterscots@gmail.com
 P.O. Box 34, Kotara NSW 2289

Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group
 Supporting the Scottish Community in Victoria

Suite 87, 139 Cardigan St Carlton Vic 3053

Email: resource_centre@scotsofaustralia.org.au
 Website: <https://scotsofaustralia.org.au>
 Facebook: [Facebook.com/ScotsofVictoria](https://www.facebook.com/ScotsofVictoria)

Discover Your Nesbitt/Nisbet Ancestry



ibyteit.org
nesbittnisbet.org.uk


Clan Sutherland Society in Australia Inc.

Contact: M Williams, Secretary

clansutherlandaustralia@gmail.com
<http://goldenvale.wixsite.com/clansutherlandaustralia>
 Facebook: Clan Sutherland Society in Australia

The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne Inc.



> Promotes interest in the works, life and milieu of the Scottish Poet Robert Burns
 > Celebrates Scottish Culture
 > Conducts Annual Burns Supper, Poetry Afternoon & Pleasant Sunday Afternoon

For Membership Information contact:
 Secretary: Melissa Ventre - 0405 182 458
 Email: rbcmelb@gmail.com

St Andrew Society of W.A.



Promoting Scottish dancing, singing, literature & other cultural activities.

For further information contact:
secretary@saintandrew.org.au
<https://saintandrew.org.au/>
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 Greenville, KY 42345
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The Scottish Australian Heritage Council



Membership is welcome from all of Scottish descent.

For information please contact
members@scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

Find us on Facebook
www.scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

Victorian Scottish Union Inc
 Established 1905

Umbrella group representing the interest of Scottish Clans and Societies in Victoria.

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Clan Donald Victoria	Maryborough Highland Society
Clan Grant	Scottish Country Dance Society of Victoria
Clan Hay	Robert Burns Scottish Festival Camperdown
Clan Macdonald of Yarraville	The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne
Clan Sinclair	Warrambool & District Caledonian Society
Geelong Scottish Dance	Warrambool Highland Dance

Chief : Mr Grant McKinna
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Contact details:
 Email: secretary@victorianscottishunion.com
 Mobile 0438 584 930
 Address: PO Box 116, Cobden, Victoria 3266
www.victorianscottishunion.com

Top Robert Burns relics revealed



Burns Cottage.

Less than a year after launching the Robert Burns collection online, the National Trust for Scotland has revealed the five relics of the bard's life that have most captured people's attention. In Spring 2024, the conservation charity launched a new portal giving unprecedented access to more than 2,500 historic items in its Robert Burns collection, including manuscripts, archives and artefacts, which are held in store for their long-term preservation and protection. The Trust cares for the largest collection of Burns artefacts, as well as the cottage he was born in, where the first Burns supper was held after his death.

The most interesting treasures in Burns' life

After nine months of global access to some of the most interesting treasures in Burns' life, the Trust has revealed the five most viewed items, which give a sense of the public's fascination with Robert Burns the man and how he lived his life.

The top five items are:

- Wooden Box containing Jean Armour's wedding ring, alongside two other rings: this box contains the wedding ring of Jean Armour, Burns' wife, flanked on each side by two other rings, one containing a lock of Burns' hair and a lock of Jean's hair.
- Pair of Burns' socks: a pair of blue woollen knitted socks with the initials 'RB' at the top, believed to have been worn by Burns. The size eight socks date to around 1770 to 1796.
- *Auld Lang Syne*: a fragment of the manuscript of one of Burns' most famous songs, known and sung the world over, dating from around 1793. Only six manuscript copies of this song are known to still exist.

- Letter to George Sutherland: dated 31 December 1789, the letter to theatre-owner George Sutherland encloses a 34-line poem for Sutherland to use as a prologue at his New Year performance of the Dumfries theatre company in January 1790.
- Lock of Highland Mary's hair: the lock of Mary Campbell's hair was preserved in a Bible, tied to a piece of dark grey card.

The personal objects that resonate with people

Caroline Smith, the National Trust for Scotland's Operations Manager at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, said: "This list features some of my personal favourites from our collection. It seems to be the personal objects that resonate with people, and that they help them form a connection with Burns the man, the ordinary guy who wore socks, just as much as the famous words he wrote. The box of rings is an amazing item as it was quite popular at the time to keep a lock of hair, but it's very special that the rings have survived all these years. Jean's wedding ring is a precious item symbolising Burns' everlasting love, and it's hard not to feel the sentiment behind this. I think the initialled socks are incredible - just imagine your socks being kept and displayed in a museum almost 230 years after your death! There's something very humbling about them - they have clearly been worn and therefore mended a lot by someone, probably Jean, with a lot of care. It's a simple object but when I see pictures of Burns amongst society in Edinburgh, I imagine him wearing these socks. *Auld Lang Syne* is probably Burns' most famous song, and one of the collection's hero objects. With only six manuscript copies of the song still known to exist, it is a significant piece of Scottish cultural heritage and one of great international importance too. The letter

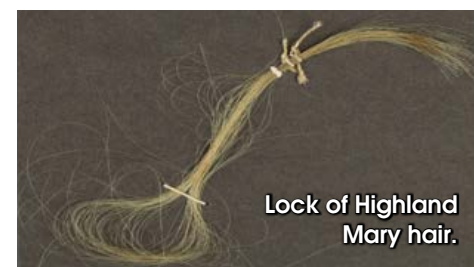
to Sutherland is most significant because of the bird doodles on the back, which I think shows Burns' playful side. The Highland Mary story appeals to the romantic side of the poet. During a time when he had been banned by Jean's father from seeing her, Burns forged a relationship with Highland Mary Campbell and had made plans to emigrate to Jamaica with her. However, the successful publication of the *Kilmarnock Edition* changed his plans, and he stayed in Scotland and married Jean. Highland Mary's lock of hair had been preserved in the Bible that she had given to Burns when they are reported to have exchanged Bibles on the banks of the River Ayr. It is said that Burns still thought very fondly of Mary, who inspired several poems. *Thou Lingerin' Star* was written around the third anniversary of Mary's death."

Preservation of Burns' legacy

The Burns online collection was made possible thanks to the support of a member of the Trust's Patrons' Club and by donations from the National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA. The Trust cares for other important sites in the life of Robert Burns, including the Bachelors' Club and Souter Johnnie's Cottage, where it is

undertaking ongoing conservation projects to preserve these historic buildings. It will cost £330,000 to complete these works and the Trust requires £130,000 not currently covered by funding. Donations from generous supporters will directly assist the vital preservation of Burns' legacy at these iconic locations. The 18th century Gregg Fiddle is also part of the Burns collection, which was recently heard by 7,000 music fans at Hoolie in the Hydro in Glasgow and will be played in front of thousands more in New York City this April as part of Tartan Week's Hoolie in New York event.

For more information about these works, or to make a donation, please visit [nts.org.uk/burnsappeal](https://www.nts.org.uk/burnsappeal). The Robert Burns collection can be found online at <https://www.nts.org.uk/collections/robert-burns-collection>.



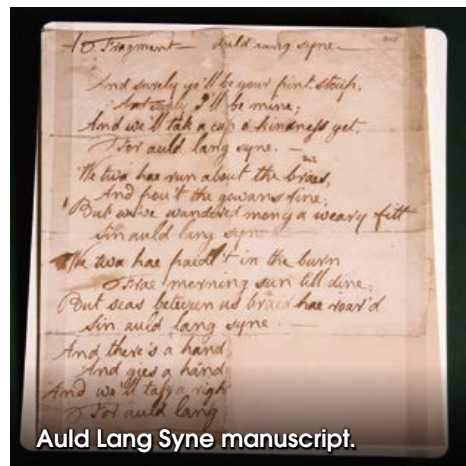
Lock of Highland Mary hair.



Burns sock.



Wooden Box containing Jean Armour's wedding Ring.



Auld Lang Syne manuscript.

Clan MacLennan, honoured clan of the Melbourne Highland Games and Celtic Festival

Clan MacLennan Australia are proud to announce Clan MacLennan has been nominated as Honoured Clan at the Melbourne Highland Games and Celtic Festival on 23rd March at Eastfield Park, 119 Eastfield Road, Croydon, Victoria. Carol Davis, Clan MacLennan Australasia's Chief's Commissioner has been appointed Chieftain of the Day. Calling all MacLennans/McLennans to gather at the Melbourne Highland Games & Celtic Festival on Sunday 23rd March and show their Clan pride! Visit the Clan tent and meet Clan Genealogist, Bruce McLennan, who'll be there to answer your family

history questions. Clan MacLennan Australia will also have a special offer for new members who join our Clan association on the day. Wear your MacLennan tartan with pride as you to participate in the Parade of Clans as the Honoured Clan. Dum Spiro Spero!

For full details on this month's Melbourne Highland Games and Celtic Festival, the Chieftain of the Day and Honoured Clan please visit: www.melbournehighlandgames.org.au



Carol Davis and Chief Ruairidh MacLennan of MacLennan.

Bundanoon Highland Gathering

**Saturday
April 5th 2025**

ADMISSION PRICES FOR 2025:

Online Sales and at the gates

Adults: \$25 Family: \$60 Children: \$10 Concession: \$20
Groups: \$20 (Minimum 20 tickets - maximum 50 tickets per order)

Tickets: www.ticketebo.com.au/bundanoon-highland-gathering/brigadoon-2024

**Inaugural Brigadoon-Pipe Bands
NSW Solo Piping and Drumming Competition**

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www.brigadoon.org.au

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MARCH 2025

After a huge success in 2024, the “twilight contest” is back, brought to us by Ballarat Grammar School.
Info: www.pipebandsaustralia.com.au/victoria

Three-time winners of Scotland's "Live Act of the Year" award, Skerryvore, will embark on an Australian tour in February and March. With a mix of bagpipes, fiddles, accordions, and whistles, alongside guitar and vocals, underpinned by driving bass, drums and keys, Skerryvore represent the best in contemporary Scottish traditional music. Info: www.skerryvore.com/tour

1-March 23, Various locations
Laughs galore and quirky observations as Bruce Fummey explains how Scotland Made the World. This show will deliver more jokes than you'd get from the YouTube videos, and some might even make you blush, but you'll still leave having learned about Scotland's role in the world while you laughed. Shows in Perth, Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide. Info: www.brucefummey.co.uk/shows.aspx

Scottish comedian and globally-renowned funnyman Danny Bhoym returns to Australia. Fresh from his completely sold out run at Edinburgh Fringe, he brings his latest show 'Dear World...' to our shores. Info: www.bohmpresents.com/current-events/show/danny-bhoym-7

Listen or play some pipes today! This is a day initiated by The Bagpipe Society to celebrate the world's many bagpipes and piping traditions and what is known the world over as the sound of Scotland!

The Melbourne Celtic festival hits the road for a national tour, bringing a dynamic lineup of Celtic entertainment to venues across Victoria, NSW, and Queensland. Info: www.melbournecelticfestival.com.au

The MSFC is back in 2025 for another Ceilidh! These often sold-out dances are underscored by live music and called by an experienced dance caller. All dances are called with gender neutral terms and are beginner friendly at Hawthorn Arts Centre. Info: https://tr.ee/-6ijqu_2Db

Scots on The Rocks Chaotic Ceilidhs are filled with energetic dances that (almost) anyone can do. At Abraham Mott Hall, 15A Argyle Place, Millers Point. Info: Robert: 0435 154 433 or www.sotr.org.au/chaos

Gather your clan and to celebrate everything Celtic on St Patrick's Day.
Info: www.melbournecelticfestival.com.au

A fun taster free event. Learn some of the famous ceilidh dances and some easy set dances. We will be dancing walkthrough style, no fancy steps, at BDSAC Hall 13s Fordham Ave. Info: www.scdvictoria.com

Metropolitan Melbourne's only Scottish festival with pipe bands, Clans, entertainment, Celtic dancers and more at Eastfield Park. The Games are hosting the 2025 International Heavy Games with Scottish heavy event competitors and judges coming from around Australia and overseas.
Info: www.melbournehighlandgames.org.au

Join the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
and dance Scottish. Ceilidh Dancing at the Irish
Club with live music by the Adelaide Ceilidh Band
at Irish Club Hall, 13 Carrington St.
Info: www.rscdsadelaide.org.au/events/ceilidh-at-the-fringe

25-29, Sydney, NSW
This course is for new dancers who wish to learn steps and basic dance formations that are the building blocks of Scottish Country dancing. You will be introduced to Jigs and Reels and will learn a series of lively, beginner friendly dances, at Glebe Town Hall, 160 St Johns Rd. Info: www.trvbooking.com/CVOCZ

After selling out at Perth Fringe World, 100% Scottish Comedy is coming to Melbourne! This show is an unapologetic celebration of Scotland's unique culture, wit and charmingly quirky sensibilities. We're talking about a comedy experience that's as robust as a good single malt whisky, as hearty as a bowl of haggis and as sharp as a Highland blade, at Elephant and Wheelbarrow 94-96 Bourke St. Info: www.topshelfcomedy.co.uk

Pipe Bands Victoria is delighted to continue their partnership with Haileybury, one of Australia's leading schools, announcing the 2025 Pipe Band contest at Haileybury.
Info: www.pipebandsaustralia.com.au/victoria

Australia's largest Scottish gathering with pipe bands, entertainment, Clans, dancers, parade and stalls in the beautiful NSW Southern Highlands. A great family day of Scottish celebration. Info: www.brigadoon.org.au

Commencing with a street parade along Lachlan St (Cobb Highway) to Hay Oval for massed pipe bands, Riverina Highland Dancing Titled, Highland Muscle Heavy Events Competition, stalls and food vendors, athletic and children's events, shortbread competition, finalised with a ceilidh (dinner/dance) at Hay Services Club and fireworks. Info: www.facebook.com/haylandgathering or haylandgathering@gmail.com.

The Queensland Highland Pipers Society, in conjunction with the Lower Clarence Scottish Association, are proud to bring the 2025 International Piping Recitalist, Stuart Liddell, MBE, to Brisbane for a performance at the Queensland Multicultural Centre, Main St, Kangaroo Point. Stuart is one of the most gifted pipers in the world today. Info: www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1350374

The Maclean Highland Gathering Solo Piping Competition takes place on Easter Friday afternoon, with the full events including pipe band competitions, Highland dance competitions, massed bands, Scottish vendors and more on Saturday at Maclean Showground.
Info: www.macleanhIGHLANDGATHERING.com.au

This show is an unapologetic celebration of Scotland's unique culture, wit and charmingly quirky sensibilities. We're talking about a comedy experience that's as robust as a good single malt whiskey, as hearty as a bowl of haggis, and as sharp as a Highland blade, at Loft West End. Info: www.topshelfcomedy.co.uk

MARCH 2025

A celebration of Scotland in the heart of Wellington,
featuring pipe bands, entertainment and more.
Info: www.facebook.com/pipesintheparkWGTN

Pipe band competition held the weekend prior to the National championships in Invercargill, at Queenstown Recreational Ground, 1 Memorial Ground. Info: otago.centre@rnzpbpa.com

2-15, Various locations

Laughs galore and quirky observations as Bruce Fummey explains how Scotland Made the World. This show will deliver more jokes than you'd get from the YouTube videos, and some might even make you blush, but you'll still leave having learned about Scotland's role in the world while you laughed. Shows in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Info: www.brucefummey.co.uk/shows.aspx

The event is great spectacle for the Southland community to come and enjoy the call of the pipes, the beat of the drums and the swirl of the tartans. Last time around 7,000 people either participated or attended the event. The event will be livestreamed and watched by a global audience. At the Cricket Grounds, Queens Park. Info: www.invercargillpipeband.org.nz

Listen or play some pipes today! This is a day initiated by The Bagpipe Society to celebrate the world's many bagpipes and piping traditions and what is known the world over as the sound of Scotland!

Scottish Ballet visits Aotearoa New Zealand for the first time in 2025, and RNZB are delighted to be sharing the stage for three Wellington-only performances to showcase contemporary works that are unique to both companies, created in a spirit of celebration and joy.
Info: <https://rnzb.org.nz/show/rnzb-x-scottish-ballet>

Scotland's Talisk are one of the best live acts in the UK and on the festival circuit right now, producing raucous crowd energy and stadium-sized sound with a mere concertina, fiddle and guitar. at the Spiegeltent, Aotea Square. Info: www.aaf.co.nz/whats-on/talisk

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the clan's formation
in New Zealand. Info: www.clanmackenziencz.org

A ceilidh is held in the City of Wellington Pipe Band Hall, corner Stoke and Hanson Street Newtown, from 8.00pm – 12.00am. We are a very family-oriented organisation and we encourage participation by all ages and encourage the opportunity for you to wear some tartan. Info: www.wellingtongaelicclub.org.nz

The Mackenzie A&P Highland Show is the largest one day show in New Zealand with pipe bands and agricultural events at the Fairlie A&P Showgrounds. Info: www.mackenzieshow.co.nz

Unlock the secrets of world-class piping with legends Patricia and Murray Henderson! Whether you're a beginner or an advanced piper, this world class piobaireachd seminar offers hands-on instruction, expert tips, and personalized feedback from two of the most respected names in piping at Lindsfarne College. Info: www.cnpnz.co.nz/2025-Piobaireachd-Seminar

MARCH 2025

Once again, the Fiddlers will be joined by fellow enthusiasts from all over Scotland to form an orchestra of around 100 players performing a varied program of traditional music from Scotland and beyond, at Eden Court. Info: www.eden-court.co.uk

This talk will cover a snapshot of the Scottish Railway System prior to hostilities when the Scottish Central Belt was a hive of heavy industry underpinned by a steady flow of raw materials moved by rail at The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum, Stirling Castle. Info: www.argylls.co.uk

Listen or play some pipes today! This is a day initiated by The Bagpipe Society to celebrate the world's many bagpipe and piping traditions and what is known the world over as the sound of Scotland!

Celebrate Glasgow's status as the funniest city in the world at venues across the city.
Info: www.glasgowcomedyfestival.com

14, Glasgow
Ceòlraidh Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu/Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association, known as the GG, are Scotland's oldest and largest Gaelic choir, performing Gaelic choral music in the heart of Glasgow since 1893. Join them for our final concert under the baton of Kenneth Thomson BEM, who is retiring as conductor after 42 years. A very special evening of joy and celebration and experience the very best of Gaelic music and tradition at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. Info: www.glasgowlife.org.uk/event/1/urram-do-choinneach-honouring-kenneth-glasgow-gaelic-musical-association-celebration-concert

Join the Rangers to learn more about the beautiful snowdrops, heritage trees and wildlife of this special site. Family friendly activities will be delivered throughout the day and there will also be two guided walks exploring Dryburgh Abbey. Info: www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/dryburgh-abbey

Highland Young Musicians are thrilled to return to Eden Court Theatre with our 2025 showcase of the highest quality Highland youth music-making at Eden Court. Info: www.eden-court.co.uk

Explore the history of Perth Museum, from its beginnings as the Literary and Antiquarian Society to the modern visitor attraction it is today. Dr Mark Hall will give a behind the scenes look at the museum's redevelopment, charting its progress and challenges faced along the way. Info: www.perthmuseum.co.uk

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Scotword answers from page 6

Across:	Down:
1 Lairg	1 Lewis
5 Tammy	2 Reeks
8 Waterfall	3 Tramcar
9 Olive	4 Selkirk
10 Slash	5 Troon
12 Cairn	6 Macintosh
13 Slabber	7 Yokel
15 Kessock	11 Habit
17 Auditor	14 Ardersier
19 Bauchle	16 Sough
21 Annan	18 Renfrew
22 Harps	19 Bannock
25 Easel	20 Keith
26 Rookeries	21 Allan
27 Heron	23 Apron
28 Enemy	24 Sissy

An t-Eilean- Showcasing Gaelic culture and language

By: Neil Drysdale



Sorcha Groundsell leads the cast in the UK's first-ever high-end Gaelic drama, *An t-Eilean* (The Island) – a tense, twisting murder mystery story of lies, loss and long-buried secrets, set against the elemental backdrop of Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides. Scotland's first Gaelic language crime drama is set to be a defining moment for Scottish Gaelic television, as Neil Drysdale explains.

She grew up surrounded by stories and poems, which fired her imagination and piqued her curiosity during her early years in the Western Isles. So, it's hardly surprising that Sorcha Groundsell is thrilled to be a key figure in what she describes as a "watershed moment" with the creation of a new high-profile - and expensive at £1 million an episode - drama *An t-Eilean* (The Island). The four-part crime thriller, which will be shown later this year in Australia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland and the United States, has been shot mostly in Gaelic and the 26-year-old leads the cast as Kat Crichton, a young family liaison officer, who is assigned to look into the brutal killing of the wife of a local tycoon.

The murder investigation takes place on Lewis and Harris, from where Kat mysteriously fled 10 years previously. In that regard, there's a sense of life imitating art, given how Sorcha's early years were spent on Lewis, prior to her attending Glasgow Gaelic School and embracing drama classes at the Citizens Theatre and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. If you don't know her name yet, the chances are you will have caught sight of her striking and subtle performances in a variety of different programmes. She was the star of the Netflix series *The Innocents*; played Douglas Henshall's daughter, Jane Muncie, in the ITV drama *In Plain Sight* about the horrific real-life crimes carried out by serial killer Peter Manuel; and subsequently made a memorable appearance, again with Henshall, as his character Jimmy Perez bowed out of *Shetland*. Her other credits include *Grantchester*; *His Dark Materials* and a recurring role in the BritBox adaptation of Irvine Welsh's *Crime*, so she's no stranger to the dark side.

Gaelic enterprise

But there was none of that when we spoke - or not until later - about her involvement in what has been hailed as a genuinely groundbreaking new venture. She said: "It's fantastic to be involved in this and it feels like a really big opportunity for the Gaelic language - which I love - so it's a privilege to

be part of it. We filmed for nine weeks, five in Harris and four in Glasgow, so it was like a home from home for me. I was familiar with all the landscapes and, personally, it gave me a wonderful excuse to be back there, though it was strange to be in a working capacity. But all the cast and crew were so committed, and we all felt the same way, so it was very enjoyable with a great atmosphere on set and everybody really invested in the drama. Across the world, we are seeing indigenous languages step confidently out from the shadows to enjoy the recognition they deserve. And I see our show as part of that wider movement; a celebration of all that makes us unique."

If there was once a time when it might have been difficult to attract audiences for a Gaelic enterprise, Sorcha believes the climate has changed. A major part of that was the success of Scandi thrillers in the mould of *The Killing*, *Borgen* and *The Bridge*, where viewers weren't deterred by foreign language content.

And if we can watch Danish and Norwegian conversations, why not those in Gaelic - even though there will be sections of *An t-Eilean* which are in English. She told me: "If I had to estimate percentages, I'd say that it's maybe 70% (Gaelic) to 30% (English), because we have two strands of the story. The one about the people from the mainland (including her boss DCI Ahmed Halim, played by Sagar Radia) is more English language, while the family drama is in Gaelic. There's no reason why people can't handle subtitles, and everybody involved in the production got a lot of inspiration from these Scandinavian dramas you've mentioned. They really forged a path, and I honestly believe that subtitles are no longer an obstacle to an audience enjoying a series and we are much more tolerant of them these days. That has created a little window for us to expand our viewership. I certainly hope that is the case, because I am so proud to have been part of a production that is pioneering these new horizons for Gaelic. One showcasing the beauty, creativity and depth our language brings to the world."

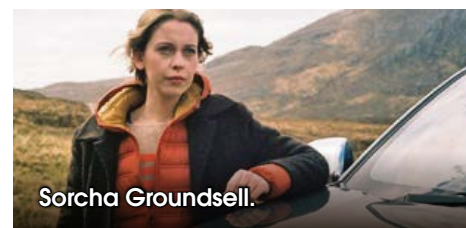
The dark side of human experience

A few days before I chatted to Sorcha, I watched her in *Shetland* where her character, Bryd Fleming, met a terrible end in a scenario which is unforgettably grim. As the police reach the scene, the camera closes in on her dead body and stares directly into her eyes. And then it lingers a little and there's nothing. A void, a shell, an abyss. She said: "I think you're describing the episode of TV which has traumatised my entire family. A few people texted me after it was broadcast and asked: 'Are you OK?' It was challenging because I've never had to play 'dead' in anything before, and this was really dramatic with my body

wrapped in plastic in the back of a car. It was intense, but in the best way. As an actor, you very often don't have a full story arc, but the more they showed me, the more scripts I saw, the more fascinating that character became, and she had such a vivid secret life. I had been trying to find a way to connect with *Shetland* for a long time, because I was such a fan of the show, and I had previously worked with Douglas. So much of the intensity of that scene was down to his performance. He is the master of subtle emotion and one of the reasons why that is so moving was down to him."

Of course, one might argue there has been an excess of "women in peril" plotlines and females being gratuitously murdered in TV history, but the tide seems to be turning. So, we have Ashley Jensen and Alison O'Donnell in charge of *Shetland* inquiries, Lauren Lyle meeting and beating the men in "Karen Pirie"... and now, this latest thriller, where a strong woman has no qualms about getting her hands dirty.

But what is this obsession with crime dramas? Why do so many love them so much? Sorcha said: "I think they showcase something in human psychology and we are all interested in the dark side of human experience. Crime drama provides a platform for that investigation and makes us think: 'What part of the dark side do we all have?' But - and this matters - they also bring us a very satisfying, problem-solving structure where, usually, there is a resolution at the end."





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