



the Scottish Banner



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A' Bhratach Albannach

Volume 49 Number 10

NEWS FOR GLOBAL SCOTS

April 2025

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The Banner Says...

Scottish dog breeds under threat



by Sean Cairney

One of many recognisable symbols of Scotland include bagpipes, tartan, whisky and the beautiful Scottish Terriers (known also as a Scottie dog). You will find Scottie dogs on all kinds of Scottish tourist products from tins of shortbread, tea towels, magnets and even a piece on the iconic Monopoly board.

Dog lovers

Scotland is certainly a nation of dog lovers with nearly a quarter of the population having a four legged resident in their households. Having a dog, though not for everyone, offers so many benefits such as helping people with stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, blood pressure, encourages exercise, and general connection in the wider community. I am a lifelong dog lover however currently do not have a dog, but make sure I connect with dogs at every opportunity I get.

The Kennel Club is a UK organisation which puts out a list of dog breeds of British and Irish origin that are considered to be vulnerable due to their declining registration numbers. Some classic Scottish breed populations are struggling, not only in Scotland but across the UK and globally and being placed on 'At Watch' or 'Vulnerable' lists.

The Scottish Terrier, which is likely the dog most would connect with Scotland was added to The Kennel Club's 'At Watch' list last year. This highly intelligent breed had less than 400 births in the UK last year which was lowest on record. Originally bred to hunt, the breed was also thought to be Queen Victoria's favourite dog.

At risk

Another breed at risk is the Skye Terrier, which takes its name from the Isle of Skye and with less than 100 UK wide births puts it in the 'Vulnerable' list. The breed is known to be the oldest terrier breed in Scotland, going back to the 14th century. The Skye breed is thought to have started after a Spanish shipwreck off the coast of Skye and Rassay and the canine survivors bred with local terriers, producing a strain with a long, silky coat. The most famous Skye Terrier is without question Greyfriars Bobby. The faithful dog who stood by his owner's grave in Edinburgh has been immortalised with one of the city's most famous statues, as well as books, movies and merchandise.

Also, on the 'Vulnerable' list are the Dandie Dinmont Terrier, a breed that even has its very own tartan and is the only dog breed named after a fictional character. Sir Walter Scott published in 1814, *Guy Mannering* which featured a character called 'Dandie Dinmont' who was a farmer from the Borders, along with his pack of pepper and mustard terriers. These fictional characters were in fact based on historical fact and these dogs are now in danger as only a few hundred are born each year around the world and less than 100 in the UK.

With less than 200 births in the UK also on the 'Vulnerable' list are Gordon Setters. Named after the Duke of Gordon, Gordon Setters were originally called black-and-tan setters and are the largest of the setter breeds. The 4th Duke of Gordon played a major role in developing the modern breed of this large hunting dog. The Duke of Gordon began breeding these setters in the early 19th century. By the early 20th century, most Gordon Setters could be traced back to the kennels at Gordon Castle.

Most do not realise that certain dog breeds can go 'out of fashion' for various reasons, and I hope these iconic Scottish breeds can turn around their numbers for generations of people to enjoy these unique versions of 'man's best friend' for many years to come.

In this issue

2025 marks 75 years of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, one of Scotland's most iconic and internationally recognised events. In 1949 a performance entitled Something About a Soldier was performed at the beautiful Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens, followed by The King's Men on the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade. Sir Andrew Murray, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, was so impressed by these productions that he invited the General Officer Commanding the Army in Scotland to produce a military show called the Edinburgh Tattoo, to take place annually as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. Since 1950 millions of people have seen the Tattoo live and many millions more on their screens. I have been fortunate to attend the Tattoo three times (and only once in the rain!) and we are delighted to have Jason Barrett, Chief Executive, of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo tell us more about this year's production.

One piper who is getting ready for a performance of a lifetime must be Lady Jane MacRae, a maths teacher from Aberdeen, who is playing the pipes at the VE Day 80th commemoration in front of the King in London in May. The former concert pianist not only will have a royal audience but will have the incredible honour of piping to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day and Nazi Germany's surrender in the Second World War.

Though a bit more planning may be involved, a visit to Orkney is well worth the effort when visiting Scotland. Some may think Orkney is a single island, but it is in fact an archipelago of around 70 islands, of which just 20 are inhabited, and located just 20 miles/32 km off the north coast of the Scottish mainland. The area has so much natural attractions, an incredible neolithic history and rich Viking culture. This month we look at some of the less well-known historic sites in Orkney that may help you decide to take that trip and explore the place the ancient Romans used to call the Orcades. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

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.



Scotland's famous Scottie dogs.



Gracing our front cover:
Leading the massed bands at The
Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.
Photo courtesy of The Royal
Edinburgh Military Tattoo.



BELLINGHAM SCOTTISH GATHERING

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www.ScottishDanceSociety.org



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?

Invictus Games in Vancouver



The band of the Sons of Scotland from Ottawa, Canada, had the wonderful opportunity to invite pipers, drummers and guests from all across Canada, Scotland and Ireland to join them to play in the opening ceremonies of the Invictus Games held in Vancouver, British Columbia – and what a time they all had! The entire band of 333 players consisted of many bands from the Vancouver area, headed by Jack Lee and Reid Maxwell, and the performance went just superbly. Simple, striking and

so memorable not just to the audience, but to the bandmembers who were very moved by the occasion. Seeing the international teams and cheering them on was just the best. Members of the Sons of Scotland group hailed from Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Montreal, and further afield in Canada, and guest piper Craig Weir came in from Scotland and entertained at Donellan's Irish Pub, and Drum Major Brian Wilson, MBE, came from Ireland to help organize the show. We look forward to Invictus 2027 in Birmingham, England, and welcome everyone to visit our website for details on how you can take part, and support the band.

Thank you all,
Bethany Bisailion
Sons of Scotland Pipe Band
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
www.sospb.com

Ed note: Congratulations to all involved and great to see the power of the piping fraternity on the world stage.

The Lost Streets of Edinburgh



I was interested in your *The Banner Says...* article *The Lost Streets of Edinburgh* in the February 2025 issue. My four times great-grandmother Elizabeth Donaldson (nee Bell) lived in Writers' Court in the High Street, Edinburgh in the 1840s. On the two pages of the 1841 census recording her residence, there were 48 people living in 10 households in that court. An online map shows its location opposite St Giles' Kirk, and in another diagram, it is shown as one of 12 closes between Bank and Cockburn Streets on the north side of the Royal Mile precinct. We visited the city in 2012 and 2014, but didn't see the sign for the entrance to Writers' Court.

It was once home to the library of the Writers' to HM Signet, and in the 16th century was the site of the manse of the great John Knox. Keep up your great newspaper articles!

Neil Harvie Thomas
Belair, South
Australia

The Maclean Brothers

What an inspirational story you had feature in your February edition (*Brothers bid to break World Record in Pacific Ocean, the Scottish Banner*, February, 2025). These brothers clearly



not only share a special bond but have a great deal of compassion and humanity in them to be doing what they are doing and raising funds for clean water projects. What an adventure, what a cause and what great young Scots! Rowing across the Pacific cannot be for the faint hearted and I imagine there will be some tough days at sea. With all the 'influencers' and 'celebrities' out there these guys are the real deal, after already rowing the Atlantic and now this. They certainly warrant your cover and hope other media follow suit in highlighting this incredible mission.

I wish them all the best and hope they surpass all their goals, Scots around the world are cheering you on!

Greg Mackenzie
Annapolis, Maryland
USA

Ed note: We agree Greg and will be keeping our readers up to date on their progress as they are truly doing something very special.

Hats off to the Maclean Brothers on their epic journey rowing to Australia. These lads are really inspiring Scots who are doing something very few of us not only could do, but could even consider doing

There are so many Scots here in Australia that will no doubt be cheering them on and I hope our winter weather is kind to them and the crossing is without major challenges for them. I can only imagine what an incredible bond these brothers have to head out to sea just them, they will be relying on each other for physical, mental and moral support. I hope they are powered by all the determination, and Celtic music, they pack on board. Travel safe lads, Australia is waiting to welcome you!

Chris Donaldson
Epping, NSW
Australia

Highland vs Lowlands



What a fascinating article (*What really divides the Highland and Lowlands? The Scottish Banner*, February 2025) about the Highland vs Lowlands. I have often wondered where the Highlands actually begin and have always felt it was where the dramatic scenery starts. I had actually not thought about the historical cultural differences found within Scotland. Scotland though small really has diverse parts to it and even today folk are different around the country, by accent, and how they interact. The communities dotted across Scotland certainly make up how people see these regions and it really is more than perhaps just a mountain range that changes what makes a place the Highlands.

Scotland is such a great country no matter where you visit, I am very fortunate to have been there seven times. Every visit is different and I learn new things every time, often about old things! I love going back and trying a new itinerary from the Highlands to the Islands, to the Borders and Central Belt. I am in fact plotting my next Scottish adventure and hope to return in 2026 or 2027. Thank you for so many great articles in *the Banner*.

Leslie Callaghan
Port Credit, Ontario
Canada

Susie's "Michty Me" Cabbitch

*If ye gang doon by Drungan Pike
An tak' a keek ower Jockie's Dyke,
A sicht tae turn ye green, mair like,
Real peely-wally!
Fur there's a scene well worth the hike
Or lengthy sally.*

*A muckle cabbitch big as aucht,
'll greet yer een, as something saucht
By giants, A hae nae dooght, hae foucht
Tae mak thir broths.
Wi flappen lugs an' luschious haugh
Tae juicy stocks.*

*It was a cabbitch fit fur aw.
A think a'll tak it tae the Shaw;
Tae beat the others far awa
Fur size competin'.
"Ye'll tak aw prizes", said ma Maw
"An' leave them greetin'."*

*But then as simmer sun sank low,
A great white cloud as saft as snow
Cam oot the East and settled low,
A can confirm;
The soond o' munchin intermezzo
- Mony a kailworm!!*

*The gerdiners laughed real fit tae burst.
The showing judges roared an' cursed.
Cheeky craws themselves were worst,
Convulsed in glee.
The tattie bogle, unrehearsed,
Was agony.*

*It goes to show; afore the day
Tae coont yer chickens disna pay;
For in a puff it's aw away -
Ower the hill.
Too late, too late tae rue the day
And never will.*

Kennedy Smith
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):

Holy Loch



A lone tree by Holy Loch.
Ronald Stokes

Tall Ship Glenlee



The Tall Ship Glenlee at Glasgow's Riverside Museum.
Mik Coia

Edinburgh



The Scott Monument from Advocates Close, Edinburgh.
Derk A Grist

Heilan Coo



Hanging out with the bairn.
ash.stow

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

Major project completed at Rosslyn Castle - *The world's oldest building to adopt air source heat pumps*



Rosslyn Castle's East Range, taken July, 2024. Photo: K Neville.

Rosslyn Chapel Trust is delighted to announce the completion of a major 'once in a generation' programme of restoration and repair at Rosslyn Castle, one of Midlothian's most important historic buildings. The ambitious £4m project to reroof the Great Hall and Tower, to conserve and consolidate the Castle's stonework and to develop a sustainable heating strategy has been entirely self-funded by the Trust.

For the first time since 1650, Rosslyn Castle's East Range now has a permanent roof over the Great Hall and Tower, protecting important masonry carvings and the three levels of vaults below ground level. The entire building is also now Net Zero ready, with heating and hot water provided

by six air source heat pumps, removing the need for traditional fossil fuels. The heat pumps are situated in the Castle's 16th century vaults, and the engineers believe that Rosslyn Castle may be the oldest building in the world to be using this sustainable, low carbon technology.

Like the world-famous Rosslyn Chapel, Rosslyn Castle was built by the St Clair family, who first came to Scotland in the 11th century. Although much of the Castle site is ruinous, part of the East Range, completed in 1622, has been let as holiday accommodation since it was restored by The Earl and Countess of Rosslyn in the 1980s. The Great Hall and Tower were partially destroyed in 1650 when Cromwell's troops attacked the building,

but both have now been sympathetically restored and reroofed, using local and traditional skills and materials, and these spaces are being brought back into use to transform the experience for guests staying there. Rosslyn Castle is category A-listed, recognising its architectural and historic character and its grounds are designated as a Scheduled Monument.

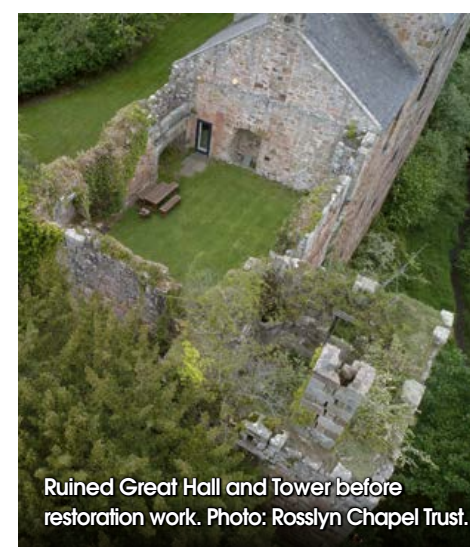
One of Midlothian's most historically significant buildings

The Earl and Countess of Rosslyn remain closely involved with the estate as Trustees of Rosslyn Chapel Trust and said: "Having seen Rosslyn Chapel flourish since its recent conservation programme, we were determined likewise to secure the future of its neighbour, Rosslyn Castle. Our vision was to conserve the Great Hall and Tower and protect the vaults below, whilst maintaining the historic character of a building which has been widely loved for centuries. We are delighted with the result and most grateful to all those who have contributed to the project over the last two years, the majority of whom are locally based."

Rosslyn Chapel Trust was established in 1995 by The Earl of Rosslyn. Since then, it has undertaken a 17-year programme of conservation at Rosslyn Chapel, concluded in 2014, built an award-winning new visitor centre and, in 2018, completed a two-year programme of conservation and repair at Collegehill House, the former

17th century inn which stands at the entrance to the Chapel. Last year 154,912 people visited Rosslyn Chapel compared to just 9,873 when the Trust was established.

Ian Gardner, Director of Rosslyn Chapel Trust, said: "We are delighted to see this major and innovative project reach its conclusion. This 'once in a generation' work will help to conserve the East Range of Rosslyn Castle for future generations to appreciate and will absolutely transform the quality of the experience for guests staying here. We are extremely grateful for such skilful work from the contractors and sub-contractors and there is no doubt that this pioneering project will secure the long-term future of one of Midlothian's most historically significant buildings."



Ruined Great Hall and Tower before restoration work. Photo: Rosslyn Chapel Trust.

The American Scottish Foundation 30th Burns Night Celebration



The American Scottish Foundation held their 30th Annual Burns Night Celebration in conjunction with the University Club. The evening honors Scotland's national Bard, Robert Burns, in words and music. From the piping in and *Address to the Haggis* by Robbie Munro, to the enthusiastic reeling, it was a celebration in high Scottish Style! Toasts were given by UN Ambassador Archie Young, UK Trade

Commissioner Niall Mackenzie and HM Interim Consul General Melanie Hopkins.

A rousing *Immortal Memory* was delivered by renowned orator Benny Higgins, Chairman of the National Galleries of Scotland Trustees, with a musical tribute and *Toast to Lads and Lassies* by the award winning team of Claire Mackenzie and Scott Gilmore of Noisemaker. The Menu was overseen by Gary Maclean, National Chef of Scotland with Whisky Tasting hosted by Lisa Pope, Whisky Ambassador, Moët Hennessy Glenmorangie, a memorable celebration of the 260th Birthday of Robert Burns.





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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.



“The Cairngorm Mountain team are overjoyed to be welcoming customers onto the funicular railway once more. Following confirmation from our parent company Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the railway has been handed over to us at CMSL to operate once more. We recognise how critical the railway is, not only to our entire team here at CMSL, but to all our customers and to many businesses in the local and regional area. We would like to thank all our visitors for their patience whilst remediation took place.”

Tim Hurst, Interim CEO of Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd (CMSL), said that the funicular railway at Cairngorm Mountain resort has returned to service. Scotland’s only funicular railway has been out of action since August 2023, while an extensive programme of remediation works has been carried out, the 2km funicular railway will again run a regular service throughout the day year round, taking snowsports enthusiasts and sightseers from the base station to the Ptarmigan building at the top of the slopes in around 5 minutes.

“I am deeply humbled by the support and dedication of the GG and the wider choral and Gaelic community. This concert will be a heartfelt celebration not just of my work, but of the incredible talent of the choristers and musicians who have shared this journey with me. The GG have been performing together in the heart of Glasgow since 1893, and the end of my

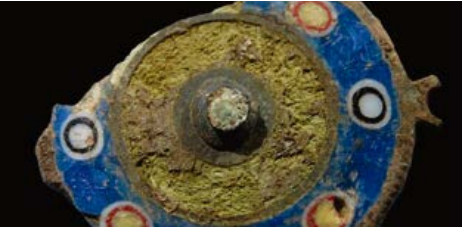
tenure marks the start of another exciting new chapter in the choir’s storied history.”

Conductor Kenny Thomson, of the Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association (fondly known as the GG), said in the lead up to a concert to recognise his extraordinary musical career as of one of the UK’s longest standing choir conductors which is now coming to a close. Mr Thomson is retiring after a remarkable 42 years holding the conducting baton for one of Scotland’s oldest and largest Gaelic choirs, the Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association, leaving a meaningful musical legacy in his wake. He joined as a singer in the Bass section, and in the 57 years since, he has gone on to amass a raft of accolades and richly deserved recognition.

“The tourism sector is a crucially important part of the Scottish economy and cruise visits are increasing. The consultation will help to inform the Scottish Government’s decision over whether or not to bring forward legislation and it is really important that we hear from a wide variety of voices on this matter. Last year, we held events to hear the views of the cruise ship industry, local government, and others. We want to continue the helpful dialogue which started at those events, and explore further what a cruise ship levy could mean in a Scottish context.”

Finance Secretary Shona Robison said the Scottish Government has launched a consultation on giving local authorities the

optional power to introduce a tax on cruise ships visiting their areas. The proposal comes as Scotland sees a significant increase in cruise tourism, with approximately 1,000 cruise ship visits to Scottish ports in 2024, bringing 1.2 million passengers – an increase of almost 400,000 compared to 2019. The areas that welcome the most cruise passengers are Invergordon, Orkney, Edinburgh, Lerwick, and Greenock, with the average ship in the five busiest ports carrying over 1,000 passengers. Cruise passengers currently make up approximately 2% of the total number of overnight stays by visitors in Scotland, but in some areas like Orkney and Shetland, they represent a much higher percentage – 84% and 79% respectively in 2018.



“This exotic brooch and others like it typically date to the late second century AD, and are most commonly found along the borders of the Roman Empire, in eastern Gaul, Switzerland and the Rhineland. Their distribution pattern suggests that these brooches were particularly popular among members of the Roman military forces, so it’s likely that it came north of Hadrian’s Wall on the cloak of a Roman soldier tasked with garrisoning the Empire’s northernmost frontier.”

Jordan Barbour at GUARD Archaeology said how a rare enamelled Roman brooch provides insight into how the local Britons of south-west Scotland interacted with the Roman army during the late second century AD. Excavations undertaken at William Grant & Sons Girvan Distillery at the Curragh in South Ayrshire in 2020 uncovered an Iron Age settlement dating to a period when southern Scotland had slipped from the grasp of the Roman Empire.

“When beavers engineer a stream, they build dams which creates barriers to flow resulting in the accumulation of water as a series of ponds – some surprisingly large. We found that these ponds can act as a trap for microbial pollutants and silt, especially when muddy or polluted waters enters a pond from upstream, reducing pollutant peaks by 95% and strongly delaying their

movement which should be to the benefit of downstream systems. Our work adds weight to the already compelling evidence of the beneficial effects of beaver ponds in the landscape – for biodiversity, for flood risk reduction and other aspects of water quality. If we want to realise these benefits rather than robbing ourselves of them, we must find better ways to accommodate beavers in our landscapes rather than continually removing their dams.”

Professor Nigel Willby said beaver dams function as traps which delay the distribution of pollutants, improving the quality of downstream water, new research led by the University of Stirling has shown. Scientists say the findings underline the beneficial effects beavers can have on fresh water where people enjoy outdoor pursuits such as wild swimming and angling.



“The Forth Bridge is an iconic structure, known around the world, and it is very fitting that we mark the 135 years of service it has provided for Scotland’s rail network. This series of events will celebrate the crossing’s links with the local community and give people an insight into the history of the bridge, as well as the year-round efforts that go into its maintenance today. Around three million passengers cross the Forth Bridge every year, and I look forward to it continuing to play this vital role for our transport network for years to come.”

Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop said that the 135th anniversary of the iconic Forth Bridge was recently marked with a series of community events. The world-famous cantilever rail crossing was opened by the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, on the 4th March 1890, following around seven years of construction. The Forth Bridge is 2467 meters in length and carries the Edinburgh–Aberdeen rail line over the Firth of Forth. At the time of opening, it was the world’s longest single cantilever bridge span.

SCOTWORD

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

CLUES ACROSS

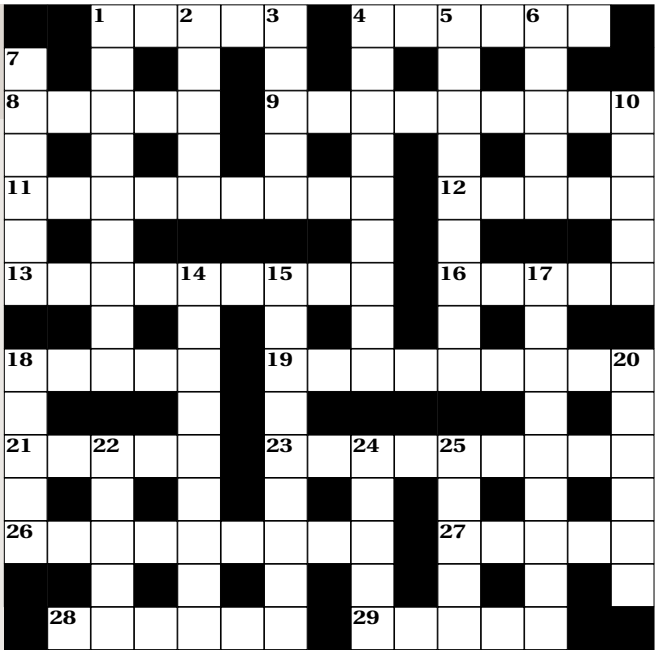
- 1) Island below South Uist (5).
- 4) Strikes in Scotland (6).
- 8) With water it refreshes (5).
- 9) Threw them down for contest (9).
- 11) Scotland’s gigantic valley (5,4).
- 12) Fruity colour (5).
- 13) Musician way out in front (4,5).
- 16) Joint below the exter (5).
- 18) A scar wound in Scots (5).
- 19) They’re needed at St Andrews (5,4).
- 21) There are many on the West Coast (5).

- 23) A Scots double room! (3,3,3).
- 26) A reaper (9).
- 27) The deepest loch in Scotland (5).
- 28) They house 14 Down (6).
- 29) Try this composition (5).

CLUES DOWN

- 1) Island between N and S Uist (9).
- 2) Correct in Scotland (5).
- 3) A high messenger! (5).
- 4) Disgusted with the Scots! (9).
- 5) Big guns! (9).

- 6) A measure of gas (5).
- 7) Put on a show (6).
- 10) Tendon (5).
- 14) Clergymen (9).
- 15) Followers of James II (9).
- 17) A colourful Scottish fruit (9).
- 18) One and the other to Scots (5).
- 20) Solar skill in Lochaber area! (6).
- 22) Animal’s immature state (5).
- 24) Protected the Highlander (5).
- 25) Loses the power (5).



Lady MacGregor's Scotland

By: Lady Fiona MacGregor

Lady MacGregor of MacGregor – otherwise known as British writer and broadcaster Fiona Armstrong – works for ITV news and current affairs. Fiona's husband is the Chief of Clan Gregor, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor. She is an active member of Clan Armstrong, so their lives are interwoven with all things tartan. The couple live in the Scottish Borderlands, although filming and writing takes Fiona all over Scotland.



Lady Fiona with her dog and the pink rhododendrons.



Veterans at Lady Haig's Poppy Factory.



Poppies being cut out.

Greetings from Scotland where spring is well underway. Snowdrops past; daffodils bobbing sunnily on – and rhododendrons coming into full glorious bloom. Here at MacGregor Towers, we're lucky to have several well-established species growing around the house. Our new puppy particularly likes the pink one near the kitchen window!

Perhaps not so blessed, we also have rather a lot of the common or garden one – the dreaded 'Ponticum'. This purple-headed Himalayan variety was planted extensively on Scottish estates in Victorian times. Dense and fast-growing, it proved useful in providing cover for game birds. Yet over the years, the hardy incomer has proved an unwelcome visitor. Indeed, it's now classed as invasive: poisonous to some livestock and overshadowing native plants. Keeping Ponticum in check is hard work. Yet I have a fondness for this seemingly indestructible bully. One that provides a rare splash of colour on a bleak mountain or moor – which is where it should be, and not in a garden...

Victory in Europe Day

And flowers loom large this month, because as we approach Victory in Europe Day (May 8th) and the 80th anniversary of the ending of World War Two, commemorative wreaths are

being fashioned to remember those who fell. All over the world, poppy production is in full swing – and none more so than here in Scotland. Yes, Lady Haig's Poppy Factory in Edinburgh is in full swing and this month I visit the place to film the revamped building and meet the veterans who make these bright red symbols of remembrance. The poppy is a simple plant. It is a bloom that inspired a Canadian doctor to write a poignant war poem during world-war-one.

John Macrae was serving as a soldier and medic and from the unspeakable French and Belgium trenches, he witnessed the small flowers that grew on the ever-increasing number of graves, 'In Flanders Field the poppies blow, between the crosses row on row...' His words led an American woman to start distributing silk poppies in honour of those who died. In France, meanwhile, another lady began selling hand-made poppies to raise money for war widows and wounded soldiers. Here in the UK, a group to help ex-servicemen had been set up by British war leader Earl Haig, and in 1921 the Royal British Legion, as it was known, began making poppies in England.

Scottish poppy

Yet the Earl and his wife lived in Scotland, and Lady Haig soon decided it was time to open a poppy outlet closer to home.

What started in Edinburgh with two men and a pair of scissors soon grew into a full-time business. Veterans were employed to work in the charity, and today around three million silk and paper flowers are fashioned each year at Lady Haig's factory. These wreaths and flowers go all over the country – but there is a difference. Yes, trust the Scots to do their own thing! Whilst English poppies have two petals and a green leaf, Scottish ones come with four petals and no leaf. Which is, according to Poppyscotland, 'botanically correct'.

What's more, it seems we're in good company with Canada – as their poppy also comes with four petals and no leaf. John Macrae, whose emotional words started this international floral remembrance, would have been amazed at the effect his poem went on to have on the world. He might have been Canadian, but he came with Scots ancestry. Then with a name like Macrae, how could you not?! John Macrae's ancestors stemmed from Kirkcudbrightshire in the south of Scotland. A place that's always been famous for artists and writers. As we work towards VE Day this man with Scottish roots has given us much to think about...

*'Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields...'*

Ken Your Kin-Bringing Scottish ancestry and heritage to life



Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies (SIGS) has launched Ken Your Kin, an exciting new event being held in Glasgow, Scotland from the 4th to the 11th of June 2025. Whether you're a seasoned genealogist or just beginning your journey into Scottish family history, the Ken Your Kin summer school is the perfect opportunity to both celebrate and bring Scottish ancestry and heritage to life. The Ken Your Kin experience will provide opportunities for participants to ask questions, engage in discussions, and benefit from one-to-one genealogy research input from qualified genealogists.

Delegates will be warmly welcomed to the City of Glasgow with a civic reception at Glasgow's historic City Chambers building. Step back in time and hear talks from Scottish historians, museum curators, and family history experts. Explore fascinating topics such as what your ancestors ate, migration to and from Scotland, the connections between

clans, families and DNA and the history of Scottish entertainment - with music hall songs and a bit of a sing-along!

Scotland's rich history and culture

Delve into Scotland's rich history and culture through visits to museums, cultural landmarks, and historical sites. Explore iconic venues such as The Tenement House, New Lanark, The National Museum of Rural Life, and enjoy a dedicated research day at Edinburgh's ScotlandsPeople Centre.

If that's not tempting enough, you'll also have the choice between a hands-on 'try the bagpipes' workshop at the National Piping Centre or a tour of the Clydeside Distillery, where you'll discover the art of single malt whisky making—and enjoy a few drams along the way. The 7-day programme will wrap up with a final night dinner at the historic Trades Hall in Glasgow's Merchant City. Non-Ken Your Kin participants are welcome to join for an additional fee. Before arriving in Glasgow, participants will have exclusive access to a secure online portal, where they can connect with fellow delegates and the SIGS team. The portal will also provide top tips, valuable resources, and the latest updates from the organisers. SIGS look forward to sharing our Scottish culture and history and meeting new friends!

To find out more visit: www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/genealogy



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100 years of royal portrait photographs and behind-the-scenes materials go on show in Edinburgh



Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Scots, Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle and Chief of the Chiefs, 2010. Photo: Julian Calder/Camera Press.

time in 1934. To achieve this effect, society photographer Marcus Adams had to adjust the lens of an enlarger, a device for producing a photographic print from the original negative, which will also be on show.

Later photographs will show how portraits became bigger and ever more colourful over the course of the century. The impact of Nadav Kander's bold, 1.6m-tall headshot of King Charles III when Prince of Wales, taken at Birkhall for a 2013 cover of *Time* magazine, or Hugo Burnand's jewel-hued official Coronation portraits in 2023, was possible thanks to advances in printing technology.

The close relationships between photographers and royal sitters will reveal themselves over the course of the exhibition, as seen in the intimate portraits of Princess Margaret taken by Lord Snowdon, born Antony Armstrong-Jones, before and after they married in 1960. Further highlights include 19 portraits taken by Cecil Beaton, who enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Royal Family. Beaton came to prominence photographing stylish society figures in 1920s London and was seen as a surprising and avant-garde choice when Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother selected him for the now-famous shoot in the Buckingham Palace Gardens in 1939. Visitors will also see photographs from

their last sitting together in 1970 after more than three decades of collaboration, with the photographs later released to mark The Queen Mother's 70th birthday. Referring to their unique relationship, The Queen Mother wrote to him saying, 'we must be deeply grateful to you for producing us, as really quite nice & real people!'

Visitors will discover the multitude of purposes royal portraits have served, from reputation-making portraits of a young Queen Elizabeth II for use on currency and stamps by Yousuf Karsh, to birthday portraits of Princess Anne by Norman Parkinson. A handwritten memorandum from Queen Elizabeth II's Assistant Private Secretary in 1953 reveals her suggestions for which Coronation portraits should be sent to Commonwealth representatives, used to thank Maids of Honour, and given as family mementos. More recently, a photograph of Her Majesty Queen Camilla by Jamie Hawkesworth commissioned by *Vogue* shows The Queen with a book in her lap to represent Her Majesty's passion for literature.

Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography is now on at The King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, until 7 September 2025. Visitor information and tickets for The King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse: www.rct.uk, T. +44 (0)303 123 7306.



Andy Warhol, Queen Elizabeth II, 1985. Photo: © 2025 The Andy Warhol Foundation Licensed by DACS, London.

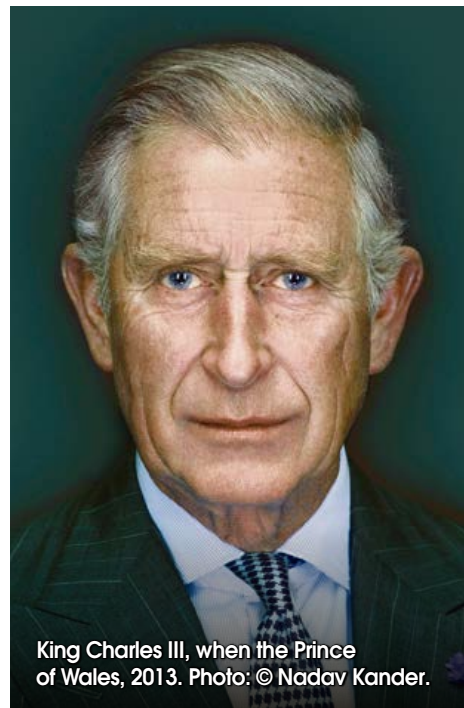
Unforgettable portraits of the Royal Family

Alessandro Nasini, curator of the exhibition, said: "Portrait photography is a creative process, and it has been fascinating to discover the careful decisions that were made to achieve such unforgettable portraits of the Royal Family, taken by some of the most celebrated photographers of the past century – from Dorothy Wilding and Cecil Beaton to David Bailey and Glasgow-born Rankin. Although we may be used to seeing photographs on screens, the opportunity to see the original prints up close is rare, as they can't often be on display for conservation reasons. With archival material providing context into how these photographs were made and used, I hope visitors will enjoy going behind the scenes into the process of creating royal portraits."

A star work of the exhibition will be a striking photograph of Queen Elizabeth II by Julian Calder, taken on the Highlands landscape of the Balmoral Estate in 2010. Beneath an unpredictable sky and cloaked in the mantle of the Order of the Thistle, the late monarch braved the threat of rain and midges to achieve Calder's vision, inspired by the 19th century paintings of Clan chiefs – as seen in a behind-the-scenes photograph reproduced on a panel within the exhibition. In contrast, for her 2007 portrait of the sovereign, Annie Leibovitz – the first American to receive an official commission to photograph Queen Elizabeth II – used digital editing to superimpose the figure against a stormy sky.

An exciting time for portrait photography

The past century was an exciting time for portrait photography; techniques evolved rapidly, and the transition from a manual craft to an increasingly digital process is a key theme of the exhibition. One of the earliest photographs shows the royal family – including the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret – smiling in soft-focus and framed by an oval vignette, typical of its



King Charles III, when the Prince of Wales, 2013. Photo: © Nadav Kander.



Princess Margaret, 1969. Photo: © Snowdon/Camera Press.



Marcus Adams, The Duke and Duchess of York, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret of York, 1934. Photo: © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2025 | Royal Collection Trust.

A portrait of Queen Elizabeth II standing against the dramatic Highlands landscape of Balmoral are among almost 100 rarely seen photographs, negatives, and archival materials from the last 100 years now on display at The King's Gallery in Edinburgh. *Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography* charts the evolution of royal portrait photography from the 1920s to the present day, unveiling the stories behind the creation of some of the most iconic images of the Royal Family. The exhibition brings together little-seen vintage prints (the original works produced by the photographer, or under their direct supervision), contact sheets and proofs from the Royal Collection, alongside documents including letters and memorandums held in the Royal Archives. It is the first time many of the works have been shown in Scotland, following the exhibition's successful run in London.

Something wicked this way comes; new Macbeth exhibition to open at Perth Museum

Perth Museum has announced that their summer show will be *Macbeth: An Exhibition*. Famously known as The Scottish Play, the exhibition explores the historical origins of the King of Scotland and the continuing influence that William Shakespeare's iconic play has had on art, theatre, music, and film. *Macbeth: An Exhibition*, will take visitors on a journey through time, connecting the legendary figure to the very landscape of Perthshire. From the haunting forests of Birnam Wood to the imposing Dunsinane Hill, the exhibition will unveil the deep-rooted connection between this dramatic tale and the region.

Visitors will be invited to uncover the enduring power of Shakespeare's Macbeth against a backdrop of national

identity, monarchy and James VI and I's fear of witchcraft during his reign, as well as the enduring influence that William Shakespeare's masterpiece has had on audiences and performers across centuries.

One of Scotland's most enduring and enigmatic figures

On display for the first time will be a rare 11th century sword from the time of the real King Macbeth, as well as an example of William Shakespeare's First Folio, where the tragedy of Macbeth was first printed, on loan from the National Library of Scotland. From Innerpeffray Library there will also be a selection of rare documents and books on witchcraft, including Dr John Dee's Spiritual Diary, and a first edition of James VI/ I's *Dæmonologie*. More modern representations of Macbeth will also be on display, including an Arabic translation and a Japanese script from the 1985 performance of Macbeth. London based artist Charlotte Rose has been commissioned to create a new work for the exhibition.

Helen Smout, Chief Executive Officer at Culture Perth and Kinross, said "As we approach our first anniversary, we are thrilled to announce this new exhibition bringing together history, legend and art to explore one of Scotland's most enduring and enigmatic figures. From the real 11th century king to Shakespeare's tragic character, this exhibition offers a

fascinating insight into the myths and reality of Macbeth all set in the heart of Scotland."

Scottish history

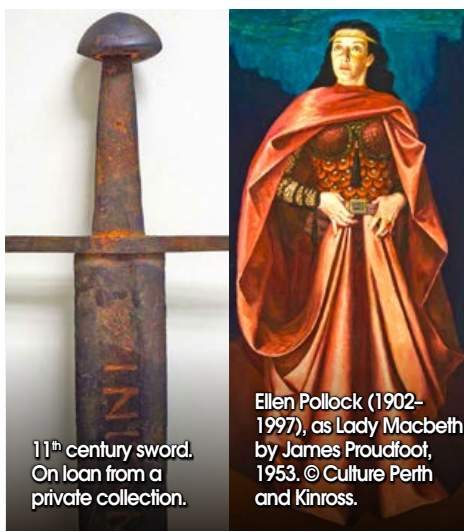
JP Reid, Exhibitions and Interpretation manager at Culture Perth and Kinross, added "Visitors will be surprised to learn just how much the play draws on Scottish history. The extent to which (Shakespeare) is pulling out of historical sources is really interesting. The witches are in the historical record. They're not a literary invention by Shakespeare. So, these are very old stories. These have very deep roots in Scottish history. And I think that aspect, the connection of that literary character to Scottish history, is something that will really surprise people. Different creative people over the past 200 years have taken Shakespeare's material and run with it in totally surprising, inspiring, challenging, baffling directions. And at the core of them is this story of power and the abuse of power, and where an individual stands in relation to these huge tides of prophecy and history, and really whether they have any control over that kind of environment. This is such a rich seam for the world's best theatre producers and directors, actors, film directors, artists, and writers. This is an endlessly rich seam to mine. The topics and themes that Shakespeare is writing about 550 years after the historical king are topics that resonate and are relevant today. So, drawing that thread



Macbeth and Banquo meet the three witches on a heath; scene from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' by J.H. Fuseli (Fuseli), on loan from Wellcome Collection.

from the 11th century through the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and exploring themes like power, superstition, betrayal, and how these inform broader ideas around Scottish identity and monarchy, is something that's absolutely relevant. These are big themes which we have the luxury of being able to contextualise within some specific locations in Perth. And that's very exciting for us"

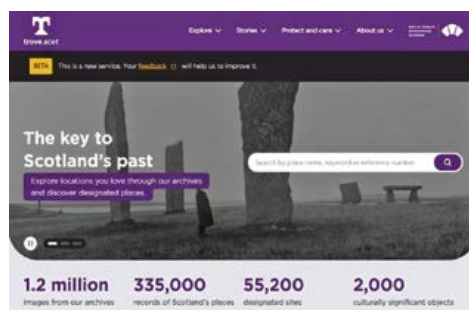
Tickets for Macbeth: An Exhibition are available to book now through Perthshire Box Office. Visitors can purchase at the Museum on the day of their visit, but advance booking is recommended to avoid disappointment. Perth Museum has welcomed over 225,000 visitors since opening in March 2024. The museum is open every day: Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday from 11am to 4pm. Entry to the permanent galleries and the Stone of Destiny exhibit is free. For more details see: www.perthmuseum.co.uk/inside-the-museum/macbeth



11th century sword. On loan from a private collection.

Ellen Pollock (1902-1997), as Lady Macbeth by James Proudfoot, 1953. © Culture Perth and Kinross.

Unlock Scotland's past with trove.scot



Screengrab of the new trove.scot website.

Explore millions of records online as Historic Environment Scotland (HES) unveils new website to access its collections, archives, images and information.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has launched trove.scot, its new digital portal for the historic environment. Users can now delve into Scotland's heritage with the platform, which brings together millions of HES's unique and diverse collections of information, images, video, spatial data and archival material in one convenient place for the first time. From standing stones to skate parks, trove.scot contains over 5,000 years of Scotland's history in approximately three million records, combining designation records of Scotland's most important historic sites and buildings; the catalogue of Scotland's archaeology and built heritage; over 2,000 culturally significant objects from HES's properties; and educational and archival images and media from SCRAN.

Dig into Scotland's past

trove.scot will make this wealth of information more accessible than ever before, providing an exciting new resource for hobbyists, educators, historians and heritage professionals alike.

Using filters, keyword and map searches, users can now unearth a range of detail from HES's different sources in a single search. Katerina Brown, Chief Executive of HES, said: "We are excited to be bringing heritage even closer to people's everyday lives with this new platform. trove.scot will make it easier to learn about the heritage and historic environment that surrounds you, whether that is the listed buildings on your street or archive images of historic events that shaped communities. trove.scot marks one of the largest investments in our programme to improve and enhance digital access to information on the historic environment, and increase the number and diversity of people who engage with Scotland's history and heritage. We hope that by making the vast store of information we hold more accessible, trove.scot will encourage more people to dig into Scotland's past and see what they can discover with the new platform. Of course, the launch is just the beginning, and we'll continue working hard behind the scenes to bring more exciting innovations to service."

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IN SCOTLAND TODAY

Jurassic dinosaur from the Isle of Skye revealed



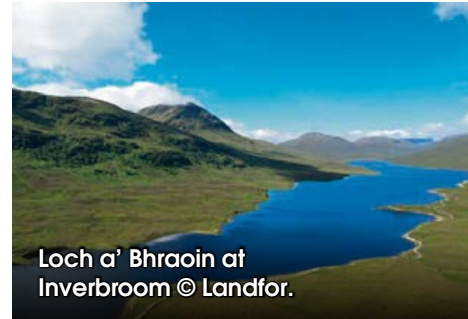
Elgol Dinosaur artist impression.
Image: Maija Karala.

A fossil first spotted in Skye over 50 years ago has finally been extracted from the base of the cliff where it was found and, following analysis, formally identified as a Jurassic dinosaur. The fossil was first discovered in 1973, making it Scotland's earliest recorded dinosaur find. It was not fully identified at the time and remained uncollected until a team led by Dr Elsa Panciroli returned in 2018 to the location near Elgol, in the south of the island, to undertake its extremely challenging extraction from the rock. While the Elgol dinosaur is preserved only in fragments compared to some specimens found elsewhere, researchers have identified part of the spine, ribs and a hip bones, making it the most complete dinosaur skeleton found to date in Scotland. Close study of these bones has led researchers to believe that it is an ornithomimid dinosaur, a group of which includes notable later dinosaurs such as *Iguanodon*, *Parasaurolophus* and *Edmontosaurus*. The Elgol dinosaur dates to around 166 million years ago, in the Middle Jurassic, making it one of the earliest known ornithomimid body fossils, as that group of dinosaurs became far more prominent in the later Cretaceous period.

Analysis of the bone structure indicates that the animal, which would have been roughly the size of a pony, was at least 8 years old. Dr Stig Walsh from National Museums Scotland said: "This is a wonderful addition to the rapidly growing set of Jurassic finds from the Isle of Skye which are enabling us to learn more and more about the rich ecosystem of the time. We've known there were dinosaurs there for a while, most obviously from the famous footprints at An Corran, Brother's Point and Duntulm and from individual bones, but it's exciting to see a more complete, if still partial, skeleton. We're delighted to add it to the other amazing finds now in the National Collection". Other recent

Jurassic discoveries from Skye include the description of adult and juvenile mammals of the same species, *Krusatodon*, which revealed that these mammals grew more slowly than mammals today, and the world's largest Jurassic pterosaur fossil, *Dearc sgiathanach*.

Charity announces purchase of its largest ever site for nature restoration



Loch a' Bhraoin at Inverbroom © Landfor.

Scotland's leading nature conservation charity has announced its largest ever land acquisition after securing the 7,618-hectare Inverbroom Estate in the Scottish Highlands. The £17.5m purchase of this ecologically and historically significant site, which is larger than the city of Dundee, has been made possible through a gift from a private donor, the largest donation in the Trust's 60-year history. Securing the site will enable the charity to significantly enhance its efforts to protect and restore wildlife at scale across Scotland, with planned nature restoration work supporting the Scottish Government's ambitions to "protect 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030", in line with international targets. Situated approximately eight miles south of Ullapool, the landscape at Inverbroom is one of epic proportions.

The site is predominantly made up of peatland, ancient semi-natural woodland, farmland and numerous lochs and lochans, the largest being the 2.5-mile-long Loch a' Bhraoin. The site is bordered to the east by two rivers, the Broom and the Cuileig, and to the south by two Munros, A' Chailleach and Sgùrr Breac. The built infrastructure includes two bridges designed by Sir John Fowler, chief engineer on the construction of the Forth Rail Bridge, who once owned Inverbroom. Jo Pike, Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, said: "Not only is the purchase of Inverbroom an important milestone for the Trust, but also for Scotland's efforts to tackle the nature and climate crises. The site includes some of Scotland's most iconic species and habitats, so we are delighted to have been able to secure it for the benefit of Scotland's wildlife and people, especially as there was also interest from overseas buyers. It has all been made possible by the incredible generosity of a private donor who is passionate about the part that Inverbroom can play in restoring our precious ecosystems, while delivering benefits for local people. We are extremely grateful to the donor for helping us secure this important site."

Following the purchase, the Trust has announced several ambitions for the site, from the regeneration of river woodland and temperate rainforest habitat to restoring peatlands and removing invasive species. It has made a commitment to the donor that none of the work at Inverbroom will be funded through the

sale of carbon credits. Inverbroom sits within Scotland's temperate rainforest zone which, due to specific climatic requirements, is one of the rarest habitat types in the world. The Trust is aiming to expand and restore rainforest where feasible, thereby improving air and water quality and providing homes for rare plants and animals such as wood warblers, pine martens and a wide range of mosses, lichens and fungi.

Historic Norwegian vessels to visit for WW2 80th Commemorations



S/S Hestmanden.
Photo: Vest Agder Museum.

A flotilla of six restored historic vessels from World War Two will cross the North Sea to be in Lerwick for the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day on 8th May 2025. Taking part in the flotilla, known as the 'Liberation Convoy 2025' will be Royal Norwegian Navy submarine chaser *HNoMS Hitra*, launched in 1943, alongside fishing vessels *M/K Andholmen*, *M/K Arneffjord*, *M/K Erkna* and *M/K Heland*. All five vessels operated from Shetland across the North Sea as part of the covert activity to support the Norwegian resistance known as the 'Shetland Bus' operations. The largest ship in the convoy will be the 60-metre merchant cargo ship *S/S Hestmanden* – originally built in 1911 and which sailed in both the First and Second World Wars. The vessel is now fully restored and officially entitled as *Norsk Krigsseilermuseum* – the Norwegian War Sailor Museum, honouring the estimated 4,500 sailors who died in the Second World War.

The convoy of vessels will be berthed alongside in Lerwick Harbour and be open for the public to visit during their stay. Crew members from the vessels will take part in local commemorations being planned in Lerwick and Scalloway to mark VE Day, and will spend time ashore during their visit. Some vessels in the convoy will then sail on from Shetland to Liverpool, in time for Norway's Constitution Day on Saturday 17th May. The 'Liberation Convoy 2025' is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, the Royal Norwegian Navy, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in London, the British Embassy in Oslo, the Norwegian-British Chamber of Commerce and others.

The convoy is organised by an informal group of museums, organizations, volunteers, professionals and enthusiasts of Norway's maritime wartime history. Lindsay Tulloch QPM, Lord Lieutenant for Shetland, said "Shetland was a strategically important location for the Allied Forces during World War Two and the wartime history of the 'Shetland Bus' operations is well known. It's a fitting recognition of the vital maritime alliance between the UK and Norway during the war that we will see the Liberation Convoy in Shetland on the 80th Anniversary of VE Day."

Edinburgh's historic Nelson Monument and Timeball to undergo major restoration



Photo: Edinburgh City Council.

Nelson Monument, one of Edinburgh's most iconic landmarks, has temporarily close for the final phase of essential refurbishment works and the reinstallation of its historic Timeball and mast. The refurbishment will include inspection and restoration to the monument's external walls and windows, the installation of some new internal lighting, as well as the reinstallation of the Timeball mechanism to full working order. Visitors will be unable to access the monument until the scheduled reopening expected in July 2025. Councillor Val Walker, Culture and Communities Convener, said: "We are excited to embark on this next stage of the important refurbishment of the Nelson Monument, ensuring that both the iconic structure and its fascinating history continue to be celebrated for generations to come. The restoration and reinstallation of the Timeball and the enhancements to the monument will provide visitors with an even richer experience, connecting them to the legacy of Charles Piazzi Smyth and the monumental role this site has played in both Edinburgh's heritage and the history of navigation."

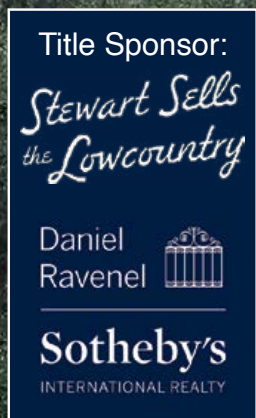
The Nelson Monument, designed by architect Robert Burn in the shape of an upturned telescope, has stood proudly on Calton Hill for over 200 years. The monument's Timeball, added in 1853 by Charles Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, was once crucial for ships navigating the Firth of Forth and Port of Leith, helping them to adjust their clocks for accurate navigation. The Timeball was raised daily before 1pm and lowered at precisely 1pm, with the One O'Clock Gun at Edinburgh Castle providing an audible signal. As well as the Timeball, the Nelson Monument offers one of the finest panoramic views of Edinburgh, with views stretching across the city to the Pentland Hills, the Firth of Forth, and Fife. Visitors can also explore the current exhibition inside the monument, which highlights the life and achievements of Charles Piazzi Smyth, a pioneering figure in astronomy, photography, and Egyptology. His innovative work at Calton Hill contributed significantly to global astronomical practices.

It also forms part of the wonderful visitor experience available at Calton Hill which is home to several neoclassical structures, including the National Monument, the City Observatory and the Dugald Stewart Monument. The Monument will re-open in July 2025. This year marks 220 years since Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805.

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Celebrating 75 years of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

All images courtesy of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.



Can you tell us a bit about 2025 production *The Heroes Who Made Us* and what can audiences expect with this year's performance?

JB: In 2025 we are celebrating 75 years of the Tattoo with our new Show, *The Heroes Who Made Us*. The Show will celebrate the heroes across the Tattoo, military and wider society in Scotland who help better the lives of others through their efforts and take audiences on a journey through our rich history. The Show, which will run from 1-23 August 2025, will also see the introduction of a storyteller, who will not only guide audiences through the Show, but immerse themselves in the performance to provide an even deeper and enhanced emotional audience experience. *The Heroes Who Made Us* will be the first Tattoo from new Creative Director Alan Lane, who places storytelling at the heart of his creative process. The performance will also nod to Scotland's proud history in the arts and military connection with Skipinnish's song *Eagle's Wing* being performed as part of the finale with the whole cast, supported by state-of-the-art projection and lighting.

Can you briefly explain just how much work, logistics and preparation goes into bringing hundreds of performers from around the world together to create the magic that is the Tattoo?

JB: A lot! We work about 18-24 months from each Show, preparing the Show theme, content and production elements as well as the logistics of the venue and our ongoing marketing campaigns. We have a core team of 36 employees who work tirelessly across the year to bring together the incredible spectacle that nearly 230,000 people get to see live every August. We're lucky to have such supportive partners and stakeholders that help bring the Show to life, from selecting the performers to writing the music. It's a team effort – and one that is very rewarding for all involved.

How hard, or easy, is it to secure performers, especially from the military, each year given the length of the run of the Tattoo each August?

JB: As you can imagine, for many services times are tough just now with reduced numbers of serving personnel and even more reduced numbers of musicians taking up the ranks. However, we have such a strong and important relationship with the MOD that we work very closely together to ensure we continue to represent the best of military music in our Show each year. It's quite the commitment for performers to be part of the Tattoo, but the experience and opportunities that it opens – not just for individuals, but countries and militaries – is unmatched and one that everyone who joins us in August recognises.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a world-class event, rooted in Scottish tradition, offering audiences an experience like no other. Performed to a global live audience of over 220,000 each year in August on the iconic Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, the Tattoo showcases creativity through music, precision performances and dance from military and cultural acts from around the world.

Jason Barrett, Chief Executive, of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo took the time to speak to the Scottish Banner on the Tattoo's special 75th year, how Edinburgh Castle plays such a starring role in the Tattoo and just what it is like to be part of 'the greatest show on earth'.

2025 marks 75 incredible years of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The event has grown to become a benchmark of Scottish global celebrations. What is it about the Tattoo do you feel is so enduring and also continues to hold such broad global appeal?

JB: I'm a firm believer that if you're standing still you're falling behind, which is why we continue to evolve and innovate creatively throughout the entire company. From our plans to tour internationally, to enhancing our arena for a better experience, to upgrading our systems and

processes throughout the business, we are committed to growing the brand and elevating the Tattoo at all levels.

We're excited to celebrate the 75th anniversary of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and while naturally people think of the lights, sounds and skill featured on the Esplanade, we have so much more going on throughout the year to signify this celebration.

Our 75th allows us to look back proudly on our legacy, and enthusiastically to the future. In this anniversary year, we recommit to giving more to our charitable partners and to honouring those who've made the Tattoo so successful.





Some feel Edinburgh Castle itself is always one of the stars of the Tattoo. How does the Castle serve up both logistical challenges but also provide such a unique stage that few productions can replicate?

JB: There's nowhere else in the world quite like Edinburgh Castle. And we absolutely refer to it as one of the stars of our Show! It's unique backdrop and iconic location has lent itself to many classic Tattoo moments – not least our Lone Piper appearing on the historic ramparts. That doesn't mean to say it doesn't come without its challenges – something our Operations team will attest to. Each night of our 26 Show run, we welcome up to 9,000 audience members – and not to mention the 1000s of cast and crew members – to a venue with only one exit and entrance, up cobbled hills and steep steps. That's why it's so important that we work closely as an organisation with our stakeholders and suppliers to ensure the best experience for all visitors to our event. We work hard to make the event accessible by all and will continue to do this.

Our 75th allows us to look back proudly on our legacy, and enthusiastically to the future

The Tattoo not only honours tradition and Scottish culture but also uses cutting-edge production technology. How important is it to merge modern technology to showcase military tradition?

JB: It's very important. The Tattoo has always been at the forefront of technology or techniques when it comes to presenting the best show we can. Even 75 years ago, we were using innovative ways to light the Esplanade. Today we have so much at our fingertips, and so much opportunity to present the best of military



and Scottish traditions. It's vital to us that while we introduce or make use of new technologies, whether that be in projection or special effects, the core of the Tattoo will always remain our values of military, tradition and charity.

Every year the Tattoo celebrates comradery and friendship through music, dance and military alliance with a variety of nations. How does it feel to witness that connection and unity of performers coming together to create what many consider 'The greatest show on earth'?

JB: In one word? Incredible. There is no feeling that matches that of witnessing the whole cast come together on the Esplanade in the finale of a Show and the connection between them and the audience. Many of whom have travelled far and wide to be there. It's made that extra special for me as I get to see the backstage friendships forming, and the coming together throughout the year that goes on behind the scenes. But really nothing is better than sitting back and seeing the magic come to life on the Esplanade.



The Tattoo has been performed previously in both Australia and New Zealand. Are there any plans to again take the Tattoo to international audiences?

JB: This is such an exciting time for us just now, with many great opportunities on the table. I've spoken before about the potential for the Tattoo and where we could take it – whether that be around the world, or just to different venues. Now we have ambitions to go back to Australia and New Zealand soon, and potential for presenting something in the US. Already in 2025, we're heading out to the US to be part of the Washington Tattoo and New York's Tartan Week. So, watch this space for more to be announced soon!

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo celebrates their 75th in 2025. The Heroes Who Made Us will run at the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle from 1-23 August 2025. For details and tickets visit: www.edintattoo.co.uk



THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - Hunt the Gowk - Scottish equivalent of April Fool's Day (gowk is a cuckoo).

1 - Scottish singer Susan Boyle born. Boyle rose to fame in 2009 after appearing as a contestant on the third series of *Britain's Got Talent*, singing *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Misérables*. Susan has sold over 25 million albums, has had 250 million audio streams, and over 650 million YouTube hits. **1961**

1 - *Reporting Scotland*, BBC Scotland's flagship national television news programme, is broadcast for the first time. The show continues today and has the largest reach of any televised news in Scotland. **1968**



2 - The College of New Aberdeen was founded. The college was founded by the Earl Marischal of Scotland, George Keith of Inverugie, and became known as Marischal College. Marischal College was the second university in Aberdeen, following the foundation of King's College in 1495 by Bishop William Elphinstone. The two universities were united in 1860 as the University of Aberdeen. **1593**

2 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian province of Prince Edward Island. **1992**

2 - Scottish comedian Janey Godley wins the inaugural Billy Connolly Spirit of Glasgow Award at the Glasgow International Comedy Festival. Godley went viral during the pandemic with her impersonations of the then First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. She was later diagnosed with ovarian cancer, from which she died in 2024. **2023**

3 - Murder of Duke of Rothesay, heir of Robert III. **1401**

3 - King James VI travelled to London to take up the English throne. James moved his court to Whitehall Palace in London, where they settled around the palace in an area which became known as "Scotland Yard". On his way to London he knighted 300 people, and in the space of four months in England had knighted more people than Queen Elizabeth had in her entire reign. James returned to Scotland only once, in 1617, and he liked to boast that he now ruled his northern kingdom with a stroke of his pen. **1603**

4 - Parliament held by King Robert II at Scone, resolved that his son, the Earl of Carrick should succeed his father as King (as Robert III although he was baptised John). **1373**

4 - King Robert III died and James I ascended the throne (but was not crowned until 1424 as he was a prisoner of the English). **1406**

4 - John Napier, inventor of logarithms, died in Edinburgh. **1617**

5 - Disaster at an England vs. Scotland football match at Ibrox Stadium when part of the flooring collapsed, killing 25, injuring over 500. **1902**



6 - Declaration of Arbroath - "For we fight not for glory nor for riches nor for honour, but only and alone for freedom, which no good man surrenders but with his life", was drawn up by the monks of Arbroath Abbey. The Declaration of Arbroath is widely regarded as being the inspiration behind the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. **1320**

6 - Nova Scotia officially proclaims Tartan Day. Started originally as "Tartan Day in Nova Scotia," founder and *Scottish Banner* reader Jean Watson approached every provincial Legislative Assembly in Canada, as well as other Scottish-cultural societies across Canada, to help get such a date established. **1986**

6 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. **1992**

6 - Tartan Day is officially proclaimed in the Canadian province of Newfoundland & Labrador. **1995**

6 - The U.S. Senate declared April 6 to be National Tartan Day to recognize the contributions made by Scottish Americans to the United States. **1998**

7 - The Scottish National Party was founded. The SNP was created out of the merger of a number of parties; the National Party of Scotland, formed in 1928 from an amalgamation of a number of small parties following the rejection of a Home Rule bill, and the Scottish Party, a breakaway section of the Cathcart Conservative Association. The party enjoyed its first success in 1945, when Robert MacIntyre was elected to represent Motherwell. **1934**

7 - Jim Clark, Duns farmer, twice World Motor Racing Champion, killed in crash, Hockenheim. The Jim Clark Motorsport Museum opened in the historic market town of Duns in the Scottish Borders in 2019. **1968**

7 - The last native person born on the island of St Kilda, Rachel Johnson, died at the age of 93 at a care home in Clydebank. **2016**

8 - Radical prisoners were taken from Paisley to Greenock jail under escort. The citizens of Greenock fought their escort, the Port Glasgow Militia, until they reached the jail. Still coming under attack, the Militia opened fire on the stone-throwing crowd. Eight were killed, including an eight year old boy, and ten wounded, before the militia retreated from Greenock. In the evening, the angry Greenockians stormed the jail and freed the prisoners. **1820**

9 - Second Treaty of Durham in which David I is recognised as King of an independent Scotland by King Stephen of England. **1139**

9 - Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, the leading Scottish Jacobite rebel was beheaded on Tower Green, London. Lovat has the unwanted notoriety of being the last man to be publicly beheaded in Britain. It is said his last words said were in Latin: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" or "It's sweet and seemly to die for one's country". **1747**

10 - King James V born. **1512**

10 - Sandy Lyle becomes the first Scottish (and British) golfer to win the US Masters tournament. **1988**

11 - Scottish settlement in Darien, Panama, abandoned. **1700**

11 - The wedding of Scottish tennis star Andy Murray to his long-term partner Kim Sears takes place in Dunblane. **2015**

12 - Union flag adopted as the flag of England, Wales and Scotland. **1606**

12 - The SNP won their first electoral victory. Dr Robert D. MacIntyre won the Motherwell and Wishaw by-election in a straight fight with Labour by a majority of 617 votes. MacIntyre later became Provost of Stirling. **1945**



12 - The Cromarty Bridge opens. The road bridge joins a junction with the B9163 to the south in Ross and Cromarty with a junction with the A862 to the north at Ardullie Point. It became part of the A9 in 1982. **1979**

13 - The Stone of Destiny, which had been removed from underneath the Coronation Chair by Scottish nationalists on 25 December 1950, was returned to Westminster Abbey after being found at Arbroath Abbey. **1951**

13 - Scots entertainer, actor and comedian Jimmy Logan died. **2001**

14 - University of Edinburgh founded. It is the sixth oldest university in the UK and some prominent alumni include Charles Darwin, Alexander Graham Bell, Sir Walter Scott, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. **1582**

14 - Aberdeen Football Club was founded. **1903**

15 - Prof Joseph Black chemist, researcher, teacher, first to identify carbon dioxide, died. **1799**

15 - Infamous passenger liner the *RMS Titanic* sank in the Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg. Several Scots died on the ship including musician Jock Hume who played as the ship sank, First Officer William Murdoch, and several staff members. 1,500 people perished on the maiden voyage to New York. **1912**

15 - Actor and comedian Rikki Fulton born in Glasgow. He was best known for his double act with Jack Milroy as Francie and Josie and as the Rev I M Jolly in *Scotch and Wry*. **1924**

16 - The Battle of Stracathro, also known as the Battle of Inchbare, where forces loyal to David I defeated the invading army of Óengus, the last King of Moray. **1130**

16 - The Battle of Culloden took place at Culloden Moor, where British troops defeated the Scottish Jacobite army for the final confrontation of the 1745 Jacobite Rising. It was the last ever battle to be fought on Scottish/British soil with over 1,500 Scottish fatalities. **1746**



16 - *Royal Yacht Britannia* launched at John Brown's shipyard, Clydebank. *Britannia* served the Royal Family from 1954 until 1997, and travelling more than a million nautical miles. The *Britannia* opened as a visitor attraction in Edinburgh in 1998. **1953**

16 - Livingston in West Lothian is officially designated as a New Town. It was the fourth post-war new town to be built in Scotland. **1962**

17 - Alexander Mackenzie, the Scottish-born Canadian statesman, died. Mackenzie was the first Liberal Prime Minister of Canada, serving from 1873-78. **1892**

17 - A British record attendance at a football match was set when 149,547 watched Scotland play England at Hampden Park, Glasgow. Until 1950, this was a world record. **1937**

18 - Remains of David Livingstone interred in Westminster Abbey. **1874**

18 - Harbourne Stephen, the Scottish World War II fighter pilot, was born. Stephen was a Battle of Britain fighter ace who went on to forge a career for himself as a newspaper executive. On his way to a tally of 23 registered kills (though it was almost certainly higher) he shot down five enemy aircraft in a single day in August 1940. **1914**

19 - Robert II, grandson of Robert the Bruce, died at Dundonald Castle. **1390**

19 - Jim Mollison, the pioneering Scottish aviator, was born. Mollison held many individual records for distance, endurance, and speed flying, he became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic from East to West. **1905**

20 - The first public meeting of the Scottish National Party was held. The meeting was held in the Central Hall, Tollcross, Edinburgh. The Scottish National Party was formed by the amalgamation of The National Party of Scotland and The Scottish Party. **1934**

21 - John Muir, the Scottish-born American naturalist, was born in Dunbar. Muir was responsible for the creation of Yosemite and Sequoia national parks in California. The 550-acre Muir Woods National Monument is named after him. **1838**

21 - Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act passed by the Scottish Parliament, the first piece of legislation in the UK to give formal recognition to the Scottish Gaelic language. It aims to secure Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding "equal respect" with English, by establishing Bòrd na Gàidhlig within the framework of the government of Scotland. **2005**

22 - Captain John Paul Jones (born and raised in Scotland), Commanding Officer of the Continental Warship *Ranger*, led a raid on the town of Whitehaven, England. The first raid on England in over a hundred years and the last time England was attacked on its own shore. No one was hurt and the damage was minimal, but the fear created in England played a huge part in the American victory. **1778**

23 - King Alexander I died at Stirling Castle, succeeded by David I. **1124**

23 - Blackout restrictions lifted as World War II heads to a conclusion. **1945**

24 - 15-year-old Mary, Queen of Scots, married French Dauphin, Francis Vailois (aged 14) at Notre Dame in Paris. They had no children and Francis died in 1560, ruling France for just eighteen months. **1558**

25 - Malcolm III (Canmore) crowned. **1058**



25 - The Royal Navy's last battleship, *HMS Vanguard*, was accepted for trials by the navy. The ship was built at John Brown's in Clydebank. It was originally intended to be part of the Far Eastern Fleet fighting the Japanese but was not completed until after the war, and so became the only British battleship never to fire her guns in anger. **1946**

26 - Philosopher David Hume born. **1711**

27 - The Scottish army was routed in the Battle of Dunbar by Edward I, King of England. Hostilities started when the King of the Scots, John Balliol, renounced his allegiance to the English Crown. The battle became known as the "Dunbar Drave". **1296**

27 - James Bruce, the Scottish explorer, died. Bruce became the first European to discover Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile, in 1770. **1794**

28 - Henry Dundas, powerful politician, known as "Uncrowned King of Scotland", born. **1742**

28 - Glasgow Garden Festival opened by Prince Charles and the Princess of Wales on the south bank of the River Clyde. The festival would welcome 4.5 million visitors over five months. **1988**

29 - Lonnie Donegan, the Scottish skiffle singer, composer and guitarist, was born. Considered by some to be Britain's first pop superstar, James Anthony Donegan burst onto the scene in the mid-1950s with a distinctive, lively sound called skiffle. **1931**

29 - Stephen Hendry, aged 21, becomes the youngest world snooker champion by beating Jimmy White 18-12 in the final. **1990**

30 - Royal Bank invents first overdraft, William Hogg overdraws by £1,000 (over £75,000 at today's money). **1728**

30 - David Livingstone, the renowned Scottish missionary and explorer, died. Born in Blantyre, Livingstone was famed for his exploration of central and southern Africa. He was the first European to see Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. **1873**

30 - An Comunn Gàidhealach was formally instituted as a vehicle for the preservation and development of the Gaelic language. **1891**

Learned Kindred of Currie to host 23rd annual Tartan Day on Ellis Island Celebrations



The Learned Kindred of Currie is proud to announce that it will host the 23rd annual Tartan Day on Ellis Island celebrations from April 4-6, 2025. This prestigious event honors Scottish heritage, culture, and contributions to America, bringing together Scots and Scottish-Americans from across the country.

Scheduled to perform this year are, The Force – championship drum major demonstration team; the Shot of Scotch Highland Dancers; pipers and drummers from the St. Columcille United Gaelic

Pipe Band, Scottish juggler John Grimaldi and members of the Fling Together dancers and the McAngus School of Highland Dance.

Performances will take place every day between 10AM and 3PM in the great lawn facing the Manhattan skyline.

The Scottish spirit

Tartan Day on Ellis Island is a cornerstone of the broader National Tartan Day celebrations, which recognize the lasting impact of Scottish immigrants on the United States. Throughout the weekend,



attendees will enjoy historical exhibits, cultural performances, and special presentations highlighting Scotland's deep connections to American history.

"The Learned Kindred of Currie is honored to lead this year's celebrations, continuing the proud tradition of recognizing the Scottish spirit that helped shape this nation," said Robert Currie, Commander of the Learned Kindred of Currie and event producer. "Ellis Island serves as a powerful backdrop for this event, reminding us of the journey so many Scots took in pursuit of a better future in America."

Highlights of the past festivities have included:

- Historical and genealogical exhibits showcasing Scottish immigration stories
- Traditional music and dance performances from acclaimed Scottish artists
- Keynote speakers and honored guests reflecting on Scotland's influence in America

Tartan Day on Ellis Island is free and open to the public. Visitors are encouraged to don their tartan and join in the festivities. This program has been made possible in part from a generous grant from the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government. The Learned Kindred of Currie is a recognized Scottish heritage organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the history, traditions, and contributions of the Currie name and wider Scottish culture.



For more information, please visit: www.facebook.com/TartanDayonEllisIsland

Tartan of the Month

Red Thistle Dance 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).

Designed as a tribute to the dancers, musicians, founders, and friends of the Red Thistle Dancers, a Scottish Country and Highland Dance performance group from the San Francisco Bay area, and named for California's native red thistle. The tartan marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of this group. The colours are intended to reflect the vibrant hues of the California native red thistle species, *Cirsium occidentale* and *Cirsium arizonicum*, under a blue sky.

This tartan (SRT #14517) was designed by Deborah Savage and registered in October, 2024.

TARTAN DAY SOUTH CELTIC FESTIVAL APRIL 3 - 6 CAYCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Join us for the best weekend
you'll enjoy this spring!

ENJOY GREAT FOOD, SHOPPING, CELTIC MUSIC, HIGHLAND ATHLETICS, BIRDS OF PREY, HERDING DOGS, TRADITIONAL DANCE, HISTORICAL PRESENTATIONS, A CLASSIC BRITISH CAR SHOW AND MUCH MORE...

TARTANDAYSOUTH.COM

IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN

Burns
Cottage pie**Ingredients:**

1 tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
560g/1¼lb. beef mince
400g can of tomatoes
290ml/10fl oz. beef stock
1 bay leaf
1 sprig fresh thyme, leaves stripped
2 tbsp. tomato purée
salt and freshly ground black pepper
For the topping
750g/1½ lb. potatoes, peeled and chopped
225g/8oz. parsnips, peeled and chopped
2 tsp creamed horseradish
75g/2½oz. butter
55ml/2fl oz. milk

Method:

Preheat the oven to 190C/170C Fan/Gas 5. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onion and carrot and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the

minced beef and cook for 3 minutes, to brown. Add the tomatoes, purée, beef stock, bay leaf and thyme.

Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Season.

Arbroath toasties

Ingredients:

175g/6 oz. smoked haddock (you can also substitute with cod, trout, arctic char or halibut)
175ml/6 oz. milk
15g/½ oz. plain (all purpose) flour
25g/1 oz. strong, hard, grated cheese
One egg (separated into white and yolk)
Salt, pepper, freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 slices of buttered toast

Method:

Heat the smoked haddock in quarter pint/150ml/two-thirds cup of the milk in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat, cover and cook for about five minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork. Remove the fish with a fish slice and flake. Mix the flour with the rest of the milk and then stir into the milk in the saucepan. Bring to the boil and cook for two minutes, stirring continuously until thick. Stir in the cheese, egg yolk and flaked fish. Season to taste with salt, pepper, freshly ground black pepper, then heat through. Whisk the egg white until it is stiff and fold in with a metal spoon.

Put the toast on a grill rack and spoon the fish mixture onto each slice of toast. Place under a hot grill until it is lightly browned. Serve immediately.

Forfar Bridies

**Ingredients:**

700g/1½ lbs. boneless, lean rump steak. Lean minced beef can also be used.
2 rounded tablespoons suet or butter or margarine
1 (or 2) onion, chopped finely
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder
¼ cup rich beef stock
Salt and pepper to taste
700g/1½ lbs. flaky pastry (homemade or from a pastry mix packet)

Method:

Remove any fat or gristle from the meat and beat with a meat bat or rolling pin. Cut into half-inch/1cm pieces and place in a medium bowl. Add the salt/pepper, mustard, chopped onion, suet (or butter/margarine) and stock and mix well. Prepare the pastry and divide the pastry and meat mixture into six equal portions.

Roll each pastry portion into a circle about six inches/15 cm in diameter and about quarter of an inch thick and place a portion of the mixture in the centre. Leave an edge of pastry showing all round. Brush the outer edge of half the pastry circle with water and fold over. Crimp the edges together well. The crimped edges should be at the top of each bridie. Make a small slit in the top (to let out any steam). Brush a 12 inch square/30cm (or equivalent area) baking tray with oil and place the bridies in this, ensuring that they are not touching.

Place in a pre-heated oven at 450F/230C/gas mark 8 for 15 minutes then reduce the temperature to 350F/180C/gas mark 4 and cook for another 45/55 minutes. They should be golden brown and if they are getting too dark, cover with greaseproof paper (vegetable parchment).

Almond Shortbread
(Microwave version)**Ingredients:**

150g/5oz. soft butter
65g/2½ oz. caster sugar
5ml/1 tablespoon vanilla extract
150g/5oz. plain flour
50g/2oz. ground almonds
35g/1½ oz. ground rice
10-12 split almonds

Method:

Line the base of a 20cm/8 inch ovenproof flan dish with baking paper. Beat together the butter, sugar and vanilla extract until light and fluffy. Sift together the flour and add the almonds and rive and stir in. Gather the dough into a smooth ball. Press the mixture into the flan dish and level the surface. Prick all over with a fork, then lightly press split almonds around the edge.

Cook in the microwave on Medium-High for about 6 minutes or until just firm. Leave to cool for 5 minutes, then cut it into wedges. Leave to cool completely before removing from the dish. Makes 10-12 wedges.

Hot cross buns

**Ingredients:**

450g/1lb strong white bread flour
7g/½ oz. dried yeast
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp allspice
100g/3½oz raisins
1 orange, zest only
100g/3½oz sugar
50g/1¾oz butter
250ml/9fl oz. milk
1 free-range egg

For the cross:

75g/2¾oz flour
4 tsp caster sugar
4 tbsp. water

For the glaze:

1 tbsp. smooth marmalade
1 tbsp. soft dark brown sugar
2 tbsp. water
butter, to serve

Method:

For the dough, sift the flour, dried yeast, cinnamon, allspice, raisins, orange zest and sugar into a bowl. Warm the butter and milk together in a saucepan until the butter has melted. Remove from the heat and whisk in the egg. Fold the milk mixture into the flour mixture to form a dough. Tip the dough onto a floured work surface and knead for 10 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and elastic. Divide the dough into 12 pieces, shape into balls and cover with a damp cloth. Set aside for 12 hours, or until the dough has doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Meanwhile, for the cross, mix the flour, sugar and water together in a bowl and spoon into a piping bag with a plain nozzle. Place the buns onto a baking tray and pipe a cross onto each bun. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until cooked through. For the glaze, heat the glaze ingredients in a pan until the sugar has melted and the mixture is smooth and glossy. Remove the buns from the oven and immediately brush each bun with the glaze. Set aside to cool. Serve the hot cross buns warm with butter.

Easter bunny martini

Ingredients:

35ml/1¼fl oz vodka
1 tbsp vanilla liqueur
25ml/1fl oz. Advocaat
25ml/1fl oz. single cream
25ml/1fl oz. sugar syrup/ gomme syrup
25g/1oz. chocolate (milk or dark), grated

Method:

Place the vodka, vanilla liqueur, Advocaat and single cream into a cocktail shaker and shake well. Place the sugar syrup into a bowl and dip the rim of a Martini glass into the syrup to coat. Place the grated chocolate onto a plate.

Dip the rim of the Martini glass into the grated chocolate to coat. Pour the liquid into the glass and serve.

Learned Kindred of Currie to sponsor
new Highland Dance Competition

The Learned Kindred of Currie proudly announces its role as a title sponsor for the inaugural New York City Highland Dance Competition, set to take place during the city's Tartan Week celebrations. This exciting new event will showcase the rich tradition of Scottish Highland dancing, bringing together top competitors and enthusiasts from across North America and beyond. "We are thrilled that the Learned Kindred of Currie is sponsoring the inaugural NYC Highland Dance Competition during New York City Tartan Week," said Emily Ritter, co-chair of the NYC Highland Dance Competition. "This event will give dancers from around the world a chance to showcase their art at

its highest form and the public a chance to witness this key cornerstone of Highland dance culture."

Cultural heritage of Highland Dance

The event will feature dancers of all ages and skill levels competing in traditional Highland dances, including the Highland Fling, Sword Dance, and Seann Triubhas.

A judge will evaluate the dancers on timing, technique, and general deportment and medals will be awarded for the top places in each class. Held near Battery Park, the competition on April 6, 2025 will highlight the grace, athleticism, and cultural heritage of Highland Dance, a discipline deeply rooted in Scottish history. "Last year's Celebration of Highland Dance on Ellis Island brought together dancers from around the world for a massive tribute to the power of Highland dance," said Alexa Smith, Director of Fling Together Collective, a co-sponsor of the NYC Highland Dance Competition. "This partnership between the competition and Tartan Day on Ellis Island offers dancers the amazing experience of performing in an iconic NYC location while enabling us to showcase the importance of immigration to America via an awesome cultural display at Ellis Island."

Find out more at:
<https://nychighlanddance.com/competition>



Scots gather for the 47th Savannah Scottish Games



the Great Highland bagpipe. She blends classic rock and heavy metal with Celtic influences, captivating audiences worldwide. Ally showcases her talent on various traditional instruments and is redefining the bagpipe's place in contemporary music.

Throw away preconceived notions about Celtic music .. Seven Nations has invented its own sound veering from roots in folk, dance and fusion-rock. The pipe and drum and solo competitions provide the stirring and haunting melodies of the bagpipes which characterize the very soul of Scotland. Did we mention that Savannah is known as a haunted city?

The Scots in you

Children might encounter Zephyr, a magical fairy, while enjoying a captivating selection of Scottish tales and games like the kilt run, tug-of-war, sheaf toss, caber

toss, haggis hurl, stone throw, welly toss, and the sack race. Children's Passports are provided to collect stamps from clan tents and collect a special prize.

The Shire of Forth Castle, will host interactive demonstrations and displays showcasing a variety of medieval European activities. This authentic southern venue is the perfect backdrop for Clan Nan Con, a passionate group of historians and reenactors who specialize in studying and bringing to life the world of Scottish Highlanders between 1736 and 1746. Living history reenactors from Fort King George in Darien, Georgia will also be representing some of the finest soldiers of their time and demonstrating life as a settler.

Ever wondered if you have a bit of the Scots in you? Explore forty-three clan tents surrounding the Scottish Games arena, each offering a treasure trove of artifacts, history, and a list of surnames tied to their clan. For those eager to dig deeper, visit the genealogy tent, where experts and historical associations will help you trace your family tree and uncover your roots. But beware—this fascinating journey into your past can quickly become an addictive adventure.

Savannah, Georgia is full of manicured parks, cobblestone streets, and southern charm - perfect opportunity to visit on May 3rd.

For more information visit:
www.savannahscottishgames.com

Celebrate our Scottish heritage

Title Sponsor, Stewart Marshall, with Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty adds, "With a long Scottish family history in Savannah, It is an honor and a privilege to celebrate our Scottish heritage as title sponsor of the 47th Savannah Scottish Games, leveraging the Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty brand and my brand Stewart Sells The Lowcountry. From the manicured town squares and horse-drawn carriages to ornate antebellum architecture of Historic Savannah it's no wonder Savannah is one of the most visited cities in the South. Come for a visit and let Stewart Sells The Lowcountry find you a home in this beautiful community."

Athletic Competitions are one of the highlights of the Scottish Games. This thrilling event features skilled athletes competing in seven traditional athletic events. The Games are proud to host the ScotDance Highland Dancing Southeast Regional Championships, one of six Highland Dance competitions held throughout the United States each spring. The top three Savannah Regionals winners in each group can compete in the ScotDance National Championships. Music lovers will enjoy performances by renowned Celtic bands, including Ally the Piper and Seven Nations.

Ally the Piper is a viral internet sensation, renowned for modernizing

The 47th annual Savannah Scottish Games will take place on Saturday, May 3, from 8:45 am to 7 pm at Bynuh's Field, Bethesda Academy, located in Savannah, Georgia. "At Bethesda Academy for our 17th year, we will host Celtic competitions, Scottish food, gathering of the clans, and outstanding live music from bands including our headliners, Ally the Piper and Seven Nations. Providing an iconic venue for heavy athletes, pipe bands, and Highland Dancers to compete and obtain feedback from highly esteemed judges, we celebrate our love for Scottish culture and heritage with our surrounding communities," states Savannah Scottish Games President, Murray Marshall. The Savannah Scottish Games are set at Bethesda Academy on 650 picturesque acres which sits on the pristine banks of the Moon River. This event promises a day filled with wide-ranging entertainment for the whole family.



Calling the Clans

Welcome to our "Clansified" listing of Scottish Clans, Societies and Clubs. If you would like to add your Clan please contact our office for full details. Our contacts are located on page 2. If you are contacting your Clan be sure to tell them you saw them in *the Scottish Banner* and please support these great community organisations.

Clan Baird Society Worldwide



Membership is open to those descended from Baird, Barde, Bard, Beard, Beaird, Brd, Bayard, Bardt, Barth and Biard or varied spellings of the name of Scottish origin.

In addition to the Society newsletter and the opportunity to associate with fellow clansman members may query the Society genealogist. **For information write:**

Clan Baird Commander

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

Hereditary President of Clan Baird Society Worldwide

Debra J. Baird, Ph.D. FSA Scot, CBSW Convenor
Email: djbaird4@gmail.com
Website: clanbairdsocietyworldwide.co.uk

CLAN CARRUTHERS SOCIETY - INTERNATIONAL-

HEREDITARY CHIEF AND SOCIETY PATRON
Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains
Chief of the Name and Arms of Carruthers

Cordially invites all Carruthers and their descendants to join **us** in preserving our Clan and Family heritage.

Clan Carruthers Society - International
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www.clancarrutherssociety.org
clancarrutherssociety@gmail.com

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Online membership: <https://clanbell.org/membership.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ClanBell>

Email: President@clanbell.org

Clan Bell North America

49 Greystone Lane NW

Cartersville, GA, 30121

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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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Duncan Robertson Reid

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Email: Ih100@tpg.com.au

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Membership enquiries to Don Chitts

Ph: (03) 9754 5120 donchitts@hotmail.com

Website: <http://clanfraseraustralia.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Pages/Clan-Fraser-Society-of-Australia/>

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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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President	5561 Earl Young Road
1051 Eagle Ridge Trail	Bloomington, IN 47408
Stillwater, Minnesota 55082	www.familyofbruceinternational.org

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Website: www.elliotclan-usa.com

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Membership is open to MacLarens (all spellings), Septs, individuals and families with an association to the Clan.

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Contact: Secretary Mal Nicolson
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www.clanmacnicol.org



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Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Invites anyone interested in our Clan and its ancestral heritage to contact us. Various Clan names include McPhee, MacFee, Macfie, McAfee, Fee, Phee, McDuffy, Duffy, McCathie and many more.

For more information please email:
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website: <https://clanmacfie.com.au>

Clan MacLellan

Kevin S Gates
Treasurer
2610 Kuykendall Dr.
Arlington, TX
76001-6726

Email: treasurer@clanmaclellan.net

Invites all MacLellans and their descendants regardless of surname spelling to join in preserving our heritage. Various family names are MacLellan(d), McClelland(d), McLellan(d) and Gilliland.

Visit our website: www.clanmaclellan.net



Clan Macpherson Association

Clan Macpherson welcomes enquiries from Macphersons and members of our Associated families. For information about local activities visit our web site www.clan-macpherson.org/branches

Africa: Derek Macpherson
African.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +265 999 512 620

Australia: Pam Rhenrov
Australian.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +61 407 789 924

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

England & Wales: William Macpherson
EnglandW.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
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Europe: Bodo Bernd Schmitz
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phone +44 7810 860 528

USA: Dave McPherson
UnitedStates.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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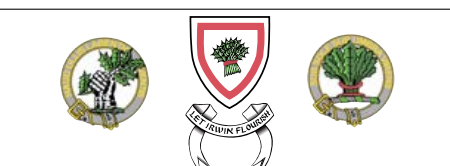


The Clan MacRae Society of Australia and New Zealand

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: clanmacraeaustrnz@gmail.com

NZ Contact: Sue Tregoweth
email: sue.treg1@gmail.com



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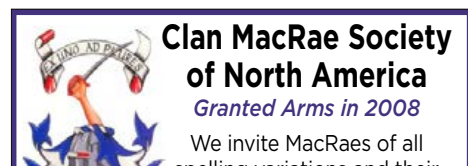
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• NSW, ACT & Qld - Peter Macleod 02 4397 3161
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rthomnvrdrca@aol.com www.clanmaitlandna.org

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12 Settlers Way, Westleigh, NSW, 2120

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33 Disley Street, Highbury, Wellington 6012. NZ

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for information contact Commander Des Ross
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Contact: Commander Des Ross at
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For further info contact
 President: WayneSinclair 0417 146 174
 Secretary : Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263
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Archaeology Institute PhD student's research dates St Magnus reliquary



The wooden box that once held the suspected remains of St Magnus on display in the Orkney Museum. Photo: Jenny Murray.

Research by a UHI Archaeology Institute PhD student suggests the wooden box said to have contained the remains of St Magnus is contemporary with the martyrdom of the 12th century Orkney earl. The box was recovered in March 1919, during extensive renovation work in St Magnus Cathedral. Within it were human bones, the skull showing clear signs of injury. This led to the remains being heralded as that of Saint Magnus, murdered at Easter in 1116, 1117 or 1118. Despite this, there was always the possibility that the box and its contents were much later, perhaps introduced to cash in on the medieval pilgrim trade.

Alternatively, the wooden reliquary may have been fashioned to protect the relics when they were hidden in the cathedral pillar ahead of the 16th century Scottish Reformation. But a radiocarbon date secured from the box now suggests it, and by extension the bones, fit the timeframe of St Magnus' demise. Jenny Murray surveying red sandstone fragments in the ruined medieval Eynhallow Church, Orkney, as part of her ongoing PhD research. Jenny Murray, a curator at the Shetland Museum and Archives, is researching Magnus Erlendsson for her PhD, which is looking at the physical traces of his cult in the North Atlantic.

Expanding on research carried out by the UHI Archaeology Institute's Dr Sarah Jane Gibbon, Jenny has been recording sites relating to St Magnus as well as the surviving artefacts associated with his veneration. As part of this she was drawn to the reliquary said to have once held Magnus' relics.

Scotland's earliest surviving wooden reliquary

Jenny explained: "Funding from the Orkney Archaeology Society allowed me to obtain a radiocarbon date from a small sample of the box lid. This revealed the tree used to construct the box was most likely felled between AD1034 and AD1168. This is hugely important on many fronts – it may be Scotland's earliest surviving wooden reliquary but also strongly suggests that the box was original to the translation of St Magnus' relics into the cathedral around AD1150, where it remained until 1919."

Although the bones were reinterred in the cathedral pillar, the box is now on display in the Orkney Museum, Kirkwall. She added: "There's also the strong

possibility that the box was fashioned around the time that Magnus' bones were moved from Birsay to Kirkwall, to awaiting the opening of the cathedral." According to the Orkneyinga saga, Magnus' remains were exhumed around 20 years after his death. They were washed, tested in consecrated fire and, on St Lucy's Day, "enshrined and placed above the altar" at Christchurch, Birsay. But, in a dream, Magnus declared he wanted his mortal remains moved to Kirkwall.

The saga states that Bishop William "led a grand procession east to Kirkwall, taking along with them the holy relics of Earl Magnus, and placed the reliquary above the high altar of the church that stood there at that time". That temporary destination was the little church of St Olaf, where a "A good many miracles happened there immediately after these events."

The saint's relics

Some years later, around 1150, the saint's relics were moved again - this time to the cathedral that had been raised in his honour. The box, which is 74.5cm long, 25.7cm wide and 17.6cm high, was identified as being made from Scots pine in 1926, a conclusion confirmed by Associate Professor Scott Timpany of the UHI Archaeology Institute, who also extracted and prepared the timber

sample for radiocarbon dating. Although it is not possible to say whether the wooden box held Magnus' relics throughout that period, and part of the saint's elaborate shrine at all three locations, there are a few tantalising hints.

The lid has been worn smooth at one end, suggestive of repeated contact. Are we seeing the result of pilgrims touching the sacred reliquary? Likewise, the body is damaged at the same side. It is purely speculative but were eager pilgrims taking fragments and splinters as talismans or keepsakes? We know, from the saga, that two miscreants made off with gold from the shrine! The healing properties of the saint's relics were renowned and well-documented, with the Magnus saga stating that "a good many people kept vigil ... beside the holy relic and were cured of their sufferings as long as they invoked Earl Magnus in true faith."

That perceived healing power may have extended to the fabric of the buildings themselves, with evidence of marks within the cathedral where visitors scraped away tiny quantities of red sandstone – perhaps for curative reasons. Jenny said: "The new radiocarbon dating also expands the narrative as to the reliquary's position within the cathedral and adds an extra level of significance to the notion that the skeletal remains are indeed those of St Magnus. In 1926, it was surmised that

the box was transferred from the high altar to the column during the extension of the cathedral's east end in the late 12th century. The altar would have been close to the pillar before it was moved into the extended choir. It's been suggested that the interment within the pillars was intentional – placing the remains of both Magnus and Rognvald in a place of special honour and security. One of my PhD supervisors, Dr Sarah Jane Gibbon, has proposed the pillars' inward-facing position was so the two saints could watch over and 'protect' the high altar. With St Magnus and St Rognvald being placed within the very fabric of the cathedral, the building itself can be seen as the reliquary and the red sandstone becomes even more special."



Jenny Murray.



St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney. Photo by Sigurd Towrie.



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Celebrating 60 Years

WHAT’S ON - SCOTTISH EVENTS

Enjoy North America's premier Scottish event listings in the Scottish Banner. Please check directly with event contacts for the most up to date information. You can also see our latest updates (including events listed across Scotland and Australasia) or add your event at: www.scottishbanner.com/events

Canada

APRIL 2025

The Fitzgeralds Tartan Day Celebration 3, Toronto, ON

The Fitzgeralds are bringing their brilliant fiddle and step dancing show to Rivoli. Prepare to be amazed by their fast feet, faster hands and incredible stage presence. This dynamic family act is inspired by the music of Irish, Scottish and French immigrants. Info: www.thefitzgeraldsmusic.com

Tartans and Tunes 5, Flagstaff County, AB

Join the Flagstaff Scottish Club in celebrating Tartan Day with music, dance and more. Info: www.flagstaffscottishclub.com/highlandflingevent

Federation for Scottish Culture in Nova Scotia's Salute to Tartan Day 5, Halifax, NS

Founded in Nova Scotia in 1986, Tartan Day has grown into an international celebration of Scottish culture, observed in countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, and Scotland itself. It's a day to wear your tartan with pride and recognize the enduring contributions of the Scottish diaspora, at St. Margaret of Scotland Church Hall. Info: fscns.secretary@gmail.com

Tartan Day Reception 5, Ottawa, ON

Beechwood Cemetery, The National Cemetery of Canada welcomes you to join them for an evening of music and history. The Sacred Space will be the setting for this gathering, and Director Nick McCarthy will share stories of Scottish-Canadian connections at Beechwood, and more. The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band help host this fundraiser, which helps raise money for the band's trip to Scotland in August - and there is a lovely reception afterwards. Tickets are only \$20.00 plus fees on EventBrite - you can visit the band's website: www.sospb.com

RSCDS Hamilton Platinum Anniversary Ball 5, Hamilton, ON

Come celebrate with your friends-in-dance at RSCDS Hamilton, Canada's 1st and oldest Branch celebrating their Platinum Anniversary — 70 years of Scottish Country Dancing in Hamilton! Live music by Scotch & Soda at Scottish Rite, 4 Queen Street South. Info: www.rscdshamilton.org

Scottish Studies Society's 2025 Scot of the Year Award 5, Toronto, ON

Dr Lynn McDonald will be receiving the Scottish Studies Society's 2025 Scot of the Year Award in view of her long public career and many contributions to building a better Canada, especially in relation to women's equality and pay equity, at The Arts & Letters Club, 14 Elm St. Info: www.scottishstudies.com

Tartan Day Fling 5, Innisfail, AB

Hosted by the Red Deer Highland Games at Innisfail High School. Info: www.reddeerhighlandgames.com

Tartan Day 2025 6, Nationwide

An annual celebration of Scottish culture, heritage and recognises the incredible contributions Scottish immigrants have made to their new lands. A celebration of Scottish heritage on April 6, the date on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320, and started by a Scottish Banner reader!

National Tartan Day Ottawa 6, Ottawa, ON

The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band welcome you to join them at their 17th annual National Tartan Day show on Parliament Hill. Come along in your tartans and bring your friends to enjoy a concert with pipes, drums, dancing and much more. Info: www.sospb.com

Vancouver Ceilidh 25, Vancouver, BC

Ceilidh dance at the Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson St– class 7 – 7:45 pm and dance from 8 to 10:30 ish. \$15 (\$10 for students) Cash only and cash donations for beer, cider, pop, juice and cookies etc. Live music for the dance by Calanaish and all dances taught and walk though etc. No partner required, pay at the door. Info: www.vancouverceilidh.org

Heather Ball 26, Vancouver, BC

Scottish country dance event at Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson St. Info: www.scottishculturalcentre.com

MAY 2025

VE Day 80 Ottawa 3, Ottawa, ON

The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band of Ottawa welcome pipers, drummers, and guests to join them on May 3 in Ottawa to help mark the 80th anniversary of the Victory in Europe Day. 80 pipers will line Wellington Street starting at 3 pm at the Canadian War Museum and each play a tune of their choosing for 1 minute and at 5 pm the last piper will play at the National War Memorial. The pipers will be joined by 20 drummers at the War Memorial to play some tunes at 5:30 pm before heading to Deacon Brodie's Pub for a tune and a reception. Registration is open now on the Sons of Scotland website and we hope you can join us for this very special event: www.sospb.com

The 2025 West Toronto Ball 10, Toronto, ON

Scottish country dance event. The programme contains a lovely selection of dances suited to delight both newer and experienced dancers, to the live music of Scotch & Soda, at the banquet hall at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 101, 3850 Lake Shore Blvd W. Info: www.dancescottish.ca

Pipers' and Pipe Band Society of Ontario-Ottawa Indoor Contest 10, Ottawa, ON

Enjoy solo piping and drumming competitions in the morning, followed by quartet and pipe band competitions in the afternoon. Info: www.ppbso-ottawa.org/indoor-highland-games

Saskatchewan Highland Gathering and Celtic Festival 17, Regina, SK

Saskatchewan's premier Scottish festival with pipe bands, Clans, dancing and more at Victoria Park. Info: www.saskhighland.ca

Victoria Highland Games & Celtic Festival 17-18, Victoria, BC

A family-focused weekend of Scottish and Celtic arts and culture including pipe band competitions, Scottish Highland dancing competitions, Heavy Events, Clans and more at Topaz Park. Info: www.victoriahighlandgames.com

World Whisky Day 17, Nationwide

World Whisky Day invites everyone to try a dram and celebrate the water of life. Events are taking place all over the globe. Info: www.worldwhiskyday.com

Halifax Celtic Festival 21-25, Halifax, NS

A celebration of Celtic culture and music at Spatz Theatre. Info: www.hfxcelticfest.ca

Spirit of Scotch 24, Gravenhurst, ON

The Spirit of Scotch is an evening filled with five of the finest Scotch whiskies paired with sumptuous food at the Gravenhurst Centennial Centre. Savour the rich flavours of exclusive Scotches from five distinguished Scottish distilleries and participate in an auction of unique and hard to obtain whiskies. Info: www.gravenhurstrotary.org

USA

APRIL 2025

Tartan Day South 3-6, Cayce, SC

Tartan Day South honors the Celtic culture and heritage in South Carolina's Midlands region. Info: www.tartandaysouth.com

Tartan Day on Ellis Island 4-6, New York, NY

A celebration of Scottish-American history and culture at the Ellis Island Museum. Info: www.tartandayonellisland.com

Hoolie in New York 5, New York, NY

Scotland's beloved cultural extravaganza, Hoolie in the Hydro, comes to Carnegie Hall for an unforgettable evening of vibrant Scottish music and culture, showcasing world-renowned talent from throughout Scotland to the Big Apple. Info: www.anairdevents.com

Dunedin Highland Games 5, Dunedin, FL

Celebrate the heritage and culture of Scotland with great music, dancing, athletics, good food, drink, and friends at Highlander Park. Info: www.dunedinsafoundation.com/highland-games

Dressed to Kilt 5, New York, NY

Dressed to Kilt charity fashion show is returning to New York City, the most prestigious, largest and exciting Scottish fashion show in the world. The theme of the 2025 DTK fashion show will be "Country Couture – From the Scottish Highlands to Fifth Avenue". Info: www.dressedtokilt.com

San Antonio Highland Games 5-6, Helotes, TX

A Celtic filled weekend at Helotes Festival Grounds, 12210 Leslie Rd. Info: www.sahga.org

Hawaiian Scottish Festival and Highland Games 5-6, Honolulu, HI

Highland Games, entertainment, Highland dancing, bagpipes, Gathering of Clans and more. Info: www.hawaiianscottishassociation.com/highland-games

Tartan Film Festival 5-12, Los Angeles, CA

A celebration of Scottish film presented by the St. Andrew's Society LA. Info: www.tartanfilmfest.com

Tartan Day 2025 6, Nationwide

An annual celebration of Scottish culture, heritage and recognises the incredible contributions Scottish immigrants have made to their new lands. A celebration of Scottish heritage on April 6, the date on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320, and started by a Scottish Banner reader!

A Celebration of Scotland's Treasures 10, New York, NY

The evening included live and silent auctions with one-of-a-kind prizes, a whisky tasting, a meal among friends in The Metropolitan Club's spectacular dining room, and Scottish cèilidh to end the festivities. Honoring Scottish actor Robert Carlyle OBE. Info: <https://ntsusa.org/about-us/celebration-gala>

Scottish Tartan Festival 12, Minden, LA

Highland games, vendors, entertainment and more at Miller Quarters, 198 Gleason St. Info: www.scottishtartanfestival.com

Ormond Beach Celtic Festival 12-13, Ormond Beach, FL

A Florida Celtic festival that incorporates music, food, Clans and family entertainment. Info: www.ormondbeachcelticfestival.com

Las Vegas Celtic Festival and Highland Games 12-13, Las Vegas, NV

Pipe bands, live music, Scottish athletics, shopping, food and more at Craig Ranch Regional Park. Info: www.lasvegascelticsociety.org

Colorado Tartan Day Festival 12-13, Longmont, CO

Celebrate Tartan Day at the Boulder County Fairgrounds. Info: www.coloradotartanday.com

Virginia International Tattoo 24-27, Norfolk, VA

Largest Military Tattoo in the US, with 800+ international cast bands, pipes, drums, dancers, drill teams & more at Scope Arena. Info: www.vafest.org/tattoo

Southern Maryland Celtic Festival 26, St. Leonard, MD

Celtic bands, Clans, historical displays, Scottish/Irish country dance performances and more at Jefferson Patterson Park, 10515 Mackall Rd. Info: www.cssm.org

Stonehenge Celtic Festival and Highland Games 26-27, Ingram, TX

Celtic entertainment, vendors, dancing and music. A family-friendly good time for all at Hill Country Arts Foundation, 120 Point Theatre Rd. Info: www.hcaf.com/celtic-festival

MAY 2025

Decatur Celtic Festival 2-3, Decatur, TX

Music, clans, food and more at Wise County Fairgrounds. Info: www.decaturcelticfestival.com

KVMR Celtic Festival 2-4, Grass Valley, CA

A weekend of Celtic celebration with entertainment, Clans, Scottish Games and more. Info: www.KVMRCelticFestival.org

Savannah Scottish Games 3, Savannah, GA

A grand celebration of Scottish heritage, with Celtic music, Scottish clans/societies, pipe bands, Highland dancing, heavy athletic events, children's activities, sheep herding, falconry, genealogy, food, refreshments and fun for the entire family at Bethesda Academy. Info: www.savannahscottishgames.com

Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival 3-4, Albuquerque, NM

Celebrating seven Celtic nations with Celtic music and entertainment, marketplace, Clans and more at Albuquerque's Balloon Fiesta Park. Info: www.celtfestabq.com

Loch Badin Celtic Festival 10, Badin, NC

Free event with Celtic music, Clans, crafts, game demonstrations, Highland Cows, 24 Falls Rd. Info: www.better-badin.org

World Whisky Day 17, Nationwide

World Whisky Day invites everyone to try a dram and celebrate the water of life. Events are taking place all over the globe. Info: www.worldwhiskyday.com

Fair Hill Scottish Games 17, Elkton, MD

A day of athletics, music, dancing, food, and arts celebrating Scottish and Celtic culture at Fair Hill Fairgrounds. Info: www.fairhillscottishgames.org

St. Louis Scottish Games 17, Manchester, MO

Immerse yourself in the rich Scottish heritage and witness incredible displays of strength, skill, and tradition at Schroeder Park, 359 Old Meramec Station Rd. Info: www.stlouis-scottishgames.com

Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival and Games 17-18, Townsend, TN

Scotland in the Smokies at Tennessee's oldest festival of Scottish, Irish and Celtic culture at the Townsend Visitor Center, 7906 E. Lamar Alexander Pkwy. Info: www.smokymountaingames.org

Alma Highland Festival 23-25, Alma, MI

A full weekend of Scottish entertainment, events and displays at Alma College. Info: www.almahighlandfestival.com

Greenville Scottish Games 24, Greenville, SC

A celebration of Scotland Memorial Day Weekend at Furman University. Info: www.gallabrae.com

Scottish Fest

24-25, Costa Mesa, CA

Experience two days of world class Celtic music, piping and drumming competitions, Highland dancing contests, Scottish heavy athletics at Orange County Fair & Event Center. Info: www.scottishfest.com

Stirling Classic & Scottish Festival 30-June 1, Yukon, OK

A unique celebration of Celtic culture, complete with music, dance, food, and good 'old-fashioned Scottish fun, at the Mollie Spencer Farm. Info: www.thestirlingclassicsf.com

Port City Highland Games 31, Wilmington, NC

The event benefits paws4vets and features professional athletes (including the East Coast Women's Championship competition), clan tents, vendors, food trucks, music, Highland dancing, herding dog demonstrations, sword fighting and more at 3600 Randall Parkway. Info: www.portcityhighlandgames.com

Eugene Scottish Festival 31, Eugene, OR

A vibrant celebration of Scottish culture at the Irving Grange. Info: www.eugenescottishfestival.org

Scotland

APRIL 2025

Coll Connections 19, Isle of Coll

A new folk festival based in the Isle of Coll in the Inner Hebrides. Workshops, concerts, ceilidhs and other events will be based in An Cridhe and in the wider community. Info: www.ancridhe.com

The National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland Live 19, Glasgow

The National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland brings together incredible young pipers and drummers from all over Scotland to learn and perform a diverse range of music for Pipe Band. This is their flagship concert at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, which will feature our three ensembles comprising around 120 young people for a night of incredible music. Info: www.glasgowlife.org.uk/event/1/the-national-youth-pipe-band-of-scotland

Fife Police Pipe Band Live in Concert 19, Aberdeen

The band are preparing new music for their show 'Dancing on the Beat 2025' at Aberdeen Performing Arts. Info: www.aberdeenperformingarts.com

Logan Family & Clan Convention 2025 23-27, Edinburgh

The Ancient Scottish Family and Highland Clan of Logan is taking the next step to find the hereditary Chief of Name and Arms of Logan and holding a global family convention in the capital city of Scotland. Info: www.clanlogansociety.org/family-convention-2025

Macbeth: An Exhibition 25-31, Perth

From Birnam Wood to Dunsinane Hill, the story of Macbeth is woven into the landscape of Perthshire. Our latest exhibition at Perth Museum explores the iconic Shakespearean play that has captivated audiences for centuries, alongside the story of the real King Macbeth who reigned in Scotland 900 years ago, at Perth Museum. Info: www.perthmuseum.co.uk

Run Balmoral 26-27, Ballater

North east Scotland's biggest running event, with races for all age groups held amongst stunning Royal Deeside scenery at Balmoral Castle. Info: www.runbalmoral.com

Beltane Fire Festival 30, Edinburgh

The annual Festival sets Calton Hill cacophony of drums and pyrotechnics to mark the coming of spring in the Celtic calendar and the celebration of the return of the summer. This ancient Iron Age Celtic ritual and is the largest of its kind. Info: www.beltane.org

Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival 30, May 5, Speyside

The doors to Speyside's world-famous distilleries open, inviting visitors from across the globe to meet the makers, taste the world's finest whiskies and discover the passion behind them. Info: www.spiritofspeyside.com

Scotword answers from page 6	
ACROSS:	DOWN:
1 Barra	1 Benbecula
4 Scarts	2 Richt
8 Tonic	3 Angel
9 Gauntlets	4 Scunnered
11 Greatglen	5 Artillery
12 Lemon	6 Therm
13 Drummajor	7 Staged
16 Elbow	10 Sinew
18 Blain	14 Ministers
19 Caddycars	15 Jacobites
21 Isles	17 Blaeberry
23 Butandben	18 Baith
26 Harvester	20 Sunart
27 Morar	22 Larva
28 Manses	24 Targe
29 Essay	25 Numbs

Off the beaten track in Orkney

By: David C Weinczok



The lighthouse at the western tip of the Brough of Birsay.



The tidal causeway to the Brough of Birsay.



North Ronaldsay's seaweed-eating sheep.

North Ronaldsay Lighthouse and seaweed-eating sheep

North Ronaldsay is the northernmost of the Orkney Islands, reachable by a 2.5-hour ferry from Kirkwall or, in my case, a spectacular 15-minute flight in an eight-seater propeller plane. The island's fertile inland contrasts with a precipitous and rugged coastline, and it is along this coastline that you will find North Ronaldsay's most numerous and distinctive residents – beach sheep!

The North Ronaldsay breed is unique in subsisting on foraged seaweed. Their sure-footedness on the stones is unmatched, and they resemble the ancient sheep breeds which prehistoric Scots would have farmed. They're not fazed by much, sometimes even approaching human observers and mingling with basking seals. The whole island is encircled by a Grade A-listed Sheep Dyke, a stone wall first built in the 19th century which keeps the sheep on the shore and has pens for shearing them. Much of their wool is processed in the historic North Ronaldsay Lighthouse, the tallest land-based lighthouse in the UK at 42 metres high. It was built in 1852 by Alan Stevenson, a member of the renowned 'Lighthouse Stevensons' family.

The lighthouse has a visitor centre with guided climbs up its 176 steps, atop which you can easily see Fair Isle and sometimes even Shetland on a clear day. Within easy sight of the newer lighthouse is the Old Beacon, the third lighthouse built in Scotland first lit in 1789 and now abandoned.

The Broch of Borwick

Orkney has dozens of brochs, stone towers from the Iron Age which, when complete, resembled the cooling towers of modern nuclear power plants. Brochs were certainly defensive in part, with thick stone walls and a towering height advantage, but they were also homes for extended families and even places of worship – several brochs



The Norse settlement on the Brough of Birsay with the hills of Orkney Mainland across the water.

have wells and subterranean passages which were likely used to commune with the ancient gods and the dead.

The Broch of Gurness and Midhowe Broch, both along the Eynhallow Sound, are the most famous and best-preserved of Orkney's brochs, but few stand in locations as spectacular as the Broch of Borwick in West Mainland. The Norse who gave it its name called it as they saw it – Borwick is derived from Old Norse 'borg', meaning 'fortification', and 'vik', meaning 'bay'. The broch stands immediately upon the edge, and will no doubt begin to vanish with a few more centuries' worth of winds and waves chewing away at the cliffs. Excavated in 1881, locals quickly availed of its fine worked stone when in need of repairs and extensions to their field dykes and cottages. The broch was likely built around 500BC and occupied until as late as 700AD. Remarkably, there was once a path carved into the cliff face leading down to a cave evocatively known as 'Hell's Mouth'. Combined with extensive Iron Age cultivation terraces found in the grounds in front of the broch, this was clearly a place of strength, prominence, and high status in the landscape, hardly less impressive today than in its heyday.

The Yetnasteen and the 'Fingersteens' of Rousay

Much of the Norse legendarium took root in Orkney during the Viking Age. There are the goblin-like trows who stalk hillsides at night and ancestor spirits called Hogboons who guard tombs. Looming largest, literally and figuratively, are stories of giants. Some throw great stones to settle



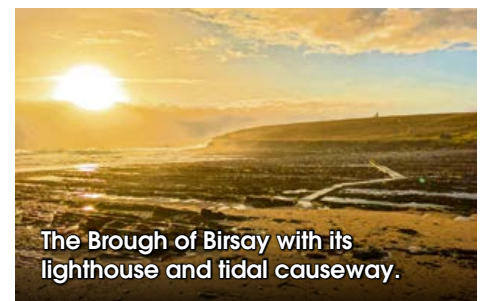
The Yetnasteen with the Loch of Scockness in the middle distance.

others have become great stones themselves. The Yetnasteen in the east of Rousay is one of the latter. Its name comes from the Old Norse jotna-steinn, meaning 'stone of giants'. The Yetnasteen was once a giant but was caught out by the rising sun and turned to stone by its rays. Now, it thirsts for a drink from the nearby Loch of Scockness. At the stroke of midnight on Hogmanay it comes to life, makes its way to the loch in two great strides, takes a drink, and then returns to its position. Those who attempt to see this transformation occur are invariably distracted, fall asleep, or have imbibed too many drams to be believed.

Two boulders in Rousay are said to bear the fingerprints of Cubbie Roo, an infamous giant resident in the island of Wyre derived from a very real Norse strongman, Kolbein Hruga. These boulders, called 'Fingersteens' were thrown by Cubbie Roo in anger at other giants. Antiquarian sources are vague as to their location, but on a recent visit I managed to track down two very likely candidates. One, on the slopes above the Knowe of Yarso in Frotoft, bears four incredibly deep and unmistakable holes as if massive fingers bored into them. Alongside it is another boulder with deep markings which resemble a three-clawed hand. Another boulder in the shore of the Leean in North Rousay has less obvious 'fingerprints' but is said to bring disaster to passers-by who do not place a pebble atop it. With my ferry back to the Scottish mainland due to depart in the next few days, you can be sure I added one to the pile!



The Old Beacon of North Ronaldsay.



The Brough of Birsay with its lighthouse and tidal causeway.



The Broch of Borwick near the Yesnaby cliffs.

Orkney is a place of innumerable wonders great and small. Most visitors tend to gravitate towards a handful of well-known sites like Skara Brae, Scapa Flow, and the Broch of Gurness. Across the archipelago, however, are historic sites and natural landscapes of staggering variety and character which relatively few tend to tread. These are a few of my favourites, all freshly visited during a month-long stay in February 2025.

The Brough of Birsay

The Brough of Birsay is a very special place, cherished by Picts, Norse, and modern Orcadians alike. Sloped like a cresting wave with towering cliffs on its seaward face, the Brough of Birsay is an island only accessible at low tide by a meandering causeway traversing a wonderland of tidepools and rock formations.

A large Pictish settlement was established on the island, later superseded by a Norse settlement which was possibly the base of operations for Thorfinn the Mighty, a mighty Norwegian Earl of Orkney. It is holy, too – pilgrims make their way to the Brough of Birsay to pay tribute to St Magnus, whose body was possibly taken here after his murder-cum-martyrdom on the island of Egilsay. George Mackay Brown, Orkney's quintessential writer, set many stories and plays on the island and along its sea-swept causeway.

Built heritage aside, the Brough of Birsay is a prime puffin-spotting location in May and June and affords spectacular views across Birsay Bay to the south and to Westray to the north. On my recent visit I took great pleasure in wandering the island's fringes, searching for seashells among the tidepools, and contemplating the countless generations and multiple cultures who invested the Brough of Birsay with an air of both secular and spiritual reverence.

Auchindoun Castle reopens to visitors



Historic site in Moray welcomes visitors once more.

Auchindoun Castle, a 15th century stronghold in Moray, has reopened to the public following a series of high-level masonry inspections and associated repairs. Historic Environment Scotland (HES), who manages the site, is welcoming visitors to explore the site and its surrounding earthworks.

Auchindoun Castle passed through a number of well-known hands across the centuries. Built in the 1400s, possibly by Thomas Cochrane, the 10th Earl of Dundonald and a favourite of King James III, the stronghold was then owned in the early 1500s by the Ogilvy family who sold the castle on to Sir Adam Gordon in 1594. In 1571 a party of Gordons from Auchindoun attacked and burnt the nearby Corgarff Castle, along with its occupants.

William Mackintosh, seeking vengeance, attacked and burned Auchindoun. For this crime he was beheaded by the Countess of Huntly's cook. The castle was back in Ogilvy hands by 1594, and lay derelict by 1725.

Imposing stone fortress

Graham Smith, District Visitor & Community Manager North Region at HES, said: "Built in the 1400s, Auchindoun Castle still stands as a mighty and imposing stone fortress. The site's remains tell a bloody history all whilst overlooking the spectacular setting of the Moray landscape. With a lord's hall, withdrawing chamber and a barrel-vaulted chamber only revealed by excavation in 1984, there's lots to explore and discover. Plus, the views from its hilltop location make it more than worth the walk!"

The High-Level Masonry Programme is the result of ongoing risk assessment and sample surveys and assesses the impact of climate change on sites as well as the scale of deterioration caused by a number of other factors, including the materials used in the building's construction, its age and physical location. Whilst this is not an issue unique to Scotland, HES is believed to be amongst the first heritage managers to approach it in this way, with the results shared with peer organisations.

Auchindoun Castle is open daily and entry to the site is free of charge. For information see: www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/auchindoun-castle



Andrew Carnegie was born here.

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 Where is the weaver's cottage where Scottish American industrialist and globally famed philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was born in 1835?
- 2 Cherry Island is the only island on which famous Scottish loch?
- 3 What is the name of the Scottish dish that consists of smoked haddock, potatoes, and onions in a creamy sauce?
- 4 In the Highlands what did the term "the drove road" mean?
- 5 Which famous Scottish natural landmark is said to have inspired German composer Felix Mendelssohn's composition *Hebrides Overture* in 1830?
- 6 What is the Scottish equivalent of the Coroner?
- 7 In rugby Scotland and England have contested the Calcutta Cup since 1879. Which two animals are engraved on to the cup?

- 8 Which declaration was written in 1320 and proclaimed Scotland's status as an independent sovereign state?
- 9 Queen of the South is an alternative nickname given to which market town?
- 10 The celebrated Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns is known the world over, but what was his role in the whisky industry?

Answers:

- 1 Moodie Street, Dunfermline, Fife.
- 2 Cherry Island lies near the southern end of Loch Ness.
- 3 Cullen Skink, a traditional Scottish smoked fish soup and originated in the village of Cullen, Moray.
- 4 These were the tracks through the Highlands where the farmers would take their cattle to market. They could only walk a few miles each day so would stay in different places every night so the animals could graze and stay safe.
- 5 Fingal's Cave on the uninhabited island of Staffa off the west coast of Scotland in Argyll and Bute. Mendelssohn visited the cave in 1829 while on a tour of Scotland and completed his *Hebrides Overture* the following year.
- 6 The Procurator Fiscal in Scotland has an investigative role and can provide instructions and directions to the police in connection with their investigations.
- 7 Cobra and Elephant.
- 8 The Declaration of Arbroath, a letter written in Latin and sent to the pope by Scottish Barons and Nobles. It asks the pope to recognise Scotland's independence and acknowledge Robert the Bruce as the country's lawful king.
- 9 The town of Dumfries got its name Queen of the South from David Dunbar a local poet who back in 1857 stood for the General Election.
- 10 Burns became an exciseman and was employed by the government to ensure that people paid their taxes, particularly where related to alcohol. Burns was employed at the excise office from 1788 until his death in 1796.



Dressed to Kilt Returns to NYC

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST, MOST PRESTIGIOUS & EXCITING FASHION SHOW

"For one night the Scot's own the runway" - The Wall Street Journal

DATE: Saturday Evening, April 5, 2025 - Tartan Day Around The World

TIME: Doors open 7pm - Reception, 8:15 Fashion Show, 9:30 Post-Party

WHERE: Church of the Heavenly Rest

1085 Fifth Avenue (at 90th Street), NYC

TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT WWW.DRESSED TOKILT.COM

Dressed to Kilt will be raising funds for The Navy Seal Foundation.

If you wish to be involved in the 2025 show as a model, designer or sponsor email gscarroll@mindspring.com

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Blair Castle's Atholl Highlanders to tour US



British Embassy in Washington, attend a Black Rose Dinner in Athol, and enjoy a Legion Spaghetti Supper. With Atholl Highlanders often recruited through their family lines, there are presently six sets of brothers in the regiment and its band, together with three sets of father and sons.

Incredible trip

RSM Graham Jack, an Atholl Highlander since 1977, and a veteran of three previous USA tours, commented on the forthcoming trip: "We are all really looking forward to this incredible trip. Although many of our members have been on a US tour before, each one always offers something new. This time, it's the honour and privilege to lead the Tartan Day Parade, which came about through our previous Adjutant, John Bullough, planting the seed of the Regiment leading the Tartan Day Parade in New York. It will be an amazing experience for us all, one that we will never forget, and particularly poignant and memorable for the Atholl Highlanders attending for the first time with their sons, and for our many sets of brothers."

Graham, who can trace his family ancestry regarding the Murray Clan back to the Battle of Culloden, went on to say: "On behalf of the Atholl Highlanders, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank the extremely hospitable host families in Athol who look after us so well. Many of us have become firm friends, with visits taking place outwith official tours, something we are sure will continue into the future. This year's itinerary in Athol will be particularly fun with some of our members taking part in the Athol Rat Race, a break from the formality of other tasks. We always welcome the chance to get right into the heart of the community through the school and business visits too."

On a final note, Graham said: "We'd say to any of Americans who love their history, and who'd like to find out more about the Atholl Highlanders, to make the very worthwhile trip over to Scotland to visit us at Blair Castle. May is a fantastic time to come, as we have our annual Military Parade and take part in traditional Highland Games. It's a true Highland spectacle not to be missed! The regiment was actually formed to fight American Independence on behalf of the Crown, which is another fascinating fact. However, they ended up in Ireland and never made it over to get involved in the conflict. Now, we are happy to say that we enjoy the best possible connections to the USA!"



Did you know?

- The Atholl Highlanders remain Britain's only private Regiment, raised and commanded by the Dukes of Atholl, they are based at the ancestral home, Blair Castle, Perthshire where they parade every year on the last weekend of May. They wear Murray tartan, Murray being the family name of the Dukes of Atholl.
- The original Atholl Highlanders were a regular regiment in the British Army, the 77th raised in 1777 for service in America. However, after being stationed in Ireland, the war concluded before they had embarked for America and they were disbanded in 1783.
- The Atholl Highlanders, a band of local men, were first deployed in 1839, by Lord Glenlyon, later 6th Duke of Atholl, to participate in a tournament at Eglinton in Ayrshire, Scotland's celebration for Queen Victoria. In 1842 the Duke entertained Queen Victoria on her first visit to Scotland and two years later she chose to stay at Blair Castle to rest after the birth of her second child. Throughout her stay the Atholl men provided her with a guard. In recognition of this service she granted them the Queen's Colours and the right to bear arms the following year. This unique grant constituted the Atholl Highlanders.
- The Atholl Highlanders are primarily a ceremonial regiment, however during the two World Wars many of the men served in the regular British Army.
- During the first half of the twentieth century the regiment went into abeyance and was only revived by the 10th Duke of Atholl in 1966. Today, officers are drawn from the Duke's relations and local lairds and the men are invited to join by the Duke, usually having an estate or family connection. They wear the Murray tartan kilt, plaid and juniper as a cap badge. Their present 12th Duke, Bruce Murray, hails from South Africa.



Britain's only private regiment, The Atholl Highlanders, are about to commence an 11-day US tour marking the fourth time in its history it has embarked on a tour of the States. The Atholl Highlanders, raised and commanded by the Dukes of Atholl, and based at their ancestral home of Blair Castle in Highland Perthshire, have announced that they are honoured to be leading New York's Tartan Day Parade.

In what is the fourth tour of the States undertaken by the Atholl Highlanders in its long and proud history, and having last toured there as a regiment in 2012, the 62 strong contingent of Atholl Highlanders, including its Pipe Band and support staff, will visit Washington, Boston, and the Massachusetts town of Athol, which claims a historical connection to the Atholl Highlanders, along with New York City itself.

Parade marches

Having performed parade marches many times in the States as part of other US tours, the Atholl Highlanders have never marched in the Tartan Day Parade before, and, as such, are honoured to be not only taking part, but to be leading the parade.

Their band, which consists of ten pipers and nine drummers, will lead the colourful procession and will wear the Clan Murray Tartan. The following day will see them parade at the British Embassy in New York. Touring the East Coast of America, to coincide with New York Tartan Week, was the idea of His Grace, The 10th Duke of Atholl, who funded the very first trip in conjunction with the Murray Clan in 1987, visiting Boston, Athol, Concorde, the Loon Mountain Highland Games, New York, Washington, plus the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington and Williamsburg.

After the 10th Duke passed away, and the title moved to John Murray in South Africa, an Atholl Highlanders Council was created, which went on to operate a Tour Fund. It allocated money that the Atholl Highlanders received as payment for Duties at the Keepers of the Quaich, and through the Atholl Gathering, towards overseas tours, which usually had a link to the Murray family and/or Blair Castle itself. Subsequent tours followed, in 2000 and 2012, visiting other destinations such as Quebec, Toronto, and Bermuda, along with the Massachusetts town of Athol, an approximate 90-minute drive from Boston.

Athol

In the mid-18th century, Athol was chosen as the place to settle by an emigrating Scot, John Murray. Becoming a prominent businessman and landowner, he named the town Athol to remind him of his Scottish roots in Highland Perthshire. Although his connection to the Murray Clan remains unfounded in Blair Castle archives, the town, has, since the Atholl Highlanders first American tour in 1987, developed close links with the Regiment, and Blair Castle. Following the Regiment parading at The State House, Boston, during its 2012 tour, a ceremony officially recognised the town of Athol's 250th anniversary, with June 6th declared "Athol Day". On this forthcoming tour, local Athol families will host pairs of Atholl Highlanders in their own homes for four nights, before the Regiment returns to Scotland.

Started three years ago, as a result of a special Atholl Highlanders organising committee reaching out to the local community to foster even closer links between them, the hosting provides a more personal experience than a hotel, and enables all parties to gain a deeper understanding of each other's culture. Kindly transporting the Atholl Highlanders to parades, and other trips and activities during their time with them, such as this year, the Girardi's River Rat Race, a canoe race on the Athol-Orange River, the Host Families are instrumental in organising cultural and educational visits to local schools and businesses in Athol and the surrounding area. Once again, as on previous trips, the Athol Highlanders will take part in the State House Parade in Boston on the 11th April. Their packed itinerary also sees them parade at the

The story of the Sanday knitters

The remarkable story of how a small group of skilled craftswomen in the Orkney island of Sanday built a knitwear business that went on to supply prestigious clothing outlets around the world, has been recounted in a new book. *How to Knit a Bathroom, The Story of the Isle of Sanday Knitters*, has been written by Sandra Towrie, who played a key role in the pioneering company that ran between 1970 and 1999. When the business started, few opportunities for women to work outside of the home existed in Sanday, reflecting the situation across Orkney's North Isles. But many Sanday women had a particular talent for knitting and, around 1970, their skills caught the attention of Mary Baker, wife of the newly appointed Sanday School headteacher, Ron. She saw there was an opportunity for local women to make a little money for themselves, making crochet squares for a fashion company which had advertised for outworkers in a sewing magazine.

Camaraderie

Under Mary's encouragement and leadership, the Sanday knitters ultimately moved on from crochet squares to jumpers, combining their talents to create a new cooperative enterprise, Isle of Sanday Knitters. For three decades, the company grew and flourished, with the women designing and making traditional wool jumpers that quickly became much sought after throughout the UK, and further afield. It was a venture that had a tremendous impact on the local community, changing the lives of many of the knitters. The book's title

reflects how income generated from knitting work brought a greater degree of financial independence to local women, paying for everything from clothes for their children and family holidays, to new television sets and even complete bathrooms. The knitters' efforts placed Sanday firmly on the international fashion map, with the company producing knitwear for exclusive boutiques and large, well-known stores, including Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman in New York, and Hackett and Harrods in London. They were also commissioned to knit Christmas jumpers for actors, Martin Clunes and Neil Morrissey, for a festive episode of the *Men Behaving Badly* sit-com in 1997.

Although Isle of Sanday Knitters wound up in 1999, an extensive archive of documents and photographs relating to the company had been kept by Sandra Towrie, a Shetland born teacher who designed and knitted for the company during its heyday. Sandra had passed the archive material to the island's heritage centre for a 2016 exhibition on the business, but last year was approached by the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS) with a view to running some hand knitting classes in Sanday, as part of a project aimed at preserving traditional skills. That then led her to explore the idea of writing a book on the Isle of Sanday Knitters and sharing the unique story of the venture with a wider audience. Funding for the book has come from NILPS, with proceeds from sales going to the Sanday Heritage Centre. "It was a tremendous thing for the island," said Sandra. "The abiding memory I have of that time is of the camaraderie. None of



Above Sanday.
Photo: VisitScotland.



the women involved ever set out to run a business, but because they were managing houses and running farms, multitasking to a degree nobody would believe, they discovered they had all these transferable skills. They'd fit the knitting around whatever else they were doing."

A great deal of pride in Sanday

"I just bumped into somebody recently who had lived in Sanday a long while ago and been one of the knitters," continued Sandra. "She remembered how her kids had wanted designer jeans, but the family were scrimping and saving at the time and couldn't afford to buy them. But with the knitting, she was able to pay for the jeans. And somebody really did pay for a bathroom!" What's perhaps most surprising about the Isle of Sanday knitters is the scale of the operation at its peak. It got so busy the company had to enlist the help of knitters all the way from Shetland to Wolverhampton. "It was all big orders," recalled Sandra. "The knitters were working for the mass market, with 200 pieces for places like Hackett. It was huge quantities and tight, tight timelines, and we had agents in London getting us those big customers. And there was me, a mum of three small children, who had been no further than Aberdeen or maybe Edinburgh,

and suddenly I was having to go to trade fairs in Paris, Munich, New York and London!"

By the 1990s, many of the people who had worked hard to establish the company were no longer able to devote as much time and energy as they'd done in the past. And some of the business' long-standing customers found they could source similar products much more cheaply from overseas. In 1999, the board of Isle of Sanday Knitters unanimously agreed to wind the company up. Sandra added: "The aspect of the Isle of Sanday Knitters that's hard to quantify is the feeling it created within the community. People had that little bit of extra money, and it was a positive thing for everyone, even if they weren't directly involved with the company. There was a great deal of pride in Sanday for what was achieved and it's a pleasure to be able to share the story of the company through the new book."

Valerie Dawson, programme manager/project officer for NILPS, said: "We are delighted to fund the publication of Sandra's book about the Isle of Sanday Knitters. NILPS aims to support and celebrate traditional local crafts and this excellent book documents how ingenuity and hard work by the Sanday community saw the craft of knitting develop into an important small industry for the Island for over 25 years."

The American Scottish Foundation invites all to join them on the Fountain Terrace during New York Tartan Week



From our first performances at Bryant Park in 2012, the ASF Pipes and Drums on the Fountain Terrace has grown to be a central part of the New York Tartan Week event calendar offering free community programming to all. This year over 18 groups and performers will take part in programming between April 4th and 6th, with 12 of the performing groups journeying from Scotland to take part in New York Tartan Week and march in the New York Tartan Day Parade. "We are so aware of the organizational and fundraising effort it takes for the young bands and performers to journey here to New York. Many tell us how it has taken them over two years to fundraise for their trip over. ASF are

delighted to add to their experience of the NY Tartan Day Parade and all that is New York with a performance with us at Bryant Park" noted Camilla G Hellman, President, American Scottish Foundation (ASF).

Participating youth groups include Oban Pipe Band, Renfrewshire Schools Pipe Band, Fettes Pipe Band, Falkirk School Pipe Band, ACT Scotland, the Denny High School Dance Academy.

Celebration of Scottish music

In addition to the great youth pipe bands, Songs for All Choir, the Highland Divas, Britain's Got Talent winner Jai MacDowell will return for his second visit to NY Tartan Week. All of this comes together with help from celebrated piper Craig Weir and



Gaelic award winning singer, Joy Dunlop. Joy is once again leading on the organizing of the third annual New York Tartan Week MOD and will perform with winners of the MOD in Bryant Park on Saturday morning. The programs on Saturday and Sunday mornings begins with Highland dancers coordinated by Shot of Scotch

who organize for visiting dance groups to join them in a wonderful program. This year will also be an opportunity to hear close up Pipers and drummers from The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo who will perform as part of the Tartan Day Observance on Friday April 3 and see a short performance from the Atholl Highlanders on Saturday April 4 prior to their joining the Parade. The celebration of Scottish music will be closed out on Sunday with a one-hour concert featuring Claire and Scott Mackenzie of Noisemaker, Calum Pasqua, Shot of Scotch dancers and the great sound of The Laurettes.

For more information, please visit the ASF website at: www.americanscottishfoundation.org



Aberdeen piper prepares to honour at 80th anniversary of VE Day

*VE Day in 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. On Thursday 8 May Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) marks the day the German forces surrendered to the Allied powers. People are being urged to stop and reflect on this day of this year's anniversary and one Aberdeen piper, who was taught my one of the world's top pipers, will be playing the pipes in honour of those who have served. Pipe Major Lady Jane MacRae will perform *Celebratum*, which was specially written for the commemoration, at St Paul's Cathedral in London in May, as Neil Drysdale explains.*



Lady Jane MacRae.



Stuart Liddell MBE.

By: Neil Drysdale

Try to picture Margaret Rutherford with a dash of Joyce Grenfell and a sliver of Maggie Smith and you might get close to describing Jane MacRae. Or rather, Lady Jane MacRae. Or, more precisely, Dr Lady Jane MacRae. ("No no, that looks stupid"). Whatever the title, comparisons are futile when it comes to describing this remarkable force of nature who teaches mathematics at St Machar Academy in Aberdeen - even though she could have retired from the classroom years ago.

Lady Jane is, quite simply, a formidable character who regards any obstacle in her path as something to be beaten into submission: the one-time Grease and Oliver singer who has danced to her own tune while strolling down the corridors of academia. If you had suggested a decade ago that she would be playing the bagpipes in front of the King at the official VE Day 80 commemorations at St Paul's Cathedral in May, she would probably have looked at you with a mixture of derision and incredulity. But here's the thing. It's happening, this redoubtable individual will take centre stage in the cathedral on May 7 and at the London Eye on May 8 and she told me all about it.

Stuart Liddell MBE

Lady Jane said: "I was brought up at Carlton Towers in Yorkshire and music was very much part of as life because my mother was a very talented pianist. At school, my music teacher tried very hard to persuade me to have my voice trained but, although I sang in many performances of Gilbert and Sullivan

operettas, I was not interested at that time in singing as a career. At no point in my life did I ever even consider playing the bagpipes until one day when a lady I know suggested I should try the chanter, lent me one and taught me the scale. This became a challenge and I'm not somebody to refuse one. I started lessons with the local band (in Deeside), but that didn't last long as Covid hit (in 2020). For several months, I was floundering, not having any real direction and trying to teach myself grace notes and tunes. But, purely by chance, I was advised to have a lesson with Stuart Liddell MBE and I was shaking in my shoes at the thought of doing this with somebody who is, arguably, the greatest piper in the world today. However, that was the start of what has now become an obsession."

As somebody based in Monymusk, the mother of two - and grandmother of four - has never been less than competitive. It has inspired her in music, in teaching, in assisting vulnerable children and relentlessly improving her standards. Maths might be difficult for some people, but not when it comes to Lady Jane. And she smiles when she recounts how it has transformed so many lives. She told me: "I have been teaching for many years and, to this day, I love the interaction with the youngsters. It has been a very satisfying career with often wild children taking snippets of the many talks we had and remembering them years later and thanking me for helping them become successful people. You tend to think your advice falls on deaf ears, but this is far from the truth with letters - yes, they did exist - and messages being sent from grateful youngsters. Obviously, all teachers are delighted when their pupils pass exams, especially when they have little confidence in their ability, but these are stepping stones to their careers and it is the proof you have made a difference to a life that gives the most pleasure. I really must have annoyed the heads of several schools because I would sing at the top of my voice in the corridor at all times of the day, irrespective of lessons going on. Nobody objected, but I'm sure that Iona Reid, the headmistress of St Machar Academy, must heave a sigh of relief that she has not been subjected to this... yet!"

Climactic commemorations

Last summer, as Britain remembered D-Day, Lady Jane participated in a poignant memorial to those involved in the Normandy landings in 1944 by playing the pipes at 10 different Scottish castles, prior to travelling to the Menin Gate in Belgium. She was joined at Inveraray Castle by her mentor in what became an "especially moving" event and will never forget the haunting lament which Mr Liddell performed at Ypres, one of the towns which suffered the biggest loss of life from 1914 to 1918. She recalled: "My grandfather served in the First World War. When he returned home, he was unrecognisable and was told by the butler to use the tradesmen's entrance. Obviously, this was soon rectified, but the very fact he was in such a state that his own wife didn't recognise him, has always resonated with me. I suppose he was lucky being able to return home because so many didn't, both in the camps and fighting on the front. My mother was in the Signals Regiment during the Second World War and lost friends during those dreadful times."

Most of those who served their country in the two conflicts are gone now and that is why the 80th anniversary of VE Day will be a closing salute to the remaining few. In which light, it's hardly surprising that Lady Jane has a mixture of emotions about being asked to fulfil such a pivotal role in

these climactic commemorations. She said: "I'm still reeling from the shock of being invited to play at St Paul's Cathedral for the Blessing of the Lamp Light of Peace and at the London Eye for the Lighting of the Principal Beacon. This is a great honour, and I am very aware of its significance. My first thought must be to practise the two tunes as much as possible in order to do the occasion justice. I could have no better teacher than Stuart who, I'm sure, will crack the whip if he doesn't think I'm working hard enough. But there is little chance of that happening as I will practise as much as possible to perfect the tunes for the events. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Stuart is the single, most important reason I have continued my love of the bagpipes and music in general. Many people think of him as being the greatest piper of his time and the Pipe Major of the World Champion Pipe Band, Inveraray and District, but he is far more than that. He is a consummate musician, plays many instruments, his knowledge of all genres is astonishing, and his ability to teach and motivate both young and old is incredible. The man's a genius and it is an honour to have him as a teacher. My only worry is just how big a stick will be needed to bring my playing up to the standard required."

One suspects both will be equal to the task. After all, nothing else has held them back.

Where did you GlasGOw?

Glasgow 850 is calling on Glaswegians who have gone international to be part of this year's celebrations.



Cllr Jacqueline McLaren, Lord Provost of Glasgow.

This year, Glasgow is celebrating its 850th birthday with its first living remembrance book to celebrate the people who have taken the Glasgow spirit globally. The physical book, which will also be available to view online for a limited time, is aiming to contain the names of at least 850 Glaswegians that no longer reside in the city but still call it 'hame' (Scots word for home). Once ready, the book will be displayed in Glasgow City Chambers and will include a mix of names, stories and images capturing the memories and special moments of the people that make Glasgow what it is today. The book allows Glaswegians living abroad or away from the city to be part of this year's celebrations. Entrants can share as much or as little as they like about their time in the 'Dear Green Place'.

Where did you GlasGOw? is an open invitation for those abroad who have an affinity to the city and a story to tell -

whether about themselves, a fellow Weegie (Scots word for Glaswegian), or on behalf of an ancestor, family member, or friend.

The unique spirit of Glasgow

Cllr Jacqueline McLaren, Lord Provost of Glasgow said: "Glasgow has long been known for having some of the world's best banter and that sense of humour doesn't fade when they move away. They carry their memories and stories of home with them, sharing the unique spirit of Glasgow wherever they go. It's long been said that 'story telling is the oldest form of education', and we hope by having global Glaswegians share their authentic stories and experiences that people will be able to gain a real understanding of our famous slogan, People Make Glasgow."

The launch of the book is part of a much wider yearlong citywide programme of curated events and community-based activities for citizens and visitors. It will let people at home and abroad, share their experiences and tell their stories, celebrating Glasgow's rich heritage and culture, reflecting on its transformation, and inspiring future ambitions.

Submissions for Where did you GlasGOw? can be made through an online form at: <https://glasgow850.com/article/12243/Where-Did-You-GlasGOw>. Celebrate Glasgow's 850th birthday, join in marking this milestone at: www.glasgow850.com.

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