

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?

Kilchurn Castle

Kilchurn Castle, situated on Loch Awe at sunrise. The Campbells of Glenorchy were the most powerful cadet branch of the Clan Campbell, and over two centuries from the 1430s came to dominate the central Highlands.

The building of several castles, of which Kilchurn was the first, was a key part of their territorial expansion during this period. Sir Colin Campbell, 1st of Glenorchy (died 1475), was a younger son of Duncan Campbell, 1st Lord Campbell, ancestor of the Earls of Argyll. Sir Colin was granted Glen Orchy and other lands by his father in 1432, and afterwards established Kilchurn around 1450. The first castle comprised



the five-storey tower house, with a courtyard defended by an outer wall. At the time Kilchurn was on a small island scarcely larger than the castle itself, and would have been accessed via an underwater or low-lying causeway.

Thomas Lamont
The Kilted Photographer
Falkirk, Scotland

St Kilda



Photo: National Trust for Scotland.

I read your editorial on St Kilda with interest (*The evacuation from the 'Edge of the World', the Scottish Banner*, August, 2025). St Kilda might be quite isolated miles off the nearest Outer Hebrides landfall but there has been a lot written about it. One book was written by (later, Emeritus) Professor Eric Richards (now deceased) from Flinders University. As a friend Eric was a great source of inspiration to me over the years. He was known over the world for his ground-breaking work on better understanding Scottish emigration during earlier times. Amongst his many books is *From Hirta to Port Phillip*, written in 2010 for the Islands Book Trust. In it he traces some of the early St Kilda inhabitation and then, more specifically, the ill-fated emigration 36 Kildans to Victoria in 1852.

Unlike some of the brutal Highland Clearances, it was not motivated by landlord greed, but rather to take up challenge in a rapidly modernising world in which they were being left behind. Being so far out in the Atlantic Ocean, they had few visitors and only a handful of their own had been to the Scotland we know. Its population lived a quite reasonable life mainly off birds and hard-caught fish.

They reported as content in their stable but primitive environment, protected quite a bit from the stresses and strains found in the rest of the country. But to some of the people they were fascinated by the outside world resulting in a handful of them considering emigration. So, in September 1852 36 individuals comprising eight families (Ferguson, Gillies, MacDonald, McCrimmen and MacQueen) set sail under the auspices of the Highland and Islands Emigration Society. The benevolent and absent landlord, John McPherson McLeod, assisted them

greatly, making sure that they had funds to start a new life in a, to them, a quite strange world. He even went so far as to accompany them through several stops all the way to Glasgow.

They went first to Harris and then to Skye where they stayed for a few weeks being joined by some 350 others who were to make the trip to Australia. There they embarked on the *Priscilla*, the ship that was to make the journey, for Glasgow.

The voyage lasted 98 days arriving at the Port Phillip quarantine station on 19th January 1853. Although the ship was quite a quality one, only 17 of the Kildans were still alive when they departed the station a few weeks later. This was largely because their previous isolation had not protected them the illnesses of the outside world.

From there, despite their lack of English those who were fit were able to gain employment. Outside of the work of Eric Richards little is known how they fared upon arrival, although one of their number, a MacQueen was able to get something written down.

The final note is that the voyage of the 36 cut the overall St Kilda population to about half and in 1930 the rest of the residents were evacuated, leaving the place for scientific, heritage and occasional tourists purposes.

Ron Layton
Crafers, South Australia

Ed note: Thanks Ron for sending us this additional great bit of detail on this dramatic story.

PS Waverley



How lovely to read about the *Paddle Steamer Waverley* in your July edition. I have very fond memories of sailing on her as a kid and I have been fortunate to return to Scotland and sail on her with my children. The *Waverley* is more than just

nostalgia as it continues to light a spark in the eyes of those that sail her, regardless of age! I recommend anyone visiting Scotland to try and get on one the trips that take place from spring each year and see Scotland in a different way and experience what so many did in the past.

I have travelled the world over and Scotland will forever for me not just be the land of my birth, but also my favourite holiday destination. And as Billy Connolly has said 'There is no such thing as bad weather, just poor clothing choices!'

I really enjoy the articles presented in *the Scottish Banner*, which does so much to promote Scotland and thank you to all the writers who give us so much information on Bonnie Scotland.

John Skene
Oakville, Ontario
Canada

Ed note: Thanks for sharing your memories John and we agree a trip on the *Waverley* is a must.

James MacKenzie

I find your newspaper to be immensely interesting. My grandparents emigrated to New Zealand at the beginning of the 20th century, and I have had the pleasure to visit the land of my Scottish forbears. My poem is an important part of New Zealand folk lore, a huge region of the South Island of New Zealand is named Mackenzie Country, commemorating the story of Mackenzie and his dog moving sheep in that place.

James MacKenzie 1855-1856

Where sheep graze sun stunted fodder
And dewy flats lie
A lone shepherd with a dog
Cast a thoughtful eye.

The stockman walked a rugged route
Above the tawny grass
James MacKenzie stealing sheep
From north of Timaru
By Dunstan Ranges
Through Lindu Pass
Was the route he took them through.

An overseer saw him
And with two Maori tied him up
As the strong eyed dog Friday
Runs like a frightened pup.

Then MacKenzie made his own escape
Below the mountain tops
But one hundred miles north at Lyttelton
Was recaptured by the cops.

He goes to court a Scottish man
Accused of stealing sheep
Where he yawned or Gaelic
While looking half asleep.

Twice he escaped from prison
But didn't get away
The public gave him sympathy
And wanted to have their say
Five years hard labour's far too much
So, the Magistrate pardoned him.

And it was true, and it was weird how
James and dog disappeared.

JJ Fagan

Palmerston North, New Zealand

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Highland Coo



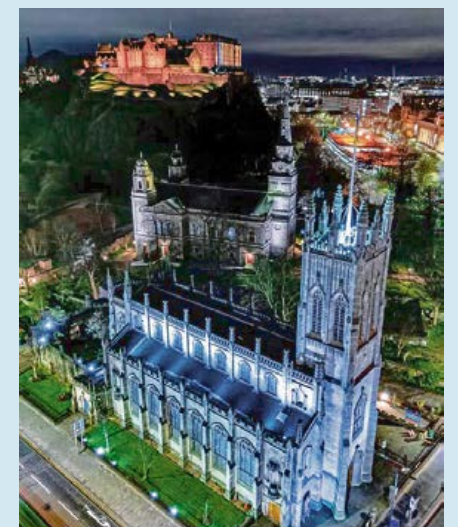
What a face!
Mik Coia

Doune Castle



Golden sunshine at Doune Castle.
Jamie Taylor Photography

Edinburgh



The west end of Princes Street. Looking over St. John's Scottish Episcopal Church and The Parish Church of St Cuthbert with Edinburgh Castle in the background.
Craig Duncan Photography

PS Waverley



Paddle Steamer Waverley passing Largs.
Fly - Caledonia