

SCOT POURRI

Send us your inquiries on life's little question marks.

Ever wanted to know what happened to your old pal from home, how to make your favourite Scottish meal, or wondered about a certain bit of Scottish history?

Scotland's railway



Thank you for your article on the 200th anniversary of rail travel. I have visited Scotland on several occasions over the years and always travel by train. I find it a wonderful way to take in the country and for me is so hassle free. I remember the days of British Rail which had smoking sections, now we have Wi-Fi and much improved stations. I too love the rail trip from Glasgow to Oban, such

an iconic journey and such a relaxing way to get to the Oban port for a West Coast adventure. I find if you are able to book tickets in advance you can get some great deals, so planning saves! I have not tried all the lines mentioned in the article but am interested in exploring more.

My favourite train station is without doubt Wemyss Bay, which is rightfully often dubbed the most beautiful station in the UK. If you are there on a sunny day it is stunning as light bathes the station with its curved glass ceilings.

I am heading back to Scotland this year and am already planning my next rail adventure.

Greg Finlay
Boston, Massachusetts
USA

Ed note: Thank you Greg for your letter and we would be interested in hearing about other readers favourite train trips in Scotland.

Wartime Glasgow



I was so pleased to see Jim Stoddart's *Kings Castles and "Durtie" Wee Rascals* back again (*the Scottish Banner*, June, 2025). I have related to most of his articles. I lived on the corner of Kinning and Scotland Street's born 1933 was six when war broke out so I experienced sirens most nights. I went to Scotland Street School. From there on the 5th September 1939 many children were evacuated to the country. We were sent to Auchlinleck my two brothers along with me but sadly we were separated and allocated to different families, which my parents were very upset about. About eighteen months later my parents got a new house in Househillwood so we were all together again.

Even although this was still wartime it was a most happy memorable time growing up there.

Jessie Robertson
Bowral, NSW
Australia

Clydeside air raids

Jim Stoddart's story about the Luftwaffe air raids and bombing of Clydeside in 1940-41 brought back memories of those days to me. I was five years old, and I lived with my mother in a single end (as the one room unit was called then) in Carnoustie Street, Kingston. Like all the men in our tenement, my father was "away at the war." As soon as the siren went, our little nook was crammed with the other mothers in our part of the building and we kids went under the table with our toys. What I especially recall is the laughter and singing of all the women.

My mother had a gloriously pure singing voice, and I can remember her leading the young women in Vera Lynn songs like *Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover*, *I'll Never Forget That Lovely Weekend* and *We'll Meet Again*. What was particularly moving

for her was when she sang *Because*, she and my dad used to sing it together. He used to admit he didn't have much of a voice, but she made him look good!

I live in Queensland Australia now and about 20 years ago my wife and I went on holiday to Scotland. I showed her when a bomb had dropped just 500 metres from our tenement and was now a co-op store.

Thanks to Jim's story I also remember VE night in 1945 and the joy of seeing the mothers dancing and singing round the bonfire. The chalked sign of welcome to their men on the front of our close said it all—East West Hame's Best.

Thank for the opportunity of writing this.

Regards
Jim Fagan
Tewantin, Queensland
Australia

PS Waverley



Thank you for the wonderful article on the *Paddle Steamer Waverley* (*Celebrating 50 years of the PS Waverley preservation, the Scottish Banner*, July, 2025). I have been fortunate to travel on the *Waverley* three times in my life and at different stages of my life. The pure joy this vessel has brought countless number of people is immeasurable and as a Scot it fills me to the brim with pride. Many generations of my family have experienced a sail on the *Waverley* including those of us who now reside outside of Scotland. This note cannot just thank Douglas McGowan but also the many who have quite literally kept her afloat all these years. This is part of Scotland's maritime history and we should all be celebrating having the *Waverley* still part of our summer traditions. I know in my parents time this was what you did over summer (if you could), not the package holidays so many get to enjoy now.

Congratulations to *the Scottish Banner* for having the foresight in highlighting the *Waverley* on this special occasion year.

Your aye,
Donald Grant
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Scottish Week 2025



As part of Scottish Week 2025, I was honoured to take part in the annual inspection of the Cairn in Mosman, a proud symbol of the enduring friendship between Scotland and Australia. The Cairn was a gift from the people of Scotland to mark Australia's Bicentenary in 1988 with a stone from every Parish in Scotland brought to Australia and Mosman chosen as the permanent location for this tribute. Now, 37 years on, it remains a cherished part of our local landscape and a tribute to the Scottish heritage that has shaped our community.

Thank you to everyone who helped mark this special anniversary, and to all celebrating Scottish Week across NSW.
Felicity Wilson MP
Member for North Shore in the NSW
Parliament
Australia

The Legionary

The July edition's article about the Roman invasion reminds me of one of my poems, *The Legionary*.

*On Tony's wa', A stomp ma feet,
A conscript frae the local beat;
Sae cauld at times A fain wid greet -
Fair soaket.
Thae painted men A'm doomed tae meet
A'm boacket!*

*Aye rainin' here gin A wis gaird,
Wi' brasses unco ternistéd
"Get'em polished!" sergeant said -
A richt teuch yin.
For Legion XXI he's laird,
A dinna question.*

*There is a flithering in the sauch;
A kin o' pink, a show o' haugh
Designed tae gie us aw a laugh;
A flash o' bum.
It's Rory, flauntin' fur his cause
Tae bang o' drum.*

*Whiles thir times A envy him;
Awa fae aw the strife sae grim.
Tae please masel - that sort o' thing
Real free.
Aw this merchin's gettin' grim;
It's scunnert me.*

*The morn, we gang up North, ye ken,
Tae wetlands just beyond the Ben.
A'll see the heather glens again -
No bad! eh!
An tak ma chance an' jouk awa then;
Ilka wey*

*Haud on a wee, A hae a thocht.
That's no' the life A wid hae soacht,
For aw the fechts that A hae focht
Tae get me here.
Efter aw, the grub's aye hot.
A'll wait, nae fear.*

Kennedy Smith
Scotland

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Edinburgh



Edinburgh in blossom.
Craig Duncan Photography

Stirling Castle



Lovely day above Stirling Castle.
Fly - Caledonia

Braemar Castle



Stunning day at Braemar Castle in Aberdeenshire.
The Kilted Photographer

Highland Coo



Hanging out at Loch Awe on a Coos Day!
Soul of Alba Photography