

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?

The Isle of Gigha



Thank you for your story on the Isle of Gigha (*The Isle of Gigha: The community owned island, the Scottish Banner*, March, 2026). This wee island has long fascinated me, and I do recall reading about the community buyout of Gigha. That really intrigued me that the locals had such passion for their home-something many likely do not

beyond their own property line. I was not aware of Gigha Day and I have decided to include Gigha on my next trip to Scotland as it really does look like a very accessible place and from the images, I can also see quite beautiful. I enjoy learning about new places to visit in Scotland as I have done most the 'must see' type spots. I have travelled to Scotland at least 20 times over the years and enjoy all my trips.

All the best to all involved with *the Scottish Banner!*

Derek Crossly
Manchester, Vermont
USA

Ed note: I hope you make to Gigha soon Derek, I too have the same plan!

Strathendrick Boys Rugby U18 Australia Tour



Hello from Scotland, I am part of the fundraising committee for the Strathendrick Boys Rugby U18 Australia Tour for 2027. My son Archie (16yo) is a budding rugby player who has trained with the Scotland Youth Development Squad and he and his team are travelling to Australia in July / August 2027 to play a series of matches and enjoy the trip of a lifetime.

They are all an amazing bunch of boys who have played together from the age of 5 and from various backgrounds who all deserve this chance massively, so we are now embarking on quite the fundraiser to get them all to the other side of the world. We successfully fundraised to get them to Sweden to play in the 2025 Viking Cup and they won!

We are doing a lot of ground level fundraising from ceilidhs, car washes and sponsored sports events to working with a wide variety of companies who might be willing to support the team.

You are probably asking - why Australia? A couple of reasons, it's somewhere that some of the boys may never get a chance to visit and this is an incredible opportunity for them but also their amazing coach Jason who has trained them from the very beginning is a very proud Aussie and hails from Sydney himself.

Any help would be very much appreciated and to find out more please visit: www.strathendrickrfcaustralia2027.com
Debby McGregor
Scotland

Ed note: Wishing the team all the best in their preparations for next year Debby!

Haemochromatosis - The Celtic Curse

I read with interest the article 'Celtic Curse' genetic disease hotspots revealed in *The Scottish Banner* Vol 49, No.11, of May 2026. Many *Scottish Banner* readers in Australia and New Zealand may well also be carrying the haemochromatosis gene

mutation - which is particularly prevalent in people of Scots, Irish, and Scandinavian descent - as I am. Similar to UK, testing for haemochromatosis is not something that occurs routinely.

My diagnosis was as a result of 'iron studies' blood tests as I was being treated for joint pain in my late 40s. My iron levels were very high, and a further genetic test confirmed that I am 'homozygous for the C282Y HFE gene mutation'. This diagnosis now requires me to give blood regularly, but that is OK because since the Australian Red Cross lifted the ban on people who may have been in the Creutzfeldt-Jakob (Mad Cow) risk group, it means that my blood can be used. Regular blood donation has allowed for my iron saturation to return to, and be kept within, normal levels and the risk of organ damage significantly reduced.

I am no doctor, but my advice for the members of the ex-pat and descendent community in the Scots/Irish/Scandinavian risk group who may be concerned, is to perhaps have a chat with their GP. Other information is available in Australia from the Haemochromatosis Australia website at www.haemochromatosis.org.au or in New Zealand, the Blood Cancer NZ website at www.bloodcancer.org.nz/blood-cancer-information/haemochromatosis

Haemochromatosis can be a 'silent killer' - so if in doubt, get it checked out.

Best wishes,
Neil Collie
Australia

007's Glasgow Gunsmith



What an interesting article to read on *007's Glasgow Gunsmith* (*the Scottish Banner*, March, 2026). I absolutely love the James Bond series of films and how wonderful to read how a Glasgow resident, my hometown, had an impact on how these popular films were presented. I had not heard of Geoffrey Boothroyd prior to this

but have no doubt the Bond franchise has many Scots involved in its production, beyond of course the best Bond ever Sir Sean Connery.

While I am no fan of guns myself, no Bond film would be made without them. The world's most suave spy needs his gadgets and his guns!

Enjoy *the Banner* each month.

Ken Chapple
Mississauga, Ontario
Canada

Engaging issue



Congratulations on another engaging issue (May, 2026) of *the Scottish Banner*! Like many people, I have been fascinated by the myth of the Loch Ness Monster. I will finally be visiting the loch and Urquhart Castle this August, after I finish leading the Clan Forbes Heritage Tour. I love your observation that "Nessie remains a living reminder that some mysteries are meant to be cherished - not solved."

I also enjoyed the reflections the importance of deer, especially stags, in Scottish culture: "deer have been seen as

a potent embodiment of the natural, and indeed the supernatural, world." Thanks for mentioning that a stag adorns the Forbes crest. As always, I appreciate articles about the Forbes heritage site of Culloden. The fact that live undetonated ordnance has been unearthed is astonishing!

I read with interest the article regarding the project to design the commemorative America-250th tartan. Did you know that members of the St. Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C., submitted the design for the Bicentennial Tartan fifty years ago? See www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=67. I've attached an archival photograph of Society President John G. Urquhart and Pursuivant J.C. "Scotty" Thompson as they examine the new American Bicentennial tartan created by the Society and registered with the Scottish Registrar of Tartans in 1975. That is the same J. Charles Thompson that wrote *So You're Going to Wear the Kilt*.

I'm pleased to announce that my book *Forbes: A Story of Scotland* has been published and is available world-wide through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, and other booksellers.

Thanks for everything you do to keep the Scottish diaspora connected and engaged!

Grace Me Guide,
Barry Robert (Bart) Forbes
President
Clan Forbes Society, Inc.
USA

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Lochan an Daim



Reflection perfection at Lochan an Daimh, Perthshire.
Paul Cross

The Kelpies



Golden hour at The Kelpies.
Fly - Caledonia

Dean Village



Beautiful Dean Village, Edinburgh.
Paul Watt Photography

The Waverley



The PS Waverley leaving Greenock.
Mik Coia