



the Scottish Banner



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A' Bhratach Albannach

Volume 48 Number 12

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June 2025

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The Banner Says...

Celebrating 200 years of train travel



by Sean Cairney

Should you be visiting Scotland and the UK this year there is a good chance you may find yourself on a train or at least seeing one. This year marks the 200th anniversary of rail travel in the UK. In the coal region of County Durham the Stockton & Darlington Railway opened in September 1825 and was the beginning of what would completely revolutionise how people connected with communities and each other. That first twenty-six-mile train journey carrying over 400 people did not just set the stage to transform Britain but the entire planet.

Scotland's oldest railway

Our ancestors were using horse and cart to transport people and goods prior to this, and the thought of a passenger train ignited the imagination of the world. The first rail line built in Scotland was the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway which opened in June 1812 and was constructed to transport coal from pits around Kilmarnock. The railway initially used horses to pull the carriages. On June 27, 1812, the historic journey marked the beginning of regular railway passenger services in Scotland. It also became the first railway in Scotland powered by a steam locomotive in 1816. Scotland's first steam locomotive was called "The Duke" which pulled a passenger service, nine years before its use on the Stockton to Darlington Railway being celebrated this year.

Scotland can trace railways even further in history as the Tranent Waggonway in East Lothian was first constructed in 1722 and considered to be Scotland's oldest railway. Tracks were made for horses to pull coal and salt filled wooden wagons and are a unique part of Scotland's industrial history. The railway has quite a history as in 1745 the opening skirmish between

the English army and Bonnie Prince Charlie's Highlanders took place at Prestonpans on the Waggonway line. Scotland's first railway fatality also took place on the Waggonway when in 1762 James Paterson was hit by the train and later succumbed to his injuries. This is reported to also be the first death on a railway anywhere in the world.

Railway Mania

By the 1840's 'Railway Mania' had swept across the UK with thousands of new railway lines being planned. In 2022/23 the UK railway carried 1.4 billion passengers on 9,864 miles of route between 2,578 stations. It also moved more than 15.7 billion tonnes of freight, taking 6.4 million trucks off the nation's busy road network.

In Scotland you can of course take a train to get from A to B but there are some great rail experiences on offer. The West Highland Line- Widely regarded as one of the world's greatest train journeys. The route leads from Glasgow to Mallaig on the west coast, passing over the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct and offering breathtaking views of locations such as Loch Shiel, Loch Eilt and Ben Nevis. The West Highland Line is also known to millions as the railway that took Harry Potter from Platform 9 ¾ all the way to Hogwarts.

The Far North Line is Britain's most rural railway and connects Inverness with Thurso (the UK's most northerly station) and Wick at the northern limits of the Highlands. The full journey takes around four hours and follows hundreds of miles of beautiful varied landscapes, from peatland bogs and minuscule hamlets to the gates of the magnificent Dunrobin Castle.

The Belmond Royal Scotsman train offers a truly glamorous once-in-a-lifetime trip with fine dining and five-star hospitality. The Royal Scotsman whisks travellers around Scotland on unforgettable luxury breaks, stopping off for day trips along the way.

Strathspey Steam Railway takes in the majestic Cairngorm mountains which can be seen from the comfort of a plush carriage on a trip along the route.

Visitors travelling from England can catch the Caledonian Sleeper at London Euston and be swept up

to the Highlands overnight, waking up to stunning views of Rannoch Moor before arriving in Fort William. Other options include waking up in Edinburgh, Inverness, Aberdeen or Glasgow before continuing your Scottish adventure.

No Scottish rail experience is complete without a trip across the Forth Rail Bridge. Connecting Edinburgh with Fife, this remarkable structure has the second-longest single cantilever span of any bridge in the world and has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status.

In this issue

Scotland is blessed with an incredible history and part of that story has to be the many castles found across the nation. These fortresses of power and wealth have an amazing and often bloody history and castles have changed over time incorporating different styles and uses. Who better to do a 'Scottish castles 101' than our very own Castle Hunter- David C. Weinczok.

Last month the 80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day took place. Celebrations were marked across the world. Jim Stoddart reflects on his family's history in Clydebank during the war and the celebration that followed.

Rail adventures

One of my favourite rail trips in Scotland is Glasgow to Oban, full of incredible scenery and a great way to travel. Without question my favourite station in all of the UK is Glasgow Central Station, the architecture draws me in every time. My grandfather made rivets used in the station so maybe that draws me in closer. If you ever have time do the amazing station tour on offer, it is incredible to do, and you will not be disappointed.

I am looking forward to experiencing some rail adventures myself this summer and will no doubt reflect just how far down the rails we have evolved in the last couple of hundred years. Happy travels to those doing the same... 🍀

Have you travelled by train in Scotland? Do you have a favourite rail adventure? Do you have any comments from the content in this month's edition?

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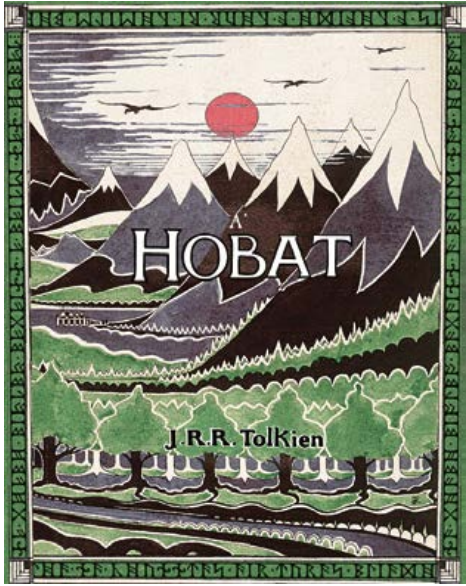


The Jacobite Steam Train. Photo: VisitScotland.



Gracing our front cover:
The medieval Caerlaverock Castle.
Photo: David C. Weinczok.

First Gaelic translation of The Hobbit published



The first (Scottish) Gaelic translation of JRR Tolkien's timeless classic, *The Hobbit*, has been completed by a University of Aberdeen professor. Moray Watson, Professor of Gaelic and Translation and a lifelong Tolkien fan, began working on a Gaelic version titled *A' Hobat* prior to the Covid lockdowns. Delays from this and fitting the project around his teaching commitments meant that arriving at a final version took much longer than expected. Now, after many phases of editing, the book is available to order, complete with an afterword explaining why Professor

Watson alighted on the word *hobait* to translate 'hobbit' and why it has *a'* and not the more 'expected' *an*.

The Gaelic translation, supported by the Gaelic Books Council, joins a growing list of languages allowing new engagement with the classic story the world over, including Hawaiian, Esperanto, Breton and Yiddish. Professor Watson is Director of Ionad Eòghainn MhicLachlainn: the National Centre for Gaelic Translation, which exists specifically to support the translation of literature into Gaelic (as well as Manx and Irish).

Rich joy of discovering Tolkien's world

In addition to *The Hobbit* translation, the Centre is supporting a book co-edited by Professor Watson which features a set of essays from translators and scholars on various aspects of the translation process. "Enjoyment of reading is of tremendous importance on many levels when it comes to the esteem and status of a language," he said. "Being able to select from a wide range of engaging texts is also extremely important when learning a language or when making the decision to dig in and make that long, sustained extra effort necessary to go from competence in a language to mastery. I've read the book in at least nine languages so far. Whenever I learn a new language now, I always check to see if there is a translation of *The Hobbit*. If there is, I buy it. That way, I can read a novel early

on in the learning process, because I already know the story very well at this point.

Every single time I read it, in every single language, I get to experience the deep, rich joy of discovering Tolkien's world."

The book includes all the drawings by the author and Professor Watson says it was a pleasure and privilege to delve deeply into the maps, runes and illustrations when triple-checking translations before publication. "It's no wonder people fell in love with this book, and continue to do so nearly 90 years after it was first published," he added. "I'm very lucky to have had the chance to work with it and I hope that people enjoy it."

Professor Watson is also completing a Gaelic translation of H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, which includes an academic essay on how elements of translation theory can help the translator work through some of the trickier parts of a text. The first appearance of Sherlock Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* is next on the list to be translated to Gaelic and Professor Watson is hunting for interesting novels in French, German or Spanish that have never been translated to English to further expand Gaelic reading lists. Professor Watson teaches on the MSc in Translation, which is available online and on campus and makes the University of Aberdeen the only institution in the world that offers a Gaelic translation degree at this level.

Scotland's newest community owned pub opens



The Wigtown Ploughman, Scotland's newest community-owned pub, is now open. It's led by a Management Committee of ten volunteers who are part of the Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society. They have been working this past year to secure funding for the building, which has been empty for three years and was at risk of being lost as a community asset.

The society have had an army of volunteers working hard behind the scenes, and local businesses donating pieces of equipment, providing brilliant trade services, and working together all to get the pub up and running and open to the public. They also have nearly 450 members of the society who have been a great source of support, feedback, and ideas. This project is more than just a pub, however. The same building will also be used as a community space, affectionately called The Lounge. The pub hope's to have the accommodation up and running, creating further employment opportunities, and their aim is then to design a food offering that entices locals and tourists alike.

This community-led project is just getting started, and the Wigtown Ploughman plan to be in the heart of Wigtown for generations to come.



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. The landmark 'Journey's End' signpost was installed in 1964 as a visitor attraction in which village?
2. In which century did Glasgow receive its city status?
3. Which river forms part of the border between England and Scotland?
4. Which is taller — The Wallace Monument or The Scott Monument?
5. What does 'Fit fit fits fit fit' mean?
6. What is the oldest university in Scotland?
7. In Scots what does the word Glaiokit mean?
8. What are Scotland's three official languages?
9. The Saltire or St Andrew's Cross is the national flag of Scotland, what makes it so unique?
10. Which ABBA track features the lyric 'I was sick and tired of everything/When I called you last night from Glasgow'?

Answers:

1. Located right next to the old John O'Groats hotel, the signpost was installed in 1964 to mark 'Journey's End'; the very top tip of mainland UK.
2. The 12th century in 1175.
3. The River Tweed is a river 97 miles (156 km) long that flows east across the Border region in Scotland and northern England.
4. The Wallace Monument is taller at 220 feet. The Scott Monument is 200 feet tall.
5. This Doric saying from Aberdeen means 'Which foot fits which foot?'.
6. St Andrews University was founded in 1411 by Bishop Henry Wardlaw.
7. Stupid, foolish or thoughtless.
8. English, Scots, and Scottish Gaelic.
9. The flag is considered to be the oldest in Europe and the Commonwealth, originated in a battle fought close by the East Lothian village of Athelstaneford in the dark ages, believed to have been 832AD.
10. Super Trouper.



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SCOT POURRI

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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?

VE Day 80 in Ottawa

The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band got the word out to pipers and drummers from all over to help them mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in Ottawa. Pipe Major Bethany Bisaillion created an event that saw 50 pipers and 20 drummers assemble along the route which took the players and audience from the Canadian War Museum to the National War Memorial on Saturday, May 3. Each piper played for 1 minute at their chosen spot, and some doubled and tripled up their playing to ensure all 80 spots were covered.

Once done, they met the drummers at the War Memorial, and they played together for a huge crowd that had gathered to watch. The day was complete with a reception at the local Scottish pub Deacon Brodie's that enjoyed a wee set of tunes from the band on their patio.



Later on that week, the band returned to the Canadian War Museum to play for their 20th anniversary. The Sons got to perform at the opening in May, 2005, and they were pleased to help mark the occasion. So many great events to mark in our community and many others, and it's just great to be part of the celebrations!

Bethany Bisaillion
Sons of Scotland Pipe Band
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada



The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo



I have attended the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo several times and enjoyed reading this amazing event is celebrating 75 years this year. Just how far has it come to be the 'must see' event it now is. One thing I love about the Tattoo is the variety that comes with each year, the core is always however going to be the tradition of the military bands and pipes and drums. There can be no better place than Edinburgh Castle to stage this which adds so much to the experience, even on a wet night.

Many years ago, I purchased an old VHS video cassette of the Tattoo and made it a bucket list event to attend in person. I am happy to report I have ticked it off my bucket list five times in total and loved each and every show I have attended and of course my visits to the amazing country that is Scotland. I have made sure on each visit I take in a different part, from Orkney to the Scottish Borders. Like many when I cannot get to Scotland there are many Scottish events I can attend close to home and enjoy.

For a small nation we are all fortunate to have such a rich and strong culture around the world and for me I am hoping to tick my bucket list again soon and get back to the Tattoo for visit six.

Thank you for a wonderful selection of interesting and informative stories.

Jen Macdougall
Burlington, Ontario
Canada

Gaelic Society of Inverness 100th Culloden Commemorative Service



Photo courtesy of the National Trust for Scotland.

On 19 April, the National Trust for Scotland hosted the Gaelic Society of Inverness for its 100th Culloden Commemorative Service. Commemorating the anniversary of the battle, which took place on 16 April 1746, a procession was led by piper Steven McCabe from the Culloden Visitor Centre to the memorial cairn, where the Society held its annual service. Events held by the Trust over the anniversary weekend also included the Christopher Duffy Memorial Lecture series, which saw Dr Darren Scott Layne and Dr Arran Johnston share insights into the Jacobite uprising using data and eyewitness testimony.

National Trust for Scotland

Scottish dog breeds under threat



Reading April's *Scottish Banner* I was greatly distressed to read that my beloved dog breed, the Scottish Terrier, has been listed by the UK Kennel Club, in danger of dying out due to their declining registration numbers. They are now on a 'At Watch' or 'Vulnerable' list. I own a Scottie, who is loyal, loving and highly intelligent-Maggie loves everyone she meets, and every dog she sees. She is playful and has a wicked sense of humour. It is beyond me how or why dog breeds come and go in fashion; they are dogs not items of clothing!

Keep up the good work producing *the Banner* it is such a grand newspaper, which I eagerly look forward to each and every month.

Mrs Margaret Michie Benney
Craigieburn, Victoria
Australia

How sheep conquered Scotland



What a fascinating article in the May edition of *the Scottish Banner* about sheep (*How sheep conquered Scotland*). I always love seeing the sheep scattered across the Scottish countryside and to be honest have not really thought about how they got to be or their historical importance to Scotland.

I certainly was not aware they had such a long history in Scotland, and they truly are part and parcel of the Scotland we all know, and love! To think that sheep have had an impact on Scottish culture and economy is fascinating to me and to hear more about the story of sheep is fantastic to this Scotland lover. I always take great joy in seeing sheep going about their day and for me there is something reassuring and relaxing in seeing them. I have a Scotland sheep magnet on my fridge which always makes me smile.

Thank you for this and so many other unique stories you share in *the Scottish Banner*.

Claire Gromley
Chicago, Illinois
USA

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Glasgow



Lovely Glasgow evening over the River Clyde.
Craig Duncan Photography

Doune Castle



Lovely evening at the Doune Castle, a featured in Game of Thrones, Outlander & Monty Python and the Holy Grail.
Jamie Taylor Photography

Kilchurn Castle



Reflections at Kilchurn Castle.
Soul of Alba Photography.

The Jacobite Steam Train



The Jacobite Steam Train at Polnish.
Mik Coia.

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Rare surviving piece of Scottish Iron Age textile goes on public display



Experimental archaeologist Isobelle Hanby with the piece of woven fabric. Photo Martin Shields.

A fine piece of woven fabric lay buried in the bottom of Loch Tay in Perthshire for nearly 2,500 years, naturally preserved by the silty bed. Believed to be one of the oldest of its kind in Britain and dating back to the early to middle part of the Iron Age, it was found in 1979 when an Iron Age loch dwelling house, known as the Oakbank Crannog, was excavated on Loch Tay. Now, the public will be able to see this ancient textile close-up when it goes on show for the first time at The Scottish Crannog Centre's Iron Age village, visitor centre and museum, on the banks of Loch Tay.

Oakbank Textile

Previously thought too fragile to go on display, the textile will become a permanent exhibit at the Centre. Thanks to a painstaking stabilisation and conservation process, funded

by Museums Galleries Scotland, it will be housed safely in a climate-controlled cabinet. The 'Oakbank Textile' has been analysed by archaeologists at the University of Glasgow who have radiocarbon dated the material to between 480 - 390BC. Maureen Kerr, an experimental archaeologist and volunteer at the Centre, said: "The exciting thing is that there's nowhere else in Scotland, and very few places in the rest of the UK, that has a textile of this size and age. The weave on this fine textile is called a 2/1 twill which is really unusual for the time in southern Britain and northern Europe as most twill weaves were 2/2. This sheds considerable light on the technologies society had in the Iron Age. Twill weaves, which this textile is part of, is a dense, flexible fabric, very similar in appearance to our modern denim weave. It has been

made, we think, on a two-beam loom, or a warp-weighted loom. This, combined with the fact that there are the remnants of a possible hem indicating that it could have been part of a piece of clothing, makes it a rare and special discovery."

Crannogs

Dr Susanna Harris, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, carefully examined the textile on behalf of the Centre. She said: "There are very few early textiles of this date and we think this is the first one of this type, of 2/1 twill, in Scotland. Wool was such an important material in Scotland it's been exciting to analyse this piece. It's great that the Scottish Crannog Centre has taken this step. It's really important finds like this go on display. It may be a small piece of textile but it tells us a lot about the heritage of Scottish textiles."

Crannogs were dwelling houses built on stilts or stone over water and usually had a bridge connecting them to the shore. Very few exist outside of Scotland and Ireland. The first crannogs in Scotland were built on lochs from Neolithic times. In 2021 the Scottish Crannog Centre was dealt a devastating blow in 2021 when a fire burned down the site's reconstructed crannog, built by archaeologists in 1997. The Centre opened to visitors on its new and enlarged site near Kenmore last year and the build team is well on the way to completing a new crannog using sustainable and historical construction methods.

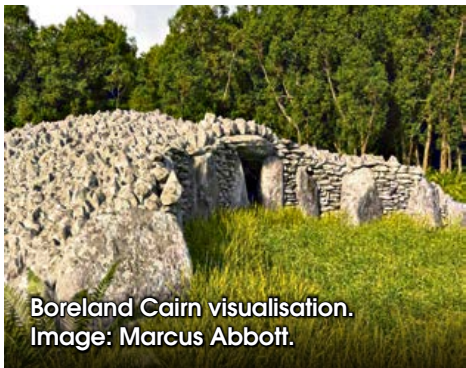
Highland cow social media campaigns celebrates a decade



A fun social media campaign celebrating the iconic Highland cow on VisitScotland's social channels recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary – with one recent post reaching more than three million people. In late 2014, VisitScotland began posting an image or video of the popular Scottish animal on its Facebook channel every Tuesday, with the hashtag #Coosday. Due to its popularity, the hashtag and images were posted on all the national tourism organisation's social channels, though Instagram remains the most popular platform for #Coosday. In the last decade, VisitScotland's social media team have published a #Coosday post almost every week. Since 2016, there have been 1,160 #Coosday posts, which have been viewed more than 218 million times. What started out as sharing a fun image to celebrate the iconic hairy Scots cattle – known in Gaelic as Bò Ghàidhealach – is now used to help raise awareness of businesses, destinations and the burgeoning agritourism sector. Despite the social media landscape evolving in the last decade, #Coosday posts have remained a firm favourite with followers around the world, with one post published last year reaching more than three million people.

These rustic cattle, famous for their shaggy red, blonde or black coats, can be found across Scotland - including the islands - and #Coosday has profiled them the length and breadth of the country.

History comes alive at ancient Galloway site



Boreland Cairn visualisation. Image: Marcus Abbott.

Visitors to the ancient, chambered cairn of Boreland in Knockman Wood, Galloway can now step back in time to see how the ruin once looked around 6,000 years ago. An enormous pile of stones is all that remains of the cairn built by the Neolithic farming pioneers who made the area their home but now an innovative new visualisation allows people to imagine what the cairn would have looked like in the past. Hundreds of photographs taken



The remains of Boreland Cairn. Photo: FLS.

from drone have been used to create a 3D model of the tomb – a technique known as photogrammetry.

The full textured model of the site is used as the foundation for reimagining the monument in its original state and how the cairn may have been used by those who built it. Working with professional archaeologist and artist Marcus Abbott, Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS), has produced an online video that can be accessed via a QR code on the interpretation panel at the site or viewed on the FLS website.

Vibrant ancient society

FLS Archaeologist Matt Ritchie said: "This visualisation allows us to imagine what this Clyde Cairn - a type of tomb characteristic of southwest Scotland – would have looked like when it was first built. The architecture suggests its use as both a tomb for the dead, where people placed the deceased in the chambers within the cairn, and a space for the living, where people could pay their respects within the forecourt. Archaeological studies of these chambered cairns can reveal only the bare bones of their story, leaving much to the imagination. But they were built by a vibrant ancient society with beliefs, traditions and practices that would seem very strange to us today. Watching the video and seeing the cairn come to life will hopefully get visitors at the site – and those visiting online – curious and questioning whether the ceremonies that accompanied the placing of the dead

in these monuments were small family affairs or large communal gatherings? Were there drums and chanting, dancing and trance-like states? Perhaps there were grand fire-lit feasts with songs, speeches and toasts? Or were there solemn torch-lit processions, arcane rituals and strange incantations?"

Of the cairns that survive across Scotland, some remain closed, their secrets hidden beneath huge mounds of stone, such as at Boreland in Galloway. Others bear the ravages of time, their features masked by rubble and collapse. Or have disturbed by treasure-hunters, their chambers ripped open and exposed. Many more have simply been lost over time. Matt added: "The reconstruction of Boreland really helps us appreciate and understand the remains of the chambered cairn as it survives today. It can be difficult to connect with these people and communities from so long ago, but their lands are our land and by reimagining and appreciating these ancient structures that they left behind, their story is told and can connect us today with the lives of our ancestors."

You can see the new video online – and onsite the next time you're in Galloway enjoying Knockman Wood. This old oakwood is a haven for both wildlife and archaeological sites. The yellow Woodland Trail will take you through oak and hazel woodland toward the ancient chambered cairn. Learn more: <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/forest-parks/galloway-forest-park/knockman-wood>



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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.



“Summer toboggans are a well-established concept in the mountains of Austria, Switzerland and Germany and in North America, but this is a first for the Scottish Highlands. We’re incredibly proud to be working on this exciting product, introducing something new to the area with minimal impact on the terrain. It complements the other activities on offer, fits into the existing infrastructure and is easy to remove and install by hand each season. By building on the success of our fantastic summer activities, we believe our toboggan ride will attract even more families, encourage them to stay in the local area for longer, providing yet another reason for visitors to come to Cairngorm Mountain out of the snowsports season and to enjoy the natural mountain environment throughout the year. We’ll be offering something unique and exhilarating that all the family can enjoy, and we can’t wait to get started on it.”

Tim Hurst, Interim CEO of Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Limited, said plans for a major new attraction are taking shape to complement the summer activities at Cairngorm Mountain as the resort hopes to introduce a mountain toboggan experience. Aiming to launch in summer 2026, subject to planning and funding approval, the dual rider toboggans will run along 1.2km of track, making it the longest of its kind in the UK, as well as the highest, with the highest point at 715 metres above sea level.

“We’re looking forward to welcoming people on board during our visit to Lerwick as part of the Liberation Convoy. We’re eager to share stories of the heroism of everyone involved in the Shetland Bus operations, that shipped resistance fighters to Norway and refugees back to Britain, and of Norwegian war sailors, who helped maintain supplies of food, fuel and weapons to the UK throughout the Second World War. Norway remains truly grateful to the people of Shetland and the rest of the UK, and we’re pleased to have this opportunity to celebrate our strong relationship.”

Ragnhild Bie, Project Manager and Historian with S/S Hestmanden, the Norwegian War Sailors Museum, said ahead of the recent VE Day 80th anniversary celebrations in Lerwick, Shetland. The 80th anniversary of the end of WW2, included a visit by the ‘Liberation Convoy’ - a flotilla of

five historic vessels crossing the North Sea from Norway. During WWII, the Shetland Bus - a lifeline of Norwegian fishing boats and submarine chasers - smuggled agents, refugees, and supplies between Shetland and Nazi-occupied Norway. Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, helped orchestrate these perilous missions. This was the first time that some of these vessels crossed the North Sea since the end of World War Two.



“These creative improvements to the city centre make it a more a pleasant space for everyone to enjoy – and ensure a positive first impression for the millions of tourists who visit Stirling each year. While Stirling is a historic city, famed for its world-class attractions and cobbled streets, it is also a vibrant, modern city with so much to offer. This bold new installation captures this exciting blend of tradition, innovation and dynamism. It perfectly complements the remarkable mural that celebrates Stirling’s 900th anniversary and other upgrades around the train station: it shows that we’re proud of our past and embracing the future with confidence and optimism. I can’t wait to see all the selfies and snaps with this new backdrop.”

Stirling Council Leader Cllr Gerry McGarvey said an unmissable 27-foot long sign that spells out the Stirling name has been unveiled as a busy area of the city centre continues to be transformed. The new artwork is located in the public space directly across from Stirling train station and is close to the bus station and new active travel networks, meaning it will be one of the first sights visitors see when they arrive in the city.

“Tourism is an important industry for the Kingdom. There are very mixed views on the introduction of a visitor levy. There’s also lots to learn from others who have already introduced these schemes. So we will be taking the time to make sure we gather all the views and have all the facts and evidence in front of us before we make any decisions on this.”

Fife Council Leader David Ross said as the council will look at the possibility of introducing a visitor levy for the region and will commence a consultation with communities and businesses this year. The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 allows local councils to charge a percentage rate on accommodation within the scheme’s area. Early research shows that a visitor levy scheme charging 5% (in line with City of Edinburgh Council) could generate between £3.4m and £8.2m each year. No decision on the introduction of a visitor levy would happen before August 2026 at the earliest.



“It’s really humbling – not only the fact that my father did these remarkable things but actually to meet all the other people who are on the stamps and to meet their descendants.”

Angus Macpherson said, son of WW11 Highland hero, at a launch for new Royal Mail stamps of his father Sir Tommy Macpherson. A set of ten special stamps celebrating the courage and dedication of individuals whose actions saved lives, changed history and shaped Britain’s war effort. Colonel Sir Ronald Thomas (“Tommy”) Stewart Macpherson was a Commando known for his audacious actions who German’s called “The kilted killer”. These included being dropped by submarine in North Africa, where he sabotaged enemy positions before being caught. After several escape attempts from Italian camps, Macpherson was imprisoned in Austria, Germany and Poland. Escaping to Britain, he was parachuted into central France in 1944 to join with the Resistance as part of Operation Jedburgh. Destroying bridges, railways, and roads vital to the German occupation, Macpherson eventually accepted the surrender of thousands of Axis troops. At one point, 300,000 francs (£1m today) was offered for his capture.

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SCOTWORD

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

CLUES ACROSS

- Related to (4).
- Jock's other nickname! (3).
- Old silver coins (6).
- Series of years (3).
- A combination (6).
- Old Scots prison (8).
- Dundee's waterway (3).
- A hire car (4).
- Highland military depot (4, 6).
- Scots fliers (4).
- In competition with (5).
- A tattie (4).
- Central ranges (5, 5).
- Monastic island (4).

- With Scotch it's a game! (3).
- Kirk's covered entrance (8).
- Soccer side (6).
- Gaelic festival (3).
- Make enquiries in Scotland (6).
- Agrees (3).
- Farmyard animals (4).

CLUES DOWN

- A Scotsman's oxtar (6).
- Scots goonies (8).
- North-east waterway (5, 5).
- Old Scot (4).
- The true Scot (4).
- Burns' wife, Jean (6).
- Country dancer's decoration! (4).
- A fogey-bummer in Aberdeen (3).
- In times past (3).
- Make merry (5).
- Town to the north of Hawick (10).
- Part of game of bowls (3).
- Dynamic pair (3).
- To a Scot they're baffles (8).
- Vase (3).
- Military bonnet decoration (6).
- Chatter to a Scot (3).
- Highland games are held here (6).
- Scots listeners! (4).
- Equips with weapons (4).
- Whirlpool (4).

Page 6 • The Scottish Banner • June 2025

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 at Mellerstain House.

Greetings from Scotland – a sensationally sunny place. It is unusual, but this spring it seems as if the whole country has been bathed in light. Which is good news for the Chief, who likes to get a bit of warmth on his bones. Having led a rugged outdoor life, the MacGregor is hardened to both heat and cold. For myself, I wilt a bit when the temperature rises. But I am grateful that delicate blooms should be safe now a late frost seems to be out of the question.

Ayrshire

Indeed, as I write, the warmest day of the year is recorded at Auchincruive in Ayrshire. 25.4 degrees Celsius (77F) might not be hot by your standards, but it's pretty good for us... Just to the north of where we live, Ayrshire is a pretty place. Along with

its southern lochs and glens the region boasts a dramatic coastline with a mix of sandy beaches and small fishing harbours. Historically, Ayrshire has connections to William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. It is the birthplace of Robert Burns - and of two road greats: John Boyd Dunlop, the creator of the pneumatic tyre, and John MacAdam, the man who put the 'mac' in tarmac. Today, modern links go as far as the White House. The Trump family are the owners of mighty Turnberry golf course - one of around 50 in Ayrshire. Because they like their golf there.

Then the region also boasts Dumfries House, a magnificent eighteenth-century mansion built for the Earls of Dumfries. This stately home stayed in the family for 250 years and when the last full-time occupant, the Dowager Marchioness of Bute, died it was put up for sale. It was our current King, the then Prince of Wales, who in 2007, bought the building and its contents, including a fabulous collection of rare Chippendale furniture. In so doing, he saved the house for the nation.

Boswell Book Festival

And so, this month, the MacGregor Chief and I find ourselves staying there. Not in the actual house, you understand, but in a rather luxurious estate lodge. We are there for the annual Boswell Book Festival;



an event inspired by the famous Ayrshire biographer, James Boswell of Auchinleck. This gathering is the world's only festival of biography and memoir. Over the years it has showcased books by actors, politicians, academics, and more. They go onto the stage and talk about their latest book.

This time, I am an interviewer, and my author is an actor. Rupert Everett first made his name with the film *Another Country*. He went on to star in movies like *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *The Happy Prince*, and the *Shrek* series. Nothing if not versatile. Rupert has written autobiographies about his life in theatre and the big screen. Detailed and often racy, they are well worth a read. And whilst he might be referred to as an English actor, he actually had his first acting break in

Glasgow whilst his mother, a Maclean, hails from Scotland. Unsurprisingly for a noted name, the marquee is packed. He makes the audience laugh with his outrageous tales. They go away happy. I do have his latest book, but wish I had thought to get a selfie with him... Dumfries House is well worth a visit.

Mellerstain House

As is another Scottish architectural gem. Mellerstain House in the Scottish Borders was built in 1725. It is a Georgian stately home, one designed by the architect, William Adam and his son, Robert. Now home to the 14th Earl of Haddington, it comes with exquisite plasterwork ceilings. Yet we are not filming inside the house. Instead, we are capturing garden glories; beds laid out in an Italian style; acres of ornate box hedging; stone terraces sloping down to a glassy lake. It is simply majestic. Yet among the parkland and grandeur is a tiny thatched cottage. Once home to the estate shepherd, it is delightfully quirky. Indeed, it would not be out of place in a *Hansel and Gretel* movie. We film as the sun beats down. I feel very hot in my jacket. But as they say: 'Ne're cast a clout till May is out.'

In other words, here in Scotland it's best not to take off too many bits of clothing until June is with us...

Tartan of the Month

Elkmont Game Day Collection 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).

The Elkmont Game Day Collection tartan was created for the Elkmont Trading Company, Clemson, South Carolina, USA.

The tartan is intended to celebrate the beauty of Elkmont, where the Blue Ridge Mountains overlook a highland dale carved by the Little River and Jake's Creek. Settlers came to the valley in the 1840's seeking gold, but instead discovered a lush forest teeming with wildlife, canopied beneath hemlock giants and rhododendron thickets, rambling streams and a location visited each June by the synchronous firefly's spectacular light show. This tartan (reference: 14280) was designed by Robert Paterson and registered in April, 2024.

HUNTER VALLEY
Highland Games

23RD AUGUST 2025
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The Celts: Search For A Civilization

A history of the Celts and their international legacy today. We know a lot about the Roman Empire. The Romans left monuments to their glories and written histories charting the exploits of their heroes. But there was another ancient people in Europe – feared warriors with chariots, iron swords, exquisite jewellery, swirling tattoos and strange rituals and beliefs. For hundreds of years Europe was theirs, not Rome's. They were our ancestors, and yet the scale of their achievements has largely been forgotten. They were the Celts.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

The Colouring Book of Scotland

The first colouring book dedicated to the beautiful landscapes and landmarks of Scotland. A unique Scottish colouring book suitable for adults as well as children featuring 20 of the country's most iconic places, including: Edinburgh Castle • Forth Rail Bridge • St Andrews • HMS Discovery, Dundee • Balmoral Castle • Loch Ness/Urquhart Castle • Dunrobin • Castle, Stromness, Orkney • Skara Brae • Callanish Standing Stones • Highland Games • Eilean Donan • Tobermory, Skye • Caerlaverlock Castle • Abbotsford House • Melrose Abbey • Rosslyn Chapel • Falkirk Wheel • Stirling Castle and more. Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

Robert Burns: A superb collection from Scotland's finest lyrical poet

Robert Burns, poet and lyricist is widely regarded as the National Poet of Scotland – and much of his work has become part of everyday modern language. Often credited with writing the lyrics for *Auld Lang Syne*, he almost single-handedly inspired the movement that preserved Scottish music and lyrics which had been handed down the generations vocally for centuries, thereby maintaining Scots culture and language. A cultural icon and pioneer of the Romantic movement. This collection includes some of his best-loved, most beautiful work.

Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

The Pocket Gaelic-English/English-Gaelic Dictionary

Latest soft cover dictionary is ideal for learners of Gaelic at all levels, and its generous coverage of vocabulary from fields such as business and IT makes it a valuable tool for all those who require an up-to-date reference work. It contains a large amount of explanatory material, numerous examples of usage and idiomatic phrases and expressions. Many registers and styles are sampled, from the familiar (and occasionally the vulgar) to the formal and the literary.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

The Borders: A History from Earliest Times

This book tells the story of a part of Scotland that has played a huge role in the nation's history for hundreds of years. The hunter-gatherers, who first penetrated the virgin interior, the Celtic warlords, the Romans, the Northumbrians and the Reivers, who dominated the Anglo-Scottish borderlands for over 300 years, have all had their part to play in the constantly evolving life of the area. It is the people of a place that make its history, and Alistair Moffat's book is a testament to those who have made the Borders their home and who have created the traditions, myths and romance that define it so strongly.

Price: \$34.95 Plus postage

Clans and Tartans of Scotland

The Scots are a remarkable race with a justifiably proud history and culture which they have successfully passed on through generations. This compact book sets out to identify the larger Scottish clan and family names, their tartans, septs (dependent family names), heraldic crests, mottos, ancestral lands and allegiances. This book features full colour photographs of each tartan as opposed to digital reproductions, allowing readers to see both the textures and patterns.

Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

My First Colouring Book: Scotland

Age range 3+. Young children will love these colouring books featuring simple illustrations of a variety of Scottish themes. Contents feature: Castles, Unicorns, Scottish Country Dancers, Bagpipes, Loch Ness Monster, Forth Rail Bridge, Tartan and more.

Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

Columba: Pilgrim, Priest & Patron Saint

St Columba is one of the most important figures in the early history of the British Isles. A native of Donegal and a nobleman of royal ancestry, his outstanding religious career spanned both sides of the Irish Sea. On the Scottish island of Iona he founded his principal monastery where he served as abbot until his death in AD 597. Iona eventually became the centre of a powerful federation of monasteries that preserved a memory of Columba and nurtured the saintly cult that grew around him. This book traces Columba's achievements and legacy.

Price: \$34.95 plus postage

A History of Scotland

Historian Neil Oliver presents a compelling new portrait of Scottish history, peppered with action, high drama and centuries of turbulence that have helped to shape modern Scotland. Along the way, he takes in iconic landmarks and historic architecture; debunks myths surrounding Scotland's famous sons; recalls forgotten battles; charts the growth of patriotism; and explores recent political developments, capturing Scotland's sense of identity and celebrating her place in the wider world.

Price: \$29.95 Plus postage

Tall Tales and Wee Stories: The Best of Billy Connolly

Tall Tales and Wee Stories brings together the very best of Billy's storytelling for the first time and includes his most famous routines including, The Last Supper, Joboba Shampoo, Incontinence Pants and Shouting at Wildebeest. With an introduction and original illustrations by Billy throughout, it is an inspirational, energetic and riotously funny read, and a fitting celebration of our greatest ever comedian.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

New Scottish Baking

The only book on Scottish baking you will ever need. This is the ultimate celebration of the amazing variety of Scottish baking. Acclaimed cookery writer Sue Lawrence introduces essential tips before going on to share 150 easy-to-follow recipes which will appeal to bakers of all abilities, and a chapter of baking with kids will inspire a new generation in the kitchen. Featuring traditional favourites such as Selkirk bannock, Ecclefechan tart and Cloutie dumpling, it also also showcases exciting contemporary recipes.

Price: \$59.95 Plus postage

Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors

This is a new edition of the bestselling guide to this increasingly popular pursuit. Scotland has the best-maintained records and facilities of any country in the world for undertaking family research. This is the National Archives' official guide and is written in an accessible style from the unique perspective of a custodian of the records. It details all the latest internet developments, including a chapter on family history on the web. It also points to more traditional resources, explaining step by step how to research records of births, marriages and wills.

Price: \$29.95 Plus postage

Queen Macbeth A thousand years ago in an ancient Scottish landscape, a woman is on the run with her three bosom companions – a healer, a weaver and a seer. If the men hunting her find them, they will kill her because she is the only one who stands between them and their violent ambition. She is no lady: she is the first queen of Scotland, married to a king called Macbeth. Shakespeare fed us the myth of the Macbeths as power-hungry murderous conspirators. But now Val McDermid drags the truth out of the shadows, exposing the patriarchal prejudices of history.

Price: \$29.95 Plus postage

Scottish Quotations

The Scots have always had a reputation for clarity of thought and also for the vigour with which it is put into words. This collection spans the entire gamut of a nation's recorded thought and experience from Roman Scotland to the present day. It covers a vast range of subject matter and demonstrates a remarkable variety of moods and tones, from the literary to the colloquial and bawdy. Packed with sharp observation and humour, it sounds other notes too. Meditative, triumphant, tragic, accusing, tender – and often hilarious – it reveals the spirit of Scotland in a truly unique way.

Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

Under the Hammer Few aspects of Scottish history inspire an interest as the wars with England & exploits of not one, but two, national heroes – William Wallace & Robert Bruce. But few have ventured to examine it in depth from an English perspective. Yet there could have been no Wallace or Bruce without the English kings' efforts to subjugate their northern neighbour. This book explores how Edward I attempted to bring the Scottish kingdom under his control. Despite England's military might, victory was by no means inevitable, and this book paints a vivid picture of a key period in the history of both nations.

Price: \$34.95 Plus postage

The Outer Hebrides: A Historical Guide

The Outer Hebrides lie 40 miles to the west of mainland Scotland. Culturally distinct from early prehistory, the islands contain a wealth of historical and archaeological monuments. In addition to descriptions of key historic sites from prehistory onwards and gazetteers covering every place of historical interest, this book also traces the development of the modern environment and landscape of the islands, enabling the visitor to appreciate the sites within their historical and cultural context.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

Mull and Iona: A Historical Guide

Mull and Iona are two of the most visited islands in Scotland, and have played a central role in the history of the country. As the cradle of Christianity in Scotland, Iona has been a place of pilgrimage for almost 1,500 years. This book provides a full and engaging history of the islands from the time of their earliest human inhabitants to the present day. The gazetteer lists all the places of interest from all periods in the islands' history, from the worldwide renowned churches, crosses and grave slabs on Iona and the magnificent restored Duart Castle on Mull, seat of the Clan Maclean and the mausoleum of Lachlan MacQuarrie, the much esteemed 18th-century Governor of New South Wales.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

Glasgow: The Autobiography

This book tells the story of the fabled, former Second City of the British Empire from its origins as a bucolic village on the rivers Kelvin and Clyde, through the tumult of the Industrial Revolution to the third millennium. Including extracts from an astonishing array of contributors – the result is a varied and vivid portrait of one of the world's great cities in all its grime and glory – a place which is at once infuriating, inspiring, raucous, humorous and never, ever dull.

Price: \$29.95 Plus postage

War Paths: Walking in the Shadows of the Clans

Alistair Moffat sets off in the footsteps of the Highland clans. In 12 journeys he explores places of conflict, recreating as he walks the tumult of battle. As he recounts the military prowess of the clans – surely the most feared fighting men in western Europe – he also speaks of their lives, their language and culture before it was all swept away. The disaster at Culloden in 1746 represented not just the defeat of the Jacobite dream but also the unleashing of merciless retribution from the British government which dealt the Highland clans a blow from which they would never recover. This is an exploration of many of the places and events which define a country's history.

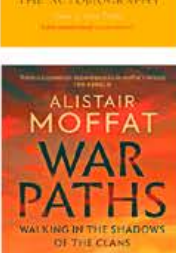
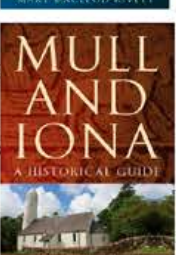
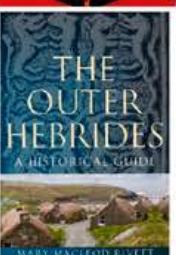
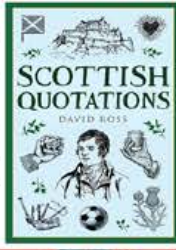
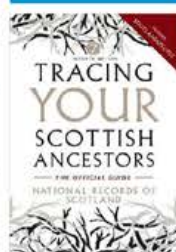
Price: \$39.95 Plus postage

Tales for Twilight

This book offers a spine-tingling selection of unnerving tales by writers from James Hogg in the early 18th century to James Robertson, very much alive in the 21st. Scottish authors have proved to be exceptionally good at writing ghost stories. Perhaps it's because of the tradition of oral storytelling that has stretched over centuries, including poems and ballads with supernatural themes. The golden age was during the Victorian and Edwardian period, but the ghost story has continued to evolve and remains popular to this day.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

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Nature Notebook: Highland Cow

This notebook features a stunning cover with artwork by acclaimed nature artist Jane Smith. It contains lined paper, a head-and-tail band, a purple ribbon marker and band to keep it securely fastened. Blank pages for your personal notes. A great Scottish notebook!

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

The Hebrides

Paul Murton has spent half a lifetime exploring some of the most beautiful islands in the world – the Hebrides. He has travelled the length and breadth of the Scotland's rugged, 6,000 mile coast line, and sailed to over 80 islands. This new edition visits each of the Hebridean islands in turn, introducing their myths and legends, history, culture & natural beauty. He also meets the people who live there and learns their story. A vivid account of the Hebrides and serves as unique guide to the less well-known aspects of life among the islands.

Price: \$34.95 Plus postage

North Coast Journey: The Magic of Scotland's Northern Highlands

This is the essential guide to the north of Scotland, on a route which begins in Inverness, weaves westwards to Applecross and then northwards towards Torridon. From Ullapool it leads to the most northerly points in Britain, passing by Caithness and John o' Groats before heading south again through Dingwall and to Inverness. In addition to stunning mountains, moors, lochs and beaches, the route also features exquisite towns and villages, castles, distilleries, breweries, natural wonders and wildlife.

Price: \$44.95 Plus postage

The Scottish Food Bible

Scottish produce is celebrated the world over. The demand for game, for example, far exceeds what can be supplied, and Scottish cheeses surpass many from mainland Europe. In this book Claire Macdonald celebrates the very best of home-grown ingredients – from oatmeal, dairy produce, meat and fish, fruit and vegetables and even whisky – in 60 imaginative recipes for starters, main course and puddings, as well as for sauces, dressings, baking and other treats.

Price: \$19.95 Plus postage

Columba's Bones: Darkland Tales

The Isle of Iona, 825. In a bloody, brutal raid, Abbot Blathmac is slain on the steps of his monastery for refusing to give away the location of the sacred relics of St Columba, the missionary who first brought Christianity to Scotland. Rooted in the real history of Iona and its early monks, this is an utterly unique and thrilling read, exploring the clash of early Christianity and paganism, and expanding into a sharp, witty meditation on philosophy, redemption, shame, violence, love and reality.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

Everyday Gaelic: With Audio Download

This new and expanded edition of the best-selling Everyday Gaelic has been compiled by an author with many years' experience in teaching the language to adults and children. In addition to basic words and phrases, it also includes more complex and idiomatic material, all arranged thematically and covering topics such as meeting & greeting, travelling, the weather and eating & drinking. There are also clearly explained sections on grammar and imitated pronunciation for all Gaelic words and phrases. The result is an accessible and useful book which will be of benefit to all levels and ages of Gaelic learners.

Price: \$34.95 Plus postage

The Poor Had No Lawyers

Who owns Scotland? How did they get it? What happened to all the common land in Scotland? This book updates the statistics of landownership in Scotland and explores how and why landowners got their hands on the millions of acres of land that were once held in common. It tells the untold story of how Scotland's legal establishment and politicians managed to appropriate land through legal fixes. Have attempts to redistribute this power more equitably made any difference, and what are the full implications of the recent debt-fuelled housing bubble. For all those with an interest in urban and rural land in Scotland, this provides analysis of one of the most important political questions in Scotland.

Price: \$39.95 Plus postage

Dancing in the Streets

The classic Glasgow Memoir with a new introduction by Tom Morton. This is Clifford Hanley's vibrant, unsentimental and hilarious account of growing up in the 1920s and '30s, and his later working life as a radio broadcaster & journalist. His razor-sharp observations and anecdotes cover many topics, from family life, art and showbiz to politics and what it was like to be a conscientious objector during WW2. But even the most bittersweet stories are leavened with humour, and the irrepressible Glasgow spirit always shines through.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

The Picts: A History

This is a new edition of this popular history of the Picts, an ancient nation who ruled most of northern and eastern Scotland during the Dark Ages. Despite their historical importance, they remain shrouded in myth and misconception. Absorbed by the kingdom of the Scots in the ninth century, they lost their unique identity, their language and their vibrant artistic culture. Tim Clarkson pieces together the evidence to tell the story of this mysterious people from their emergence in Roman times to their eventual disappearance.

Price: \$24.95 Plus postage

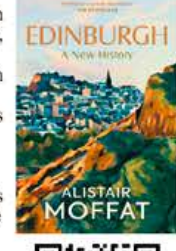
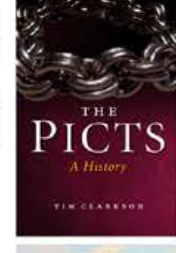
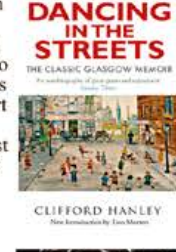
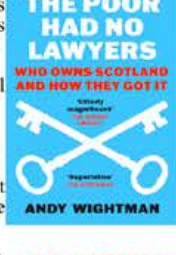
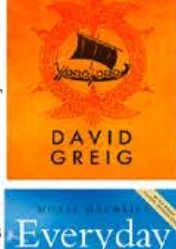
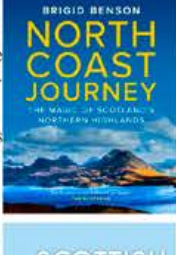
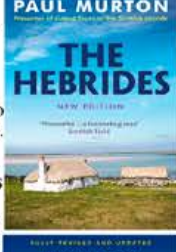
Edinburgh: A New History

From prehistory to the present day, the story of Edinburgh is packed with drama. As Scotland's capital since 1437, the city has witnessed many of the key events which have shaped the nation. But Edinburgh has always been much more than just a political centre. During the Enlightenment, it was one of the intellectual powerhouses of Europe, and in the 20th century it became the arts capital of the world. This book shows how the city changed over the centuries, introduces Edinburgh's famous places and people, as well as the ordinary citizens who have contributed so much to the life of one of the world's most incredible cities.

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Homecoming for collection of Doune Pistols



Ten eighteenth-century pistols have returned to their place of origin in an extraordinary homecoming for the historic village of Doune. Once part of a private collection, the pistols are now on permanent public display at the community's Information and Heritage Centre in Doune. Forming the centrepiece of new heritage exhibitions, the collection has been gifted to Kilmadock Development Trust (KDT) by collector Andrew Yool in a remarkable act of generosity.

Scottish ingenuity

Crafted by six different Doune hammermen in the 1700s, these pistols are outstanding examples of the artistry that made the village a renowned centre of gunsmithing.

Each piece features elaborate decoration, often Celtic-inspired, applied through fine engraving and silver wire inlay. "The fact that a representative selection by the most well-known local hammermen has finally found a permanent home on display at the Doune for all to see and admire is undoubtedly an occasion for celebration," said collector Andrew Yool. "These flintlock firearms are of unique design, construction and decoration, instantly recognised and appreciated worldwide as iconic examples of Scottish ingenuity, craftsmanship and enterprise, as a result of which they have earned international fame for the village of Doune where they were made 300 years ago."

The roots of Doune's pistolmaking tradition trace back to 1646, when Thomas Caddell brought the gunsmith trade to

the village. With iron scarce, he made use of old horseshoe nails and, through dedication to his craft, developed a level of refinement that defined the Doune style much sought-after around Europe. His legacy passed down through generations of apprentices, establishing Doune as the heart of Scotland's pistolmaking industry.

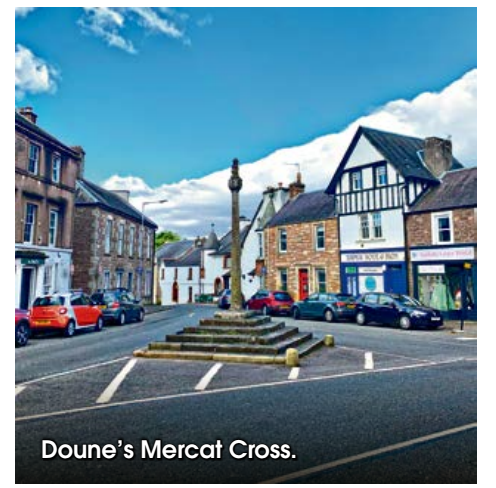
Unique part of Doune's history

After the Jacobite's defeat at Culloden, Scottish mercenaries fled abroad, taking their arms with them. It is said that the American War of Independence was started by a shot from a Doune-made pistol at the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775; later described as being the "shot heard round the world." Only a few hundred examples of genuine 'Doune Pistols' are known to remain in museums and private collections around the world today. Karen Ross, Chair of KDT

says: "We are thrilled that such a unique part of Doune's history is now on display in the village where they were made, and are grateful to Mr Yool for his generosity. While having a practical function, the pistols really are fine works of art and would have taken countless hours of craftsmanship by candlelight to bring to fruition."

While relatively small places, Doune and Deanston have a wealth of history to delve into. These are featured in the new heritage exhibitions at the Information and Heritage Centre, which have been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Run by local volunteers, and open throughout the week, visitors are invited to come spend some time and discover the stories of Scotland's historic crossroads.

For more information on the historic villages of Doune and Deanston visit: www.douneanddeanston.com



Doune's Mercat Cross.

Saddle up for the Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular



The Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular returns on June 14 & 15 with country roots and cowboy boots – now featuring a major country music concert! One of Queensland's most loved and unique events, which celebrates the Scottish ancestry of the Scenic Rim, the Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular is the richest Clydesdale Show in the Southern Hemisphere and takes rein in Beaudesert on the weekend of June 14 and 15, with a brand-new country music concert galloping into the program on Friday June 13.

Gentle Giants

From pint-sized Shetlands to towering Shires, the event is a full-throttle celebration of the Gentle Giants of the horse world.



Over two mighty days, Clydesdale champions are judged, their Scottish heritage is honoured, rare trades are showcased, and their vital place in Australian history is proudly preserved. And now, in a major new addition, country music becomes the heartbeat of the hooves, with a brand-new Country Concert headlined by Queensland country star Luke Geiger from 5pm Friday June 13. For Luke, it's a special homecoming.

Almost 30 years after playing Rugby League in Beaudesert and earning an NRL scholarship, he returns not in footy boots—but cowboy boots. "I'm a country singer and a horse guy, and I can't wait to get around the big horses at the Clydesdale Spectacular—what an experience it'll be!" Luke said. Known for his powerhouse stage presence and authentic sound inspired by legends like George Strait and Garth Brooks, Luke Geiger is one of Queensland's most in-demand performers. With his steel guitar player hailing from nearby Tamborine, the Scenic Rim spirit will be front and centre on stage.

Agricultural legacy

The Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular is the ultimate fusion of heritage and heart, with the 2025 program featuring: The World Whip Plaiting Titles (a global first!), World Billy Boiling Championships, Bush poetry, blacksmithing, working dogs, caber tossing, and lumberjacking, Clydesdale & Clan competitions and the stirring massing of the pipes and drums and traditional haggis burgers, whisky bar, and kilts everywhere. Event Director Greta Stanfield said the move to the Beaudesert Showgrounds has given the

event space to grow, while staying grounded in its Scenic Rim home: "It's important for us to keep the event in the region that owes so much to the Clydesdale. This breed cleared our paddocks, ploughed our fields and built our agricultural legacy. Thanks to fans, breeders and this incredible community, we're not only preserving that history—we're celebrating it." So saddle up for a weekend where country pride, horsepower, and music collide.

The Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular 2025 takes place Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th June 2025 at Beaudesert Showgrounds, Albert Street, Beaudesert, Queensland. More information, accommodation and ticketing detail: <http://www.clydesdalespectacular.com.au>.



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IN SCOTLAND TODAY

Engineers work their magic on world-famous Glenfinnan Viaduct



A team of specialist engineers have cast a protective spell over the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct with the completion of a year-long, £3.4 million restoration project. The structure in the Scottish Highlands, made famous worldwide by the Harry Potter films, has undergone an extensive maintenance programme to safeguard its future for generations to come. Network Rail, along with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, assessed the condition of the viaduct. Concrete repairs were carried out across the structure sympathetically, taking care to replicate its heritage appearance.

New safety handrails for staff working at height were installed, along with renewing ballast retention systems at the ends of the structure. Ballast is the stone material under the track that maintains stability, drainage and prevents damage to the underlying structure. Engineers also worked in the River Finnan, protecting the piers from erosion caused by the fast-flowing river. Laura Craig, Scheme Project Manager at Network Rail, said: “This project was years in planning due to the complexity of navigating such a large-scale, historic structure. Our highly skilled team faced numerous challenges, from preserving the viaduct’s original integrity to implementing modern engineering solutions. Every step of the process required meticulous attention to detail and a deep respect for its heritage. It’s an honour to look after the Glenfinnan Viaduct, knowing how much it’s loved all over the world. We’re proud to see it standing strong and it’s a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.” The Glenfinnan viaduct opened in 1901 and is the largest mass concrete viaduct in Scotland, spanning more than 1,000 feet.

The build cost £18,904 at the time, which is around £2 million in today’s money. Historic Environment Scotland have designated the structure as Category A, the highest level, meaning it’s of significant architectural and historical interest. As part of its preservation, Network Rail refrains from cleaning off efflorescence marks from the rain as it drains through, ensuring the character of the structure remains. The viaduct is an icon of Scottish tourism, drawing thousands of visitors each year. Many pass over the arches aboard ScotRail trains, as well as the ‘Hogwarts Express’ Jacobite steam train operated by West Coast Railways. Countless more tourists make the trip to Glenfinnan to admire the spellbinding views from the ground. James Shuttleworth, West Coast Railways’ Commercial Manager, added: “Having run ‘The Jacobite’ for over three decades and celebrated its centenary in 2001, we truly appreciate the historic significance of the viaduct. The recent restoration work

has further highlighted its importance, not only as a vital piece of railway heritage, but also as a beloved film star in Harry Potter, for which we proudly provided ‘The Hogwarts Express.’ The restoration of the viaduct is part of a broader programme of work in the Glenfinnan area. A two-year, industry-leading pilot project enhanced the natural habitat by planting trees across approximately 200 hectares to protect, restore and expand rainforest and peatland habitats. Additionally, deer fencing has been installed at Ardmolich to safeguard the newly planted native woodlands from overgrazing.

Stunning Aberdeen Denis Law legacy concepts inspired by RGU students



Two stunning murals of Denis Law have now been completed in Printfield, Woodside – the area in Aberdeen where the Scottish footballing legend was born and raised – and marks a milestone in planned legacy projects in Aberdeen. The remarkable artworks, situated on a high-rise block off Great Northern Road, will signpost the entrance to ‘Printfield 10 - A Denis Law Legacy Trail’, a concept initially developed by Robert Gordon University (RGU) Communication Design alumni Derek McKechnie, which aims to celebrate the area of the city where Denis grew up and help inspire and enhance the local community.

Like the murals, the trail is a predominantly community-led initiative following conceptions by Gray’s School of Art and Denis Law Legacy Trust, the children’s charity based at RGU SPORT which works in partnership with RGU. Speaking on his involvement, Derek McKechnie, said: “Printfield 10 was a concept that I developed while studying on the Communication Design course at Gray’s School of Art. The course works closely with Denis Law Legacy Trust, and I wanted to highlight where Denis grew up and celebrate his achievements and enable other people to learn more about his formative years. I’m hoping that it will inspire other kids to aim high and be ambitious, even if you come from humble beginnings. It’s been amazing to watch Blank Walls create these stunning murals and see Fine Day from Aberdeen turn the idea of a trail with 10 stop points into reality”.

Created by artist Jerome Davenport, founder of street art creators Blank Walls, the murals are 30 metres high and 16 metres wide and span the largest known surface area of its art type in Scotland. They capture Law in his trademark celebratory pose for both Manchester United and Scotland, symbolizing his incredible achievements, and will stand as a lasting tribute in the heart of the community where his journey began as a young local boy playing in the streets. His journey to stardom culminated with winning the prestigious Ballon d’Or award in 1964, and he remains the only Scottish footballer to do so.

Ancient human settlement discovered on Scottish island pushes known boundaries



Stone tools found on Skye.
Photo: Karen Hardy.

A team of archaeologists and scientists led by Karen Hardy, Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, has discovered evidence for one of the earliest human populations yet known in Scotland. Stone tools found on the Isle of Skye have been dated to a period known as the Late Upper Palaeolithic (LUP), around 11,500 – 11,000 years ago. The wider context of these finds has been analysed in detail, with respect to highly detailed maps of local glacier formation and an enigmatic group of stone circular structures which appears to lie below modern sea level.

These sites were discovered by Professor Hardy and local archaeologist, Martin Wildgoose. Their discovery means that the west coast now represents the largest concentration of evidence for these pioneer human populations anywhere in Scotland and reveals how early humans of this period ventured much further north than previously believed. The discoveries have been announced in a paper – *At the far end of everything: A likely Ahrensburgian presence in the far north of the Isle of Skye, Scotland* – published in *The Journal of Quaternary Science*. Professor Karen Hardy says: “This is a hugely significant discovery which offers a new perspective on the earliest human occupation yet known, of north-west Scotland.”

The team, from the universities of Leeds, Sheffield, Leeds Beckett and Flinders in Australia worked together to reconstruct the local landscape and changing sea levels. During this period, which is immediately after the Younger Dryas (also known as the Loch Lomond Stadial), when much of west Scotland was buried under ice, groups of nomadic hunter-gatherers most likely of the Ahrensburgian culture from northern Europe, crossed Doggerland, an area that is now covered by the North Sea, and established themselves on Skye. Back then, the landscape of Scotland would have looked very different to today. Professor Hardy adds: “The journey made by these pioneering people who left their lowland territories in mainland Europe to travel northwards into the unknown, is the ultimate adventure story. As they journeyed northwards, most likely following animal herds, they eventually reached Scotland, where the western landscape was dramatically changing as glaciers melted and the land rebounded as it recovered from the weight of the ice. A good example of the volatility they would have encountered can be found in Glen Roy, where the world-famous Parallel Roads provide physical testament to the huge landscape changes and cataclysmic floods that they would have encountered, as they travelled across Scotland.” Once they reached Skye, these early people crafted tools from stone found locally on Skye. Professor Hardy believes the settlers deliberately and

strategically chose where to base themselves as they selected a location that had good access to coastal and riverine resources, as well as natural materials like ochre that was highly valued by ancient cultures.

Although the sites themselves cannot be visited, the landscape these early pioneers encountered can be imagined at Sconser. Around 11,000 years ago, after the last of the Cuillin Mountain glaciers had melted, the sea level would still be lower than today, and it would have been possible to walk to Raasay.

Edinburgh schools are first in Scotland to pilot a phone-free policy



Portobello High School and Queensferry High School will be the first secondary schools in Scotland to pilot a zero-phone policy, with Portobello High School and Queensferry High School introducing the policy last month- with young people required to store their phones in pouches at the start of each school day. All learners from S1 to S6 will be responsible for storing mobile phones in secure and lockable Yondr pouches during the school day. The storage pouches are locked and un-locked magnetically, with phones remaining in the pupils’ possession throughout the school day.

The phone-free policy has been introduced following extensive engagement with pupils and parents and carers over a six-month period, with focus groups meeting to discuss the policy and 86% of parents and carers of children attending Portobello High School positively supported the introduction of the policy. It is hoped that the new phone-free policy will protect the learning environment, encouraging young people to stay in class and focused on learning without the distraction of checking or responding to a notification on a phone. Research shows that a phone free school environment positively impacts young people’s mental health and wellbeing, both in school and at-home, encouraging a healthier approach to managing time online and increasing face-to-face interaction. Councillor Joan Griffiths, Education, Children and Families Convener, said: “I’m pleased to see Edinburgh schools leading the way in introducing a mobile-phone free school environment. Mobile phones in classroom settings are increasingly competing with the teachers for learners’ attention and limiting access to mobile phones during the school day is only a positive thing for our young people. I know that schools across Edinburgh, and indeed the country, are exploring ways to manage mobile phone use, including restricting phone use during the school day. The new pouches provide an innovative way for our young people to have distance from their devices while having the reassurance that they are still in their possession. We hope that this new policy will increase focus on learning, reduce classroom distractions and help improve wellbeing.”

The Melbourne Tartan Festival 2025



The Melbourne Tartan Festival Ceilidh Dance with music by the Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers at Collingwood Town Hall on Friday 27th June is the opening event of this year's Festival. The ceilidh's loyal following is attracted by the high energy dance style reminiscent of many a Scottish village hall.

On Sunday 29 June is the annual Kirkin' 'O The Tartan service at The Scots' Church, Melbourne. The Parade of Clans will be piped into the church, with each Clan announced and welcomed in both Scottish Gaelic and English. To register your Clan's participation, go to: www.trybooking.com/CYLX.

The Melbourne Tartan Day Parade on Collins Street on Sunday 6th July is a Festival highlight, gaining in stature and recognition as it enters its 5th year. This is a truly stirring

and colourful spectacle, as the sound of the massed pipe band echoes across the city, with more than 200 pipers, drummers, dancers and clan representatives in traditional dress parade down Collins Street, Melbourne. The Parade is followed by a massed Highland Fling recital in the forecourt of the Westin Hotel. Highland dancing and piping displays will be on the terrace and balconies of the Old Treasury Building from 11.30am with pop-up events around the city. A CBD Scottish Connection guided walk with cultural historian, curator and tour leader Kenneth Park will commence at 10.00am – bookings essential.

Festival highlights

Melbourne Tartan Festival Gala Dinner and Concert at Melbourne Town Hall is on Saturday 19th July. This year's distinguished Guest of Honour is Member of the Scottish Parliament, Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture. Cabinet Secretary Angus Robertson. Guest Speaker is The Honourable Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Nicholas Reece.

Guests will be piped in on arrival to enjoy drinks in the Town Hall foyer

before entering the glittering Main Hall for a traditional *Address to the Haggis*, sumptuous gourmet meal accompanied by fine wines and entertained with a mix of traditional and contemporary concert style entertainment with a few surprise guest artists. This will be a night to remember as you dance the night out to internationally acclaimed Celtic rock band Claymore.

During the month long Festival there will be concerts and piping recitals featuring Graeme McColgan 'The Scotsman' with 'Highland Harmonies from Distant Shores', the Victorian Pipers Association Solo Piping Championships, The Victorian Scottish Dancing Members Association 64th Australian Commonwealth Championships, online and in person genealogy and history lectures, whisky tasting, Burns Suppers, poetry in the park and pub and much more throughout the month of July.

Visit the Melbourne Tartan Festival website for the full program and booking links, with more events being added weekly, at: www.melbournetartanfestival.com.au.

Also visit and follow the Festival Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MelbourneTartanFestival

New exhibition explores the history of Scotland's railways



SSmoke and Steel: The History of Scotland's Railways is a brand-new exhibition at Stirling Castle. Railways have helped to shape Scotland's history and the nation today, with 2025 marking the 200th anniversary of the modern railway. Using material from Historic Environment Scotland's archives and as part of Railway 200, the exhibition explores the history and impact of this groundbreaking means of transport. Visitors can discover more about the railway's construction, architecture and the connections they created, as well as their impact on industry and leisure.

Claire Whitbread, Exhibitions Manager at Historic Environment Scotland, said: "The railway is a fascinating part of our heritage that has shaped Scotland's landscape and continues to have an impact on how we live, forming connections across the nation and ushering in a new age of transport. We're thrilled to be commemorating the 200th anniversary of the railway with this brand-new exhibition that charts the challenges faced in Scotland, celebrates those who built it and explores the rise, decline and renewal of Scotland's railways."

Smoke and Steel: The History of Scotland's Railways is on at Stirling Castle to Sunday 7 September 2025.

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A crash course in Scottish castles

By: David C. Weinczok



Kisimul Castle.



Smailholm Tower.

Scotland is a castle lover's wonderland. Over 2,500 castles still stand across the country in every style imaginable, from vast royal strongholds crowning volcanic crags to slender towerhouses nestled among rolling hills. They are as synonymous with Scotland as bagpipes and shortbread – indeed, iconic castles like Eilean Donan decorate the lids of many a biscuit tin!

Where and when did Scotland's first castles emerge? Who were their builders and destroyers? How did they actually function in times of peace and war, and what forces brought about the end of the castle age? Read on for a crash course in Scottish castellated history.

What is a castle?

At the most fundamental level, a castle is a fortified residence of the royalty or nobility built during the Middle Ages. They are most often, but not always, products of feudalism. Most scholars agree that the

earliest castles in Scotland were built in the late 11th century AD, and that the socio-political systems which they were part of had largely disappeared by the early 17th century.

Fighting was only one part of castles' function. The vast majority could only hold out against raids and low-level warfare. All but the mightiest would fall quickly and fairly easily to a large, determined army, and Hollywood-style assaults with siege ladders and battering rams were exceptionally rare. Still, castles were at the centre of every major military campaign in Scotland in the Middle Ages.

A castle must also function as a home, with everything needed to support an extended household. That means a great hall for dining and feasting guests, kitchens, bakehouses, breweries, stables, smiths, and support system of farming and services around it. Many castles had villages develop around them if there wasn't one already.

To sum up, if it was built between the late 11th and early 17th centuries with some potential for defence but also for domestic living, I'm happy to call it a castle. If it's all fighting and no homemaking, it's a fort; if it has castle-like architectural features but no practical means of being defended, it's probably a country house, palace, or folly.

Scotland's first castles

Two quite distinct castle types compete for the title of Scotland's oldest. The best-known are motte-and-bailey castles, timber castles built atop earthen mounds (*motta* in Latin) introduced by knights from areas like Normandy in mainland Europe. Around 300 have been identified in Scotland. On average, a team of 50 labourers could raise a basic motte-and-bailey castle in around 40 days.

Many motte-and-bailey castles were built on the contested fringes of the Scottish kingdom. Kings like David I (r.1123-1153AD) invited European knights to build them and then hold them against rivals like the Earldom of Orkney in the north and Galloway in the southwest. John of Fordun, a 14th century chronicler, wrote of David I that, "He it is that decked thee [Scotland] with castles and towns, and with lofty towers."

Duffus Castle in Moray is one of the best surviving examples. Built by the Flemish knight Hugh de Freskin, its wide-topped bailey had secondary buildings with the defensive tower capping the higher motte. Duffus was rebuilt in stone during Edward I's campaigns in the late 13th through early 14th centuries, but the weight of the masonry proved too much and it collapsed into partial ruins. Other notable examples include the Bass of Inverurie, the Motte of Urr, and Hawick Motte.

Around the same time, the Norse settlers in places like Orkney and Argyll

raised castles of their own outside the feudal system. Norse seafarers raiding throughout Europe encountered early castles and clearly wanted some of their own. Norsemen even went on crusade to the Holy Land, no doubt marvelling at the fortifications there.

Their castles were built in stone from the start. Castle Sween, for instance, originates from around 1100AD and was built by Suibhne (Sween) to monitor the sea-highways of the west coast. It is a prime example of a 'galley-castle', one built to prioritise quick access to longboats. Other examples include Cubbie Roo's Castle, Skipness Castle, and Kisimul Castle.

The 'Golden Age' of Scottish castles

Large castles are best built in times of peace and plenty, not war and scarcity. The 12th and 13th centuries in Scotland brought a favourable climate and, in relative terms, amicable relations with England, giving Scottish lairds breathing room for castle-building. No longer were a flurry of timber castles being raised upon the kingdom's fringe – greater beasts were now stirring,

Scotland is a castle lover's wonderland.

Builders again took inspiration from France, where mighty round towers called donjons formed the nucleus of many castles. Such towers became the centrepieces of Scottish baronial castles like Dirlerton and Bothwell. Many of the defining features of castles as we think of them took shape in this period: dry and wet moats, curtain walls, wall-walks with crenellations, and enclosed courtyards.

Two types of stone castles emerged and evolved during this 'Golden Age'. Royal castles from c.1200AD like Stirling and Edinburgh served as fixed centres for administration and justice for the kingdom writ large. Baronial castles built by ascendant families like the Douglasses, Stewarts, and Murrays were like mini-kingdoms unto themselves. Such families typically used one as their *caput* or main castle with several others scattered throughout their lands.

This is the period that gave us many peoples' favourite castles, including the likes of Caerlaverock with its triangular form and picture-perfect moat, Dunnottar Castle on its high-impregnable promontory, and Urquhart Castle astride Loch Ness.



Fyvie Castle.

All, however, fell to Edward I's invasions, failing their first major test on a national scale. Majestic as symbol of power they may be, but as keepers of the kingdom they proved surprisingly fallible. This prompted a major re-think.

Late medieval castles: build up, not out

By the 15th century more and more nobles contented themselves with more modest builds. The climate had turned wetter and colder, plague wrought its ruin, and time and time again the big baronial castles fell into enemy hands. What's a status-obsessed aristocrat to do?

While royal castles became increasingly palace-like in true Renaissance style, hundreds of towerhouses rose up across Scotland. These slender, multi-storey castles were not nearly as big an investment and did the job just as well. In an age when the king's power was outstripping that of even the mightiest noble and when gunpowder weapons became capable of blasting through the thickest walls, they were an ideal compromise.

Towerhouses could stand up against raids from rival clans but were never intended to halt armies. They rose higher than any castle buildings before them – a very notable feature of Scottish castles is their tendency to 'build up' and not 'build out'. Excellent examples of towerhouses include Preston Tower, Fairburn Tower, Alloa Tower, and Castle Stalker.

There were holdouts. Tantallon Castle in East Lothian is regarded as the last great curtain-walled castle in Scotland. It's effectively one giant wall cutting off



Tantallon Castle.

a promontory. Built by the Douglases in the mid-14th century, it resisted two separate large-scale sieges by the King of Scots (no less) but fell quickly to Cromwell's cannons in the mid-17th century.

The end of the castle age

By the early 1600s several factors conspired to bring the age of castles to a longwinded end. The increasing centralisation of power in the crown, advanced artillery, the Union of the Crowns in 1603, the transition of feudalism into early modernity, and changing fashions all played their part.

In 1677 the Earl of Strathmore summed up this shift in preference: "Who can delight to live in his house as in a prison? Such houses truly are worn quyt out of fashion, as feuds are ... the countrie being generally more civilized than it was."

Many castles, like Callendar House and Fyvie Castle, built grand new modern-style residential wings around their old towers, turning a once martial and stark structure into a luxurious country house. Large windows, decorative turrets, walled gardens, and other ornate features were added with abandon, and some castle owners outright abandoned their old towers to begin anew.

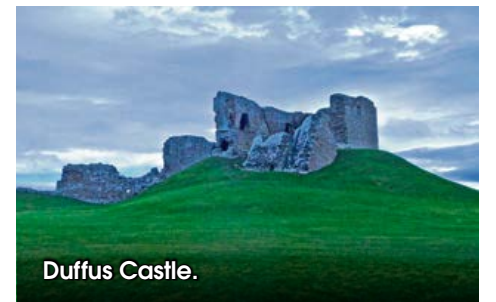
With all that said, it's important to bear in mind that these were not tidy,



Stirling Castle.

abrupt divisions. Timber castles persisted long into the High Middle Ages, many older courtyard castles simply added towerhouses and kept on going, and even the oldest and staunchest castles always had "unnecessary" decorative features as markers of status. Even today, castles like Stonepath Tower and Kilmartin Castle are being sympathetically restored as residences to their late medieval grandeur. Indeed, you could view the restoration of many castles in the 19th and 20th centuries for tourism as just the latest phase in their lifespan.

Finally, it is easy to look back and see them as the products of grand masterplans and of past peoples unrecognisable from ourselves. To that end, here is one of my favourite inscriptions from any



Duffus Castle.

Scottish castle. It adorned the entrance to Pinkie House in Musselburgh, rebuilt by Alexander Seaton around the ruins of an old castle destroyed during the Rough Wooing of the 1540s.

It reads: "Alexander, Lord Seton, built this house in 1613, not as he would have wished, but according to the measure of his means and estate." Don't we all!

A logistical marathon - *Conservation team braves the elements to protect St Kilda Kirk*



Gales, rough seas, nesting birds and the risk of non-native species arriving are just a few of the challenges National Trust for Scotland staff and contractors have faced during work on a major project to conserve the St Kilda Kirk, as its 200th anniversary approaches. Extensive repairs to the roof and the replacement of gutters and rhones are required as a first urgent phase of conservation, to make the Kirk and adjacent School watertight and windtight, in a location where peak winds can reach 144mph. Due to the St Kilda archipelago's location in the North Atlantic, the islands face gales approximately 75 days a year, with the recent Climate Vulnerability Index assessment for St Kilda showing that storms are likely to become more frequent and more severe as a result of climate change.

With support from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) grant funding, the project to weatherproof and conserve the Kirk is being managed by the National Trust for Scotland,

which cares for St Kilda, the UK's only dual UNESCO World Heritage site. Specialist contractors, Laing's Traditional Masonry, worked on Hirta during the summer, making the building more resilient to the effects of climate change while retaining its historic character. The St Kilda Kirk was constructed in 1827-28, to Robert Stevenson's 1826 design, after a visiting minister, Rev Dr John Macdonald, commented that the islanders were 'ignorant of the leading truths' of Christianity. Though ministers and missionaries had visited St Kilda since the 18th century, the first resident minister was the Revd Neil Mackenzie, who lived there with his wife and family from 1830-44.

Specialist heritage conservation

After the last islanders left St Kilda in 1930, the Kirk fell into disrepair, but it was restored by the Trust in the 1970s. Marking the 50th anniversary of the evacuation, the Kirk was re-dedicated at an interdenominational service in August 1980. Susan Bain, the National Trust for Scotland's Property Manager for St Kilda, said: "The National Trust for Scotland is privileged to care for and share St Kilda's natural and cultural heritage, including the Kirk and School, but our stewardship also brings with it great practical complexities.

The project to repair the roof and replace the rainwater goods of the Kirk not only requires specialist heritage conservation expertise and skills, but also involves a gruelling logistical marathon. Even transporting the materials for the project has taken months in planning, with initial shipment to storage in South Uist needed in good time for transfer to a landing craft, which sails when sea conditions are right.

The materials are all checked prior to loading and during the voyage for signs of non-native rodents and the vessel is also inspected before anything is landed on St Kilda. Working in the middle of a dual World Heritage Site has its challenges and noise must be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbing wildlife or visitors. While the Church and School are not open to visitors for the duration of the work, visitors can see traditional skills in action and a key building made safe for the future. We're grateful for the resourcefulness, attention to detail and resilience of our contractors, staff and volunteers who are making the work possible."

A distinctive story to tell in Scotland's history

Clea Warner, Highlands & Islands Regional Director at the National Trust for Scotland, added: "The Kirk and School are a key focal point on St Kilda, offering a very evocative window into its social and cultural history in the 1800s and early 1900s. They're an integral part of the archaeology of St Kilda and remain an important place of reflection for the islands' visitors and people who work on St Kilda, surviving not just time and climate but other challenges such as a U-boat shelling in May 1918. The conservation of their fabric and history – along with St Kilda's wider landscape and heritage – is vital work for the Trust, as we deliver our nature, beauty and heritage for everyone strategy, and we are profoundly grateful to our members and supporters, along with HES, the St Kilda Club, the NTS Foundation USA, the Noble Caledonia Charitable Trust, and McCorquodale Charitable Trust,

whose generosity has made this project possible. With the Kirk watertight, we can then embark on raising funds to secure the second phase of conservation, which will focus on the interior of the Kirk, repairing timber and plasterwork and refurbishing it to its former glory. The support of funders, philanthropists and others will once again be vital in making this possible."

Dr Susan O'Connor, Head of Grants at HES, said: "St Kilda has a distinctive story to tell in Scotland's history and these buildings are testament to a unique way of life. HES grant funding in this case is helping to conserve not only the tangible fabric of the Kirk and School buildings, but also to safeguard the island's invaluable cultural heritage, ensuring that its stories and significance continue to be shared with the world."



THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - Dr Henry Faulds, who established the uniqueness of fingerprints, born in Beith, Ayrshire. **1843**

1 - First Tay Rail Bridge opens. It was to collapse 18 months later in the Tay Bridge Disaster. **1878**

1 - Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of the Scottish Parliament establishes Bòrd na Gàidhlig to secure the status of Scottish Gaelic as an official language of Scotland. **2005**

2 - Prince Henry St Clair (Sinclair) reputed to have landed in Nova Scotia, having sailed from Orkney. **1398**

2 - James Douglas, 4th Earl of Morton, beheaded in Edinburgh Grassmarket, accused of the murder of Lord Darnley. **1581**

2 - Clothes rationing introduced as a war-time measure. The British government needed to reduce production and consumption of civilian clothes to safeguard raw materials and release workers and factory space for war production. It was not lifted until 1949. **1941**

3 - James Hutton, founder of modern geology, born. **1726**

3 - Poet Robert Tannahill born in Paisley. **1774**

3 - The company formed by John Logie Baird televised the Epsom Derby which was then transmitted by the BBC. **1931**

4 - First recorded inter-club golf match - between Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society and Bruntisfield Links Golf Club. **1818**



4 - General Post Office introduces the first postbus in Scotland, Dunbar–Innerwick–Spott, East Lothian. Postbus services by Royal Mail were used replace rapidly declining local bus and rail services in rural areas and transport mail, people and even groceries. **1968**

4 - London's Wembley Stadium was vandalised by jubilant Scottish fans after a thrilling 2-1 victory over the Auld Enemy. Following the match, Scottish supporters invaded the pitch and caused an estimated £15,000 worth of damage. **1977**

5 - An Act of the Scottish Parliament came into force "concerning the Office of Lyon King of Arms and his brether Heraldis" creating the best regulated system of armorial bearings in Europe. This became The Court of the Lord Lyon. **1592**

5 - The *HMS Hampshire* sank off the coast of Orkney. It was one of the First World War's worse naval disasters with the loss of 737 men, including the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener. **1916**

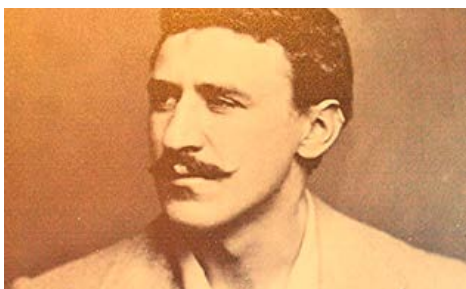
5 - Referendum held on British Membership of the European Community. In Scotland the vote was "Yes" 1,332,286; "No" 948,039. Turnout was 61%. Only Shetland and Western Isles had majorities against. **1975**

6 - Thomas Blake Glover, founding father of Japan's industrialisation (including Mitsubishi) and Japanese Navy, born Fraserburgh. **1838**

6 - Sir John A MacDonald, the Scottish-born Canadian statesman, died. MacDonald was considered to be the architect of the Confederation of Canada and served twice as the first Prime Minister of the unified Dominion, between 1867-73 and 1878-91. **1891**

7 - Robert the Bruce died, at Cardross Castle, Dumbarton, aged 54. Bruce's heart was then taken to Melrose Abbey, with his body having earlier being buried at Dunfermline Abbey. **1329**

7 - Sir James Young Simpson, pioneer of anaesthetics and chloroform, born. **1811**



7 - Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the celebrated architect, painter and designer, was born. Regarded as one of the foremost British figures in the art nouveau movement, and as the principal exponent of the "Glasgow Style", Mackintosh was born in the Townhead area of the city. **1868**

8 - Robert Stevenson, engineer, who constructed 18 lighthouses around Scotland, born Glasgow. **1772**

8 - The Earl of Seaforth raised a regiment for the American War from the MacKenzie's and MacRae's of Ross-shire and Sutherland. **1778**

9 - St Columba died on Iona. Columba founded a monastery on Iona which was to become one of the leading centres of Christianity in Western Europe, and the base from which Columba launched his successful mission to convert the Pictish nation. **597**

9 - First US troops (over 10,000 men) disembark from *Queen Mary* on the River Clyde. **1942**

10 - James Francis Stuart born. In honour of the "Old Pretender", this is known as "White Rose Day" in Jacobite circles. **1688**

10 - Battle of Glenshiel, Jacobites with Spanish assistance, and government forces clashed. **1719**

10 - Death of King George I and accession of George II. **1727**

10 - Construction of the Forth and Clyde canal started. It was to take 22 years to complete. **1768**



10 - The floral clock in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, began operation - initially driven by clockwork and with only an hour hand. Edinburgh's is believed to be oldest floral clock in the world. In May each year a new floral display is planted with a new theme. **1903**

10 - Sir Jackie Stewart, three-times world motor racing champion, born in Dunbartonshire. **1939**

11 - Battle of Sauchieburn during which King James III died attempting to subdue a group of rebel barons. **1488**

11 - Marie of Guise, widow of King James V and Queen Regent of Scotland, died. **1560**

11 - First oil pumped ashore from British oilfields in the North Sea. **1975**

11 - Police Scotland arrest former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon as part of their ongoing investigation into the SNP's finances. She is subsequently released without charge. **2023**

12 - Sir David Gill, Scottish astronomer, was born. Gill was noted for his measurements of solar and stellar parallaxes, which accurately revealed the distances of the Sun and other stars to Earth. He was also a pioneer in the use of photography to map the heavens. **1843**

12 - Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust acquires the island. The community ownership group manage the island which has just over 100 residents and it is the second largest of the Small Isles after Rum. **1997**

13 - Birth of James Clerk Maxwell, first Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge University. He created the electromagnetic theory of light. **1831**

13 - Rate of price inflation reached 25% in the UK. **1975**

14 - *Queen Mary, Aquitania, Empress of Canada*, and *Empress of Britain* arrive in the River Clyde with the first contingent of Australian and New Zealand troops. **1940**

14 - John Logie Baird, inventor of the first television, died. **1946**

15 - *Queen Mary* leaves Greenock, taking nearly 15,000 GI's home to US. **1945**

15 - A second devastating major fire takes hold at Glasgow School of Art. The blaze that gutted the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh building and devastated the neighbouring 02 ABC concert venue. **2018**

16 - Siege of Dunbar Castle by the English was raised. **1338**



16 - Thomas Mitchell Morris or 'Old Tom Morris', the world's first professional golfer and the father of modern greenkeeping. Known as The Grand Old Man of Golf, he was a 4-time Open Champion, and was born in St Andrews, the home of golf. **1821**

17 - Wolf of Badenoch burns Elgin Cathedral. **1390**

17 - Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned at the island fortress of Loch Leven Castle. She eventually escaped, never to step foot in Scotland again. **1567**

17 - Charles Macintosh patented the waterproof cloth he was using to make raincoats. **1823**

18 - Pacification of Berwick, Charles I forced to withdraw from Scotland and recognise an independent Scottish Parliament. **1639**

18 - Flora MacDonald met Prince Charles Edward Stuart and persuaded him to wear women's clothes as part of the escape plan from the Outer Hebrides to Skye. **1746**

19 - Mary Queen of Scots gives birth to the future King James VI of Scotland and I of England. **1566**

19 - Coronation of King Charles I at Holyrood. **1633**

19 - "Day of Public Thanksgiving" on Restoration of Charles II as King. **1660**

19 - Earl Haig, Commander in Chief of British forces 1915-18, founder of British Legion, born. **1861**

19 - Sir J M Barrie, author of *Peter Pan* died. **1937**

20 - Adam Ferguson, philosopher, historian, "Father of Sociology" born Logierait, Perthshire. **1723**



20 - New Tay Rail Bridge opened, then the longest in Britain. The Tay Rail Bridge crosses the Firth of Tay and connects Dundee with the Fife. **1887**

20 - First announcement of the discovery of high-grade crude oil in the North Sea. **1969**

21 - Robert Napier, regarded as the "Father of Clyde shipbuilding" was born. He died on 23 June, 1876. **1791**

21 - Scottish explorer Mungo Park reached the source of the river Niger in Africa. **1796**

21 - More than 50 German warships were scuttled at Scapa Flow, Orkney. It was the single greatest loss of warships in history, and the sailors killed that day were the last fatalities of World War One. **1919**



21 - Riverside Museum in Glasgow opens to the public. The purpose-built Museum replaced the previous home for the city's transport collection, at the city's Kelvin Hall and is located on the banks of the River Clyde. **2011**

21 - The Peebles Hoard, comprising Bronze Age horse harness, a sword and other artefacts dating back to between 900BC and 1,000BC, is discovered in a field near Peebles in the Borders by a metal detectorist. **2021**

22 - At the Battle of Bothwell, the Covenanters were defeated by royal troops led by the Duke of Monmouth near Glasgow. Ideological differences among the Covenanters factionalised them, and the resulting disorganisation contributed to the ease of the Royalists' victory. Although deaths on the field were few, 200 were killed later. Of the 1400 captured or surrendered, another 258 were shipwrecked while being transported in The Crown of London. The battle features in fictional form in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Old Mortality*. **1679**

22 - Malt Riots, Glasgow - against higher taxes imposed on Scottish malt. **1725**

23 - Charles II sailed into the estuary of the river Spey and signed the Covenant before going ashore. **1650**

23 - Singer Kenneth McKellar born. McKellar died of pancreatic cancer, at the age of 82 in 2010. **1927**

24 - Robert the Bruce defeated Edward II at Battle of Bannockburn. The battle was one of the most famous events in the wars of independence. It saw the Scottish king, Robert the Bruce, win a key victory over the English forces of King Edward II, despite being outnumbered two-to-one and facing what was regarded as the finest army in the medieval world. **1314**

24 - The birth of Admiral Sir John Ross, Scottish Polar explorer. In 1818 he went in search of the Northwest Passage but turned back after exploring Baffin Bay. **1777**

25 - David Douglas, explorer and botanist, born at Scone, Perthshire. In addition to the Douglas Fir, he brought back to Europe lupins, phlox, penstemon, sunflowers, clarkia, Californian poppy, mimulus, flowering currant, rose of sharon and mahonia. **1799**

25 - Seven Scots, including John Stuart Forbes, were in the US 7th Cavalry with General Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. **1876**



25 - Wallace statue unveiled at the Wallace National Monument, Stirling. Stirling's famous landmark stands above the fields where William Wallace led his troops to victory at The Battle of Stirling Bridge. **1887**

25 - The first Sherlock Holmes story by Edinburgh-born author Arthur Conan Doyle was published in the *Strand* magazine. **1891**

26 - James IV crowned king at the age of 15 at Scone. He reigned until 1513 when he fell with the flower of Scotland's nobility at the Battle of Flodden Field. **1488**

26 - Darien Company formed to set up a Scottish colony in Panama. **1695**

26 - King George IV died, aged 67 (and William IV ascended the throne). George IV is reckoned to be Britain's fattest king. His favourite breakfast was two roast pigeons, three beefsteaks, a bottle of white wine, a glass of champagne, two of port and one brandy. **1830**

27 - King James VI (aged 8) escaped from Castle Ruthven. **1583**

27 - Robin Hall, Scottish folk singer and musician, was born. Hall achieved national fame in partnership with fellow Scot, Jimmie MacGregor, on the BBC TV show, *Tonight*. His hits included *The Mingulay Boat Song* and *Ye Cannae Shove Yer Grannie Aff a Bus*. **1937**

27 - The Royal Navy's new aircraft carrier leaves its home port for the first time. *HMS Queen Elizabeth* - one of two new carriers being built at Rosyth dockyard in Fife at a cost of more than £6bn - is to begin sea trials. The ship passed under the Forth Bridge just before midnight. It is the largest warship ever built for the Royal Navy. The flight deck alone is the size of three football pitches. The ship can operate with a crew of 1,000 and 40 aircraft. The 65,000 tonne warship was the Royal Navy's first aircraft carrier since *HMS Illustrious* was scrapped in 2014. **2017**

28 - Flora MacDonald and Bonnie Prince Charlie set sail from Benbecula to Skye. After Culloden, the Prince had a high price on his head. He came to Benbecula, and Flora helped him escape to Skye by disguising him as her Irish maid, Betty Burke. **1746**

28 - The Forth and Clyde Canal opened. The 35-mile course from Bowling to Grangemouth is the longest of the Lowland canals. It was formally abandoned in 1962. Its re-opening in 2001 was part of the Millenium Link scheme, allowing waterway travel from Edinburgh to Glasgow by linking to the Union canal via the remarkable Falkirk Wheel boat lift. **1790**



28 - The final two second generation Glasgow Subway trains are taken out of service following the rollout of new third generation vehicles. The Glasgow Subway, which first opened in December 1896, is the third-oldest underground metro system in the world, after the London Underground and the Budapest Metro. **2024**

29 - Scottish actor Ian Bannen, was born. Bannen appeared in more than 60 British and American films. These include *The Flight of the Phoenix* (1965) for which he received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor. He died in 1999, aged 71. **1928**

30 - Start of trial for murder of Madeleine Smith who was eventually found "Not Proven". The daughter of a Glasgow architect, James Smith, this most eligible of society ladies was accused in 1857 of murdering her alleged former lover, Emile L'Angelier. **1857**

30 - James Loughran, Scottish conductor, was born in Glasgow. Loughran first came to notice when he won the Philharmonia Orchestra's Conducting Competition in 1961, and soon became principal conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. **1931**

KINGS CASTLES AND “DURTY” WEE RASCALS

Australian Jim Stoddart was born in a Glasgow Tenement and raised in a Glasgow Housing Scheme 1943-1965. Jim will be taking readers on a trip down memory lane, of a time and place that will never be the same again, and hopes even if only a few people in the Scot's Diaspora have a dormant folk memory awakened, then he shall be more than delighted.



Victory in Europe

The 80th anniversary of VE Day was celebrated joyously in Britain in May with many ceremonies to mark the occasion. My wife, Jean, and I have known and appreciated since childhood how significant was the contribution to that victory from Commonwealth countries such as Australia Canada and New Zealand - and of course our cousins from the USA. Victory in the Pacific was still to come but watching the celebrations on Sky UK and the BBC brought memories back for us and prompted us to reflect upon the sacrifice of our parents' generation to bring Victory to Europe.

Born in 1943, Jean and I were 'war babies' and oblivious to the intense bombing surrounding our tenement homes lying close to the River Clyde in Glasgow. Its shipyards, its docks, its steelworks and heavy engineering workshops were significant targets of the Luftwaffe during World War II. About 1,500 civilians died at Clydebank, the location of John Brown's Shipyard, on one dreadful night.

Air Raid Warden

My father tried to enlist in the Royal Air Force as a gunner for the turret guns of a Lancaster bomber but was refused. He was a riveter in the Harland & Wolf shipyard, in a reserve occupation. He was needed like others in the shipyards throughout Britain who were constantly building and repairing ships to compensate for the tonnage of those being sunk running the gauntlet across the Atlantic to feed and arm Britain. So after his shift at the Shipyard he became a member of Glasgow's Civil Defence as an Air Raid Warden. That was dangerous enough. On one particular night he nearly died when on patrol accompanied by a police officer. A landmine (a parachute bomb) was dropped at the end of our street. We lived next to the Princes Dock. These were massive bombs intended to land more gently than a conventional bomb so as to cause maximum lateral damage to buildings. They literally sucked the air out of people's lungs leaving them dead but their bodies almost intact.

My dad and the police constable were lucky because they had both run toward the parachute believing it was a German pilot bailing out from a bomber shot down by the city's ack-ack guns. A soldier behind a baffle wall shouted for them to stop - screaming "It's a bomb!" They were all blown back up the street with only minor injuries. My older brother and sister lost school friends that night, their school friends' broken bodies placed in a makeshift mortuary in the co-

operative dairy lying on the other side of our street. My wife's dad, Cecil (Charlie) Smith was a boy soldier in India before partition of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. Stationed at Rawalpindi in the 73rd Field Battery, of Northern Command, he is seen in photographs decked in dress tropical uniform, breeches, riding boots, spurs and pith helmet.

He's beside the horse-drawn guns of the Royal artillery and in other multiple photographs of champion teams with shields representing football, hockey and mounted sports. He left the army circa 1938 to start an apprenticeship as an electrician. That didn't last. It was now 1939 and he is called back in to service with the ill-fated British Expeditionary Force (BEF) into France with the 306 Battery of the 77th Highland Field Regiment. Then comes escape and rescue from Dunkirk as part of the walking wounded on the last hospital ship to leave the beaches. He is later fighting in the North African, and Italian campaigns, then on to Greece and Albania.

National heroes

The famous 51st Highland Division was tasked to be the rear guard to allow the rest of the BEF to escape the Beaches of Dunkirk. The 51st were literally sacrificed for the common good. All of them were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Jean's favourite uncle, Frank Simpson, was part of the 'new' 51st division with a lot to live up to. Frank was deployed to North Africa against Rommel's Africa Corps and fought in the Battle of El Alamein. There was a high cost in dead and wounded for the many national heroes of the eighth army as quoted by Winston Churchill. He was part of the victory parade at Tripoli with Winston Churchill taking the salute. Later we find Frank at Messina because it was decided the best way in to Germany was through Sicily and Italy. Frank in his storytelling after the war said that the Scots got on particularly well with the Australian troops. I guess they had a very similar egalitarian attitude toward superior officers. Although the Australians found it hard to believe that any Scotsman like Frank could be teetotal.

Frank Simpson made his own little impact on military history as recorded in a book *The Story of an Artillery Regiment of the 51st Highland Division* by BSM Sam Wallace M. M. On the third of September 1943 at Messina 308 Battery, part of the 51st Highland Division was completing the last of a barrage of 29 rounds of rapid fire with 'super charge'. We can imagine how hot the guns had become when the order was given to CEASE FIRE. Wallace in his book says: *Actually Sergeant Frank Simpson fired off the last shell from the gun after cease fire which saved the gun. He was later told that he had disobeyed orders... Five guns were disabled and lost that day because the shells left in the guns on CEASE FIRE were stuck there because the heated barrels contracted on cooling. There was a final outcome from this catastrophe because the artillery training manual was amended to read CEASE FIRE - EMPTY GUNS.*

Nevertheless according to his son, Campbell Simpson, he was demoted to corporal at the time for using common sense and a knowledge of schoolboy science to save his 25 pound howitzer. His demotion was not recorded in the official history. His son, Campbell, believed he got promoted back to sergeant when his team were back in preparation for Operation Overlord, the D-day landings.

Frank landed on Sword Beach near Ouistreham in Normandy and eventually fought through Belgium and Holland as the Germans breached the dams in their retreat back to Germany. By Christmas 1944 Frank was in the Ardennes at the Battle of the Bulge. He said that because of the cold and before they could fire their shells they had to heat the cordite in them over a fire. The 51st Highland division crossed the Rhine on the 23rd March 1944. The German army were in full retreat as the allies advanced. Frank ended his service doing policing and guarding duties in occupied Germany.

The dawn of peace

My older sister was Dux of her primary school and had the honour of becoming the Queen of the Old Govan Fair in 1945. This was a traditional celebration with roots going back to early medieval times. It was a massive pageant attended by many thousands of Glasgow's citizens. They lined the streets of Govan, Plantation and Ibrox to watch the colourful floats and tableaux, the pipe and brass bands and the marchers from all sorts of organisations. Money raised on the day went to the local hospital. Speeches at the coronation from honoured guests included:-

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it was on the third of September 1939 that hostilities broke out with all the attendant horror that we witnessed and suffered... We are able once again to hold the Old Govan Fair celebrations with all their glories and traditions. Wartime restrictions have brought us difficulties, not previously encountered, but this is our brave attempt

to depict the Govan Fair as it was in the pre-war days. I now call upon Mrs Neilson of the Elder Cottage Hospital to crown Miss Jane Stoddart, pupil of Lorne Street Public School Queen of the Fair for 1945.

I am pleased and honoured... on behalf of the people of Govan, to perform the ceremony of crowning you, Miss Jane Stoddart, as Queen for the ensuing year. Together with your loyal subjects I wish your majesty every felicity during your reign... Your majesty begins her reign at an auspicious and happy time, at the dawn of peace after a long and trying war in which you subjects have given valued and effective service in the field, and in the shipyards and factories of Govan. The local people have every reason to be proud of their magnificent contribution to bringing about peace."

My sister was then off to the hospital with her four maids to wish the patients well on their road to recovery. The reporter from the *Govan Press* found it difficult to estimate the massive number of people attending the historic procession and crowning but it seemed to him that the whole of the 100,000 population of Govan had turned out together with crowds of servicemen returned from the front. He describes gum-chewing American GI's, Canadian tank men, Aussie diggers and Chinese seamen all enjoying and joining in with the fun and festivities.

The post-war return of the Old Govan Fair was one of many small steps toward normality and hope for this stoic generation who deserve to be remembered for winning Victory in Europe for all of us.

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IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN



Forfar Bridies

Ingredients:

1½ lbs (700g) boneless, lean rump steak.
Lean minced beef can also be used.
2 oz. (2 rounded tablespoons) suet or butter or margarine
1 (or 2) onion, chopped finely
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder
Quarter cup rich beef stock
Salt and pepper to taste
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 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 (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).

Highland Salad

Ingredients:

1 x 300g/10½oz. sirloin or fillet steak
25ml/1fl oz. rapeseed oil
1 red chilli, finely chopped
1 tbsp. palm sugar
2 garlic cloves, sliced
2 tbsp. fresh coriander, plus extra for the salad
2 tbsp. fresh mint
1 tsp. fish sauce
1 tbsp. soy sauce
1 lime, juice and zest
1 round lettuce
50g/1¾oz. sugar-snap peas, halved
6 radishes, sliced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Preheat a barbecue or griddle pan to hot. Season the steak with lots of black pepper, drizzle with oil and place onto a hot barbecue or griddle pan for five minutes, turning half-way through. To make the dressing, put the chilli, palm sugar, garlic and a teaspoon of salt into a pestle and mortar. Grind for 1-2 minutes, then add the coriander and mint and grind for another minute. Mix in the fish sauce, soy sauce, lime juice and zest. Cut the lettuce into six wedges and place in a bowl.
Top with the sugar-snap peas, radishes and a few coriander leaves. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to coat. Slice the beef and lay it on top of the salad.

Dundee Lamb Chops

Ingredients:

Four leg of lamb chops
75ml/2.5 fluid oz. or five tablespoons vinegar
Half teaspoon ground ginger
4 tablespoons marmalade
4 slices orange for garnish
60g/2 oz. or half stick butter
75ml/2½ fluid oz. water
Half teaspoon paprika
Salt and pepper

Method:

You will need a frying pan with a heavy base and a close-fitting lid. First, brown the chops in the butter. Sprinkle the ginger, paprika, salt and pepper over the chops and add water and vinegar. Place a generous tablespoon of marmalade on the top of each chop. Bring to a slow simmer and cook for 45 minutes on a very low heat. If required, add a little extra water.
Serve with a twist of orange on top of the chops and with boiled potatoes and fresh vegetables.

Bannockburn Cocktail

Ingredients:

1 nip whisky (whisky or bourbon)
1 dash Worcestershire sauce
1 dash tomato juice
slice lemon

Method:

Pour into a cocktail glass and garnish with a slice of lemon.

Ginger Biscuits



Ingredients:

110g/4oz. margarine, plus extra for greasing
110g/4oz. caster sugar
110g/4oz. golden syrup
225g/8oz. self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tsp ground ginger

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and grease a baking tray. Melt the margarine, caster sugar and golden syrup gently in a pan over a medium heat. Once melted, remove from the heat and cool slightly.
Add all of the dry ingredients to the pan to make a dough. Once cool enough to handle, with floured hands, roll the dough into 50p-size balls. Place these individual balls onto the greased baking tray with enough room between each biscuit to allow them to spread during cooking. Mark the top of each ball with a fork. The dough should make about 30 biscuits.
Put the baking tray into the oven for about 10 minutes, or until the biscuits are golden-brown. Remove from the oven, leave to cool slightly and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. To serve, garnish with lemon peel.

Ayrshire Shortbread



Ingredients:

110g/4oz. butter
110g/4oz. plain flour
110g/4oz. rice flour
55g/2 oz. caster sugar
1 egg
1 tbsp. cream

Method:

Set oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 for 30 minutes. Rub the butter into the sifted flour and mix to a stiff dough with the egg and cream.
Knead well and turn out on a floured board, foll out 2 cm/ ¾ inch thick and cut into rounds with a 6.5 cm/2½ inch cutter. Set on a greased baking tray, prick with fork and bake. Sprinkle with sugar while still hot.

Uninhabited Sanda Island gets multimillion pound investment



Mowi, Scotland's largest aquaculture company, has announced its purchase of Sanda Island in Argyll and Bute off the southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula. The company plans to establish a salmon farm off the east coast of the island as well as reinvigorate the island and develop its potential as a tourism destination. The fish farm will create 14 new jobs in two shifts of seven people, including apprentice positions.
The purchase of Sanda Island also includes the former hotel and houses, as well as Campbeltown shipyard and associated property, Sandbank House. With a multimillion pound investment, Mowi has ambitions to reinvigorate the whole island and to help support the establishment of a sustainable tourism industry, creating new employment opportunities in addition to those at the fish farm. Mowi's plans include refurbishing the hotel and housing, ultimately hiring a caretaker couple or family to oversee the hospitality side of the business. As it has

done in other island locations such as Colonsay, it will also establish yacht moorings to bolster tourism as well as seeking to improve accessibility between Sanda Island and the mainland.
Additionally, there is scope to explore rewilding and nature enhancement projects. Speaking about the vision for Sanda Island, Ben Hadfield, Mowi's Chief Operating Officer of Farming in Scotland, Ireland, The Faroes and Canada East, said: "We have the opportunity to do something very special with Sanda Island. We already have incredibly valuable experience of developing successful fish farms off the coast of Scottish islands including Rum, Muck and Colonsay. We are also proud of the work we have done with local communities on these islands to improve infrastructure, be that through housing, broadband or moorings, to help retain or attract people to live and work on the island. Our first priority now will be to consult with the communities of the area and develop a comprehensive biodiversity plan for the Island. We will also undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed high energy salmon development." In a signal of further confidence in coastal, high-energy locations for fish farms, Mowi has also purchased Fladda-chuain, an uninhabited island three miles off the northern tip of Skye. Further details of the company's plans for this island will be announced in due course.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo announces Australia and New Zealand 2026 performances



Pipe Major Alisdair McLaren, Highland dancer Connor Ferguson and drummer Chevii Jay Clarke at Suncorp Stadium.



The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo has announced they will be touring the Show *The Heroes Who Made Us* in Australia and New Zealand in 2026.

The dazzling spectacle, a key part of the Scottish events calendar, will be performed in Brisbane and Auckland in February next year, and will include performances by national military forces from Australia and New Zealand as well as from the UK.

Iconic performances

2025 marks the 75th anniversary of the organisation and these events further extend the international reach of the Tattoo that traditionally takes place on the stunning Edinburgh Castle Esplanade every August with a global cast.

The Shows will take place 12-15th February at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium and in Auckland's Eden Park, home of the All Blacks national rugby team, on 19 and 21 February. The Australian Defence Force will play a key role at the Brisbane Show, and the New Zealand Defence Force will do the same in Auckland.

The Shows will incorporate elements of this year's Tattoo theme, *The Heroes Who Made Us*, spotlighting the individuals who have shaped and supported the iconic performances over the past 75 years. *The Heroes Who Made Us* will include its signature Scottish bagpipes, massed military bands, Tattoo Dancers, and international performers from across the UK, Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and beyond. This emotionally charged Stadium spectacular will bring together over 1,000 of the world's finest performers to showcase stirring anthems, traditional Scottish heritage and bold, contemporary choreography in celebration of the values that connect us all — honour, community, resilience and pride. Led by the magnificent Massed Pipes and Drums from UK Military regiments, the Show will feature over 30 bands and acts from around the world including fan-favourite Top Secret Drum Corps and performers amongst many more.

A truly remarkable spectacle

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo has previously travelled down under to delight audiences with performances in Wellington, Sydney and Melbourne in 2000, 2005, 2010, 2016 and most recently in 2019 at the ANZ Stadium in Sydney.

This tour will be the first time the spectacular event has been performed to Brisbane and Auckland audiences. While The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Show has been screened at more than 150 cinemas across Australia and New Zealand in recent years, in 2026 people across the countries have the opportunity to once again truly experience the iconic spectacle in person.



Highland dance above Auckland.

Jason Barrett, Chief Executive of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, said: "We are thrilled to be bringing The Royal Edinburgh Military to Australia and New Zealand once again in 2026. Throughout the 75-year history, the Tattoo has proudly crossed oceans, continually reaching new audiences and connecting Tattoo fans in the unique Tattoo spirit. This upcoming tour will blend our Scottish traditions with the distinctive military heritage of Australia and New Zealand all set against the backdrop of two spectacular venues. We eagerly anticipate hosting new audiences and welcoming back Tattoo fans to witness a truly remarkable spectacle."

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a globally acclaimed celebration of military tradition, music, ceremony and cultural performance. First staged in 1950, the Tattoo has grown into one of the world's most recognised live events, bringing together performers from over 50 countries. In 2010, it was granted the Royal title by Her Majesty The Queen, and is proudly supported by its patron, HRH The Princess Royal. The Tattoo has raised over £13 million for services and arts charities since its inception.

Tickets are on sale now through Ticketek. Visit www.edintattoobrisbane.com.au or www.edintattooauckland.co.nz for ticketing info, VIP packages and more.



Scottish rural residents feel less lonely than their urban neighbours



People living in rural communities in Scotland are less likely to experience loneliness and poor wellbeing than those living in urban areas, according to new research from the University of Glasgow. The study, published in the *Journal of Public Health*, looked at the differences in loneliness, social support, and social networks between urban and rural-based individuals. Researchers found that while the levels of social support given to urban and rural residents were broadly the same, urban residents had higher rates of loneliness, and poorer wellbeing overall. Loneliness is associated with several negative outcomes, including poorer physical and mental health, greater use of health care services, and even early mortality. One in five adults in Scotland report being lonely, and more than 3 million adults in England have reported feeling lonely often or always in a recent survey. Recognising the global scale of the issue, in 2021 the World Health Organization announced that loneliness should be a public health priority.

The study showed that, regardless of whether someone lived in urban or rural Scotland, loneliness was detrimental to their wellbeing. The study also found that both social support and perceived emotional closeness of social networks were related to better wellbeing, which the researchers stress, "reaffirms the importance of close social contact for an individual's overall wellbeing". Nevertheless, there is one difference between rural and urban networks that might help explain why individuals in rural areas feel less lonely. The study found that residents of both rural and urban areas reported similar size of their social networks, but that rural dwellers had more contact with people of different ages.

Study lead, Emily Long, Research Fellow at the University's MRC/CSO Social & Public Health Sciences Unit, said: "We believe this could be due to the smaller population of rural areas, limiting the social pool and encouraging rural adults to seek social relationships with people in different life stages than themselves. Our study shows that multiple dimensions of relationships are important to wellbeing, and that efforts to strengthen these relationships are particularly needed in urban areas. There's something about these environments that makes people more vulnerable to loneliness. Our research suggests that programmes and initiatives should focus on improving the exchange of support and building closeness in existing relationships, rather than relying on activities that are only aimed at building more social connections."

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
officially representing Carruthers worldwide

www.clancarrutherssociety.org
clancarrutherssociety@gmail.com

CLAN DONALD in VICTORIA

*Proudly affiliated with Clan Donald Australia, Victorian Scottish Union and Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group.
Represented at all major Highland gatherings in Victoria.*

CLAN DONALD VICTORIA
President: Mr Norman A. Macdonald
Contact: secretary.clandonaldvic@gmail.com

Formed in 1934, with membership from many MacDonald, McDonald and Macdonald families living in Victoria. Membership available, with dance classes for Scottish Country Dance most Friday evenings in Gardenvale.

CLAN MACDONALD YARRAVILLE
Hon Chief: Mr Lindsay McDonald
Contact: secretary@clanmacdonaldyarraville.com

A hereditary clan society formed by the children of Norman Hume Macdonald and Johan McKenzie Macdonald (nee Munro) who departed Scotland in 1854.



FORBES

WWW.CLAN-FORBES.ORG

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For more information:
Membership@Clan-Forbes.org



CLAN BELL

Invites membership inquiries from persons named Bell (all spellings), their descendants and friends. Various resources available for genealogical research. Quarterly newsletter. Tents hosted at major Scottish games nationwide.

Website: www.ClanBell.org
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



CHISHOLM

Clan Chisholm Society of Australia Inc

Membership is invited from Clan Chisholm descendants of all spellings of the name (Chisholm, Chisolm, Chism, Chisum, Chisam, etc)
Contact: Kim Polley OAM
PO Box 84, Longford, Tasmania, 7301
Email: kim.polley13@gmail.com
www.clanchisholmsociety.org/public/AUSmembership.php



Clan Donnachaidh Society of New South Wales Inc., Australia

Duncan Robertson Reid
People who bear any of the above names or other Sept names of Clan Donnachaidh "The Children of Duncan" are invited to join in our activities by participating in the Scottish Gatherings held in NSW.

For information and membership application, contact Richard Harvey, Secretary
Email: Ih100@tpg.com.au



Clan Fraser Society of Australia

Invites all Frasers and Fraser septs to join our clan society.

All members receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter "Strawberry Leaves"

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/>
482236358590288



The Blair Society for Genealogical Research

Collect, preserve, and disseminate genealogical and historical knowledge and information concerning the Family of BLAIR in its various lines of descent and in all parts of the world.

www.blairsociety.org



Learned Kindred of Currie

A leading Scottish non-profit cultural and educational organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Scottish and Highland heritage and the arts through a wide variety of programs.

contact@curriekindred.com
www.learnedkindredofcurrie.com

CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY

Membership open to all who share the Sept names Robertson, Duncan, Reid (and others) and anyone who has an interest in Clan Donnachaidh, its clanlands, history and heritage.

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

 Website: www.donnachaidh.com
E-mail: admin@donnachaidh.com

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




Clan Galbraith Society

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

DNA testing project, members only databases, Biennial gatherings, blog, Quarterly journal.

www.clangalbraith.org



Family of Bruce International, Inc.

Family of Bruce International, Inc., the only such organization recognized by the hereditary chief of the Name of Bruce, The Rt. Hon. Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, is a non-profit organization established to create kinship amongst its family members and promote interest in the Family of Bruce and its history. Membership is open to persons who qualify by surname, by decent, or by recognized septs: Carlisle, Carruthers, Crosby, Randolph and Stenhouse.


Membership inquiries should be directed to:
Donald E. Bruce Polly A. (Bruce) Tilford, Secretary
President 5561 Earl Young Road
1051 Eagle Ridge Trail Bloomington, IN 47408
Stillwater, Minnesota 55082 www.familyofbruceinternational.org



Clan Davidson Society in Australia Inc.

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

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



Edmonstone Clan Society

Invites membership to anyone of the surname or variations:- Edmiston/e, Edmondston, Edmanson, Edmeston, Edmonson, Edmundson, etc. Chieftain Sir Archibald Edmonstone Bt of Duntreath

Contact: Mal Edmiston
3 Laguna Ave
Kirwan, Qld, 4817
61 (0)7 4755 4370
m.edmiston@bigpond.com

CLAN GREGOR SOCIETY

Est: 1822 in Edinburgh Scotland
Patron: Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor Bt
Membership enquiries for USA: usa@clangregor.com

Rest of the World:
membership@clangregor.com

Web: www.clangregor.com

6 The Esplanade
Broughty Ferry
DUNDEE, DD5 2EL
Scotland UK




ARE YOU A BURNETT, BURNET, BURNETTE, BARNET, BARNETT, BARNETTE, BERNIT, BERNAT, BURNAP, BURNAT, MACBURNET, OR OTHER SPELLING VARIATION; MARRIED TO A BURNETT, OR A DESCENDANT?

HOUSE OF BURNETT INTERNATIONAL, INC.

THE WORLDWIDE BURNETT SOCIETY
www.houseofburnett.org



Clan Donald Australia

"Under the patronage of the High Council of the chiefs of Clan Donald"

High Commissioner John Angus Currie

State Commissioners

NSW	John A Currie
Qld	A. Neil Macdonald
SA	Michael Murphy
Vic	Norman A Macdonald
WA	Pamela McDonald

clandonald.com.au
clandonaldnsw.au@gmail.com

We are a family of many names, come & join your family!



Elliot Clan Society, U.S.A.

Jim Dougherty - Clan President welcomes membership of all who are connected with this great border family.

Direct inquires to: Marianne Elliott, Membership Chair
Email: marianne@mmelliott.com
Website: www.elliotclan-usa.com



Clan Gregor Society Australasia

All MacGregors and Septs of our clan are invited to join the Clan Gregor Society Est 1822
If you live in Australia or New Zealand, please contact our clan representative:
Frank McGregor
PO Box 14 NORTH HOBART TAS 7002
Email: clangregoraustralia@gmail.com
Web: www.clangregor.com
"Royal is our Race"



National Clan Cameron Australia Inc.

Celebrates those who trace their ancestry to Clan Cameron or are connected to the Clan through marriage or partnership or are from families acknowledged as Septs of Clan Cameron.

President: Alistair Cameron
Secretary: Terry Cameron
secy.nationalclancameronaus@gmail.com
www.clan-cameron.org.au




Clan Donald Queensland

Commissioner: Neil Macdonald
Ph: 0412 090990
Email: clandonaldqld@optusnet.com.au
Web: www.clandonaldqld.org
ELIGIBILITY: Those with the name of MacDonald Macdonald McDonald McDonell, Donald, OR of one of the Septs of Clan Donald, OR with a connection through family lineage.
There is no joy without Clan Donald



Clan Farquharson

**I Force Nae Freen
I Fear Nae Foe**
ClanFarquharson.us



American Clan Gregor Society

Est 1909 Membership inquiries welcomed from MacGregors of all spellings and Septs

Gregor Grier MacAdams MacNish Magruder McGehee Gregory King Peter Fletcher Gregg Lecky Black and many others

Contact our registrar: Jeanne P. Lehr
11 Ballas Crt.
St. Louis, MO 63131-3038
Phone: 314-432-2842, registrar@acgsus.org
website: www.acgsus.org

Clan Hamilton Society

Hamiltons and those of Hamilton descent are cordially invited to join the society.

Inquiries to be sent to:
Sheri Lambert, Treasurer
P.O. Box 5399
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
visit our website:
www.clanhamilton.org

McAlpin/e

and variant spellings

Commander: Michael T. McAlpin

DISCOVER YOUR HERITAGE!

Contact: membership.macalpein@gmail.com
Website: <https://macalpein.com/>



MacLaren

Clan Labhran

Clan MacLaren Society of Australia

Information about the Clan and application for CMSA membership is available on the website or via the email address below.

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

<https://clanmaclarenau.org/>
clanmaclarenau@gmail.com



Clan MacNicol

Chief: John MacNeacail
of MacNeacail and Scurrybreac
Contact: Secretary Mal Nicolson
55 Arcadia Ave
GYMEA BAY NSW 2227
www.clanmacnicol.org

Clan Hay

April Rich
28 Oxbow Drive
Willimantic, CT 06226
clanhaymembership@hotmail.com

The American Branch of the First Family of Scotland welcomes inquires from descendants of: Hay(s); Haye(s); Hayne(s); Hey(s); Alderston; Arml; Ayer(s); Constable; Con(n); De La Haye; Delgatie; Delgatie; D' Ay(e); Dellah'aY; Errol(l); Garrad; Garrow; Gifford; Hawson; Haygood; Hayter; Hayward; Haywood; Haynie; Hayden; Hayfield; Hayne(s); Leask(e); Leith; Lester; MacGaradh; Peebles; Peebles; Peoples; Turriff; Tweeddale; Yester

www.clanhay.com



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Clan MacLaren

MacLaren MacLaurin Lawrence
Lawson Low[e]
Low[e]ry Law[e] Patterson
MacPatrick MacRory

Mark A. McLaren, President
President@clanmaclarenna.org



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
Canada: Denise Lagundzin
Canada.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +1 519 507 4465
Europe: Bodo Bernd Schmitz
Europe.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +0152 538 19 355
Scotland & Northern Ireland: Moray G Cattanach
SandNI.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +44 7810 860 528
Australia: Pam Rhenmv
Australian.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +61 407 789 924
England & Wales: William Macpherson
EandW.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +44 7877 363 507
New Zealand: Tony McPherson
NewZealand.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +64 274 587 812
USA: Dave McPherson
UnitedStates.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +1 408 781 5199

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/>



Clan Hope of Craighall Society
INTERNATIONAL & AUSTRALIA
President & Commissioner: Stephen J. Hope
president@clanhope.org
www.clanhope.org

UNITED STATES of AMERICA
High Commissioner: Richard Rex Hope
highcommissionerusa@clanhope.org
Membership Chair: Cynthia Hope Henderson
membership@clanhope.org
www.clanhope.org

CANADA
Commissioner: Scott Hale
commissionercanada@clanhope.org
www.clanhope.org

SCOTLAND
Commissioner: Colin Douglas Hope
commissioner4scotland@clanhope.org
www.clanhope.org

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ClanHopeofCraighall>



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:
colonsay@bigpond.net.au, visit us at
facebook.com/clanmacfieaustralia or our
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



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: clanmacraeustrnz@gmail.com

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



CLAN IRVING
HEREDITARY CHIEF
AND PATRON

Rupert Irving of Bonshaw
Chief of the Name and Arms and 20th Clan Chief

Cordially invites all **Border Irvings & Irvines** and variations of the Name to join in preserving our Clan and Family history!

DISCOVER YOUR HERITAGE!
www.clanirving.com



Clan MacInnes
Int'l Assn. of Clan MacInnes
(Aonghais)

Worldwide, we welcome descendants of all spelling variations, including (Mc)Angus, (Mc)Canse, (Mc)Ginnis, (Mc)Guenis, (Mc)Inch, (Mc)Innes, (Mc)Innis, (Mc)Kinnis, (Mc)Masters, (Mc)Neish, (Mc)Ninch, and more.

Scott McInnis, Member Services: scott@macinnes.org
or visit www.macinnes.org



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Clan MacRae Society of North America
Granted Arms in 2008

We invite MacRaes of all spelling variations and their descendants to join our Clan MacRae Society. Learn your Scottish MacRae history and family lineage!

www.macrae.org
Need more info? Contact:
Bruce McRae, President
720-793-7530
brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com



Clan Irwin Association

Chief and Patron
Alexander H.R Irvine of Drum,
27th Baron and Laird of Drum, Chief of the Name


www.clanirwin.org
IRWIN • IRVINE • IRVIN • IRVING • ERWIN
We welcome all: no matter the spelling.



Clan Mackenzie Society in Australia

Inviting all Mackenzies to join us in celebrating our heritage.

Visit our website for further information
www.clanmackenzie.org.au



Clan MacLeod Societies of Australia

Membership is open to MacLeods and Septs (of any variant spelling) and descendants. **Septs:** Askey, Beaton, Bethune, Caskie, Harold, Lewis, MacAndie, MacAskill, MacAulay, MacCabe, MacCaig, MacCaskey, MacClure, MacCorkill, MacCrimmon, MacGillechallum, MacHaigh, MacRaild, MacWilliam, Norie, Norman, Tolmie, Williamson

- NSW, ACT & Qld - Peter MacLeod 02 4397 3161
- Victoria & Tas - Rhonda McLeod 0411 227 330
- South Australia - Alex McLeod 08 8327 0925
- Western Australia - Ruth MacLeod 08 9364 6334

Email: peter.macleod@exemail.com.au



Clan Maitland Society

Chief: Ian Maitland, The Earl of Lauderdale!
We are all related! Contact your local society

North America: Rosemary Maitland Thom
rthomnvpdrca@aol.com www.clanmaitlandna.org

Australia: Amanda Maitland
clanmaitlandaustralia@gmail.com
12 Settlers Way, Westleigh, NSW, 2120

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

We welcome all with Maitland, Lauderdale, Maitlen and similar name spelling. See the entire list and your family history at: www.clanmaitland.org.uk



Clan Little Society, Inc.

Welcoming Little/Lyttle/Lytle and the like.

- Promoting our Scottish heritage
- Hosting tents at Scottish games
- Connecting our families
- Maintaining our genealogy and DNA

www.clanlittlesociety.org
Registered in the State of Georgia, USA
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Clan MacKenzie Society of New Zealand

We welcome all MacKenzies
All spellings and from all Septs
Secretary: clanmackenzie@gmail.com
www.clanmackenzienz.org



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website: ClanMacNeilUSA.us
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Scottish Associations and Societies

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

Clan Ross America
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Michael Ross, President
Nancy Ross-Anderson, VP Membership
18865 Cooper Street, Apple Valley, CA92308
membership@clanross.org
info@clanross.org
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at Kathleen Syme Community Centre,
251 Faraday St, Carlton and on Zoom.
Scottish Gaelic Choir of Victoria
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251 Faraday St, Carlton and on Zoom.
Enquires: scottishgaelicvictoria@gmail.com

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Clan Sinclair Australia
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Sinclair Septs and Sinclair descendants.*
For further info contact
President: Wayne Sinclair 0417 146 174
Secretary : Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263
E: clansincliraustralia@hotmail.com
www.clansincliraustralia.com


**Caledonian Society
of WA Inc.**
Promotes Scottish Culture and Traditions
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For further details contact John: 0427 990 754
Email: caledoniansocietyofwa@gmail.com
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**Clan Sutherland Society in
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clansutherlandsocietyaustralia@gmail.com
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Facebook: Clan Sutherland Society in Australia


**Hunter Valley
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Promotes and supports all forms of Scottish culture
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P.O. Box 34, Kotara NSW 2289

**Scots of Victoria
Coordinating Group**
Supporting the Scottish
Community in Victoria
Suite 87, 139 Cardigan St
Carlton Vic 3053
Email: resource_centre@scotsofaus.org.au
Website: <https://scotsofaus.org.au>
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website: <https://www.vshcf.com.au/>


**Clan Ross
in Australia**
for information contact Commander Des Ross
(By appointment David Ross Bt Chief of Clan Ross and Balnagowan)
We would be pleased to hear from anyone
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The inaugural Edinburgh Tartan Parade

Photos: Tommy Slack/Tartan Parade Scotland.



Shetland Vikings.



Leading the pipes and drums.



Still Rollin' A Bay City Rollers Fan Community.



Lindsay School of Dance.



Dunfermline District Pipe Band.



The Rt Hon Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge.



Parade lead by Piping Bairn (James Silcock).

1,600 parade participants descended on Edinburgh in May for the very first Edinburgh Tartan Parade, with baton twirlers, 18 pipe bands, dancers, Vikings, groups and organisations. A dazzling spectacle of tartan clad people of all ages, weaving down from The Royal

Mile, through the old streets of Edinburgh to The National Galleries was lined several deep by spectators. The sunshine could not have bettered this memorable day, the inaugural Edinburgh Tartan Parade.

Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge said "We are delighted to be here

for the very first Edinburgh Tartan Parade. This is Edinburgh's 900th anniversary as a city and we hope this parade will go from strength to strength for years to come."

The parade was a vibrant celebration of Scottish culture and heritage which included a spectacular display of tartan-clad participants marching through the historic streets of Edinburgh. From traditional bagpipers to highland dancers, this event was a feast for the senses. The inaugural Edinburgh parade was designed to "celebrate the Scottish culture, foster community engagement, and commemorate Edinburgh's significant 900th anniversary as a city."

The event also hosted the Tartan Parade Celebration Concert later that evening at Usher Hall featuring the Red Hot Chilli Pipers & Rura.

Seabird numbers in Scotland continue to fall



Scotland's seabird populations continue to decline according to new statistics published today by NatureScot, although the short-term trend for some seabirds is more promising. Overall, seabird numbers fell significantly between 1986 and 2023, with the numbers breeding around our coasts now close to half of the 1986 level, when regular monitoring first started. However, short term trends show some species appear to be stabilising, albeit still at lower levels than when monitoring began. The latest Scottish Biodiversity Indicator for Seabirds was prepared by NatureScot using data from the UK Seabird Monitoring Programme. Twenty-four species of seabirds breed in Scotland and the indicator assesses breeding numbers for 11 species, and breeding success for 12 species.

Of the 11 species assessed for breeding numbers in 2023, all showed declines, with numbers down by 48 percent overall. Arctic skua continues to show the worst declines with numbers down 83 percent since 1986. Shortages of their food source, sandeels, is believed to be one of the main factors affecting Arctic skua, while increased predation from great skuas has also been linked to their decline. But the short-term trend shows a more positive picture for

some seabirds. Between 2013 and 2023, three species stabilised, while black-legged kittiwake, European shag and common guillemot populations increased in the sites surveyed. The 2023 results also show that breeding success (the number of chicks produced) was around the long-term average, at 75 percent of the 1986 level. There was a mixed picture across the 12 species assessed. Four species - Arctic skua, black-legged kittiwake, European shag and little tern - had higher than average breeding success.

Five species had lower than average breeding success: Atlantic puffin, common tern, guillemot, northern fulmar and northern gannet, while three species had breeding success around the average: Arctic tern, great skua and razorbill. Simon Foster, NatureScot Trends Analyst, said: "Scotland's seabirds are of international importance, and they attract thousands of people to visit our coastlines each year, but they face many pressures and threats. Food availability, climate change, fisheries, predation, and invasive species are all thought to be contributing to their current declines. In recent years, avian flu has also had a considerable impact on several seabird species. Developments, such as offshore windfarms, may cause additional pressures on already declining seabird populations. Crucially, although they rely on the sea, they breed on land and so are relatively easy to monitor, compared with other marine life. This latest indicator shows the importance of continued long-term monitoring to help understand what is happening to our significant seabird populations so action can be taken whenever possible."

Glasgow's George Square transformation begins



The transformation of Glasgow's landmark George Square has commenced with works beginning in the iconic city centre square. Hoardings now surround the perimeter of the city's key civic space during its 18-month redevelopment. The panels on them will showcase Glasgow's past and present, while displaying the future vision for both George Square and the city. The Square's eleven bronze statues have also been removed for restoration and storage before returning in 2026. The work on this contract will begin in June, with the Square itself expected to be complete by August 2026. Councillor Angus Millar, Convener for City Centre Recovery at Glasgow City Council, said Glaswegians will be excited to see the George Square transformation get underway. And while the Square will be closed off during the works, he said the completed project will deliver a civic space Glaswegians and Scotland can be proud of. He said: "George Square's restoration is a huge and historic project

and so much work has already gone into its planning and design.

Once complete next year, Glasgow will have a modern Square with more greenery, improved lighting and drainage infrastructure and a high-quality stone finish to replace the current tarmac. George Square is built into the DNA of this city, and Glaswegians have wanted to see its restoration for decades. Of course, that means the Square will be closed to the public and that will be an inconvenience. But by next autumn Glaswegians will have a new Square on a par with many of our international peers, one they can be proud of and one which is fitting of a city of our standing." The work on George Square will deliver high-quality stone throughout; informal 'play' areas for children in sensory gardens in the eastern areas; a raised lawn platform; new trees species will be planted to add to the existing Norway Maple and Cherry trees in the Square; new seating to add to the remembrance benches; and feature lighting.

WHAT’S ON - SCOTTISH EVENTS

Enjoy Australia and New Zealand's top 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 North America) or add your event at: www.scottishbanner.com/events

Australia

JUNE 2025

Scottish Highland Day Lunch 4, Sydney, NSW

Be transported to Scotland at this outstanding annual lunch, held in Cellos Grand Dining Room at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. Beautifully restored to it original 1920s Art Deco glory, Cellos is the perfect backdrop for a sumptuous 3-course lunch and some traditional Scottish entertainment. Enjoy performances by Scottish Highland Dancers and Pipe Band plus you'll be treated to the Haggis Ritual. Info: www.thecastlereagh.com.au or 02 9284 1006.

2025 National Show of the Australian Highland Cattle Society 6-8, Mount Pleasant, SA

This event offers a delightful mix of Highland cattle exhibits, educational activities, fun and opportunities for fellowship, bring the community together for a memorable experience at Talunga Park. Info: www.australianhighlandcattle.org

Hunter Valley Scots Club Caledonia Night 7, Teralba, NSW

Featuring Highlander Celtic Rock Band, The Miners Pipe Band & Highland Dance with Enya. Info: www.hvscots.org

Top 10 Hints for Scottish Ancestry 12, Online Event

Curious about your Scottish roots? This online session shares top 10 tips for researching Scottish ancestry. Discover the best ways to explore birth, death and marriage records, census data, immigration documents, and more—plus get insights into how major historical events shaped Scottish families. Whether you're just getting started or looking to go deeper with your family tree, this session will help point you in the right direction. Info: www.eventbrite.com.au/o/hawkesbury-library-service-11842492197

The Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular 14-15, Beaudesert, QLD

A 2-day Clydesdale & Heavy Horse Experience featuring a Scottish Highland Gathering, featuring horse displays, Clans, pipe bands and much more, at the new location of Beaudesert Showgrounds. Info: www.clydesdalespectacular.com.au

The Clansmen's Ceilidh 20, Townsville, QLD

An evening of Scottish entertainment including ceilidh dancing to an acclaimed accordionist with a traditional Scottish singer. Dances called by Margaret Silke, Townsville Scottish Country Dancing Group, and of course there'll be some bagpipes too at Townsville RSL Club. Info: www.townsvilletickets.com.au

Townsville Tartan Weekend 20-22, Townsville, QLD

Celebrate Townsville Tartan Day with the Townsville Scottish Community Inc. Includes street parade with the largest display of Clan Banners in Australia, pipe bands, Kirkin' of the Tartans, Scottish dancing and more. Info: Marie Gibson 0413 456 542 or www.facebook.com/Townsvillescots

Fox & Hounds Country Inn Winter Solstice 21, Wongawallan, QLD

Imagine arriving to the sounds of a full pipe band performing only meters away from you. This will be the scene for our Winter Solstice as we leave the shortest day of the year behind and look forward to a prosperous year ahead. Not only will you have a big band performance but also a ... Read more

British & Irish Lions Tour 21-August 2, Various locations

For the first time in 12 years, The British & Irish Lions Tour will return to Australia for a festival of Rugby across the country. Info:www.lionsseries2025.rugby

Tartan Spectacular-Queensland State Pipe Band Championships 21, Toowong, QLD

Come along and be part of this great spectacular of tartan, and witness 400 pipers and drummers compete for the title of State Champion. Incorporating Pipe Bands, Highland Dancing Competitions, Scottish Stalls, food trucks, BBQ, bar and more at Brisbane Boys' College. Info: www.facebook.com/BBCPIPEBAND

Robert Burns Celtic Festival 27-29, Camperdown, VIC

A weekend full of music, history, dance, choirs, food, fun and celebrating Celtic connections. Info:www.camperdownburnsfestival.com.au

Melbourne Tartan Festival 27-July 27, Melbourne, VIC

A full program of Scottish events taking place at venues across Melbourne. Events include Ceilidh dance, Tartan Day Parade, Gala Dinner & concert and more. Info: www.melbournetartanfestival.com.au

Caledonian Society of WA Ceilidh Dance 28, Inglewood, WA

Come and enjoy a really fun night out at Bob Daniels Community Centre, 895 Beaufort St. All ages welcome with music by the Heel n Toe Ceilidh Band. Info: John: 0427 990 754 or www.caledoniansocietyofwainc.com

Winter Family Ceilidh 29, Yokine, WA

Please bring your family along for an afternoon of fun, and to learn some Scottish Country Dancing. We have some great entertainment with the Gallus ceilidh band who will call the dances, the Perth Academy of Highland Dance & the PLC Pipe Band, at Yokine Bowling Club, 10 Wordsworth Ave. Info: <https://saintandrew.org.au/upcoming-events>

JULY 2025

International Tartan Day 1, Nationwide

International Tartan Day is held on July 1st. The day marks the anniversary of the repeal of the 1747 Act of Proscription that banned the wearing of tartan. Wear some tartan today to celebrate your heritage!

Aberdeen Highland Games 5, Aberdeen, NSW

The Games begin with a parade of bands, clan representatives and others that leads into the Massed Band Salute and Chieftain's Address that officially opens the day. Throughout the day there will be fun for all the family – there will be Highland and Country Dancing, Pipe Band displays, Strong Man events with the Kilted Warriors to enjoy as well as three-legged races, and the famed Kilted Dash to participate in, at Jefferson Park. Info: 02 6540 1300 or www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com.

48th Australian Winter School 5-12, Shoal Bay, NSW

Scottish country dance classes and events over one week in the Port Stephens region. Info: <https://ausrscdswinterschool.weebly.com>

Winter Piping and Drumming Retreat 11-13, Sydney, NSW

Showcasing Piping, Snare, Tenor and Bass Drumming Tuition and workshops suitable for all ages and abilities from Novice to A grade at Knox Grammar School. Info: <https://events.humanitix.com/pipe-bands-australia-summer-school>

Mackay Scottish Bluewater Fling 26, Mackay, QLD

Celebrating Mackay's Scottish heritage at the Bluewater Quay. This free event showcases local and visiting performers including pipe bands from across Queensland, Celtic rock bands, soloists, and Highland dancers. Info: www.bluewaterfling.com

Tamworth & District Highland Society Pipe Band Ceilidh 26, Tamworth, NSW

Embrace the Midwinter Spirit with a traditional Scottish party for people to come together for Scottish country dancing, food, drink, a few Scottish songs, and a lot of fun at Wests Leagues Club. Info: 02 6765 7588 or <https://wtlc.com.au/event/tamworth-district-highland-society-ceilidh>

The Big Melbourne Kilt Run on The Tan 27, Melbourne, VIC

The Big Melbourne Kilt Run is a fun run/jog/walk on the famous Tan running track. Wear your kilt or an article of tartan clothing and enjoy a fun morning in the beautiful Kings Domain Gardens and listen for the sound of bagpipes as you arrive. Info: www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1381874

New Zealand

JUNE 2025

Combined Clans Mid-Winter Hogmanay 7, Dunedin

Held at St Peters Church Hall, Hillside Rd. Tickets from Sheila Wall 0274800441 or Daphne Macleod 0274521855.

Wellington Gaelic Club Ceilidh 14, Wellington

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

Come Ceilidh Dancing! 27, Auckland

A ceilidh is the traditional Scottish community dance. Everyone is welcome; our friendly caller will explain everything and our live band will get you on your feet and dancing at St David's in the Fields Church, 202 Hillsborough Rd, Hillsborough. Info: www.eventfinda.co.nz/2025/come-ceilidh-dancing/auckland/hillsborough

VUW Wellington Scottish Interest Group-Scottish Food Anthropology 28, Wellington

Celebrating Scotland's iconic food, we will provide Haggis with whisky sauce, tatties and neeps plus Black Bun for all to sample. Please bring along a small plate of your favourite Scottish food to share with the group and talk about how you acquired the recipes, Grannies cookbook maybe, at 197 Willis St. Info: <https://wellyscots.wordpress.com>

Celtic Harmony 28, Waipu

An evening of Celtic music with Northland Caledonian Pipe Band and friends at the Celtic Barn, 39 The Centre. Info:www.trybooking.com/nz/events/landing/15652

JULY 2025

International Tartan Day 1, Nationwide

International Tartan Day is held on July 1st. The day marks the anniversary of the repeal of the 1747 Act of Proscription that banned the wearing of tartan. Wear some tartan today to celebrate your heritage!

Scotland vs the Māori All Blacks 5, Whangarei

Scottish Rugby's Pacific tour kicks off against Māori All Blacks at Semenoff Stadium, and will be the first time the sides have met since 2000. Info: www.scottishrugby.org

Wellington Gaelic Club Ceilidh 12, Wellington

A ceilidh is held in the City of Wellington Pipe Band Hall, corner Stoke and Hanson Street Newtown, from 8.00pm – 12.00am. We are a very family-oriented organisation and we encourage participation by all ages and encourage the opportunity for you to wear some tartan. Info: <https://wellington-gaelic-club-communn-gaidhealach-wellington.weebly.com>

NZSG Scottish Interest Group – Greater Wellington Meeting 12, Tawa

July meeting. The Occupations of our Scottish Ancestors at Tawa Union Church Lounge, 6 Elena Place. Info: www.genealogy.org.nz

Manawatū Scottish Pipe Band – 100 Year Concert 20, Palmerston North

A spectacular afternoon of music, celebration, and tradition as the Manawatū Scottish Pipe Band marks its 100-year centenary with a special Pre-Worlds Trip Concert at the Spiers Centre. Info: www.eventfinda.co.nz/2025/manawatu-scottish-pipe-band-100-year-concert/palmerston-north/tickets

VUW Wellington Scottish Interest Group-James Campbell, intrepid Wellington Master Mariner 28, Wellington

Great-grandson Lindsay Campbell will recap the arrival of James Campbell and discuss the movement of the family around New Zealand with insight into some family photographs, at the Victoria University of Wellington Law School, Old Government Buildings, Lambton Quay. Info: <https://wellyscots.wordpress.com>

Scotland

JUNE 2025

Ken Your Kin! 4-11, Glasgow

Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies (SIGS) is thrilled to launch Ken Your Ken. Whether you're a seasoned genealogist or taking your first steps into the world of Scottish family history, the Ken Your Kin Summer School promises an unforgettable journey into the heart of Scottish ancestry and heritage. Info: <https://bit.ly/kyk2025>

Arran Folk Festival

6-8, Brodick, Isle of Arran

Featuring free-to-attend afternoon sessions at the Douglas Hotel, evening concerts in Brodick Village Hall and late-night sessions. There will also be some special free-to-attend workshops. Info: www.arranfolkfestival.co.uk

Helensburgh and Lomond Highland Games 7, Helensburgh

A celebration of traditional Scottish culture, sport and dance for all ages. Info: www.hlhighlandgames.scot

Aberdeen Highland Games 2025 15, Aberdeen

Traditional Highland Games events, stage entertainment from professional performers as well as local community groups and a range of activities that can be enjoyed by all ages, at Hazlehead Park. Info: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-parks/major-events-aberdeen/aberdeen-highland-games-2025

Royal Highland Show 19-22, Edinburgh

Celebrating all things farming, food and rural life at Ingliston showground. With a packed programme of livestock shows, exhibitions, live music, entertainment and events. Info: www.royalhighlandshow.org

St Magnus International Festival 20-27, Orkney

A variety of events in music, theatre, arts, dance, literature, cabaret and folk music alongside community projects, education and learning opportunities all of them set against the backdrop of Orkney's magical midsummer. Info: www.stmagnusfestival.com

Drumtochty Highland Games 28, Auchenblae

Known as the friendliest Highland Games in the area they are firmly established in the Scottish Highland Games calendar as one of the most outstanding events. Held in the grounds of Drumtochty Castle. Info: www.drumtochtyhighlandgames.co.uk

Ceres Highland Games 28, Ceres

The oldest free games in Scotland and include mix of pipe music, dancing, wrestling, heavy events, cycling and running. Info:www.ceresgames.co.uk

Scottish Traditional Boat Festival 28-29, Portsoy, Aberdeenshire

This is the 32nd anniversary of the event and a flotilla of heritage boats from across the country, will drop anchor in the historic harbour of Portsoy for a weekend of celebrations. Upholding the north east's maritime heritage, there will be a packed programme of entertainment including music and dance, the finest Scottish food and drink and demonstrations of age-old crafts, unique handmade items and gifts. Info: www.stbfpportsoy.org

Tide Lines-Echoes to the Far Side of the World



Photo by Nathan Dunphy.

By: Rosalind Jones

Following an incredible response to their new fourth album 'Glasgow Love Story', Scotland's Tide Lines have stormed in at No. 1 in the Scottish Albums Chart and No.11 in the UK Official Albums Chart - a major achievement for the fully independent band and win for Scottish music.

Written, recorded and produced entirely by the band in their studio on the Isle of Mull, and released on their own label, the success is a testament to their tireless DIY approach and ever-expanding, organically built fanbase. The band celebrates their Scottish roots and believe in protecting the planet for future generations, as Rosalind Jones explains.

Tide Lines live.
Photo: Cameron Brisbane.

Tide Lines are Scotland's foremost Folk Pop Group. Four multi-talented, down-to-earth young men in their 30s, they incorporate Gaelic tradition with lyrics featuring social and environmental themes.

Independent artists, Tide Lines's first self-produced record and video, *Far Side of the World*, hit Scotland's charts in 2016 and still makes a barn-storming impact today. Rising stars ever since, Tide Lines last two albums climbed rapidly to Scotland's Number 1 spot.

The song's romantic story and infectious tune was seized by The Royal Edinburgh Tattoo's previous Creative Director, Michael Brathwaite, for the finale of his *Stories* themed 'Tattoo 2023'. Whilst its memorable video features one young man on a desperate search to find 'his' Highland girl, and to 'feel the breeze of the Hebrides on the far side of the world', this hit song was piped and danced sensationally, by 800 global performers including 100 Highland girls! For thousands watching from Edinburgh Castle's esplanade, on television at home, and millions more world-wide, Tide Lines' *Far Side of the World* was the highlight of the show.

Inclusive appeal

Popular with teenagers to octogenarians Tide Lines' friendly inclusive appeal was amplified when invited a second time to Murrayfield this March for Scotland-v-Wales. Hearing their songs before kick-off, Scotland supporters felt they were meeting

familiar old friends. The score? Scotland 35-29 Wales. Described by *The Scotsman* as 'Folk melodies with big-chorused contemporary indie-rock' and by *The Line of Best Fit* as '... Warm, tender and utterly charming', Robert Robertson (vocals, guitar), Alasdair Turner (guitar, bagpipes) Ross Wilson (keys, bass guitar) and Fergus Munro (drums), all from rural backgrounds, are passionate about protecting the environment. Today two live near the sea and two are based in Glasgow – where all four met at university. Mod gold medallist Robert who studied English, is their singer-song writer front man. Ross studied music and music technology. Fergus and Alasdair both followed music related studies.

Scotland's favourite folk pop group infect fans and strangers with their song's messages.

Ceilidhs at Glasgow's legendary music venue, The Park Bar, in Argyle Street – meeting place for Gaelic speaking Hebrideans since 1895, was a catalyst for Tide Lines's formation. Intent on releasing *Far Side of the World*, they suddenly realised the group didn't have a name! Searching the lyrics for inspiration, providentially two lines and two words clicked: 'In my mind, I see her smile; where tide lines grace the isle' ... Given their environmental empathy, they couldn't have picked a better name. Their first big gig, Tíree Music Festival 2016, was followed by concerts around the Hebrides – Scotland's westerly islands. Environmentally at risk, the Hebrides face higher tides and Atlantic storms ripping up swathes of kelp and undercutting precious machair.

Thanks to Ross's technical capabilities, Tide Lines independently record and self-produce their albums in their recording studio overlooking Bunessan bay, near his home in Mull. Hosting the annual Feis Mhuile ceilidh for aspiring young musicians, Bunessan has a long musical tradition. The village famously 'owns' the mid-19th century Gaelic hymn *Leanabh an aigh, Child in a Manger*, composed by poet-crofter Mary MacDonald. Sung to its evocative folk tune *Bunessan*, rewritten in English as *Morning has Broken* – it became Cat Stevens' international hit. Daughter of a Baptist minister, Mary MacDonald might approve Bunessan's folk music's renaissance as Celtic folk-pop, resounding inside Mull's former Baptist chapel. Recording studios don't usually enjoy heavenly sea views combined with excellent acoustics. Nor do pop stars usually spend so much time together in church singing! Have Tide Lines absorbed a spiritual element? They certainly feel energised by Mull's beautiful west coast, crediting it for boosting their creative processes - perfecting lyrics, fine tuning their music and recording their songs.

Famous for its 'magic' has Mull imbued Tide Lines's songs with their 'Joyous' and 'Uplifting' elements? Not entirely. Much more is due to Tide Lines and the relaxed friendly way they communicate with their audiences.

Glasgow Love Story

Following their first recording success, in 2017 the innovative group produced their first album *Dreams We Never Lost*, but during Covid they couldn't tour so they kept their fans updated with news on Facebook plus videos of them 'together' whilst isolated, playing from their homes.

Ingenious in concept and execution, individual parts were incorporated into heartening videos for their fans, also in lockdown. Was this why their second album, *Eye of the Storm* in 2020 was so named? *An Ocean Full of Islands* in 2023, released post-pandemic, marked a leap forward, now in



Glasgow Love Story cover.

their converted church, reflecting and exploring various ideas, to a backdrop of islands.

January 2025 Tide Lines nailed their colours to the mast when they supported CAPE - Climate Adapted Pathways to Education. Verses from their songs featured in CAPE's free to download publication 'Implementing Climate Change Education in Schools: Constructive Hope in Action report – CAPE.' They all signed its dedication, writing: 'We are truly honoured that CAPE recognises the deep connection between our music and the natural world. It brings us great joy to know that the heartfelt lyrics, inspired by the stunning beauty of the Scottish Highlands will introduce each chapter of this report. As we grew up, the magnificent oceans, islands, mountains, and rivers that surrounded us had a profound impact on who we became. We are genuinely excited about this opportunity to inspire readers of this report to appreciate and protect our precious planet for future generations.'

Released in April *Glasgow Love Story* is a tribute to their adopted city. Touring June to November, Glasgow, Sunderland, Manchester, Bristol, London, Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dundee venues of 15,000 capacity, are selling out through their website tidelinesband.com. Their actions speak as loudly as their words. Tide Lines market environmentally, socially, and ethically responsible merchandise. Clothing is 100% ethically sourced and organic. They use recycled plastics and compostable shrink wrap. CD's for *Glasgow Love Story* are recycled plastic wrapped in a compostable sleeve. In a world dominated by streaming, physical album sales are vital to an independent band like Tide Lines without any label or industry backing.

Although *Glasgow Love Story* features more social than environmental lyrics, *Better Days* hits out that 'sometimes it feels as if the world is already broken', inviting audiences to 'drink with them to better days', optimistically refraining, 'we may not know the answers, but we'll find them in the end'. Scotland's favourite folk pop group infect fans and strangers with their song's messages. Their name is like a wake-up call. Tidelines are getting higher. Every dawn, sunrise illuminates oceans full of islands threatened by sea level rise. Tide Lines' enigmatic dedication must echo to the far side of the world – 'protect our precious planet'.



Photo: Nathan Dunphy.



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