

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?

GG on Two Wheels



My name is George Talbot and would love to share my story with you in the hope that it might resonate.

My story is called "GG on Two Wheels." It began after I lost my wife, Gaynor to terminal cancer on the 02-04-2025 after a 4 and ½ year battle. In order for me to try cope with her loss I wanted to honour her memory and to keep a promise I made to her, I am taking her ashes with me on a solo motorcycle journey across Australia over 6824 Km from December 2025 to the 9th January 2026. Where I hope every mile I take is a way of keeping her close, remembering her warmth, her strength, and the love we shared. What began as a personal journey through grief has become a mission of purpose and purpose to now support and raise as much money as I can for a cause, I will be documenting this journey through daily blog updates, sharing the highs, lows, memories, and moments from the road, you can follow my story online and during this trip I will be trying to raise funds for Strathcarron Hospice.

As I said earlier my overall aim is to help raise awareness and funds for Strathcarron Hospice. The Hospice had been one of the most incredible places that allowed Gaynor to die with dignity and love and more importantly

where I was no longer a carer but a husband again. We had been together for over 22 years. But during this time in the hospice I got to fall even more in love with Gaynor all over again during those final 22 days, knowing she was going to pass away and I would lose her, and knowing all this I would do it all over again just to spend those last minutes with her again. Strathcarron Hospice was such a beautiful place for Gaynor and as her health declined, this allowed us to cherish every moment, the laughter, the conversations memoirs and the love we had for each other. Once Gaynor passed, she went at peace, with ease, dignity and respect.

I decided to do something to raise funds for Strathcarron Hospice as a thank you. I along with my close friends help organised a ball which was held in October and raised an amazing £30,000. And in a matter of months with other fundraising events that we held the total is now £41,000 and rising daily. I then decided this was not enough and wants to raise enough funds to cover the cost of running the hospice for 22 days, to reflect the number of days that Gaynor spent there.

To support the fundraising further I have since commissioned a bespoke campervan to be designed and fitted by my good friend at Rolyan Design. This van was created especially for the fundraiser it is not my personal vehicle, and I am now raffling it to raise vital funds for Strathcarron, whose care and compassion meant so much to Gaynor and me. And 100% of the funds are going to the hospice.

For updates and to support the cause please visit: www.ggontwowheels.com
George Talbot
Scotland

Ed note: What an amazing thing you are doing George, we wish you safe travels.

The Great Melbourne Bagpipe Bash



Congratulations to all the Aussie pipers who broke the World Record for the largest ever bagpipe ensemble (*Melbourne breaks World Record with The Great Melbourne Bagpipe Bash, the Scottish Banner*, December, 2025). What a fun experience for all those involved. I was a bit surprised that 374 bagpipers was record breaking with all the massed band displays across the world but what a fantastic achievement.

I love the pipes and drums and enjoy attending many Highland Games and seeing the bands when we have them here in Canada. I love all the traditional tunes but also think it is great that modern music, or even AC/DC's *It's a Long Way to the Top*

is being played to help keep young players interested in pipes and drums. I also love the Red Hot Chilli Pipers who bring a real modern flair to Scottish music. It is however *Highland Cathedral* for me that is my favourite piping tune, it always stops me in my tracks, and I fill with much emotion.

Love the stories in *the Banner*!

Gayle Anderson
Cobourg, Ontario
Canada

Ed note: Thanks Gayle and we agree they did a wonderful thing in Melbourne. We would love to hear from other readers their favourite piping tune.

Spooky Scotland

I have a few spooky stories to share. My daughter and I stayed in room 8 at Tulloch Castle. Karen set up her infrared camera and in the morning the film showed the chandelier swinging-it did not wake me in case I was too scared! On another occasion we had the same room, and I woke to feel pressure below

my collar bone, I half woke and told it to go away but it returned so it got a mouthful of Aussie instructions! I did have a feeling of deep bruising for nearly a week after that, but no marks.

We also went to Dover Castle and Karen saw a man in striped pyjamas and I saw a man wearing a bomber jacket, they both went through the wall, and we both saw just one person.

At home I have been woken by my blanket being pulled up and had my toes squeezed as well. My daughter came to visit me once and a ghost passed straight through her, the ghost used to visit between me and my neighbour.

I don't know why I have had all these experiences. My maternal grandmother was from Glasgow and a great believer.

Thanks for a great paper and I hope to be in Scotland in 2026!

Jocelyn Layton
Wyndham, Western Australia

Burns... the Haggis

Chorus Chant... "We're nae fu' yet"...
The Haggis Cull is noo complete
All we hae' to dae... is eat
Chorus... "Ye'll ne'er tak' me alive"...

Wi' neeps 'n' tatties
There's nane... sae sweet
Chorus... "Och aye"...

When whisky chasers
Donce... the feet
Chorus... "Scots wha hae"...

The skirl o' pipes the world sae richt
When feastin' on this rare... auld nicht!
Chorus... "O flur o' Scotland"...

A comment sae' Braw... ye'r' ee' tae greet
As ye toast... to "Burns" an'...yon "sonsie"
faced meat
To Burns... for you... an' ane an' a'
Chorus... "Will ye no' come back agen"...
Heed ye a' the ca'!

THE PHANTOM POET

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George Ian Caldwell (T.P.P4)

I wrote this for Burns night hope it amuses fellow Haggis hunters...

Brisbane Celtic Festival



I enclose a photo at the Brisbane Celtic Festival at Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, Brisbane in October. A wonderful event which I enjoyed immensely. I am a new subscriber to *the Scottish Banner* and love it. I look forward to future editions.

John Harper
Bunya, Queensland
Australia

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 beauty



The beauty of winter at Buachaille Etive Mor. **Mik Coia**

Forth Bridge



The incredible Forth Bridge-a symbol of Scotland!
Fly - Caledonia

Tantallon Castle



The incredible Tantallon Castle with the Bass Rock in the distance.
Jamie Taylor Photography

Loch Lubhair



Capturing reflections at Loch Lubhair. **Robert Gibb**