



the Scottish Banner



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Volume 49 Number 11

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The Banner Says...

Strange Spectacle on Loch Ness—What Was It?



by Sean Cairney

Ninety-three years ago, this month, the first newspaper article on a strange and massive, whale-like creature churning the water in the dark waters of Loch Ness was printed. It was May 1933 and *The Inverness Courier* featured an article of an unexplained creature in the cold and deep waters located just outside of Inverness. The author of the feature was Alex Campbell, a water bailiff and part-time journalist, and was titled *Strange Spectacle on Loch Ness—What Was It?*

This article would go on to gain national and international attention and change the course of the region, which is still being felt today. The article detailed how Aldie Mackay and her husband reported seeing an enormous animal rolling and plunging in the loch on April 15, 1933. Whilst this was not the first mention of a strange sighting on the loch, it was the first printed recollection and led to the story gaining far reaching appeal and curiosity.

One of Scotland's most enduring mysteries

The legend of Loch Ness is one of Scotland's most enduring mysteries — a blend of ancient folklore, modern myth, and scientific curiosity that continues to ripple across the world. At its heart lies Nessie, the elusive creature said to inhabit the deep, dark waters of Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands.

Loch Ness itself is a vast freshwater lake stretching about 23 miles (37 kilometres) and plunging to depths of over 750 feet. Its peat- stained waters are famously opaque, creating the perfect stage for tales of hidden beasts. The earliest known account of a monster near the loch dates back to the 6th century, when Saint Columba

reportedly confronted a “water beast” in the River Ness. According to Adomnán’s Life of St. Columba, the saint made the sign of the cross and commanded the creature to retreat — which it did, leaving witnesses awestruck. This story, though set in the river rather than the loch, became the first written record of what would later be called the Loch Ness Monster.

Nessie's place in popular culture

For centuries, Scottish folklore spoke of kelpies — shape- shifting water horses said to lure travellers into the depths. Many historians believe these tales helped shape the Nessie legend.

But the modern phenomenon began in 1933, when a new road along Loch Ness offered unobstructed views of the water. When Mrs Mackay, who was the manageress of the Drumnadrochit Hotel, reported seeing the massive creature it sparked a media frenzy. There have been over 1,000 reported sightings since and so far just one this year, which took place in March.

Nessie remains a living reminder that some mysteries are meant to be cherished — not solved.

In 1934, the world was captivated by the so- called “Surgeon’s Photograph”, allegedly showing Nessie’s long neck rising from the water. Decades later, it was revealed to be a hoax — a toy submarine with a sculpted head. Yet the image cemented Nessie’s place in popular culture.

People who knew very little about Scotland had heard of this monster lurking deep in the waters. Over the following decades, sonar scans, underwater photography, and scientific expeditions sought proof of the creature. None found definitive evidence, though some readings hinted at large, moving shapes beneath the surface.

In this issue

One creature more accessible to the visitor to Scotland is without doubt the Scottish deer. Not to be just found

in the Highland landscape but deer have been used throughout history in art, carving, architecture, stories and folkloric symbolism. This month we look at some of the symbolism of deer to Scotland, both in the natural and supernatural forms.

Pipe bands are located right across the world. Being part of a band is not just a musical ambition for many, but it also brings a unique life experience. Bands travel to many places to perform and take part in some incredible events. This month we feature the Haddington Pipe Band who are a community focused band, and we would love to hear from other bands on their story.

Alexander Wilson (1766–1813) was born in Paisley and was a poet, weaver, artist and pioneering ornithologist, celebrated as the Father of American Ornithology. His nine-volume *American Ornithology*, the first bird book with coloured plates to be published in America, transformed bird study in North America. He sadly died in poverty at just 47 but is remembered for introducing a new way to present nature writing and illustration.

The legend of Nessie

Despite scepticism from scientists, who attribute sightings to misidentified animals, floating logs, or optical illusions — the legend thrives. Nessie has become a symbol of mystery and wonder, drawing millions of visitors and contributing tens of millions of pounds to Highland tourism each year. Modern studies, including DNA sampling of the loch’s waters, have found no trace of unknown species, but the myth endures. I visited the loch in 2025, and you bet I was watching the water...just in case!

Ultimately, the legend of Loch Ness is less about proving a monster’s existence than about celebrating imagination itself. In the Scottish Highlands, where history and myth intertwine in story, Nessie remains a living reminder that some mysteries are meant to be cherished — not solved. 🍀

Do you have any comments from the content in this month's edition? Share your story with us by email, post, social media or: #ScottishBanner, #TheBanner.

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We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy this edition.



Gracing our front cover: The Haddington Pipe Band flying the flag at Traprain Law, near Haddington. Photo: Nick Callaghan.



BELLINGHAM SCOTTISH GATHERING

Saturday, June 6, 2026

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ScottishDanceSociety.org



SCAN ME!



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?

Diana Gabaldon



Photo courtesy of Scottish Heritage USA.

What a delightful way to kick-off Spring by meeting *Outlander* author Diana Gabaldon at the Scottish Society of Wilmington's event. She is coming out with her 10th book in the series later this year, but found time to charm everyone she graciously visited with in Wilmington and at Moore's Creek - including our contingent from Scottish Heritage USA (L to R) Bill Caudill, SHUSA board, Susie Thomas, SHUSA Exec Director, Diana Gabaldon, Scottish Society President Catherine Fort, Mary Ann Masters on the SHUSA and Colonial Dames board, Steve Quillin, President of Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Scottish Heritage USA

Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago



Attached is a photo from a Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago shared lunch. From left to right are: Joy Baker (Clan Elliot), Dene Mackenzie (Clan MacPherson), Sheila and Todd Gunn (Clan Gunn). The event was a shared lunch, or potluck lunch, organised by the Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago. *The Scottish Banner* is always sought after.

Many thanks,

Dene Mackenzie

Dunedin, New Zealand

Ed note: Thank you Dene and we are so glad to hear the Banner is being enjoyed in the 'Edinburgh of the South'.

Tribute to Tartan Day in Nova Scotia

Guest Speaker Jean (MacKaracher) Watson spoke at the Tribute to Tartan Day Dinner at St. Margaret of Scotland Church Hall on April 11th in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. 40 years after Tartan Day was founded in Canada. Jean with the help of her husband Andy, in 1986, was the one person committee who for ten years worked to establish the great idea of Tartan Day in Canada of behalf of the Federation for

Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia. Jean contacted Scottish Societies across Canada to push the idea and contacted every serving Member of Parliament across Canada at that time.

In attendance as well were The Pipes and Drums of Clan Farquharson who she also founded in 1981. Her talk to the assembly covered topics about the tartan and of Gauls wearing checkered and striped clothing back when the Scribes noted the tribal habits outside the walls of Rome.

Also, of the great history of each Clan in Scotland and the stories behind them. The fairy flag, MacFarland's Lantern, the Curse of the MacDonalds on the Campbells and the curse of the Lamont widow on the Farquharson Chief. How Celts were considered very phisic and stories behind this even in local School social studies books.

Her closing remarks were: "Always remember... the Tartan thread... is the never-ending circle like the Celtic cross... it never breaks with our past. Like the call of the pipes, even in the distance you will stop and listen, some claim they get the chills. The pipes are calling our ancestors to us."

The tartan and the pipes, tell of the terrible times and happy times, of family and of love and battles and loss. But it is our strength, built on the shoulders of those who came before us."

Federation for Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia Nova Scotia, Canada

Ed note: We thank the 'Mother of Tartan Day' and Andy for all their inspiring work for the Scottish community.

Glasgow Central Station



Photo: Network Rail Scotland.

Just a wee note to thank for your April editorial on Glasgow Central railway station. As a Fly Fifer and leaving Scotland at a young age I had few reasons to visit Glasgow, so my memories are not as clear as yours. However, the obvious passion you have for the station and the great city of Glasgow came through in your words!

The cause of the fire was suspected to be the lithium-ion batteries used in vape and other products. They can self-combust and the resultant explosions, fire and toxic fumes are extremely difficult to extinguish! Unfortunately, a timely reminder of how we use and store these dangerous products!

You are doing the Scots of this world a great service with your publication!

Keep up the good work!

Baxter Henderson

Aspendale Gardens, Victoria Australia

Ed note: Thank you Baxter for your letter, this has been a tough time for a very resilient city.

The Frasers of Quebec

Many years ago, I read a Fraser story I'd like some authentication for or correction, if any of your readers know source detail?

During the time of the Battles for Quebec, about 1775, Lord Lovat, with the Frasers self-exiled to France (a natural selection, since originally they were from there - Frasier, and the fraises strawberry plant on some badges still), went to King George III and volunteered to raise a regiment of the Clan, if in return, after their service, he'd allow their return to their seized lands by Inverness. George, pressed by the costs of the 7 Years War and the French battles for Quebec, allowed this was a good deal, so agreed. Thus, Lovat raised a regiment. They were stationed in the fort at Stirling, awaiting a ship to take them to

the Canadian scene - the taking of Fort Louisbourg, and eventually Quebec itself.

Then the story becomes more hearsay! While in the fort at Stirling, the Frasers, no doubt living on 'hard tack,' heard there was quite a stache of cheese being held in locked storage above theirs in the fort.

So, a Fraser, name unknown, climbed up the OUTSIDE wall to the window of the storage, got in, got a supply of cheese, and returned to his waiting no doubt hungry friends. The Brits, of course, soon knew the cheese had been stolen, no doubt by some of the Frasers, but could prove nothing. Later, in the 1759 attack on Quebec, the Frasers were in some of the 1st boats that landed at the foot of the considerable bush and treed cliffs leading up to the later famous 'Plains of Abraham' on the outskirts of the walled city (still there in part too!). Much of that is true, I'm told, at least them being in Stirling awaiting passage and at the attack on fortress Quebec. The 78th. Then it becomes more imaginative. In the leading boat full of Highlanders, the officer in charge is SUPPOSED to have said "Alright, since one of you is such a great climber I'm told, you lead the way up that vague path onto the 'Plains of Abraham' above!" Thus, he does. At the summit, as he's breaking out of the underbrush, he's challenged by a Frech patrol, in French, no doubt "Qui va la?"

But having been exiled in France he's able to reply "De La Reine!" leaps out, silences the sentry. The squad behind debouch onto the plain without further challenges, and the taking of the fort and Quebec - and deaths of Wolfe & Montcalm - are true history. The question I have is any of this factual? I know the Frasers were in France in exile, and at the battle for Quebec (many of their Clan remained in Canada, not entirely trusting George III's word about returning their lands in Scotland quite rightly!).

I worked in Quebec in forestry and it was quite common to come across names like Pierre-Alphonse McGregor or Claude Adelard Fraser! There is still formed a 78th volunteer Regiment of historic 'Highlanders' that parades in Quebec.

Best regards,

*Fraser (Murray) McKee
(Commander, RCNR (ret'd)
Toronto, Ontario
Canada*

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

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

Loch Etive



Beauty and calm at Loch Etive.
Fly - Caledonia

Dumfries and Galloway



The beauty of Scotland at Cairnpat Fell, Lochans.
Colfin Captures

The Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh



Edinburgh lights rush past The Balmoral.
Brad Dickson Photography

Scottish Highlands



The beauty of the Scottish Highlands.
Mik Coia

Scotland's oldest heritage charity launches global £1.5m race against the clock



An artist's impression of the proposed heritage hub. Image: Benjamin Tindall Architects.

One of the UK's oldest heritage societies has launched a global £1.5 million campaign to secure a permanent home in Edinburgh, with a deadline of January 2027 to complete the purchase. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, founded in 1780 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1783, is seeking to buy a B-listed property on a site within Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site that was once part of the historic southern gateway to the city. The building has been offered to the charity at a fixed price if purchased by January 2027. The Society is contributing £600,000 from its own investments and must raise the remaining £1.5 million.

For nearly 250 years, the Society has supported archaeological and historical research. Its early Fellows contributed collections that formed the foundation of the Scottish history and archaeology galleries for the National Museum of Scotland. Today it connects more than 2,700 Fellows across six

continents and reaches millions of people annually through media and digital channels, including recorded lectures and open access publications.

Scotland's first national heritage hub

Despite this historic role, the Society currently operates from an inaccessible top-floor flat within the National Museum of Scotland complex which limits its ability to engage with the public and collaborate across the sector. The project would establish Scotland's first national heritage hub. Here, academics, visitors and anyone curious about Scotland's past can explore their heritage and engage directly with the work of protecting Scotland's history.

The campaign carries added significance as the Society approaches its 250th anniversary in 2030. Diana Murray CBE HonFSAScot, President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, said: "For centuries, this small corner of Edinburgh has been a gateway to Scotland's past. We now have a rare and time-limited

opportunity to secure this building and open our doors properly for the first time in our modern history, ensuring that Scotland's past belongs to everyone, at home and across the world."

Dr Simon Gilmour FSAScot, Director of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, added: "This is a once-in-a-lifetime alignment of opportunity, affordability and historic significance. The building sits at the very heart of Edinburgh's cultural quarter, beside the National Museum of Scotland, within a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in an area attracting more than ten million visitors a year. We invite everyone who cares about Scotland's past to help us secure it."

Architectural and historic significance

Located on the corner of Bristo Port and Bristo Place, this B-listed property holds special architectural and historic significance, standing on ground that has witnessed more than five centuries of Scottish history. Bristo Place was once the southern gateway into Edinburgh, entered through Bristo Port, a fortified arch built in 1515 as part of the Flodden Wall. In 1503, Margaret Tudor entered the city here through a grand Renaissance arch to marry King James IV, marking the Treaty of Perpetual Peace between Scotland and England. Nearby, in 1638, the National Covenant was signed at Greyfriars Kirk, another turning point in the nation's story, and later the doomed Darien project was directed from a house on Bristo Place.

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is an independent membership charity which actively supports the study and

enjoyment of Scotland's past. The Society's purpose is "to investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general, with the intention that the talents of humanity should be cultivated and that the study of natural and useful sciences should be promoted."

Professor Ewan is Professor Emerita of Scottish Studies and History at the University of Guelph and one of Canada's leading authorities on Scottish and medieval history and has been a Fellow of the Society since 1985. She said: "From Canada I have seen first-hand how deeply Scotland's history runs in people across the world. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland has been at the heart of Scottish historical scholarship for nearly 250 years, connecting researchers and heritage enthusiasts across the globe. A permanent home would transform what the Society can offer to that global community."

Dr Lorna Barrow FSAScot, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, editor of the *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History*, former researcher on the Australian edition of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, and recipient of the Celtic Council of Australia's Duine Urramach award for services to Scottish heritage, said: "Scotland's story belongs to people on every continent and nowhere is that truer than here in Australia where Scottish heritage runs deep in our national story. Helping the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland secure a permanent home is something the global Scottish community should rally behind."

For more information, visit: www.socantscot.org.

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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.



"We expect to see a test flight by our client RFA this summer, although the final timings are still being negotiated with all the relevant authorities. Clearly, this is hugely exciting and testament to all the hard work done by RFA and by our team here at SaxaVord. It is important to us that Unst residents have first refusal on the limited number of viewing spaces that will be available given that they have been most impacted by the building of the spaceport and will be most affected on launch days. Due to the fact that this will be a test flight and the length of the launch window, if you live outwith Shetland I would recommend that you watch it on the livestream rather than bear the cost and time involved with travelling here only to be disappointed."

SaxaVord Spaceport CEO Scott Hammond said that viewing spaces for SaxaVord test launches on Unst this summer to be offered to local people first. SaxaVord Spaceport is the UK's first fully licensed vertical launch spaceport. Unst is a small Shetland island with a population of 600 and a network of mainly single track roads and very few accommodation options. Test flights and launches will be livestreamed, enabling people everywhere to view them.

"This new research will help us identify where investment in Gaelic can have the greatest impact to ensure the language thrives. The findings will also explore how we can use Gaelic to attract tourists and boost visitor spending in communities across Scotland. Our Scottish Languages Act gave Gaelic official status, and we are backing this commitment with an extra £1.8 million for Gaelic initiatives in the draft Scottish Budget for 2026-27."

Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes said Gaelic-led organisations across the country will take part in a significant new research project exploring the economic, social and cultural impact of the Gaelic language. Scottish Gaelic continues to play an important role in shaping Scotland's identity, especially within the visitor experience. From place names and storytelling to festivals, community events and cultural attractions, the language provides a unique layer of authenticity that deepens visitors' connection to Scotland's landscapes and heritage.

"I am pleased to report that the work on George Square continues to progress on schedule and will reopen later this year. Recent progress on site includes laying

high-quality stone surfacing, which we can all see as we walk along George Street and the successful planting of new trees. George Square is expected to be opened to the public by the end of August, alongside the physical completion of works. A cross-service team within the council is currently developing plans for a formal reopening event. This is expected to take place in September. It will include a civic event for elected members and community representatives. The refurbished square will meet the needs of residents and visitors alike, and we will work closely with partners to ensure a successful evening at the end of the summer."

Glasgow City Council's Susan Aitken said work to refurbish George Square is expected to be completed by August, with an official reopening event planned for September. George Square is described as being the heart of the transformation of the city and will provide a welcoming space for events, festivals and for people to sit and meet up. It will also offer more green spaces, places for sitting, meeting and enjoying the city centre as well as improved landscaping, new play and sensory gardens.



"Every time I play this flute, I'm aware of how much history it holds. To play this instrument in front of Robert Burns's statue in Central Park will be a moment I'll never forget."

Flautist Claire Mann said 1,200-year-old flute once owned by Robert Burns's son ahead of being played in the United States for the first time, as part of an international campaign to save Ellisland Farm, which was built by Robert Burns in 1788 for his young wife Jean Armour and their family. The Farm is considered the home of the famous *Auld Lang Syne*.

"Due to an over order of bananas to our Kirkwall Superstore, colleagues have been inviting local schools and community groups to collect the fruit to redistribute locally."

A Tesco spokesperson said one of their supermarkets in Orkney is giving away boxes of bananas for free after a glitch saw the delivery of 38,000 by mistake. The Tesco in Kirkwall received 380 boxes, each containing around 100 pieces of fruit.



Photo: Starz.

"We're both excited and saddened to see the return of Outlander to our screens for the eighth and final season. It has been an amazing journey on-screen and off. We've enjoyed seeing fans flock to Scotland to create their own Outlander-inspired story, providing a huge boost to Scottish tourism and our wonderful sector. From season one, fans have had a hunger for our history, culture and, of course, our beautiful landscapes, and we know that desire to visit will last long after the conclusion of the series. The breadth of the filming locations and Scotland's place in the storyline has helped support our work to spread visitors and the benefits of the visitor economy across the regions and seasons. And while Outlander is coming to an end we still have season two of prequel series, Outlander: Blood of My Blood to look forward to, offering further opportunities to capture the hearts of fans and travellers."

Jenni Steele, Film and Creative Industries Manager, VisitScotland said as the eighth and final season of *Outlander* premiered around the world. The time-travelling romantic TV series has had a huge impact on Scottish tourism since it was first broadcast in 2014. Dubbed, the 'Outlander Effect', the series has seen a surge in interest and trips from the North American and French and German visitor markets to Scotland.

SCOTWORD

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

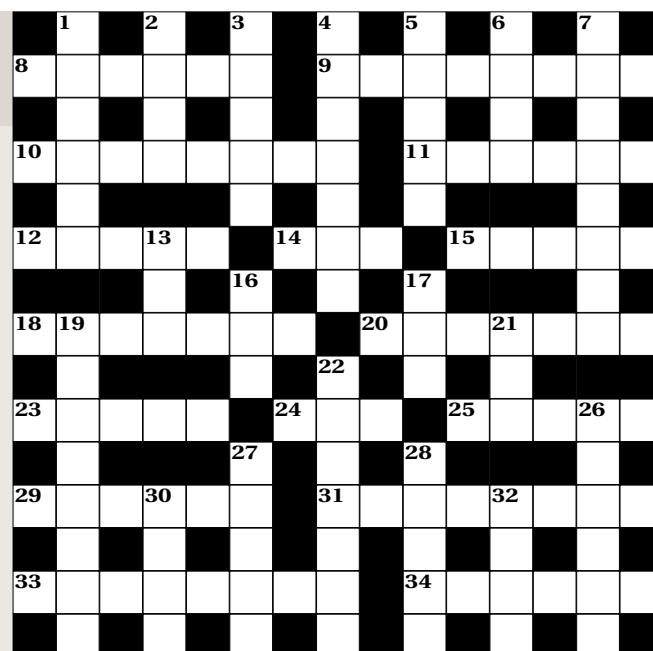
CLUES ACROSS:

- 8) People of a state (6)
- 9) It can be found in the North Sea (8)
- 10) It goes with Dumfries (8)
- 11) Scots town sounds American (6)
- 12) Perfect (5)
- 14) A Scots roll (3)
- 15) Front of a kilt (5)
- 18) Bagpipe essential
- 20) Scotland' emblem (7)
- 23) Scots valleys (5)
- 24) Conical hill (3)

- 25) Call-to-arms cross! (5)
- 29) Resort near the River Earn (6)
- 31) The Granite City (8)
- 33) East-coast port (8)
- 34) A Scots bride's dowery (6)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1) A knight's tunic (6)
- 2) A Scots measure (4)
- 3) A Scots hilltop
- 4) Follow the feline! (7)
- 5) Glasgow' flower! (5)
- 6) Bequeath (4)
- 7) Fishing port on Loch Broom (8)
- 13) Scotland's own (3)
- 16) A river from 31 Across (3)
- 17) Reserved (3)
- 19) A capital palace (8)
- 21) Scots winter pastime (3)
- 22) Castle rampart (7)
- 26) Smelt in Scotland! (6)
- 27) Gently-flowing water (5)
- 28) Grampian town on the Isla (5)
- 30) Newts (4)(3)
- 32) Across airport (4)



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.



Major MacGregor's dirk.

wonderful time to see Scotland's seventh largest island. With a mix of Highland, Lowland and Borderland scenery, this place has been called 'Scotland in Miniature'.

Here, sandy beaches and sparkling seas beckon, along with hard to climb Goat Fell. There is an ancient stone circle, a distillery, and, of course, those famous Arran oatcakes. Sweet and nutty, he promises to bring some home, along with a fat slab of tasty Arran cheese.

That peak comes with its own story

Before he leaves for the west coast, though, we find ourselves in the Trossachs, and it is a joy getting there; travelling through winding glens, leaves budding baby green; passing dark forested peaks and weathered stone bridges. Then there is the Lake of Menteith – Scotland's only lake - because the country's waters are all lochs. Here wildlife abounds, with regular signs telling us to watch out for red squirrels and deer. Here are ancient cottages and the more modern Rob Roy Hotel. Because this is the edge of once bandit country; the legendary Scotsman owning around 7,000 acres; a base from where he could carry out his blackmail operations and drive his cattle down south into England.

More memories return. Because this is close to where the chief was brought up as a boy, and he seems to know every bend in the road. Up the glen we drive, with a snow-capped Ben Lomond now in view – and that peak comes with its own story.

It is said that in 1803 this mountain was climbed by two chiefs - the MacGregor and the Colquhoun. The reason? To remember the infamous Glen Fruin massacre of 1603 when members of Clan Gregor killed a group of Colquhoun clansmen. The feud would simmer for two centuries. Until the early nineteenth-century when these two lairds reached the top of Ben Lomond, accompanied by a piper and a picnic.

And there at the summit, the story goes that they shook hands and danced a jig to try to put the past behind them...

The Children of the Mist

We continue on, reaching the larger village of Aberfoyle, and just beyond that, at the head of Loch Ard, the hamlet of Kinlochard. This is a place recently in the news with their 'Field' project; local people hoping to transform a 27-acre piece of boggy, rough land into a place for community use. Nature and history are all around and Kinlochard is where the chief has been invited by the local history group to give a talk about Clan MacGregor. Suitably he is wearing his MacGregor red and green kilt whilst I have on a similar tartan coat. Both seem to go down well in the community hall.

Now I have heard my husband speak on many occasions, and this time he is in full flow: bringing in family history, heraldry and clan rivalries. There are photos he has taken of Clan Gregor sites, including

Glengyle and Glenlyon. There is mention of how his ancestor, Evan MacGregor, supported Bonnie Prince Charlie in the taking of Edinburgh in the '45. As a reward for his leadership the prince gave Major MacGregor a large dirk. Then, after Culloden, the would-be king presented him with his personal quaich. We have both and these precious seventeenth century artefacts are passed round an admiring audience.

As is a large ancient weapon we bring with us. Once outlawed, with a bounty on their heads, Clan Gregor, the Children of the Mist, regularly found themselves pursued by packs of blood hounds. But they did not go down without a fight. Members of the history group are shown a gun that was used to shoot one of the baying dogs. It is humbling to sit in a room with people who know about and want to find out more about the past – and many questions are asked. After all, this is not just Rob Roy country. It is also Walter Scott land. The novelist made much of local folklore and set his poem *The Lady of the Lake* in the Trossachs. That work was a sensation, turning a wild, forgotten area into a tourist attraction. And they are there already; next morning we see a crowd of Japanese visitors taking in Highland scenes.

It is a magical place. And best of all – no midges. It is clearly too early, but like the Isle of Arran, this is Scotland at its finest...



The 17th century quaich.

Greetings from Scotland where spring has sprung, bringing blossom, bulbs and a mix of sunshine and showers. Taking advantage of better weather, the chief and his dog head off to the Isle of Arran, to capture landscape shots for a new photographic book. April may be the cruellest month, but it is a



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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.



Dugs

Hey daddy, wid you get us a dug?
 A big broon alsation ur a wee white pug,
 Ur a skinny wee terrier, ur a big fat bull,
 Aw daddy, get us a dug, wull yi?

Whit! An whose dug'll it be
 when it dirties the flerr?

An pees'n the carpet, and
 messes the sterr?

It's me or yer mammy'll be
 tane for a mug.

Awa oot'n play! Yer no gettin a dug.

First two verses of 'A Dug, A
 Dug' by Bill Keyes

Jean loved dogs and dogs loved her. When I first met her, she owned a dog called Major, a handsome golden Labrador, and he often accompanied her on her trek from one side of Pollok to the other, to visit me. Jean had been given Major by her Uncle Davie, the gamekeeper on the Ardlamont Estate. Davie had other mouths to feed, those of his four children and his working dogs, Jack Russell Terriers.

Jean had begged her parents to let her have Major as her pet and they reluctantly had agreed to relieve Davie of the extra burden of caring for him. He was like all Labradors a gentle, reliable dog, friendly to all he met and a danger to none. He, nevertheless, met an untimely death years later, in East Kilbride, when he was either baited or inadvertently took bait when out on one of his many wanderings as dogs were free to do in those days.

Courum

After the loss of Major Jean's solace was found in Couram, the only surviving pup from her Uncle David's latest litter of Jack Russel Terriers. He was the progeny of Davie's large sturdy, working terrier and Shoe-Shoe, a small bitch, called that because she once could fit into a large shoe. For years Courum enjoyed his days in East Kilbride and the freedom of running around on holiday at Portavadie, Argyll until one day at the beginning of December when out on a walk with Jean, disaster struck. The lightweight Courum

was attacked by a large, aggressive Alsation that took the helpless Courum in its jaws, shook him vigorously from side to side and finally tossed him against a brick wall. The little Jack Russel was never the same again. Jean carried him home and her parents drove her and the dog immediately to the vet. The vet advised them that they would need to keep him over the next few days so that they could monitor him.

After a few days it was obvious that a decision had to be made about Couram's future. His quality of life had become really poor. From that day forward he seemed to acquire a number of health problems including what appeared to be brain damage. As a last resort the vet suggested that they try a new treatment being trialled at the faculty of veterinary science at Glasgow University. He had discussed Couram's condition with people he knew there and they were willing to include him in their trial of some new drugs. Courum went off in due course to seek some improvement and recovery and to make his own small contribution to science. He had nothing to lose.

What dog?

After some weeks the predictable bad news came from the family vet. Courum had not responded to the treatment given; and there had been no evident improvement in his condition. Could they have permission to 'put him down'?

Jean and the rest of the family were devastated, and it fell upon me as the science teacher in training, now back in Scotland from my first term at college, to agree to have him euthanised. In our minds, Courum had now gone to where the spirits and souls of all good little dogs should go. It was some months later when Jean and I were living in Manchester and everyone had just about used to Courum not being around anymore that the family got a follow-up call from the university. "When is someone going to come and collect that dog you left with us?"

"What dog? There must be some mistake. Our dog was put down months ago!" said Jean's father. What had happened was that my agreement to have the dog euthanised had not reached the people charged with his day-to-day care and treatment. They had soldiered on with the treatment, in good faith, and in the end it had borne some fruit.

Like a canine Lazerus Courum had miraculously returned to the land of the living. He never quite recovered the vigour and full health that he had enjoyed before his wounds and injuries occurred, but he did recover enough to have an acceptable quality of life for a few years more. Jean was delighted with the result. Her parents agreed to look after Couram as Jean and I were now living in a very small flat in Manchester and were not allowed to have pets in residence.



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IN SCOTLAND TODAY



Dumfries and Galloway Councillors Designate Stranraer as Region's "Oyster Town"

Dumfries and Galloway Council has formally agreed to designate Stranraer as the region's "Oyster Town". The decision was made at Full Council in March 2026 following a notice of motion. Loch Ryan is home to Scotland's last remaining wild, sustainably harvested native oyster bed.

The bed is of national biodiversity importance and has been managed locally for centuries. The motion recognises the success of the Stranraer Oyster Festival, which now attracts over 20,000 visitors and takes place in September each year. Councillors agreed to adopt and promote the "Oyster Town" title and to seek national recognition through the Scottish Government. As part of the motion, the Leader of Dumfries and Galloway Council will write to the Scottish Government requesting formal backing for the designation. The letter will highlight how the move aligns with Scotland's Good Food Nation ambitions. The council's Economic Development team will also work with partners – including the Regional Economic Partnership – to promote the designation through relevant tourism strategies and plans.

Full Council also recorded a formal vote of thanks to the local volunteers, community groups and the Stranraer Development Trust. Their efforts in establishing and growing the Oyster Festival have helped transform the town's identity and economy. A council spokesperson said: "Stranraer's oyster heritage and the success of its festival have been there for all to see. Being known as our region's Oyster Town is more than just a title – it celebrates a unique local asset and a community-driven success story. By officially embracing this identity, we can work with local partners and national bodies to boost Stranraer's profile, attract visitors and support ongoing regeneration efforts, while recognising the people who made it possible."

Team Scotland celebrate Official Tartan



Photo: Team Scotland.

Team Scotland has revealed its Ceremony Outfits for the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. The attire, which

will be worn during the Opening Ceremony on 23rd July 2026, was unveiled at a special dinner to mark 100 days to go until the Games, bringing together stakeholders, partners, athletes and supporters.

The Team Scotland tartan for Glasgow 2026, unveiled on Tartan Day on 6th April, takes a bold new direction, using the Team Scotland thistle logo as inspiration and incorporating metallic gold yarn to represent the team's ambition and pursuit of success. Gold embroidery on the shirt collar and custom-made kilt pins tie-in the thistle design and metallic gold from the tartan, as accents in the full outfit. In addition to the main team attire, the outfits to be worn by the flagbearers were also revealed, adding a jacket and fly plaid to create an eye-catching contemporary twist on tradition. Team Scotland is delighted to be collaborating with award-winning Scottish designer Siobhan Mackenzie for a third time.

Siobhan, who kick-started her career as tailoring technician at Glasgow 2014, designed the women's Ceremony Outfit for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, and the tartan and Ceremonies Outfits at Birmingham 2022. She has once again designed all elements for the team at Glasgow 2026, from the tartan to the outfits and accessories, with everything being manufactured in Scotland. Siobhan said: "It's an incredible honour to be asked to design the Ceremony Outfits for Team Scotland at a home Games. I want the athletes to walk out into the Opening Ceremony feeling great in their outfit, with the bold colours and introduction of metallic gold representing their drive and determination. The outfits are classic and timeless, with the tartan very much the focus. It's also really important to me that everything is made in Scotland, from the woven cloth to the finished garments and accessories, supporting local textiles and craftsmanship." Team Scotland Chef de Mission Elinor Middlemiss MBE added: "Tartan is one of the strongest symbols of Scotland's identity and this design captures exactly what it means to represent the country on the international stage. With a home Games coming up, this is something our athletes and team members will wear with pride and I'm sure it will become a big part of Glasgow 2026."

Commemorating History: The 90th anniversary of the Spitfire



Photo: Darren Harbar.

Spitfire "K5054" during transit to Southampton Airport ahead of the Spitfire90 Launch. Photo: Darren Harbar.

This year marks 90 years since the first flight of the Supermarine Spitfire. To celebrate this milestone, the Royal Air Force and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight collaborated to honour the anniversary of this iconic aircraft. A two-seat Spitfire, painted to replicate the

original K5054 prototype, embarked on a historic tour of the UK, which included Scotland. The Scottish tour visited RAF Lossiemouth and Glasgow Prestwick Airport. The event also raised funds for two important charities: the Mark Long Trust, which supports disabled individuals in aviation, and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, which provides vital assistance to serving and former RAF personnel and their families.

On 5th March 1936, Captain Joseph 'Mutt' Summers piloted the first Supermarine Spitfire prototype, K5054, from Eastleigh Aerodrome, what is now Southampton International Airport. After just eight minutes in the air, he famously declared, "Don't change a thing." Numbers 602 (City of Glasgow) and 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadrons flew Spitfires at the start of the World War 2. On 16 October 1939 the German Air Force, or Luftwaffe, launched air attacks on Royal Navy ships in the Firth of Forth. It was the first air attack on Britain since the end of the First World War. Two German Junkers Ju 88 bombers were shot down into the Forth by the Scottish Spitfire squadrons. Ninety years later, this historic moment was commemorated with nine special flights across the UK. The Spitfire went on to become one of the most recognisable fighters of the Second World War.

Spitfires remained in RAF service after the end of the Second World War. The last RAF Spitfire mission was on 1 April 1954.

Scottish distillery in world first to produce low-carbon whisky



Exergy3, a clean heat technology company, has announced the commissioning of a first-of-a-kind decarbonised heat project at Annandale Distillery near Dumfries in Scotland. The pioneering project delivers high-temperature process heat of up to 1,200°C using low- and zero-carbon electricity. This represents a major breakthrough in the affordable decarbonisation of industrial heat, which currently accounts for around 18% of global CO₂ emissions and is notoriously difficult to decarbonise.

The award-winning Annandale Distillery aims to become one of the first distilleries in the world to produce low-carbon whisky. Prof. David Thomson, cofounder of Annandale Distillery, said: "This is a first – not just for the whisky industry or Scotland, but globally. Heat-intensive industries like ours are under increasing pressure to decarbonise, and solutions that can deliver high-temperature heat without fossil fuels have been hard to find. The fact that it does so economically, while also helping tackle the rising costs of balancing the electricity system, makes it incredibly powerful." What makes the solution particularly distinctive is its use of renewable electricity that would

otherwise be curtailed. In this project, the system utilises wind power, which is the most abundant renewable energy source in Scotland.

Iron Age human remains identified in South of Scotland excavation



Adie's Brae excavation. Photo: Airborne Lens.

Cremated human remains dating from the Iron Age have been discovered during an archaeological excavation at Adie's Brae near Moffat. The dig was part of the Destination Tweed project's community-based archaeology programme, Uncovering the Tweed, which is investigating important sites of activity along the River Tweed and in the surrounding area. The programme is being led by AOC Archaeology Group who worked with a team of volunteers to carry out the dig in October 2024, with results now emerging from post-excavation analysis.

The cremated remains were found during an initial excavation of the Adie's Brae scooped settlement at Ericstane near Moffat on land owned by Borders Forest Trust, a partner in the Destination Tweed project. Scooped settlements are enclosures that have been cut into the hillside. They are found exclusively in south-east and central southern Scotland and typically date to the Middle Iron Age (c.200BC-200AD).

The dig uncovered two roundhouses, pits and postholes as well as evidence of everyday domestic activity. Burnt bone fragments were discovered in a small pit within the settlement, with specialist analysis later identifying them as human remains representing one individual, thought to be male and aged over 17.

Radiocarbon dating indicates that the person was cremated somewhere between the second half of the 1st century BC and the end of the 1st century AD. It is believed that the cremated remains represent a small deposit deliberately placed within or under a building, with the main funeral pyre located elsewhere. While human remains of various forms have been found in Iron Age domestic settings in other areas of Scotland, surviving remains of this type in a domestic context are a very rare discovery in this part of Scotland and have the potential to aid understanding of funerary rituals and pyre technology of the time, as well as the health of the people of the period. Destination Tweed Project Officer, Charlotte Douglas, said; "Discoveries like this highlight the incredible depth of history that exists along the River Tweed and its surrounding landscape. Through Uncovering the Tweed, we're both revealing fascinating insights into how people lived and commemorated their dead thousands of years ago, and also giving local communities the chance to play a direct role in these discoveries. It's a wonderful way to connect people with the heritage on their doorstep and to help tell the story of the people who have lived in these landscapes across the centuries."

'Celtic curse' genetic disease hotspots revealed

People from the Outer Hebrides and north-west Ireland have the highest risk of developing a genetic disease that causes a dangerous build-up of iron in the body, a study suggests.

The study marks the first time the genetic risk for haemochromatosis – also known as the 'Celtic curse' – has been mapped across the UK and Ireland, despite a high incidence of the condition among Scottish and Irish populations. Targeting genetic screening for the condition to priority areas could help identify at-risk individuals earlier and avoid future health complications, experts say.

Genetic risk

Haemochromatosis symptoms can evolve over decades as high iron levels in the body cause damage to organs. Early diagnosis and treatment – such as regular blood donation to reduce iron levels – is key to prevent liver damage, liver cancer and arthritis.

The condition is caused by small changes in DNA, known as genetic variants, which can be passed down through families. The most important risk factor in the UK and Ireland is a genetic variant called C282Y. Scientists at the University of Edinburgh analysed genetic data from more than 400,000 individuals in the UK BioBank and Viking Genes studies to determine the prevalence of the C282Y variant across 29 regions of the British Isles and Ireland.

They found that people with ancestry from the north-west of Ireland have the highest risk of developing haemochromatosis, with one in 54 people estimated to carry the genetic variant. This is followed by Outer Hebrideans (one in 62) and those from Northern Ireland (one in 71).

Mainland Scots – particularly in Glasgow and southwest Scotland – are also at increased risk of the condition, with one in 117 people estimated to carry the variant, corroborating the 'Celtic Curse' nickname.

The high combined genetic risk across these locations suggests that focusing genetic screening at these key areas would discover the largest number of people with the condition, researchers say. Professor Jim Flett Wilson Chair of Human Genetics, Usher Institute said "If untreated, the iron-overload disease haemochromatosis can lead to liver cancer, arthritis and other poor outcomes. We have shown that the risk in the Hebrides and Northern Ireland is much higher than previously thought, with about one in every 60 people at risk, about half of whom will develop the disease. Early detection prevents most of the adverse consequences and a simple treatment – giving blood – is available. The time has come to plan for community-wide genetic screening in these high-risk areas, to identify as many people as possible whose genes mean they are at high risk of this preventable illness."

Celtic connection

The team also examined haemochromatosis diagnoses across NHS England and identified more than 70,000 cases. A diagnosis was nearly four times as high in white Irish individuals than in white British individuals.

Among white British individuals, those from Liverpool were 11 times more likely to have a diagnosis than those from Kent. The research team suggest this could be due to historical immigration from Ireland – more than 20 per cent of Liverpool's population was Irish in the 1850s. The prevalence of



haemochromatosis in England largely follows the pattern of genetic risk, but some regions – Birmingham, Cumbria, Northumberland and Durham – have lower rates of diagnosis than expected. These areas of potential under-diagnosis in England could also benefit from genetic screening to reveal additional cases, experts say.

Haemochromatosis prevalence data from the NHS are not available for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, so could not be included. Torcuil Crichton, the Labour MP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles), has haemochromatosis and supports the call for community screening for haemochromatosis genetic variants in the Western Isles, Northern Ireland, and other haemochromatosis hotspots. I have previously raised this with Ministers in the House of Commons and this new evidence ought to be enough to persuade the UK National Screening Committee to review its position and approve a pilot screening programme. The Western Isles offers a contained and distinct population sample to start from. Early identification, which I was lucky to have, means a whole range of bad health outcomes can be avoided and I'll be urging Ministers and the Screening Committee to reconsider their stance."

7th annual Bellingham Scottish Gathering



The Scottish Dance Society presents the 7th annual Bellingham Scottish Gathering on Saturday June 6, 2026. Spectacular Marine Park in Blaine, Washington has unrivaled natural beauty. Surrounded by the Salish Sea, the park affords views of Mount Baker and the Peace Arch border crossing into Canada. The Scottish Gathering features the City of Bellingham Open Highland Dancing Championship and a full slate of competitive dance events for young beginners to adults. Championships are the highest level of competitive highland dance and sanctioned by the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing, the World-Wide Governing Body based in Edinburgh, Scotland. The prestigious event includes the four traditional Highland dances performed by top-level competitors.

A celebration of Scotland's culture

New this year, the 'Fabric & Fibers of Scotland Contest' promoting the use of Scottish textiles in garment construction and exposes festivalgoers to the variety of wool fibers, yarns and fabrics originating in Scotland.

The Scottish Gathering often offers Scottish-breed animals in educational and fun displays. 2026 is the year of the Clydesdale with the magnificent Katelyn joining the festivities. Celtic musicians entertain around the beer garden while Scottish clan and vendor booths offer information and goods for sale. The day is a celebration of Scotland's culture with something for everyone to enjoy in a beautiful outdoor venue.

For more information visit:
www.ScottishDanceSociety.org



Protecting Scapa Flow and the Queen of Sweden



Queen of Sweden. Photos: Historic Environment Scotland.

A World War naval base and a centuries old Swedish ship have both been named as Scotland's newest Historic Marine Protected Areas. Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy Gillian Martin confirmed the designation of the two sites off the coasts of Orkney and Shetland to recognise the national importance of the historical marine assets and provide legal protection to ensure their preservation. The Scapa Flow site off the coast of Orkney has a number of different historic marine assets including the largest concentration of warship wrecks and other wartime artefacts in the UK. It played an important role as a naval base during the two World Wars of the 20th century and was the location of the internment and scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet at the end of the First World War.

The *Queen of Sweden* is one of the best-preserved remains of a Swedish East India Company ship located in waters around Scotland. She was built in

Stockholm in 1741 to trade with China - the largest ship built for the company at that time – and sank off the coast of Shetland in 1745 during strong winds. The first Historic Marine Protected Areas were designated by the Scottish Government in 2013 to identify and protect marine historic assets of national importance which survive in Scottish territorial waters. It is a criminal offence to remove, alter or disturb any of the protected sites across the country.

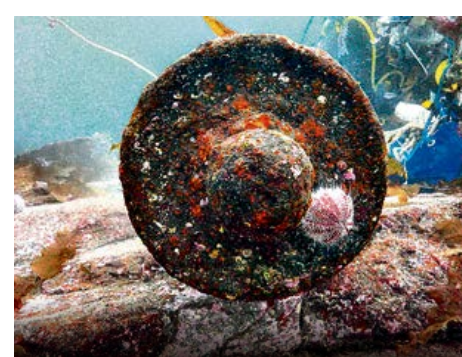
Scotland's underwater heritage

Confirming the designation of the two sites, during a tour of the Scapa Flow site, Ms Martin said: "These two new Historic Marine Protected Areas - at Scapa Flow, and the *Queen of Sweden* wreck site in Shetland - are important additions to our network of Historic MPAs, which protect the most significant wreck sites across Scotland's seas. The designation of these sites recognises their national value and will help to ensure that future generations can continue to explore,

learn from, and be inspired by Scotland's underwater heritage. I'm grateful for the support from local authorities, heritage bodies, and marine industries in bringing these designations forward."

Orkney Islands Council Leader Heather Woodbridge added: "Wrecked vessels, including those of the German High Seas Fleet, are a significant heritage asset and attract visitors from all over the world, contributing to the economy of Orkney. Sadly, the condition of the wrecks is deteriorating, and these important remains will not last forever. Officially recognising and protecting these sites is therefore vitally important to maximise their longevity. This Historic MPA will ensure these irreplaceable assets are protected from future human damage or disturbance while still allowing for responsible access, research and education where appropriate."

The Historic Marine Protected Areas for the Scapa Flow and *Queen of Sweden* designations came into effect on 1 November 2025.



From the Antipodes to Scone: *Clan MacKinnon returns to the Battlefield*



Australian representative Rodney Deaman of Tarago, NSW.

For McKinnon and Deaman, this is not theatre, but the culmination of years of training in historical martial disciplines—where authenticity is matched by athleticism.

A clan story renewed

For Clan MacKinnon, the symbolism runs deep. To have stood in the last interclan battle of the old era, and now to take the field in the first of a new one, is a rare and powerful continuity. It speaks not only to heritage, but to resilience—the enduring identity of a clan whose story has crossed both centuries and continents. From the Hebrides to New South Wales, and now back again to the ancient seat of Scottish kings, the journey is as meaningful as the contest itself. “I am proud to represent both Australia and Clan MacKinnon. I feel a deep calling to serve the betterment of our Clan. Though small, we have achieved remarkable things throughout history, and I am in a unique position to win new renown for the MacKinnon name. Cuimhnich bàs Alpein.” History, as the clans have always known, is not something left behind. It is something carried forward—into the field, and into the fight.

Beyond the tournament, this moment marks the beginning of a broader storytelling journey. Andrew McKinnon’s participation will form part of *The Bard & the Blade*, a developing series exploring Scottish history through lived experience—where scholarship meets steel, and where stories are not only told, but embodied. For history, as the clans have always known, is not something left behind. It is something carried forward—into the field, and into the fight.



Andrew McKinnon.

Andrew McKinnon (gàidhlig - Anndra Mac Fhionghuin Nan Cath [Andrew McKinnon of the battles]) is an armiger of Clan MacKinnon and serves as Gillie Mòr (swordbearer) for the clan. Based in New South Wales, Australia, he trains in historical martial disciplines and represents both Australia and Clan MacKinnon in competitive medieval tournaments across the globe.



Representing Scotland Jane de Bleu.

In June 2026, the grounds of Scone Palace—long regarded as the spiritual heart of Scottish kingship—will once again echo with the clash of arms. This time, however, history is not simply being remembered; it is being lived anew. Among those taking the field is Andrew McKinnon of New South Wales, Australia: an armiger of Clan MacKinnon, his arms granted by the Court of the Lord Lyon, and serving as Gillie Mòr (swordbearer) for the clan.

He has been invited to compete in a full-contact medieval tournament on 20–21 June, representing Australia alongside fellow New South Welshman Rodney Deaman. Their opponents are not merely other competitors—but history itself.

Where kings were crowned

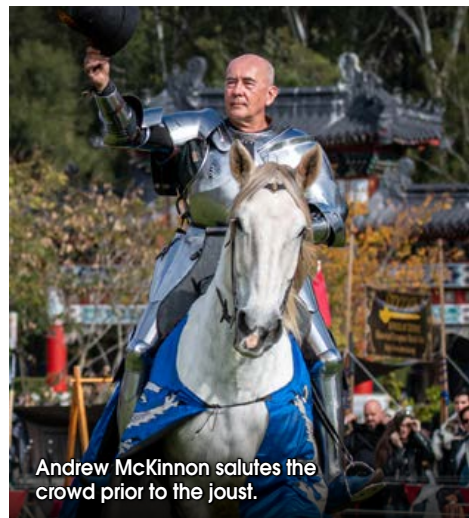
Few locations could be more fitting. Scone Palace stands near the ancient Moot Hill, where Scottish kings—including Robert the Bruce in 1306 and Charles II in 1651—were crowned upon the Stone of Destiny. Centuries later, the same ground will host a different kind of coronation: not of kings, but of courage, skill, and living tradition.

At the heart of the tournament lies something far rarer than sport: a true interclan contest. Not since the Battle of Mulroy in 1688—fought between MacDonald of Keppoch and Clan Mackintosh—have Scottish clans met in formalised combat. In that final clash of the old clan era, Clan MacKinnon stood alongside MacDonald of Keppoch.

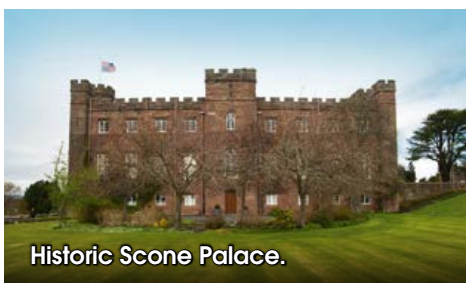
Now, 338 years later, Clan MacKinnon once again takes the field—this time against Clan Murray. Representing Clan Murray is Roy Murray, serving as Gillie Mòr for his clan and fighting on home soil. Opposing him, Andrew McKinnon carries both the weight of his lineage and the distinction of representing Australia in what is believed to be the first international jousting contest between Australia and Scotland. Rounding out team Australia is Rodney Deaman, a highly experienced international competitor. Roy Murray’s teammate for Scotland will be experienced horsewoman Jane de Bleu. History, it seems, has come full circle.

The tournament will feature two principal disciplines:

- The joust—the thunder of hooves, the splintering of lances, and the timeless test of nerve and precision.
- Ground combat with poleaxes—a demanding and highly technical form of armoured fighting, requiring strength, control, and tactical awareness at close quarters.



Andrew McKinnon salutes the crowd prior to the joust.



Historic Scone Palace.

Ken your country

This mansion was originally built for Andrew Carnegie. Photo: VisitScotland.

How well do you know Scotland? To test your knowledge, we have assembled ten fun questions on its geography, history and culture - but if you get stumped, the solutions can be found underneath. Good luck!

- 1) Which musical instrument did Robert Burns play?
- 2) How many ships of the German fleet were scuppered at Scapa Flow in 1919?
- 3) Where in Scotland is the Crinan Canal?
- 4) What was James Braidwood famous for?
- 5) Near which Scottish island does the Isle of Raasay lie?
- 6) Which famous book was written by economist Adam Smith?
- 7) Which northerly baronial mansion was originally built for Andrew Carnegie?
- 8) Which town did Robert Burns say had “honest men and bonnie lassies”?
- 9) Name the castle where you would hear the One O’Clock Gun?
- 10) What name did the Romans give to Scotland?

Answers

- 1) The fiddle and he taught himself to play.
- 2) 52 within five hours, representing the greatest loss of shipping in a single day in history.
- 3) Argyll, it connects Loch Fyne to the Sound of Jura.
- 4) He established the first municipal fire brigade in the world and is considered the ‘father of the modern fire service’. The Edinburgh Fire Engine Establishment was formed in 1824.
- 5) The Isle of Skye. Raasay sits between the Isle of Skye and the mainland of Scotland.
- 6) *The Wealth of Nations*.
- 7) Skibo Castle, which is located near Dornoch in the Scottish Highlands.
- 8) Ayr in the poem *Tam O’Shanter*.
- 9) Edinburgh Castle. Ships in the Firth of Forth once set their maritime clocks by the One O’Clock Gun. The firing of the gun dates back to 1861.
- 10) Caledonia, it was the Latin name applied to the lands north of Roman Britannia.

Haddington Pipe Band - *The innovative community band driving Scottish culture at home and overseas*



The band at Aubigny-sur-Nère, led by Pipe Major Fraser Wilkinson, playing for the crowds at the 2025 Fête Franco-Écossaises. Photo: Nick Callaghan.



A photo staged for one of the band's memorable calendars. Photo: Nick Callaghan.



Photo: Nick Callaghan.



Performing in 2025 with the Aubigny-sur-Nère band under the shadow of Haddington's St Mary's Kirk. Photo: Daniel Hogarth.

In the historic East Lothian market town of Haddington, where the first recorded mention of town pipers dates back to 1542 and a 15th century carving of a piper graces St Mary's kirk, the musical heartbeat of piping and drumming has been part of local life for centuries. Yet it was only in the early 1980s that the modern incarnation of Haddington Pipe Band took shape under a formal name and structure. That initiative sparked a journey that would extend far beyond its borders and resonate with Scots and many others at home and abroad.

What began modestly in 1981 - when four friends abandoned fancy dress performances as the 'Tyneside Tipplers' to establish a 'proper' band - has blossomed into an organisation celebrated not merely for its musical talents, but for its cultural reach, community spirit, innovation, and international bridge-building.

Roots in community and tradition

Haddington Pipe Band describes itself first and foremost as a community band dedicated to encouraging the art and tradition of piping and drumming. Open to all ages and skill levels, it runs a structured tuition programme that nurtures young pipers and drummers alongside more seasoned players. Rather than pursuing competition circuits, the band has chosen a different path - one that prioritises cultural engagement. Band members regularly perform at local galas, festivals, weddings, charity events, dances, parades, and markets,

embedding the sound of the pipes deep into the everyday life of East Lothian and beyond.

Over the years, engagement with local schools and collaboration across generations - from teenagers to octogenarians - has kept the tradition alive and evolving, fuelling a pipeline of young talent that carries the echoes of Scottish heritage into the future.

Celebrating Scottish musical heritage

In a proud tradition of cultural leadership and innovation, the band has spearheaded events that extend beyond performance alone.

One standout moment came back in 2009, a year the band affectionately refers to as their 'annus mirabilis'. The band organised a worldwide competition to compose a pipe anthem for East Lothian. Composers from across the globe sent in entries, and the winning tune - The Haddington Turnpike, by Bruce Thomson - was performed live in front of a large local audience. The tune has become the band's signature tune and went on to achieve high recognition when it was included in the bible of outstanding pipe tunes, the *Scots Guards Standard Settings of Pipe Music* collection.

The band didn't stop there. They brought together local bands in a series of massed band events to showcase this new anthem and the breadth of piping talent in the county, culminating in multiple awards at the Scottish Event Awards and - in a remarkable accomplishment - winning Scottish Pipe Band of the Year at the Scots Trad Music Awards in 2009, beating top-class competing outfits despite being a non-competitive community band.

This focus on inclusion and celebration of Scottish musical heritage reflects a deep cultural confidence - a willingness to define success not by trophies but by community engagement and creativity.

The story of Haddington Pipe Band is more than local history.

International footsteps

Haddington Pipe Band hasn't confined its influence to local shores. In addition to visits to, among other destinations, China and Germany, the band has maintained a thriving cultural link with Aubigny-sur-Nère, Haddington's twin town in France.

What began as a goodwill visit soon grew into a tradition of reciprocal performances and cultural exchange. The band regularly travels to Fêtes Franco-Écossaises, where crowds numbering tens of thousands gather in the historic French town to celebrate Scottish-French heritage through music, dance, and community spirit.

In turn, the Aubigny pipe band - whose very existence was sparked with Haddington's encouragement - has performed in Scotland, joining forces with their Scottish counterparts in shared performances that honour the Auld Alliance between the two communities and nations.

These exchanges reveal a remarkable truth: Scottish culture - distilled in the haunting resonance of the pipes - travels

not only across sea but through hearts, reinforcing diasporic ties and reviving old alliances. For many Scots abroad, stories of gatherings like those in Aubigny become bridges back to home.

Connecting to wider audiences

While rooted in community, Haddington Pipe Band has consistently stepped onto stages that connect Scottish tradition with wider audiences. They've organised award-winning traditional music festivals (Trad on the Tyne) and concerts, performed at Edinburgh's Usher Hall, supported the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra in end-of-year concerts, and taken part in significant civic events like remembrance parades, torchlight processions, and memorial commemorations.

Perhaps most importantly, their performances at hospitals and charitable events underscore a belief in the positive power of music, bringing joy to children and communities alike.

A thriving tradition

For the Scottish diaspora, the story of Haddington Pipe Band is more than local history. It's an affirmation of how tradition can thrive when it opens itself to exchange and innovation, celebrates community, and never forgets its roots.

It's not merely the sound of drones, chanters, and drums that travels; it's the spirit of Scotland - resilient, generous, and joyful - carried by each performance, each shared tune, and each gathering where the pipes and drums fill the air with stories of home and carry forward a mightily significant facet of Scotland's culture.

For more information on Haddington Pipe Band, visit: www.haddingtonpipeband.co.uk



Band members at the Scots Music Trad Awards back in 2009, when the band won the Scottish Pipe Band of the Year award. Pipe Major David Leckie with the trophy.



Photo: Nick Callaghan

THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - England declared war on both Scotland and France. **1522**

1 - Act of Union of English and Scottish parliaments proclaimed, the Union was brought about in spite of opposition by the majority of Scots. **1707**

1 - Glasgow band Deacon Blue release their debut album *Raintown*. **1987**

2 - Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert the Bruce, crowned High King of All Ireland. **1316**

2 - King James I crowned at Scone. **1424**

2 - Mary, Queen of Scots, escaped from Loch Leven Castle and revoked her abdication. She soon gathered an army and moved towards Dumbarton Castle. **1568**



2 - Loch Ness monster is sighted. Although accounts of an aquatic beast living in Scotland's Loch Ness date back 1,500 years, the modern legend of the Loch Ness Monster is born when a sighting makes local news on 2 May 1933. The newspaper *The Inverness Courier* related an account of a local couple who claimed to have seen "an enormous animal rolling and plunging on the surface." **1933**

3 - John Knox began the Reformation in Scotland. **1557**

3 - Nearly 300 miners are arrested outside Ravenscraig in clashes with police as they try to stop lorries laden with coal entering. The steel works was the site of some of the most violent conflicts of the strike of 1984 and 85. Bottles, stones and missiles were thrown with both workers and police suffering many injuries. **1984**

3 - The Pan Am Flight 103 bombing trial opens at the Scottish Court in the Netherlands. Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988, after a bomb was detonated. All 259 people on board were killed, and 11 people on the ground also died. **2000**

4 - Marquis of Montrose victorious at Battle of Auldearn. **1645**

5 - King Charles I surrenders to Lord Leven and was later passed to the Parliamentary forces. **1646**

5 - King George VI officially opened the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow. Glasgow's Bellahouston Park played host to over 13 million people who came to visit the Empire Exhibition, a celebration of the achievements of the British Empire. **1938**



6 - Last major bombing attack on the Clyde area by the Luftwaffe; Greenock was badly hit with 280 dead. **1941**

6 - Icelandic gunboats fired live rounds at British fishing trawlers, many of them from Scottish ports, during the Cold War over fishing rights. **1959**

6 - The election of the first Scottish Parliament since 1707. Elections were held for the Scottish Parliament and the 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) took their seats on 12 May 1999. **1999**

7 - The Earl of Hertford invaded Scotland in an attempt to force the marriage of Edward, son of Henry VIII, and Mary, Queen of Scots. **1542**

7 - James Naysmith, engineer and inventor of steam hammer, died. **1890**

7 - First broadcast of the BBC television variety show *The White Heather Club*, featuring music, dance, and comedy acts, which aired nationally until 1968. **1958**

8 - Scottish-born pirate "Captain" William Kidd tried for piracy at London's Old Bailey. He was hanged on 23 May. **1701**

8 - V.E. (Victory in Europe) day marked the end of World War II in Europe. Over 50,000 Scottish servicemen lost their lives during the conflict. **1945**

9 - J M Barrie, author of *Peter Pan* born. **1860**

9 - The Marquis of Montrose and his Royalists camped at Auldearn near Nairn, enroute to attack Inverness. The Covenanters, reinforced by troops withdrawn from England because of the threat from Montrose, gathered at Inverness before marching overnight in an attempt to surprise Montrose at Auldearn. The Royalists won a fierce fight, killing 2000 Covenanters for the loss of 200 of their own men. **1645**

10 - Rev Henry Duncan opened the world's first savings bank in Ruthwell, near Dumfries. **1810**



10 - Rudolf Hess crash-landed in Scotland after his bizarre solo flight from Nazi Germany. Hitler's most trusted official and friend, he crash-landed a stolen plane at Eaglesham in an inexplicable effort to negotiate an end to the war. He died in 1987 after apparently trying to hang himself with an electrical cord. He was 93. **1941**

10 - Donovan, Scottish pop and folk singer-songwriter, was born. Upon his emergence during the mid-'60s, Donovan was anointed 'Britain's answer to Bob Dylan'. **1946**

11 - Covenanter martyrs, Margaret Lachlane, or McLachlan, and Margaret Wilson, refused to take an oath of loyalty to Charles II that acknowledged his authority on everything, including religious matters. They were tied to stakes in the Solway near Wigtown where they drowned as the tide rose. A reprieve had been sent from Edinburgh but never reached Wigtown. **1685**

12 - The Black Watch regiment was commissioned under General Wade to police the Highlands. The force was known in Gaelic as Am Freiceadan Dubh, "the dark" or "black watch". The regiment's motto is Nemo Me Impune Lacessit (No One Assails Me With Impunity). **1725**

12 - Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, daughter of the Earl of Strathmore, was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom with her husband King George VI. Queen Elizabeth was raised at Glamis Castle in Forfar. Queen Elizabeth reigned until 1952 and became known as the Queen Mother as her daughter, the current Queen Elizabeth, took the throne. **1937**

12 - The Scottish Parliament reconvened with Dr Winifred M Ewing MSP as acting Presiding Officer. Her first words to the Parliament were: "The Scottish Parliament which adjourned on the 25th of March in the year 1707 is hereby reconvened." **1999**

13 - The forces of Mary Queen of Scots are defeated at Battle of Langside by a confederacy of Scottish Protestants under James Stewart, the regent of her son, King James VI of Scotland. During the battle, which was fought out in the southern suburbs of Glasgow, a cavalry charge routed Mary's 6,000 Catholic troops, and they fled the field. Three days later, Mary escaped to Cumberland, England, where she sought protection from Queen Elizabeth I. **1568**

13 - James Kirk was executed near Dumfries as a Covenanter refusing to swear the oath, one of the last of the wave of deaths of the 'Killing Times'. **1685**

13 - MSPs vote 70-56 in an initial vote to accept the principles of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill, which would allow assisted dying in Scotland. **2025**



14 - St Andrews Society of Golfers constituted. In 1834 it became the Royal and Ancient Golf Club. Thus began the foremost club in both Scottish golf history and world golf in general. **1754**

15 - Mary, Queen of Scots, married Earl of Bothwell - at 4am. Mary's third marriage to James Hepburn, the Earl of Bothwell took place in the Chapel of Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh. **1567**

15 - Bobby Murdoch, Scottish footballer, died. Murdoch was a key figure in Celtic's European Cup-winning side of 1967, dubbed the Lisbon Lions. **2001**

15 - Stagecoach Group launches a driverless bus service on the Forth Road Bridge, believed to be the world's first. **2023**



16 - The Bay City Rollers form in Edinburgh. Called the 'tartan teen sensations from Edinburgh', The Bay City Rollers sold 120 million records worldwide. **1966**

17 - King James V established paid judges to sit as the Court of Session, the highest civil court in Scotland. **1532**

17 - Robert Tannahill drowned himself in a Paisley canal. A compassionate poet, he explored themes of love, friendship and empathy, and often used his surroundings as inspiration, taking long walks in the country around his home. He was prone to bouts of melancholy. **1810**

18 - Robert the Bruce invades Isle of Man. **1313**

18 - The Free Church of Scotland was founded by dissenting members of the Church of Scotland. **1843**

19 - Death in Auchinleck of James Boswell, biographer of Dr Johnson. **1795**

20 - Battle of Dunnichen (also known as Nechtansmere), south of Forfar in Angus, as a result of which the Picts stopped the advance northwards of the Angles of Northumbria. **685**

20 - The Earl of Argyll sailed from Holland to Campbeltown with 300 men in an attempted uprising. After its failure he was executed. The rebellion was designed to place Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, on the throne. The failure of this revolt led to a close bond between the Stewart monarchy and the enemies of the Campbells in the Highlands, which was to become more apparent in the subsequent Jacobite uprisings. **1685**



Photo: Fife Council.

20 - Dunfermline, Fife, is among a record number of locations to have won prestigious city status through a competition, as part of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Dunfermline became the eighth Scottish city, joining Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Stirling and Perth. **2022**

21 - Clocks and watches went forward for one hour as the Daylight Savings Act brought in 'British Summer Time' (BST) for the first time. **1916**

22 - Britain's worst train disaster at Quintinshill (near Gretna Green) in which three trains collided, with the loss of 227 lives. A troop train carrying the Seventh Royal Scots Regiment hit a stationary train and the night express from London then hit the wreckage. Two signalmen were later jailed. **1915**

22 - The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted in favour of women ministers. Soon after four women were accepted as candidates for the ministry by the Presbyteries of Edinburgh, Irvine, and Kilmarnock. **1968**

23 - Captain William Kidd, the notorious Scottish pirate, died. Born in Dundee, around the year 1645, Kidd became one of the best known pirates of his age. **1701**

23 - 'The Unknown Bairn': The drowned body of a young boy is found washed up onshore at Tayport; he is never identified. **1971**

23 - A major fire at the Glasgow School of Art causes severe damage to the main building, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. A further fire took place during the restoration in June, 2018. **2014**

24 - King David I died at Carlisle and Malcolm IV crowned at Scone. **1153**

24 - Glasgow Rangers became the first Scottish side to win the UEFA Cup Winners' Cup, when they defeated Dynamo Moscow in Barcelona. **1972**

25 - John Stuart, Earl of Bute, Britain's first Scottish Prime Minister, born. **1713**

25 - Celtic FC become the first British football club to win the European Cup. The winning team was made up of eleven Scots, all born within a thirty mile radius of Glasgow. **1967**

25 - St. Enoch Centre shopping mall opened to the public in Glasgow city centre. The building is notable for its massive glass roof, the largest glass-covered enclosed area in Europe, and is affectionately nicknamed 'The Glasgow Greenhouse'. **1989**

26 - The parliament convened by King James I approved the arrest of a number of the Scottish nobility - and also banned the playing of football. **1424**



26 - Dunnottar Castle, the last Royalist stronghold in eastern Scotland, surrenders. Dunnottar Castle had been under siege for eight months by Cromwell's forces. Although the castle fell, the defenders managed to smuggle out the Crown Jewels of Scotland to nearby Kinneff Church. **1652**

27 - Maiden voyage of liner *Queen Mary* from Southampton to New York. Built by John Brown & Company in Clydebank, Scotland and was a luxury ocean liner for three years until 1939, when it was transformed into a troopship for the Second World War. She resumed passenger service in 1947, where it continued until 1967, when it docked permanently in Long Beach, California. **1936**

28 - Papal Bull signed by Pope Alexander VI confirming the marriage of King James IV and Margaret Tudor and the "Treaty of Everlasting Peace" between Scotland and England. **1503**

29 - King Charles II born. **1630**

29 - King Charles II returned to England. Royal Oak Day. **1660**

30 - Thomas Chalmers, the Presbyterian cleric, theologian and social reformer, died. Chalmers was a popular figure within the Kirk and held a keen interest in improving social welfare. **1847**

31 - The Royal Bank of Scotland was formed from a company of debenture holders. **1727**



31 - Start of passenger services on Edinburgh Trams. Trams previously ran in the Scottish capital from 1871 to 1956.

31 - A huge wildfire covering 30 square miles (80 km²), thought to be the largest ever seen in the UK, is brought under control by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service at Cannich in the Highlands. **2023**

The Bird Man of Paisley

By: David McVey



Alexander Wilson's statue outside Paisley Abbey.

Paisley-born Alexander Wilson is famed for his pioneering study and illustration of American birds. He is described as the 'founder of American ornithology' and noted as one of the leading naturalists of the early 19th century, as David McVey explains.

The late 18th century saw several talented poets emerge from the town of Paisley. Mostly they were working-class men, employed as weavers in what was becoming one of the great thread and fabric centres of the world.

The best-known of these was, of course, Robert Tannahill. Not only is his work still read and celebrated but his name lives on in the popular Scottish traditional music ensemble The Tannahill Weavers.

Alexander Wilson

However, there were others; Robert Allan, principally a songwriter, Ebenezer Picken and Alexander Wilson. Wilson would achieve some notoriety as a poet, fame in quite another field, yet he would die poor in a far distant country. Wilson was born in 1766 in Paisley. His mother died when he was ten and he had to begin working on a farm in 1777 when his father married a widow with two children and there were three more mouths to feed. He began as a weaver in 1779, apprenticed to his brother-in-law William Duncan; he was 13.

Wilson had received some education but not much but this didn't stop him growing and developing and acquiring an interest in poetry. This was especially fuelled by the publication of Burns' *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786. Just as a generation of 60s youngsters heard The Beatles and

picked up guitars, the emergence of Burns inspired many Scots to write imitative poetry. Wilson wasn't the best such poet, but he certainly wasn't the worst. He published a small collection (unimaginatively entitled *Poems*) in 1790. He published anonymously a long poem called *Watty and Meg* in 1792; some assumed it was by Burns himself. It opens as follows:

*Keen the frosty winds were blowing,
Deep the snaw had wreathed the ploughs,
Watty, wearied a' day sawing,
Daunert down to Mungo Blue's,*

*Dryster Jock was sitting cracky,
Wi' Pate Tamson o' the Hill,
Come awa', quo' Johnny, 'Watty Haith
we'se hae anither gill.'*

Social justice

Like other Paisley poets, Wilson had a strong sense of social justice and often addressed the plight of working-class people. In 1794 he penned a poem called *The Shark, or Lang Mills Detected* which was a satirical attack on the Paisley mill owner William Sharp, whom he accused (disguised as 'The Shark') of using, no pun intended, sharp practices to exploit his weavers;

*Think, thou unconscionable Shark!
For heaven's sake bethink thee!
To what a depth of horrors dark
Sic wark will surely sink thee
Repent of sic enormous sins...*

This poem was also published anonymously but Wilson unwisely tried to blackmail Sharp by offering to suppress the poem for five guineas. He was fined £60, couldn't afford to pay, and so spent 14 days imprisoned in Paisley's tolbooth in February 1793.

America

By 1794, Wilson was living in poverty. After being arrested again (for 'political agitation') he decided to emigrate to America at the age of 27. He landed in Delaware and *walked* to Philadelphia where he tried to make a living in his old trade but could find little work and so made the unusual, even for the time, switch into teaching. He taught for five years in

Philadelphia before having to scamper off to New Jersey in 1801 after a scandalous affair.

He taught for a while in Bloomfield, New Jersey before heading back to Pennsylvania. He taught at Union School near Gray's Ferry from 1802 until 1806. A near-neighbour was the naturalist William Bartram. Bartram seems to have identified Wilson's enthusiasm for nature, especially bird life, a love that comes out clearly in a number of his poems. He encouraged Wilson's growing interest in birds, and also his ambitions as a painter

Bartram's niece gave Wilson lessons in draughtsmanship. By 1804 Wilson was expressing his ambition to publish a book recording all the known American species of bird. He started travelling, collecting, recording, observing, painting and acquiring subscribers to fund ('crowdfund' essentially) the work. He worked closely with Charles Willson Peale, the founder of the Peale Museum in Philadelphia (one of the first natural history museums in America) and used the ornithological collections there for reference.

Alexander Wilson travelled a long way from the weaving industry in Paisley. Poet, artist, ornithologist, teacher, he packed a great deal into 47 short years of life.

He resigned his teaching job in 1806 to become editor of *New Cyclopaedia*, but the bird volumes were still his focus. Eventually, *American Ornithology* was published in nine volumes (by the publishers of *New Cyclopaedia*) between 1808 and 1814. It described 268 species of birds, 26 of which had not previously been recorded in print, and featured 76 plates drawn by Wilson.

The father of American ornithology

On a collecting expedition on the Ohio and Mississippi in 1810 (in his skiff, *Ornithologist*), Wilson reached Louisville, Kentucky. Here he met John James Audubon who would be inspired to improve upon Wilson's work.

Audubon's *Birds of America* was published between 1827 and 1838 in Edinburgh and London. While Audubon was much the better artist, some argued that he plagiarised much of Wilson's writing and that he had actively tried to suppress *American Ornithology* in order to promote his own work.

Ironically, in Wilson's home town, Paisley Museum and Art Gallery holds a copy of the four-volume edition of Audubon's book.

Wilson had become an American citizen in 1804 and in 1812 he was elected a member of the Society of Artists of the United States. The following year he was welcomed into the American Philosophical Society. Yet when Wilson died that same year, he was living in poverty, his great project having taken its toll. His friend George Ord, himself a zoologist of some note, saw the final two volumes of *American Ornithology* through to publication. Ord also later wrote Wilson's first biography. Wilson is buried in the graveyard of Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia.

Wilson is not forgotten at home. His statue stands proudly outside Paisley Abbey while there is a plaque on the former Laigh Kirk (now the Paisley Arts Centre) where he was baptised. He is sometimes referred to as 'the father of American ornithology' and there were at one time several species of bird named after him. The American Ornithological society, however, is gradually renaming bird species named after individuals. Wilson's Warbler, an attractive little yellow bird with a black cap, will be one of these. The bird serves as the logo of the Wilson Ornithological Society in the USA; it publishes the *Wilson Bulletin*. There is also a *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*.

Alexander Wilson travelled a long way from the weaving industry in Paisley. Poet, artist, ornithologist, teacher, he packed a great deal into 47 short years of life.



A drawing from the book *American Ornithology* by Alexander Wilson, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



A Wilson's Warbler. Photo: Rhododendrites, CC BY-SA 4.0.

IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN

Honey and whisky porridge



Ingredients:

150g/5½oz. porridge oats
3 tbsp. double cream, plus extra to serve
250ml/9 fl oz. milk
1 tbsp. soft brown sugar
dash whisky
1 tbsp. clear honey, to serve

Method:

Place the oats, cream, milk, sugar and whisky into a small saucepan and cook over a gentle heat for 6-7 minutes, until thickened and smooth. To serve, pour the porridge into a bowl and drizzle with honey and cream.

Whisky sauce

Ingredients

2 shallots, roughly sliced
1 celery stick, roughly sliced
2 tsp light olive oil
4 fresh thyme sprigs
1 fresh bay leaf
100ml/3½fl oz chicken stock
400ml/1⅓ pints double cream
70ml/2⅓fl oz good Scotch whisky
2 tsp wholegrain mustard
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Method:

Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and cook the shallots and celery in the olive oil. Fry gently for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, without colouring the vegetables.

Add the thyme and bay to the pan, taking care as they might crackle a little, then stir and cook for 2 minutes.

Pour in the chicken stock and reduce the liquid by half. This should take about 5 minutes.

Stir in the cream and then gently simmer the mixture for 20 minutes, reducing the liquid by one third. Take care not to let it boil and stir every couple of minutes.

Remove the sauce from the heat and strain it through a sieve into a clean pan, discarding the cooked vegetables and herbs.

Place the sauce back on the heat and stir in the whisky along with both types of mustard. Cook for a further 5 minutes before seasoning with salt and white pepper to taste and serving.

Steak Balmoral

Ingredients:

750g/1.5-7 sirloin of beef
250ml/ ½ pint margarine, liquid
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
4 tbsp. of preferred Scotch whisky
500 ml/1 pint whipping cream

250ml/ ½ pint beef stock
200g/1/2 lb. mushrooms
1 tsp of strong mustard

Method:

Cut the sirloin into up to 4 individual steaks. Brush the mushrooms and cut into slices and fry them in a pan. Add the mustard, cream and stock. Simmer until the liquid has reduced to half the volume and thickens. Season with salt and pepper.

Fry the steaks in a pan on high heat till meat juice is trickling out on top. Add salt and pepper. Turn steaks and wait until meat juice appears for medium cooked steaks-cook as preferred. Add the whisky and flambé (When you set fire to the whisky you have poured over the meat in the frying pan do so immediately so that the alcohol evaporates, while the flavours of the dram is left with the other flavours in the pan). Server steaks with mushroom sauce or a whisky sauce.

Hot toddy fruitcake



Ingredients:

For the cake:
200ml hot, strong black tea (use any type)
3 tbsp. whisky
3 tbsp. good-quality orange marmalade, thin or medium shred
700g mixed dried fruits
100g mixed peel
100g glacé cherries (natural colour)
225g butter
225g golden caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
225g plain flour
1 tsp ground mixed spice
1 tsp ground cinnamon
finely grated zest 1 lemon
To feed the cake:
2 tsp caster sugar
50ml hot black tea
1 tbsp. whisky (or use orange juice if you prefer)

Method:

Mix the hot tea, whisky and marmalade in a large bowl until the marmalade melts. Stir in all of the dried fruit, peel and cherries, then cover and leave to soak overnight. Next day, heat oven to 160C/fan 140C/gas 3 and grease and double-line a 20cm round, deep cake tin with non-stick baking paper. Using electric beaters, cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy.

Add the eggs a little at a time, beating well after each addition, then fold in the flour and spices, followed by the lemon zest and soaked fruit. Add any liquid that hasn't been absorbed by the fruit, too. Spoon into the prepared tin, level the top, then bake for 1½ hrs. Turn the oven down to 140C/fan 120C/gas 1 and bake for another 1½ hrs. or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.

Cool on a wire rack in the tin. While the cake is still warm, use the skewer to pepper the cake with holes, poking it all the way down. Dissolve the sugar in the tea, add the whisky or orange juice, then spoon

over the surface. If you're making the cake ahead of time, feed it with a fresh swig of hot toddy every week, but take care not to make the cake soggy. Can be kept for a month well-wrapped in an airtight container in a cool, dry place. If short on time, the cake can be made the same day that you decorate it.

Whisky Fudge



Ingredients:

450g/1lb. granulated sugar
50g/2 oz. butter
2 tablespoons golden syrup
4 tablespoons water
8 tablespoons full cream condensed milk
1 tablespoon whisky

Method:

Put the sugar, butter, syrup, water and condensed milk in a saucepan and stir over a gentle heat until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil without stirring, then continue boiling until a temperature of 116C/240F is reached on a sugar thermometer, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Remove the pan from the heat, add whisky, and beat the mixture with a wooden spoon or an electric mixer

Whisky Month

Celebrate Whisky Month in May with these recipes which add a splash of flavour using "the water of life". You can of course omit Whisky if preferred, enjoy and Slainte mhath! Your very good health!

until thick, grainy and cloudy. Pour the mixture into a lightly greased 18cm/7-inch shallow square tin and leave until almost set-about 5 to 10 minutes. Using a sharp knife, mark the soft fudge into squares then leave to cool completely before cutting and removing from the tin. The fudge can be stored for up to 2 to 3 weeks in an airtight container.

Classic whisky cocktail

Ingredients:

1 thick slice orange peel
1 maraschino cherry, with stem
1 tsp. sugar syrup (also sold as gomme syrup)
2-3 drops whisky bitters
ice cubes, as necessary
50ml/2fl oz. Scotch or bourbon
twist of lemon peel, to garnish

Method:

Take the orange peel and squeeze it with your fingers. Rub the peel around the insides of a whisky tumbler, then place into the glass. Add the cherry, sugar syrup and bitters, along with three ice cubes.

Add half of the scotch or bourbon and stir for about ten seconds. Add more ice and the remaining scotch or bourbon and stir again for 10-15 seconds. To serve, garnish with lemon peel.

Argyll community breathes new life into landmark pub



The Oakbank Community Inn. Photo: Kenneth Milligan.

The Oakbank Community Inn in Sandbank, near Dunoon, has opened its doors for the first time in almost three years. One of Scotland's newest community-owned pub ventures, the venue dates back to the 1860s and has played a key role in the history of Sandbank. It was purchased by the community of Sandbank in 2025 thanks to a substantial grant from the Scottish Land Fund. A new dawn for the pub contrasts sharply with the recent, potentially devastating announcement that eight Argyll Holidays parks in the area have gone into receivership.

Following months of hard work by the committee and a dedicated team of volunteers resulting in a redesign of the bar area, the pub opened just before Christmas. Sue McKillop, who led the campaign to bring the pub back to life, explained: "There have been so many hurdles to jump over and it's been a big learning curve for us all as we get set to

embark on a new chapter for a much loved and cherished community resource. We are under no illusions as to the challenges that lie ahead. Like any pub venue, we will need to keep innovating in order to survive. Many community-owned pubs fall by the wayside and we're determined that that won't be the case with the Oakbank. Our aim has always been to be a vibrant resource for the entire Sandbank community as well as for people and groups from further afield and, so far, we seem to have achieved that but we will have to keep listening to the community and the 200 or so shareholders as well as our key funders whose investment and support has made this project a reality. It's exciting but all just a wee bit scary!"

The committee is planning to provide food and accommodation in the very near future as well as hosting a permanent display related to the 'American Years' when the US Navy made Holy Loch their home from 1961 to 1991. The provision of 'gallery space' for the Cowal Open Studios artists' collective is also being considered. Sue concluded "We've achieved a lot over the past few months but there is so much more still to do. We want to take everyone in Sandbank and the surrounding areas with us on this journey! Watch this space!"

For more information and to contact the venue please visit the Oakbank Community Inn Sandbank on Facebook or email: sue.mckillop@ocis.org.uk.

Scotland Cool: Braveheart to Outlander Dressed to Kilt Returns to NYC



with innovation, including Carolyn Baxter, Prophetik by Jeff Garner, Calzeat, Strathmore Woollen Company, Lorna Gillies, Sandra Murray, and Red Label Kilts of Canada, led by designer Deana Lloy, whose presence added an international dimension to the runway.

The evening was further elevated by support from the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, which offered guests exclusive access to its global whisky program and introduced a custom event label, "Kilty Pleasures." This year's show also marked two significant commercial announcements. The first was the launch of a new bespoke women's design brand, Redmond Harvey of Scotland, founded by designer Holly Harvey. Known for one-of-a-kind dresses and gowns, the brand debuted a series of striking long tartan gowns on the runway, signaling a fresh and elevated direction in Scottish womenswear.

The second announcement introduced a landmark collaboration between Strathmore Woollen Company and the Navy SEAL Foundation. Strathmore will curate a range of products in the official Navy SEAL Foundation tartan, designed primarily for the women of the Navy SEAL community—including wives, mothers, daughters, and supporters. Following the show, these pieces will be available via the Navy SEAL Foundation's e-commerce platform. This partnership represents the first collaboration of its kind between

the Foundation and a Scottish company, celebrating both Scottish craftsmanship and the legacy of the SEAL community with a distinctive Highland influence.

True to its mission, Dressed to Kilt continues to serve as a platform for philanthropy, with proceeds benefiting the Navy SEAL Foundation and several former Navy SEALs participating in the show. Blending culture, fashion, and purpose, the 2026 edition reinforced the event's place as a distinctive and enduring highlight of New York's cultural calendar.



cultural ambassadors. Scottish football legend John Collins also took to the runway, marking Scotland's highly anticipated return to the global football stage.

Fashion and performance

The evening featured a dynamic mix of fashion and performance, including a U.S. debut by award-winning Scottish jazz vocalist Georgia Cecile and a high-energy appearance by rising boy band Just The Brave. Designers from across Scotland and beyond showcased collections that blended craftsmanship

Dressed to Kilt, the internationally recognized celebration of Scottish fashion, culture, and philanthropy, returned to New York City on April 11 at the New York Academy of Medicine for an evening that brought together standout talent from across Scotland, the UK, and the U.S. Co-founded by Sir Sean Connery and Dr. Geoffrey Scott Carroll, the event once again delivered a dynamic runway experience in support of the Navy SEAL Foundation.

Hosted by Dr. Carroll alongside Scottish television personality Danni Menzies, the show highlighted this year's theme, "Scotland Cool: Braveheart to Outlander," with a mix of heritage tartans and contemporary design. A standout moment included the appearance of Miss Scotland 2026, Eilidh MacDonald, who walked in a bespoke Gwen Russell gown representing the next generation of Scottish



All images courtesy of JP Yim/Getty Images for Dressed To Kilt.

Tartan and Stars

A year long programme celebrating Scottish-American Connections

We're rolling out an exciting line-up of **events throughout 2026** focusing on Scottish and American ties, history, culture and family connections.

These are in a variety of formats - from short talks to multi-week courses - **both in-person and online**. Speakers and educators include academics from Scottish Universities and expert Scottish genealogists.

www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/genealogy



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



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

HOUSE OF BURNETT INTERNATIONAL, INC.

THE WORLDWIDE BURNETT SOCIETY
www.houseofburnett.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, Edmondson, 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 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



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.au

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
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

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



All Campbells or descendants of Campbells and members of Clan Septs are welcome to join the Society.

For State Branches contact the National Secretary Margaret Vallance
Email: libertyv93@gmail.com
www.clan-campbell.org.au



Clan Donald U.S.A. Inc.

Clan Donald USA is a nationwide organization of over 1,200 families who trace their ancestry to any of the branches of Clann Domhnaill. We embrace all of the MacDonalDs, no matter how spelled, and other surnames that are recognized as branches or adherents of the greatest of the Highland Clans.

Clandonaldusa.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, President bruce1051@comcast.net 1051 Eagle Ridge Trail Stillwater, Minnesota 55082	Rachel Bruce, Secretary robruce1@gmail.com 1652 Glencoe St. Denver, Colorado, 80220
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www.familyofbruceinternational.org



Arms of the Chief
Peter Carruthers of Holmains
Society Patron

CLAN CARRUTHERS SOCIETY (INTERNATIONAL)

Royal Charter to Holmains (1755)

Official home of Carruthers

www.clancarruthersociety.org
michaelcarruthers100@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.



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](http://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 can be made via the Clan Fraser website: clanfraseraustralia.org
Email: clanfraseraustralia1@gmail.com
Or you can contact our Commissioner Don Chitts on Ph: (03) 9754 5120

For the latest Clan Fraser news and events go to our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064819413911>



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

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




Arms of the Chief
Rupert Irving of Bonshaw
 (Hereditary Chief and Patron, 20th of his line)

Official home of this proud Border Reiver Clan

IRVING

Cordially invites all **Irving/Irvines** and other spellings of the name to join us in preserving our rich Border history and heritage.

www.clanirving.com

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 MacNicol

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



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: clangregoraustalia@gmail.com
 Web: www.clangregor.com
"Royal is our Race"





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 of New Zealand

We welcome all MacKenzies
 All spellings and from all Septs.
jwmck900@gmail.com
www.clanmackenzienz.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	Australia: Pam Rhemrov Australian.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +61 407 789 924
Canada: Denise Lagundzin Canada.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +1 519 507 4465	England & Wales: William Macpherson EandW.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +44 7877 363 507
Europe: Bodo Bernd Schmitz Europe.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +0152 538 19 355	New Zealand: Tony McPherson NewZealand.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +64 274 587 812
Scotland & Northern Ireland: Moray G Cattanach SandNI.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +44 7810 860 528	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/>



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 Little Society, Inc.

Welcoming Little/Lyttle/Lytle and the like.

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

www.clanlittlesociety.org
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 Proud Member of COSCA



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



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 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.macaipen@gmail.com
 Website: <https://macaipen.com/>



Clan MacLaren

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

Mark A. McLaren, President
President@clanmaclarenna.org



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:
Dean McCraw, President
 912-596-8624
dean.mccraw1@gmail.com



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); Della'h'ay; Errol(l); Garrad; Garrow; Gifford; Hawson; Haygood; Hayter; Hayward; Haywood; Haynie; Hayden; Hayfield; Hayne(s); Leask(e); Leith; Lester; MacGaradh; Peebles; Peeples; Peoples; Turriff; Tweeddale; Yester

www.clanhay.com



Clan MacDougall Society of North America

MacDougalls, MacDowalls, & ALL Associated Families

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www.MacDougall.org



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www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com



Clan Maitland Society

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

North America: Carolyn Dobbs
carolyn_dobbs@msn.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 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
commissioner@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](https://www.facebook.com/clanmacfieaustralia) or our
 website: <https://clanmacfie.com.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 Morrison Society of North America

Morrison

Clann MhicGillemoire: Morrison + Gilmore + Brieve

Membership cordially invited from those who are connected with this great Clan, i.e., Morrison, Morison, Gilmour, Gilmer, Gilmore, Murrison or descendants of eligible name.


www.clanmorrison.net

Clan Muirhead Society

 A NON-PROF. CORP.
 Muirhead, Muirbède, Morehead, Moorhead
 and all Variant Names
www.clanmuirhead.com
 Rev. Ref. Chev. Raymond L. Morehead, GOTJ, FSA Scot,
 Chief Officer Elect Clan Muirhead Society
 Email- raymondktj@msn.com or raymond@clanmuirhead.com

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
 with Ross Clan heritage and interest.
 Contact: Commander Des Ross at
 lonepiper.ross@gmail.com M 0403 830 853

Clan Wardlaw Association

 Founded 2004
 Worldwide organization for all Wardlaws or related
 families. We invite you to join us.
 Email: clanwardlaw2004@gmail.com
'Wardlaw ivermair!'
www.clanwardlaw.com
Wardlaw Tartan and Ancestry Books

The Scottish Australian Heritage Council

 Membership is welcome
 from all of Scottish descent.
 For information please contact
members@scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

www.scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

CLAN MUNRO ASSOCIATION
 AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND


 We would be pleased to
 welcome as a member,
 anyone interested in their
 Clan heritage with the
 names; Munro, Monro,
 Monroe and the septs,
 Foulis, MacCulloch,
 Dingwall, MacLulich and
 Vass.
 BECOME A MEMBER, VISIT
www.clanmunroassociation.org.au
 memberships@clanmunroassociation.org.au

Clan Sinclair Australia

 Membership and inquiries from all Sinclairs,
 Sinclair Septs and Sinclair descendants.
 For further info contact
 President: El-Myrrh Sinclair-Drever 0477 426 587
 Secretary : Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263
 E: info@clansinclairaustralia.com
www.clansinclairaustralia.com

Scottish Associations and Societies

 THE AMERICAN-SCOTTISH
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 Through our platform of projects and events ASF
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 The American-Scottish Foundation


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www.standrewsociety.com

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nesbittnisbet.org.uk

Clan Sutherland Society in Australia Inc.

 Contact: M Williams, Secretary
clansutherlandsocietyaustralia@gmail.com
<http://goldenvale.wixsite.com/clansutherlandaus>
 Facebook: Clan Sutherland Society in Australia

Caledonian Society of WA Inc.

 Promotes Scottish Culture and Traditions
 in Perth, Western Australia
 For further details contact John: 0427 990 754
 Email: caledoniansocietyofwa@gmail.com
www.caledoniansocietyofwainc.com

Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group

 Supporting the Scottish
 Community in Victoria
 Suite 87, 139 Cardigan St
 Carlton Vic 3053
 Email: resource_centre@scotsfoaus.org.au
 Website: <https://scotsfoaus.org.au>
 Facebook: [Facebook.com/ScotsOfVictoria](https://www.facebook.com/ScotsOfVictoria)

OLIPHANT CLAN & FAMILY ASSOCIATION of North America

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 for all Clan Oliphant
 in the Americas.
 Oliphant - Olyphant - Oliphint
 Olifant - Olifent
 and all descended
ClanOliphantMembership@gmail.com
www.OliphantOfNorthAmerica.org

Clan Sutherland Society of North America Inc.


 The Society cordially invites membership of all Sutherlands
 (however the name is spelled) and historically associated
 families: Cheyne, Duffus, Gray, Frederith and Mowat.
 Email: Secretary@ClanSutherland.org
 Website: www.ClanSutherland.org

Hunter Valley Scots Club Inc

 Promotes and supports all forms of Scottish culture in Newcastle,
 Hunter Valley and surrounding areas. Members and interested
 people are welcome to attend activities such as Burns Night,
 Caledonian Night, St Andrew's Day, and other social functions.
www.facebook.com/huntervalleyscotclub
 Web: hvscots.org Email: huntervalleyscotclub@gmail.com
 Ph: 0432 306 670 P.O. Box 34, Kotara NSW 2289

St Andrew Society of W.A.

 Promoting Scottish dancing, singing,
 literature & other cultural activities.
 For further information contact:
secretary@saintandrew.org.au
<https://saintandrew.org.au/>
Celebrating All Things Scottish

Clan Pollock

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 Poulk, Poolke, Pogue - you are cordially invited to contact:
A. D. Pollock, Jr.
 PO Box 404
 Greenville, KY 42345
 e-mail: apollockis@comcast.net

YOUNG
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 Invites all those of the name of Young, or
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membership@youngsofscotland.com
www.youngsofscotland.com

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 > Promotes interest in the works, life and
 milieu of the Scottish Poet Robert Burns
 > Celebrates Scottish Culture
 > Conducts Annual Burns Supper, Poetry
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 For Membership Information contact:
 Secretary: **Melissa Ventre - 0405 182 458**
 Email: secretary@robertburnsclubmelbourne.org.au

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 Scottish Festivals & Exhibitions
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 email: info@vshcf.com.au
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By: David C. Weinczok



From totems to trophies: *The changing symbolism of deer in Scotland*



Highland beauty. Photo: Mik Coia.



A striking deer sculpture on the grounds of Fernie Castle in Fife. © David C Weinczok.

Time, the deer, is in the wood of Hallaig'. So begins perhaps the most enduring and resonant poem by Somhairle MacGill-Eain (Sorley MacLean), dwelling in a place lost to the Clearances. No other animal than the deer could have carried the weight of this vision. For thousands of years in Scotland deer have been seen as a potent embodiment of the natural, and indeed the supernatural, world.

They appear as heraldic emblems, millennia-old carvings, iconic paintings such as *The Monarch of the Glen*, and in countless folkloric tales of grand hunts and encounters with the unknowable. Even now, the vision of a deer appearing in a back garden or bounding in a field beside a motorway evokes a sense of calming wonder in many people.

Intertwined with deer

Some of the earliest people in Scotland to leave an archaeological record were intimately intertwined with deer. Deer bones and antlers are commonly found within Mesolithic middens, Neolithic chambered cairns, and Iron Age brochs.

Not all can be explained by their utility as sources of protein and tools. Bones from 36 red deer were found within the Knowe of Yarso in Rousay, Orkney, where ancient tribes seem to have identified themselves in part by their affinity for certain animals. At Dun Mor Vaul, an Iron Age settlement in Tiree where there has never been a large deer population, a highly atypical proportion of deer remains were found, suggesting a possible special significance for local people which they expended great effort to maintain.

Deer are the only animal to appear on prehistoric decorated pottery from the Hebrides, where wolves, golden eagles,

dolphins, and other suitably totemic animals roamed. Even more remarkable is their abundance in Neolithic rock art. There are only nine known examples of prehistoric figurative rock art depicting animals in Britain, and almost all of them include or exclusively feature deer. Clearly, these animals loomed very large in peoples' imaginations and lived experiences.

Two of these depictions of deer are in or near Kilmartin Glen in Argyll, a place I have explored in several past articles. Deep in Glen Domhain on a low stone beside a burn is a lightly carved image of an almost cartoonish deer, its pointed ears, big eyes, and tuft of a tail looking straight out of a Pixar animation. It likely dates from the Iron Age and is thought to mark the boundary between two kindreds, or possibly even between the Gaels of Argyll and the Picts of the central Highlands.

The Fabulous Stag

The other was discovered by chance in 2020 by Hamish Fenton on the underside of a capstone in Dunchraigaig Cairn, an Early Bronze Age burial chamber in Kilmartin Glen. There are five deer altogether, a pair and a trio, the most striking of which is the aptly named 'Fabulous Stag' with its massive antlers.

Some of the deer appear to be in motion, as if climbing up a slope. The carvings were almost certainly made when the capstone was upright in the landscape, perhaps in the form of a standing stone which was then incorporated into a later funerary monument. Just like how people today display antiques in their homes, past peoples regularly incorporated older elements into their domestic and ritual spaces.

Of the nine known examples of deer in prehistoric British rock art, five are in Scotland. Besides Kilmartin Glen and Glen Domhain, they appear at Ballochmyle in Ayrshire, Eggerness in Dumfries & Galloway, and on the outer wall of a rock shelter on Blackford Hill in Edinburgh. Deer are pivotal in many of the oldest and best-known tales of the Celts, in which an encounter with a deer often heralds contact with the Otherworld. They are strongly associated with the Cailleach, a creation goddess in the folklore of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man who brings winter to the land and keeps nature

in balance. Deer feature in many tales of the Fianna, which people across the Highlands and Islands held in great esteem. In one tale the deer-mother Saba mates with the great Finn mac Cumhail (Finn MacCool) himself, bearing his two sons Oisín (Ossian) and Oscar. Oisín was the most gifted of all in the sacred art of poetry, a talent attributed to his unconventional parentage.

The appearance of a white hart – a deer with leucism – was a revered symbol in the Middle Ages. Catching sight of one could mean that the favour of God was upon the witness, or in the case of Arthurian lore that it was time to embark on a new quest. Thomas the Rhymer, the famed Borders prophet, was recalled into the land of the Elfen Queen beneath the Eildon Hills by the appearance of a white hart and hind in his village. Many pubs across Britain, including one in Edinburgh's Grassmarket, are named 'The White Hart'.

For thousands of years in Scotland deer have been seen as a potent embodiment of the natural, and indeed the supernatural, world.

The location of Holyrood Abbey in Edinburgh is attributed to King David I's pursuit of a white hart into Holyrood Park. Despite it being a Sunday feast day the king set out to capture it, but it charged him and threw him from his horse. As David I was about to be gored by the furious hart the Holy Rude (true cross) appeared in the sky, scaring the hart away. Later that night David I was visited in a dream by St Andrew who instructed him to build an abbey near that fateful spot as penance.

Many noble houses in the Middle Ages used deer – typically stags – in their heraldic emblems. Among them, to name but a few, are the crests of Fraser of Lovat, Clan Davidson, Clan Forbes, Clan Keith, and Clan Carruthers. Returning to Kilmartin Glen, the main landowners from the 18th century through today, the Malcolms of Poltalloch based at Duntrune Castle, use deer imagery on their crest, and the gate leading onto the castle grounds is adorned with its iconic stags.



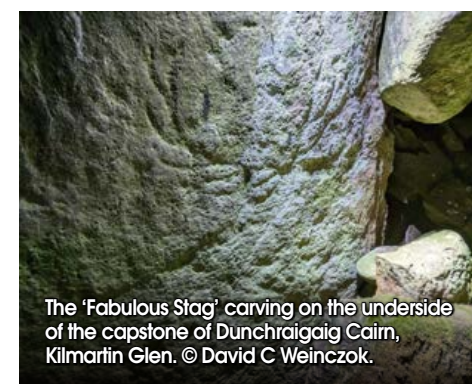
Two stags adorn the gate at Duntrune Castle in Kilmartin Glen, Argyll, home to the Malcolms of Poltalloch. © David C Weinczok.

Deer forests

Our view of deer changed during the Industrial Revolution through Edwardian period when land previously used as commons were enclosed, people were evicted, and hunting estates were established. Deer, especially red deer, proliferated due to the extinction of large predators such as wolves in the 18th century, and many estates in the Highlands and Lowlands alike became ecological deserts given over entirely to hunting.

In 1811 there were only six 'deer forests' for hunting in Scotland; by 1912 there were over one hundred, covering a staggering 3.6 million acres. During this time, and still today, many people consider deer to be either a pest to be controlled or a product to be sold as part of the sporting estate package. No country house of this time was complete without a room displaying dozens, if not hundreds, of taxidermied specimens mounted on the walls attesting to our near-total domination of the countryside.

The history of peoples' relationship with deer in Scotland can be read as shorthand for our changing views of the natural world. Prehistoric peoples saw great wonder in them, using deer totemically while also hunting them for meat and harvesting their sinews and antlers for daily tools and rituals. In the Middle Ages deer were often used in the foundational stories of saints and dynasties, becoming symbols connected with spiritual and secular power in an age of increasing hierarchies in society. In the age of enclosure and early modernity, deer lost much of their symbolic potency and became to many instead a mere resource to be exploited and profited from. Today, as the natural world is in dire peril and our connection to it weakens further still, deer are regaining some of their lost wonder – fleeting remnants of a world just beyond our own, sometimes fenced in but never fully domesticated. Next time you see one, ask what we might do to rebalance the scales.



The 'Fabulous Stag' carving on the underside of the capstone of Dunchraigaig Cairn, Kilmartin Glen. © David C Weinczok.

WHAT'S ON - SCOTTISH EVENTS

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

Canada

MAY 2026

Victoria Highland Games & Celtic Festival 9-17, Victoria, BC

Pipe bands, Clans, dancing and entertainment on Vancouver Island. The Games will also host the World Women's Heavy Events Championship, the first time held in Canada, at Topaz Park. Info: www.victoriahighlandgames.com

World Whisky Day 16, Nationwide

A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and raise a glass to celebrate the water of life!

Saskatchewan Highland Gathering & Celtic Festival 16-18, Regina, SK

Pipers, drummers, dancers, heavy events athletes, and enthusiasts from Western Canada come to southern Saskatchewan each year on the May long weekend to participate in this exciting line-up of events at Victoria Park. Info: www.saskhighland.ca

Stoney Lake Weekend 2026 22-24, Stoney Lake, ON

Scottish country dance weekend and events hosted by Peterborough Scottish Country Dance Society. Info: www.pscds.ca

Oakville Scottish Country Dance Group 70th Anniversary Dinner Dance 23, Oakville, ON

Live music, food and dance celebrating 70 years at St Josephs Banquet Hall, 300 River Oaks Blvd. E. Info: www.oscdg.ca

Spirit of Scotch 23, Gravenhurst, ON

Brought to you by the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst, enjoy a sumptuous three-course food pairing followed by a delightful dessert. Scotch Sampling: Savour the rich flavours of five exclusive Scotches from distinguished Scottish distilleries at Gravenhurst Centennial Centre. Info: www.spiritofscotch.com

JUNE 2026

Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival 9-13, Moncton, NB

Events include Highland dance, pipes & drums, heavy events, and sword competitions as well as demonstrations, workshops, live entertainment, and cultural exhibitions at the Hal Betts Sportsplex, corner of Assumption Blvd & Vaughn Harvey Blvd. Info: www.monctonhighlandgames.com

Georgetown Highland Games 13, Georgetown, ON

A full day of Scottish events, entertainment and friendship at Georgetown Fairgrounds. Info: www.georgetownhighlandgames.com

CAMMAC Scottish Country Dance Retreat 13-15, Harrington, QC

A weekend getaway, immersing yourself in Scottish country dancing and the great outdoors. Get ready to dance, unwind, and meet friends new and old at the CAMMAC Music Centre situated on the picturesque shores of Lake MacDonald. Info: www.rscdsottawa.ca/cammacscd

Northumberland Scottish Festival and Highland Games 19-20, Port Hope, ON

Pipe bands, Clans, Scottish dance & heavy events, a ceilidh and more at Port Hope Agricultural Park, 62 McCaul St. Info: www.northumberlandhighlandgames.ca

ScotFestBC-British Columbia Highland Games 19-20, Coquitlam, BC

Traditional Scottish Highland Games-enjoy the best in piping, drumming, pipe bands, Highland dancing, Scottish Heavy Events, whisky school, kids activities and more at Town Centre Park. Info: www.scotfestbc.com

Manitoba Highland Gathering 20-21, East Selkirk, MB

Longswords, Heavy Events, Canoe/Kayak & Highland Dance competitions, Broadwords & Pipes and Drums competitions, experience the Highland cattle of Bullrush Highland Acres, Scottish market and more. Info: www.manitobahighlandgathering.org

Brigadoon 24-28, Edmonton, AB

A mystical Scottish village appears once every hundred years. Love, destiny, and enchantment await in Lerner & Loewe's Brigadoon. Rich with sweeping melodies and heartfelt romance, Brigadoon is a story of enchantment and devotion, where the pull of magic competes with the call of the modern world at The Capitol Theatre at Fort Edmonton Park, 7000 143 St. Info: www.eventbrite.ca/e/brigadoon-tickets-1980929384113

KitchenFest! Féis a' Chidsin! 26-July 4, Cape Breton, NS

An immersive experience in the rich and vibrant Gaelic culture of Cape Breton Island, featuring concerts, céilidhs, pub nights, and square dances, all set against the island's stunning scenery. Info: www.kitchenfest.ca

Kingsville Highland Games 27, Kingsville, ON

Celebrating Celtic Heritage in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent at Colasanti's Tropical Gardens. Info: www.kingsvillehighlandgames.ca

Kamloops Highland Games 27, Kamloops, BC

This annual festival hosts many activities, including Scottish heavy athletics, highland dance, music performances, solo piping, drumming and band competitions at Albert McGowan Park, 2025 Summit Dr. Info: www.kamloopshighlandgames.org

USA

MAY 2026

Catalina Island Weekend Workshop & Ball 1-3, Catalina Island, CA

Scottish Country Dance weekend and events presented by the Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and San Gabriel Valley Branches of the RSCD. Info: www.scottishdancecatalinaworkshop.com

Savannah Scottish Games 2, Savannah, GA

Grand celebration of Scottish culture, music, dancing, athletic competition, children's activities, shopping, food, and fun for the entire family, overlooking Moon River at Bethesda Academy. Info: www.savannahscottishgames.com

2026 Scottish Tartan Festival 2, Minden, LA

Scottish music & dancing, living history, athletics & more at Miller Quarters. Info: www.louisianahighlands.scot

Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival 2-3, Albuquerque, NM

Celebrating seven Celtic nations in New Mexico, the Festival gives participants the opportunity to see and learn about many of the arts and athletics as well as the culture of nations like Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Isle of Man, Cornwall and Galicia at Balloon Fiesta Park. Info: www.celtfestabq.com

Decatur Celtic Festival 2-3, Decatur, TX

A celebration of Celtic music, culture, dance, food and tradition at Wise County Fairgrounds. Info: www.decaturcelticfestival.com

Fair Hill Scottish Games 16, Elkton, MD

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

World Whisky Day 16, Nationwide

A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and raise a glass to celebrate the water of life!

Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival and Games 16-17, Townsend, TN

A weekend of Highland athletics, pipes & drums, Highland and Irish dance, whisky tastings, vendors and more at the Greater Smokies Event Grounds, 7930 E. Lamar Alexander Pkwy. Info: www.smokymountaingames.org

Greenville Scottish Games 23, Greenville, SC

Celebrating Scottish heritage at Furman University. Info: www.gallabrae.com

Scottish Fest 23-24, Costa Mesa, CA

Orange County's largest annual Scottish and Celtic American Festival at Orange County Fairgrounds and Event Center. Info: www.scottishfest.com

Southern Kentucky Highland Games 30, Park City, KY

Enjoy traditional Highland sports such as the caber toss, tug o' war and the hammer throw, Highland dancing, music, and lots of family fun at Bell's Tavern Park. Info: www.southernkyhighlandgames.org

Eugene Scottish Festival 30, Eugene, OR

Immerse yourself in the rich traditions of Scotland with live music, the stirring sounds of bagpipes, and a stunning display of kilts and traditional dress at the Irving Grange, 1011 Irvington Dr. Info: www.eugenescottishfestival.org

JUNE 2026

Portland Highland Games 6, Hillsborough, OR

Stirring pipes & drums, Highland dancing, Scottish vendors, whisky tastings at the Washington County Fairgrounds. Info: www.phga.org

Bellingham Scottish Gathering 6, Blaine, WA

The annual festival features the City of Bellingham Open Highland Dancing Championship, bagpipes, drums, clans, Scottish breed animals, vendors and more. New feature: Scottish Wool Contest showcasing garments constructed with wool yarn, tartan or tweed of Scottish origin. Nestled between Seattle, WA and Vancouver, BC, and adjacent to the Peace Arch border crossing. Ride the festival ferry and enjoy views of the Salish Sea, Mount Baker and Semiahmoo resort where whale and bird watching are popular. Info: www.scottishdancesociety.org

Garrett County Celtic Festival & Highland Games 6, Friendsville, MD

Celebrating Celtic cultures in Appalachia since 1988. Enjoy an entire day of entertainment across multiple stages in the riverside Friendsville Community Park, with pipe bands, dancing, Celtic entertainment, vendors and food. Info: www.gccelticfestival.org

Georgia Mountain Scottish Festival 6-7, Hiawasse, GA

Highland dancers, Scottish athletes, family clans, bagpipes and drums and traditional musicians come to celebrate their heritage. Info: www.gamntscottishfestival.org

Chicago Scots Scottish Festival & Highland Games 12-13, Wheaton, IL

This 2-day, outdoor family-friendly event features an extravaganza of activities and attractions - the largest bagpiping championship in North America, the iconic caber toss, highland dancing, kids activities (including a Scottish petting zoo), Scottish genealogy and history, classic British car show, dogs of Scotland and more at DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds. Info: www.chicagoscotts.org

Flora MacDonald: From Skye to the Americas and back again-Online Talk 16, Virtual event

Many have heard of Flora MacDonald, the heroine who helped rescue Bonnie Prince Charlie after Culloden. But not so many know about her transatlantic adventures in later life. Come along and hear, through the story of one family, something of the experience of Scottish migration at the time of the American Revolution. Info: www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/genealogy/tartanandstars

The Taste of Scotland Celtic Festival & Highland Games 19-21, Franklin, NC

Three days of Scottish fun with athletes, clans, pipe bands, vendors and more. Info: www.tasteofscotland.org

Prosser Scottish Fest & Highland Games 20, Prosser, WA

Central Washington's only Highland Games-this annual event promises a vibrant celebration of Scottish culture, featuring everything from Heavy Athletics and Clan gatherings to Celtic bands and Highland dance at Prosser Wine & Food Park. Info: www.prosserscottishfest.org

California Celtic Fest 20-21, Placentia, CA

A weekend of Celtic celebration at Kraemer Park. Info: www.californiacelticfest.com

San Diego Scottish Highland Games 20-21, San Diego, CA

Celebrating five decades of Scottish heritage, athleticism, music, and community, the milestone event introduces a new central San Diego location at SDSU Mission Valley River Park designed to make the festival more comfortable, accessible, and convenient for attendees of all ages. Info: www.sdhghlandgames.org

Ohio Scottish Games and Celtic Festival 26-27, Berea, KY

Enjoy traditional dance, music and athletics of the ancient highland games while celebrating the cultural of the Celtic nations, at Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, 19201 E. Bagley Rd. Info: www.ohioscottishgames.com

Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games 26-27, Holland, MI

Enjoy Highland Games, Clans, Celtic entertainment and events and more at the Ottawa County Fairgrounds, 1286 Ottawa Beach Rd. Info: www.hollandcelticfestival.org

Alaska Scottish Highland Games 27-28, Palmer, AK

Featuring all things Scottish: Bagpipes, Heavy Athletics, Highland Dance, Drumming, Gathering O' The Clans, Birds of Prey, Kilted Mile and more at Alaska State Fairgrounds. Info: www.alaskanscottish.org

Scotland

MAY 2026

Girvan Traditional Folk Festival 1-3, Girvan

The finest in folk & traditional music in beautiful South West Scotland. Info: www.girvanfolkfestival.org.uk

Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival 1-4, Speyside

From cooperating masterclasses and BBQs to wildlife walks, the Dram Train, music events and canoeing down the river whilst stopping for a Speyside malt, the Festival is packed with a range of diverse events. Info: www.spiritofspeyside.com

Edinburgh Tradfest 1-11, Edinburgh

The very best traditional music from Scotland and around the world. Info: www.edinburghtradfest.com

Edinburgh Tartan Parade 9, Edinburgh

This exciting event brings together tartans, pipe bands, dancers, musicians, organisations, and individuals from Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland, and beyond - to celebrate the country's rich heritage, tartans, culture and inclusivity. Info: www.handuevents.co.uk/tartan-parade-scotland

Gourock Highland Games 10, Gourock

At this year's Games, there will be pipe band and drum major competitions; highland dance competitions; heavyweight events; mini highland games; children's entertainment; gift and craft stalls - a great day out for all the family. Info: www.inverclyde.gov.uk

Isle of Bute Tartan Festival 15-17, Rothesay, Isle of Bute

A vibrant community celebration of Scotland's rich textile heritage, set in the heart of Rothesay. Bringing together tradition and contemporary creativity, the festival showcases tartan in all its forms - from pipe bands and live music to workshops, artisan markets, family activities and friendly competitions. Info: <https://isleofbutetartanfestival.carrd.co>

World Whisky Day 16, Nationwide

A day of global whisky celebration, try a dram and raise a glass to celebrate the water of life!

Gordon Castle Highland Games 17, Fochabers, Aberdeenshire

Traditional Scottish Highland Games at Gordon Castle with pipe bands, dancers, athletics, clans and more. Info: www.gordoncastle.com

Féis Ile - The Islay Festival 22-31, Isle of Islay

A gathering of whisky and Islay fans from across the globe with walks, history talks, whisky events, Ceilidh's and more. Info: www.feisile.co.uk

Spring Fling Open Studios 2026 23-25, Dumfries and Galloway

Scotland's premier art and craft Open Studios event at locations across the region. Info: www.spring-fling.co.uk

Orkney Folk Festival 24, Stromness, Orkney

Leading international and Scottish artists set to appear alongside home-grown Orcadian talent, brilliant weekend of music and fun. Info: www.orkneyfolkfestival.com

Atholl Gathering 24, Pitlochry

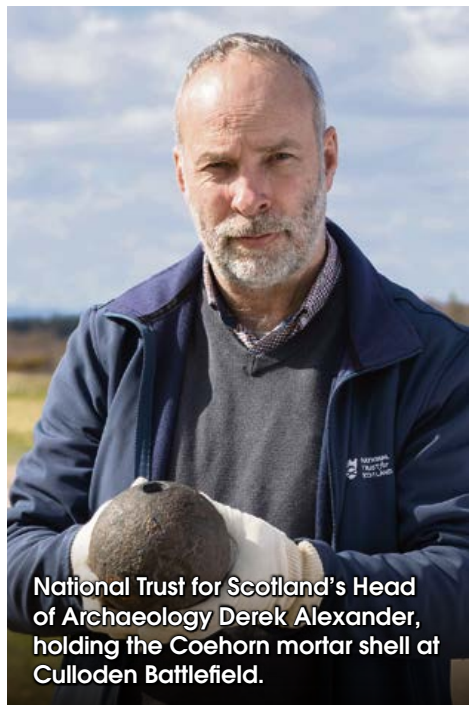
There are plenty of other attractions, such as highland dancing, tug o' war, solo piping, trade stands and refreshments to provide a fun day out for all the family, at Blair Castle. Info: <https://atholl-estates.co.uk/events/atholl-gathering>

Scotword answers from page 6

Across:	Down:
8) Nation,	1) Tabard,
9) Oilfield,	2) Gill,
10) Galloway,	3) Knowe,
11) Dollar,	4) Copycat,
12) Ideal,	5) Clyde,
14) Bap,	6) Will,
15) Apron,	7) Ullapool,
18) Chanter,	13) Ain,
20) Thistle,	16) Dee,
23) Glens,	17) Shy,
24) Pap,	19) Hollyrood,
25) Fiery,	21) Ski,
29) Crieff,	22) Parapet,
31) Aberdeen,	26) Reeked,
33) Montrose,	27) Afton,
34) Tocher	28) Keith,
	30) Efts,
	32) Dyce

'Explosive' discovery illuminates events from Culloden Battlefield

Images courtesy of National Trust for Scotland.



National Trust for Scotland's Head of Archaeology Derek Alexander, holding the Coehorn mortar shell at Culloden Battlefield.

Archaeologists from the National Trust for Scotland have recovered an unexploded mortar shell, thought to have been fired by government artillery during the historic battle. The Battle of Culloden on 16 April 1746 was a decisive defeat for the Jacobite army, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, at the hands of the Duke of Cumberland's government troops. Intact and gunpowder-packed when it was discovered, the 5.5-inch shell is the first piece of complete government ordnance found at Culloden Battlefield and provides fresh evidence for the deployment and action of government and Jacobite forces at pivotal moments in the battle.

Many other projectiles, including cannon shot, musket balls and fragments of mortar shells, have been uncovered at Culloden, but never before has undetonated ordnance been found. Parts of the battlefield are on boggy ground, and it is thought the shell landed on wet ground and the fuse extinguished before it could ignite the powder. Weighing 8kg (17.5lb), heavier than the Jacobite's three and four-pound cannonballs, the shell is thought to have been fired from one of the government army's six Coehorn mortars. The Coehorn mortar was a lightweight, squat gun that shot explosive shells in high arcs over lines of troops. Fragments of other shells from Coehorn mortars have previously been found at Culloden and at Glen Shiel, where Coehorns were first used during a battle on British soil in June 1719, but the recent discovery is the first complete and unexploded example ever to have been recovered from a Jacobite battlefield.

The Culloden mortar shell was discovered in a field to the north-west of the Memorial Cairn by a team of archaeologists, metal-detectorists, and volunteers led by the National Trust for Scotland's Head of Archaeology Derek Alexander and the University of Glasgow's Professor Tony Pollard. The dig was part of a week-long programme of fieldwork, including digging test pits, machine trenching, metal detecting and mapping, at the Culloden Battlefield in October 2025.

During the excavation, over 100 projectiles, including lead musket balls and pistol shot, were uncovered. Cleaning of the shell by conservator Will Murray at the Scottish Conservation Studio confirmed the presence of a bung, and digital x-ray imaging demonstrated conclusively

that the object was hollow with an internal chamber. The shell still retained part of its original plug, and plant fibres trapped in corrosion layers were also recovered for future analysis.

More secrets and stories to be uncovered at Culloden

Derek Alexander, The National Trust for Scotland's Head of Archaeology, said: "This is a remarkable - dare I say, explosive - find of the kind archaeologists dream of, but never expect to encounter. Along with the other projectiles recovered, this discovery helps us better understand the formation of troops and concentration of fire during this brief, but brutal, battle. The mortars may have been aiming at the Jacobite artillery, so the place where the shell landed may mark the heart of the Culloden Battlefield. The ground rises slightly in this area, providing a better vantage point, and it is adjacent to the old road along which artillery could've moved more easily, making it a plausible location for the Jacobite artillery positions. We have a more vivid image of how the battle played out, but the discovery also tells a human story. Mortar shells mark their path through the air with a smoke trail from the lit fuse, helping the government artillery officers to know how to adjust the length of the fuse to ensure maximum damage. This shell may have been a failed first shot. When it didn't explode as expected, the Jacobite fighters standing nearby must have felt an immense relief. This is our fifth consecutive year of digging at Culloden, so it's an ideal time to assess what we've found and consider how this work impacts on-site interpretation and the long-term management of the battlefield. We didn't have high expectations for this previously unexplored area of the battlefield - acidic soil was thought to have impacted the preservation of artefacts, and the broken ground makes detecting difficult - so we've been invigorated by this unexpected discovery. It's clear there are many more secrets and stories to be uncovered at Culloden. The mortar shell was found buried 30cm deep into the ground and items like these can only be found during professional excavations led by experienced

archaeologists, so the battlefield remains safe to visitors. This shell has been cleaned and assessed now, making it safe to handle, and has ensured it is safe to go on display. These exciting finds are made possible by the work of our committed archaeology volunteers and team of local metal detectorists, and the continued generosity of our members and supporters. Professor Christopher Duffy not only made a lasting impact on the interpretation and protection of Culloden, but his hugely generous legacy donation has really expanded the range of our investigations."

Cared for by the National Trust for Scotland, Culloden Battlefield was visited by over 366,000 people in 2025 and is a place of pilgrimage and remembrance for visitors from Scotland and beyond. The battlefield is central to Scotland's cultural identity, and yet historic battlefields don't enjoy the same protections as other historic sites, such as Scheduled Monuments or listed buildings. In its 2026 election manifesto, the Trust is calling for the next Scottish Government to commit to Conservation Management Plans that will give battlefields enforceable protection. Derek Alexander added: "The importance of more rigorous protection for historic Scottish battlefields like Culloden and Bannockburn is underlined by finds like this one. Not only are such places symbolic of our national story, they also may hold many undiscovered artefacts that can tell us more."

One of the most harrowing battles in British history

Professor Tony Pollard of the University of Glasgow said: "Artillery played a vital role at Culloden, particularly on Cumberland's side, where the Royal Artillery's cannon were well served by experienced gunners; after disabling the Jacobite guns in counter-battery fire, they delivered round shot, grape shot and canister shot at the Jacobite infantry, first as they were stationary and then as they charged across the wide expanse of open moor. We have found evidence for all these types of shot, but our previous archaeological investigations have also recovered fragments from an exploded

mortar shell. This was fired into the mass of Jacobites as they engaged in hand-to-hand fighting on Cumberland's left, landing so close that their detonation risked friendly fire casualties. Their location is a clear indication that the impact of the Jacobite charge was taken extremely seriously and regarded as an immediate threat to Cumberland's line."

2026 marked the 280th anniversary of the Battle of Culloden. On 16 April 1746, the final Jacobite Rising came to a brutal head in one of the most harrowing battles in British history. Jacobite supporters, seeking to restore the Stuart monarchy to the British throne, gathered to fight the Duke of Cumberland's government troops. It was the last pitched battle on British soil and, in less than an hour, around 1,600 men were slain - 1,500 of them Jacobites.

The National Trust for Scotland's richly researched, stimulating and sensitive Culloden Visitor Centre stands beside the battlefield and features artefacts from both sides of the battle and interactive displays that reveal the background to the conflict. It is both a monument and a guide to a pivotal day in history. Culloden's enduring legacy also persists in popular culture, including the book and television series, *Outlander*. Fans of the series are currently running a fundraiser in support of the Culloden Fighting Fund, which supports the Trust's ongoing interpretation of the battle and enables it to create new displays, such as this one of the mortar shell. The fundraiser runs until 2 May 2026 and can be found online at www.justgiving.com/page/jesuisprest.



The mortar shell.



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62nd Northumberland Scottish Festival & Highland Games



The Northumberland Scottish Festival & Highland Games proudly announces its 62nd annual celebration, set to take place at the scenic Port Hope Fairgrounds on June 19 & 20 2026. Renowned as one of Canada's premier Scottish cultural events, the festival promises a vibrant weekend filled with music, dance, athletic competitions, and family-friendly activities that honour both tradition and community spirit.

Attendees will experience the stirring sounds of pipe bands, traditional Highland dancing, and the excitement of heavy events such as caber tossing and hammer throw. Local vendors will offer Scottish fare and artisanal goods, while clan tents welcome visitors seeking to explore their heritage. The young ones will enjoy the Wee Highlander area with

a jumping castle, face painting, sword fighting lessons and caber toss lessons. The festival is committed to fostering inclusivity and cultural appreciation, welcoming guests from across Northumberland County and beyond.

Scottish culture and Canadian hospitality

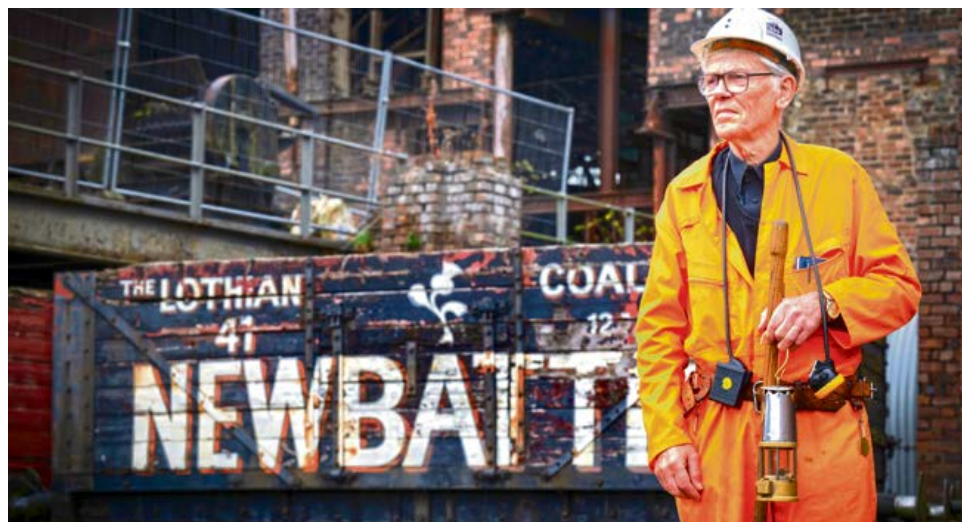
This year's festivities feature performances by internationally acclaimed pipers, dancers and heavy event competitors. Saturday afternoon you can experience the inaugural Lakeshore Open Highland Dance Championships. Friday night there is a free Ceilidh with The Fiddleheads, Saturday night with Irish Millie and Madman's Window. Whether you're a seasoned Highland Games enthusiast or a first-time visitor, the 62nd

Northumberland Scottish Festival offers an unforgettable experience rooted in Scottish culture and Canadian hospitality. Join us in celebrating the enduring legacy of Scotland in Northumberland County!

Tickets and event schedules are available at: www.northumberlandhighlandgames.ca. For further inquiries, please contact the festival committee at northumberlandgamesinfo@gmail.com.



New appeal launched to honour Scotland's mining communities



A new public appeal has been formally launched to help safeguard and transform National Mining Museum Scotland, which is home to a Recognised Collection of National Significance, Scotland's first 'super pit', and the country's last surviving colliery built in 1895. The initiative aims to preserve the legacy of coal mining - an industry that powered the Industrial Revolution, drove innovation and social change, advanced workers' rights, and shaped Scotland's landscape. It has been designed to give everyone who has a passion for preserving Scotland's national heritage an opportunity to 'be part of' the museum's future.

The Be Part of Our Future appeal marks the launch of community centred, nationally significant initiative to preserve the memories of Scotland's mining heritage.

It is hoped it will support the museum in caring for and interpreting the nationally significant collections it houses, maintaining and repairing aspects of the A-listed colliery buildings and grounds; developing green energy and community initiatives; and enhancing the venue's capacity to host community and cultural events across the site.

Launching the initiative, Mhairi Cross, CEO of National Mining Museum Scotland said: "This initiative is vital for the museum at this moment. This appeal brings together essential strands: raising financial support we need and gathering the stories and memories that keep Scotland's mining heritage alive. Together, these strands strengthen our ability to honour the past while building the resilience the museum needs now, and in the years ahead. This is about preserving

the experience of mining communities and ensuring that the museum remains strong enough to carry their stories forward."

Living heritage site

Former mine worker at the Lady Victoria Colliery and Kilmarnock Mine Rescue Station, from a long family line of coal miners, Sinclair Sutherland (age 75) is supporting the museum in engaging young people with the appeal by telling his stories through a new series of child-led video interviews. Now a volunteer and family history researcher at the museum, he said: "I'm very pleased to support National Mining Museum Scotland and would urge everyone to 'Be Part of Our Future' in whatever way you can to protect this national treasure. It is an incredible living heritage site which triggers memories and stories. It's like our generation's form of social media, allowing us to share the important learnings we had down the pits in a really visual and inspiring way. There are not many heritage sites where you can meet and learn from the people who were involved. It is a real honour to represent the pit community, but we also want to make sure that our legacy lives on in the next generation. Younger people will be the tour guides of the future, and sharing stories as part of conversations will enable us to continue to deliver a unique, authentic, and worthwhile experience."

Fellow interviewee, former timekeeper, Marion Brown age 90 from Newtongrange, agrees: "Working for the coal mines was so

much more than just a job. From the social clubs and our cooperative stores to the landscapes and monuments, the industry made so many of the communities we know today and it's important to remember that. It's not just been part of our family heritage, it's our national heritage and we must do all we can to preserve it and the living memories we still have access today."

The Lady Victoria Colliery was opened in 1895 as Scotland's first super-pit. It ceased production in 1981 and now serves as an example of one of the best-preserved Victorian Collieries in Europe. The National Mining Museum Scotland was established to make Scotland's mining heritage relevant to everyone by embracing the legacy of Scotland's mining communities and found in Newtongrange, Midlothian.

For more information about the Museum's ambitions for transformation or to donate to the Pithead Circle, visit nationalminingmuseum.com/ourfuture.

To share a mining story or find out more about the museum's Living Archive From the Depths of Coal, Rose the Scotland We Know, email: yourstory@nationalminingmuseum.com.



The 2026 Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games



The 2026 Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games returns June 26 & 27 at the Ottawa County fairgrounds in Holland, Michigan. Sponsored by Guinness, the festival is located two minutes from the white sand beaches of Lake Michigan was Developed in 2022 by the Holland Celtic Society, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural, heritage and educational organization the festival is dedicated to sharing Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and other Celtic heritage with the community in a fun, spirited, and celebratory way. The festival is open from 4:00 PM to 11:00 PM on Friday, June 26 with four bands on stage for a 7 hour-long 25 & older "Ceilidh" featuring music, dance, food, and vendors.

area, tomahawk throwing, and an on-site Irish Pub. Bands on the schedule for 2026 include Albannach, Mudmen, Crossbow, Brother Crowe, Whorled and ten others. New for 2026 is a display of Scottish Highland cattle! These cows, or "Coos" are a huge attraction for adults and kids. Also, this year, we will feature demonstrations of border collies herding sheep.

The 2026 Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games takes place on June 26 & 27, 2026 at the Ottawa County fairgrounds in Holland, Michigan.

Tickets and Information are available at: www.HollandCelticFestival.org or www.facebook.com/HollandCelticFestival.

All day festival for all ages

Saturday's all day festival is for all ages, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 PM with 13 more bands on stage, along with pipe and drum bands, 60 athletes competing in Highland Games, Scottish Clans, Irish & Scottish dance groups, Celtic genealogy assistance, a dozen food trucks/tents, two dozen Irish & Scottish retail vendors, a children's



Victorian Hotel Robbers prisoner records go online



to details that are unlikely to have been preserved for most people. Finding out the colour of their hair, details of their health or whether they could read or write can turn a name and some dates into a much more rounded person. And of course, if they have committed a serious crime, it can explain a lot about the decisions of other relatives such as moving area, changing a name or simply never talking about them."

The new additions mean there are now over 400,000 historical prison records available to search on Scotland's People. This includes the old Edinburgh prisons, Barlinnie, Perth and Largs.

Histories of both prisons and more on the cases highlighted in this story are available at Scotland's People: www.scotlandspople.gov.uk

The once infamous 'Highland Hotel Robbers' are among Victorian prisoners whose records are now online. Scotland's People, the official site for Scottish government records, has published details of more than 100,000 inmates from Ayr and Inveraray jails. In the summer of 1883, American James Edward Lyon and his young accomplice Eliza Thorpe targeted well-to-do guests in fancy hotels from Argyll to Aberdeenshire. Cash, jewellery and other valuables went missing and Lyon and Thorpe just always seemed to be around when it happened.

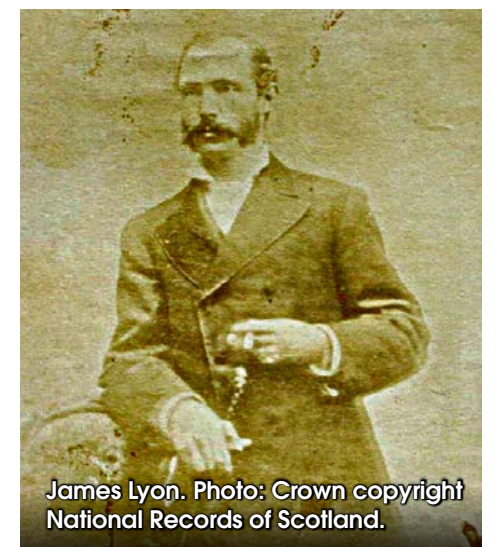
The pair who travelled as man and wife were arrested at a hotel in Edinburgh. Their associate Joseph Dowling was caught red handed with some of the stolen items. At their trial the men were convicted but the case against Thorpe, who was 20 years old, was found not proven. Lyon was sentenced to seven years. Photographs of Lyon, Thorpe and Dowling were kept in an album of interesting cases by the local procurator fiscal.

Prison registers are a rich source of information

Their entries in the registers for Inveraray prison are among 4,600 for that jail now on Scotland's People. Men, women and

children were incarcerated at the jail in the 19th century. The youngest was seven-year-old James McCulloch who was caught stealing, the oldest 82-year-old Ann Kerr found guilty of "vagrancy".

The newly published records also include 98,000 entries from Ayr Prison from 1841 to 1911. Notable prisoners included murderers Joseph Calabrese, Thomas Bone and Mary Boyd. All of them were sentenced to death and all spared. Archivist Veronica Schreuder said: "Prison registers are a rich source of information for social researchers and family historians alike. While it can be a shock to find an ancestor in prison, it can sometimes lead



Public to be given unique glimpse into Queen Elizabeth II's private rooms at her official Scottish residence



Palace of Holyroodhouse.
Photo: Peter Smith.



The Queen's outfit from the opening of the Scottish Parliament.

The private apartments used by Queen Elizabeth II when in residence at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the official residence of the monarch in Scotland, will open to visitors for the first time in 2026 to mark the centenary of her birth. Available only this year, the tours will run for 100 days and will see small groups taken behind the scenes by expert guides to discover the history of the rooms and learn how they were used by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, during her 70-year reign.

Setting for many significant occasions

The Palace of Holyroodhouse was the setting for many significant occasions during the late Queen's reign. While visiting Edinburgh to meet and celebrate Scots from all walks of life, she and Prince Philip would occupy a suite of private rooms on the Palace's east side, with stunning views of the gardens and Holyrood Park.

These modestly decorated rooms offer a rare glimpse into the personal, 'lived-in' spaces used during private moments between official duties. The rooms date from the 17th century and have been used by successive monarchs and members of the Royal Family since Queen Victoria's reign. They are furnished with historic objects from the Royal Collection, as well as pieces from Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's personal collections, many of which reflect their longstanding affection for Scotland.

Tours will take visitors through rooms and spaces including the Royal Breakfast Room, where the Queen and Prince Philip would dine privately while in residence. The room is hung with magnificent Flemish tapestries, woven around 1650,



The private apartments used by Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: David Cheskin.

featuring a beautiful design of a pergola framing an ornate vase filled with flowers. The tapestries were hung in the room in the 1920s at the request of Queen Elizabeth's grandparents, King George V and Queen Mary.

In the Dressing Room, giving a sense of how the Queen would prepare for official engagements, visitors will see three ensembles from her wardrobe, each worn during a significant occasion in Edinburgh. For the official opening of the Scottish Parliament on 1 July 1999, the Queen wore a purple coat made of a silk-wool blend with a green silk-crepe and lace dress, and a shawl of purple and green Isle of Skye tartan, woven on the Island of Lewis. The ensemble was inspired by the Scottish landscape and reflects the designer Sandra Murray's interest in her Scottish heritage. The matching hat, by the milliner Philip Somerville, is trimmed with a bow of the silk-wool fabric of the coat and curled dark-green feathers.

Edinburgh's royal palace

The tours will conclude in the Sitting Room where the late Queen would work, reviewing the papers and documents presented in the Government red dispatch boxes, as well as using the room for private audiences or resting between engagements, often while watching horseracing on television.

Prince Philip was an enthusiastic collector of contemporary Scottish art and served as Patron of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art (RSA). Throughout the rooms, visitors will see highlights from his private collection, including works by 20th century Scottish artists, acquired over four decades at the RSA's annual exhibitions and reflecting his deep appreciation of Scotland's landscapes and wildlife.

The rooms are also furnished with a remarkable collection of furniture from the Royal Collection, made by the Edinburgh firm of Young, Trotter and Hamilton. The pieces were supplied to the Palace in 1796 in preparation for the arrival of Charles-Philippe, Comte d'Artois – Marie Antoinette's brother-in-law and the future Charles X of France – who took refuge at

the Palace during the French Revolution. Emma Stead, Curator, Palace of Holyroodhouse said: "Queen Elizabeth II's well-known love for Scotland will be given fresh context through this unique and special access to the private apartments, where visitors will enjoy a new perspective into both the formal and more informal use of Edinburgh's royal palace."

After their tour of Queen Elizabeth II's private apartments, visitors can

explore the rich history of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, including the magnificent State Apartments and the historic apartments of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Queen Elizabeth II Private Apartment Tours will run daily from 21 May to 10 September 2026 and can only be purchased with a ticket to visit to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Visitor information and tickets: www.rct.uk, +44 (0)303 123 7300.



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).

May is Whisky Month in Scotland, celebrating the 'Water of Life'. The Rablogan Spirit of the Highlands was designed

for Rablogan Castle Limited as part of its Highlands collection. The design was inspired by Scotland's many whiskies, known in Gaelic as Uisge Beatha (the water of life). The colours are intended to depict the various stages in the evolution of the amber liquid from barley field to cask maturation, reflecting all of the phases that collectively form the process of the creation of this Scottish spirit: green and light yellow are for the fields of barley; dark grey is for the maltings and cellars; dark yellow, orange and yellow are for the whisky during distilling; brown is for the casks and red is intended to represent the people who make the process of development possible. This tartan (reference:14786) was designed by Robert K Jones and registered in April, 2025.

Aspiring designers poised to make history with America-250th celebration



As the United States prepares to celebrate the 250th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence, students from Heriot-Watt University have been offered an historic opportunity to create a contribution from Scotland. They're at the heart of a unique project to design the commemorative America-250th tartan, which will be presented in Washington D.C. this summer.

Heriot-Watt University was invited by the Scottish Government USA to create a

tartan symbolising the enduring historical and cultural ties between Scotland and the United States. Students from the University's School of Textiles and Design have presented their ideas to a panel of experts from both countries, who have selected the winning design. The chosen tartan will be revealed in the summer.

Professor Fiona Grant, Executive Dean of the School of Textiles and Design, said: "We were delighted to be chosen for this special assignment to mark the

America250 celebrations. It's a remarkable opportunity to contribute to a project of real cultural - and lasting - importance, while showcasing the breadth of skill, creativity and innovation that define Heriot-Watt's School of Textiles and Design."

The long and historic ties between the United States and Scotland

The initiative gives international exposure to Scotland's emerging textile designers, linking their work to a globally recognised commemoration. It also provides an opportunity for Scottish Government USA to promote Scotland's strengths in creativity, heritage, higher education and design to audiences across the United States. Mark Boyce, Acting Head, Scottish Government USA said, "The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence is a moment to reflect on the long and historic ties between the United States and Scotland.

A commemorative tartan is the perfect symbol of this interwoven relationship that continues to thrive through trade, education, culture and diaspora. We are delighted to bring this opportunity to the students at Heriot-Watt University, who are developing skills and creativity to help secure the future of Scotland's unique tartans and textiles."

The chosen design will be registered with the Scottish Tartan Authority as the

official commemorative tartan for the America-250th organisation. An initial commemorative run will be produced at Lovat Mill in the Scottish Borders, with the winning student then travelling to Washington D.C. to formally present the tartan from Scotland to the USA.

Each submission had to meet specific evaluation criteria. These include the historical and cultural relevance of the tartan design, the creativity and originality of the pattern and supporting narrative, as well as the design's public appeal and potential for ceremonial and commercial use. Colour palette, warp and weft all contribute to the narrative conveyed, combining tradition with contemporary storytelling.

The tartan project is part of a wider programme of activity around America-250th and the America-Scotland relationship. Scotland has played a part in shaping America's history, with many of the Founding Fathers and signatories of the Declaration of Independence of Scottish descent. Scottish immigrants also contributed to the development of American governance, industry and education. Lovat Mill in Hawick is an established partner of Heriot-Watt University's School of Textiles and Design. It regularly provides placements for fourth year weave students and hosts tours of the mill for students from the school.

Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival marks 20 years with historic milestone in heavy athletics



Twenty years isn't a long tenure when hosting ancient events, but the Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival has made its mark in just two decades. The event gained international acclaim in 2022, becoming only the second Canadian event

to host the Masters World Championship in heavy athletics. In 2026, as it marks its 20th annual event, the Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival will again make its mark in the field of heavy athletics, becoming the first Highland Games in Canada to host every championship division of the Canadian Scottish Athletic Federation (CSAF).

The 20th annual Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival takes place June 9 - 13, 2026, with a series of free community concerts throughout the region. It culminates on Saturday, June 13, with a day-long celebration that blends heritage sports, music, culture, agriculture, and community.

One of Atlantic Canada's signature summer events

While elite competition will be a major draw, with the 2026 CSAF Men's Masters Championship on site, the heart of the festival remains its support of local Scottish culture. The day includes highland dance competitions, pipe and drum solo events and pipe band competitions, HEMA sword fighting competitions, the growing 5K Tartan Fun Run, agricultural demonstrations, clan tents, bouncy castles, wagon rides, food vendors, and activities for all ages. The Ceilidh Tent and community concerts showcase local performers, including Lupin, RCMP Pipes & Drums, Sons of Gael, Fingal's Rant, Sara & James Nelson, Patricia Murray, Prosser Brook, Dahliah Ave, Farraige, and Corsa.



Organized by the Greater Moncton Scottish Association, the festival has grown into one of Atlantic Canada's signature summer events. In 2025, attendance climbed to several thousand visitors, more than doubling previous numbers as families, competitors, and visitors from across the region and beyond took part.

For longtime supporters, it is a chance to celebrate how far the festival has come. For first-time visitors, it is an open invitation to discover why the Greater Moncton Highland Games has become a highlight of the region's summer calendar.

Twenty years in, the tradition is only getting stronger, with some exciting plans for 2027.

For schedules and updates, visit www.monctonhighlandgames.com and follow along on social media, @moncton_scots on Instagram and www.facebook.com/monctonhighlandgame



Images courtesy of Moncton Highland Games. Photos: Matthew Bloom.

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