



the Scottish Banner



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A' Bhratach Albannach

Volume 47 Number 8 NEWS FOR GLOBAL SCOTS February 2024

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The Banner Says...

Scottish leap year traditions



by Sean Cairney

This month may be the shortest one of the year, but we do get one extra day with 29 days on this leap year. The first leap year in the modern sense in Britain was in 1752, when 11 days were 'lost' from the month of September with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by Britain and the British colonies.

Marriage proposal

In Scotland, a strange custom developed on a leap year where women could ask a man for his hand in marriage. The woman was supposed to wear a red or scarlet coat on the day of the proposal. It is thought the idea originated in Ireland in the 5th century when St Brigid asked St Patrick to allow women to be able to propose to men, as some women felt they had to wait too long for a matrimony request. The custom is believed to have been brought to Scotland by Irish monks.

Whilst this may not seem strange today back in Scottish history it was actually illegal for a woman to propose, except every four years at leap year day. It was Queen Margaret of Scotland who passed a law in 1288 that any man who refuses a Leap Day proposal should be fined, with the penalty anything from £1 to a silk gown (so it might be bad luck for anyone rejecting their sweetheart on 29 February). So, no pressure for the chap that had the question popped to them!

Should you be a lady, and a traditionalist, and not have a suitable gentleman to ask for his hand in marriage this month, I am afraid your next opportunity

will not be until 2028, or if you are very choosy perhaps you will need to wait to 2032 or 2036 which are also upcoming leap years.

Leapling

Should a marriage proposal be excepted on February 29th Scots traditionally avoided getting married on that date as it brought bad luck to the marriage and often divorce. Scots also considered it to be unlucky to be born on a leap day. It was thought that "leapling" or a leap baby were more difficult to raise and often unwell. However according to astrologers, babies born on February 29 (Pisceans) will grow up to have unique talents, including a great deal of creativity and the ability to give sound advice.

This month may be the shortest one of the year, but we do get one extra day with 29 days on this leap year.

Scottish farmers worry about their crops and livestock on a leap year. *The Farmer's Magazine* of 1816 reported that in Scotland: 'leap year never was a good sheep year' and it is thought to bring bad luck to farmers, especially for sheep farmers.

In this issue

One person who will be glad it is a leap year to keep up with his busy schedule is Coinneach MacLeod, or as many know him as The Hebridean Baker. We are fortunate to again chat to Coinneach on his new book and love of the Hebridean food and culture. And for those in Toronto, Canada, they can actually see him on leap year day!

The Stone of Destiny, or Stone of Scone, was used for the coronation of Scottish kings for generations and is considered one of Scotland's most ancient and historic objects. It is one which is surrounded by intrigue, controversy and division. The stone was removed from Westminster Abbey on Christmas day in 1950 by

four students with several articles, books and a film about it being made. However, Tam Smith also played his role in the stones time in Scotland, and we are so happy to be sharing his story.

One of the most famous events in the recent history of the Western Isles was the wreck of the SS *Politician* on the 5th of February 1941. The ship was bound for the West Indies and America and ran aground off Eriskay with thousands of bottles of whisky and became famous with the book and movie *Whisky Galore*.

Romantic places

Last year national tourism board VisitScotland conducted a survey of the country's most romantic places people would most like to visit with their partner. At joint top spot was the Scottish Highlands and the Isle of Skye (33%) with both locations filled with stunningly beautiful scenery, followed by Edinburgh (30%) which is filled with historic places and post card perfect locations.

Other contenders were the Lothians (28%) which includes East Lothian, Midlothian, and West Lothian which all blend fantastic scenery and picturesque towns. At joint fourth was Stirling and Loch Lomond & the Trossachs (26%) with the historic city of Stirling celebrating 900 years this year and the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond a favourite holiday spot for Scots for generations, and finally at joint fifth was Orkney and Shetland (23%) whose unique Viking traditions and dramatic coastlines is unparalleled.

Most *Scottish Banner* readers will have a strong link to Scotland and special connection to the welcoming people, rich music scene, unique culture, dramatic landscapes, historic buildings, romantic castles and its fascinating story. Perhaps you too will be looking to leap back to Scotland this leap year, just as I am, enjoy your month... 🍷

Do you follow any unique leap year traditions? Do you have a favourite romantic part of Scotland to visit? 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.



The Scottish Highlands. Photo: VisitScotland.



Gracing our front cover: Bestselling author Coinneach MacLeod, *The Hebridean Baker*.

National Library acquires first-ever Broons annual



The National Library of Scotland has added the last piece to its collection of *Broons* annuals. Library curators have been searching for the elusive 1939 first edition for at least a decade, only for a copy to appear on a bookseller's website a few months ago. Sport, Leisure and Newspapers Curator Ian Scott arranged the purchase for the national collections. He said: "We're really pleased to have found this first edition – the *Broons* annuals are some of the most important publications in 20th century Scotland. They have had enduring appeal since their inception in 1939, which makes them a publishing phenomenon. These iconic characters, aside from subtle changes to their clothing and technology use, still haven't changed much in the 80-plus years they've been landing in Scottish households at Christmastime. Which is a major achievement for any publication.

The *Broons'* still has a large readership because even today, you can buy a copy from major retailers, who wouldn't stock them unless they were guaranteed to sell a considerable number. Their enduring popularity can be put down to the multi-generational appeal. *The Broons* addresses, in quite a gentle way, generational conflict. In these modern times where societies and cultures are so fragmented, publications that gently chip away at generational conflict and other societal constructs such as class can bring a level of comfort to readers aged 8 to 80."

A magical formula

Initially, the *Broons* books and comics were not collected by libraries chiefly because they are distributed via newsagents rather than bookshops. This, coupled with the fact that these publications are deemed ephemeral and therefore discarded, means the earlier

editions rarely made their way to collecting institutions such as the National Library of Scotland. Since the 1940 edition (which was published in 1939), *The Broons* annual has appeared every two years, alternating with the *Oor Wullie* annual. There was a small gap in 1944 and 1946 due to paper shortages, during which time D C Thomson released *Broons* jigsaws. Otherwise, it has remained a biannual publication until the present day. On the 80th anniversary of the first *Broons* book, D C Thomson published *The Broons* and the *Oor Wullie* annual in the same year, but that was an exception.

Mr Scott attributes their instant popularity and enduring appeal to many facets, but primarily the *Broons'* relatability saying: "The tenement flats, the neighbourhood streets and nearby countryside are relatable to readers all over the country. It replicates the lives people have, the places they live in, and the language they speak. *The Broons* is written in Scots, which is unusual for a big mainstream publication." He added: "*The Broons* is never fashionable and a wee bit behind the times. But in a way, that's where most people live their lives. It's a magical formula, this unchangingness means it can never be out-of-fashion. It is current and nostalgic at the same time, which has a very strong appeal."

The first *Broons* annual – which is the only known copy in a public collection in Scotland – will be displayed in the *Treasures of the National Library of Scotland* exhibition in 2024 at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. Anyone with National Library membership – which is free – can view these comics and annuals at the Library's reading rooms.

For further details see: www.nls.uk

World Gaelic Week



Seachdain na Gàidhlig (World Gaelic Week) is gearing up for its third

and most ambitious year as organisers unveil the first wave of events in the week's packed programme for 2024, with the theme Do Chànan. Do Chothrom, which translates to Your Language. Your Opportunity. The first official nationwide language week of its kind in Scotland, Seachdain na Gàidhlig 2024 will run from 19th - 25th February and will see a plethora of vibrant events take place across the country and beyond, both in person and online. From workshops to walking tours, coffee mornings to cèilidhs, communities are set to come together to share their appreciation for Scotland's heritage and cultural identity.

This year, 53 events across 17 council areas have been funded with help from the Small Grants Fund, supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Seachdain na Gàidhlig is not just for those who have received financial support, however, with organisers keen to emphasise that everyone and anyone can get involved. The essence of the week-long event lies in welcoming individuals, community groups, clubs and schools to take part in any way they can. Whether it's a casual conversation in Gaelic, sharing a Gaelic phrase or joining any of the numerous events happening throughout the week, every contribution, no matter how small, enriches the tapestry of this widespread celebration.

Anyone keen to take part can add their own event to the week's programme through the official online diary at: <https://seachdainnagaidhlig.scot/events/>.



30th Anniversary

Panama City Beach Scottish Festival

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www.pcbsscottishfestival.com





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?

Celebrating 100 years of marriage



In the picture are David and Gladys Ricklis, Mark and Rhonda Wardlaw, and Bill and Marianne Elliott. David Ricklis is a drum major “extraordinaire” in the Washington, DC region. Both he and his wife Gladys were celebrating 50 years of marriage. Mark Wardlaw is the president of the Clan Wardlaw Association and his wife, Rhonda, was co-founder of the Mid Atlantic Scots 4 Tots charity. Bill Elliott is past president of Clan Elliot USA and his

wife, Marianne, is heavily involved with the St. Andrews Society of Mid Maryland and Quilts of Valor. Both couples were celebrating 25 years of marriage.

*Mark Wardlaw
Clan Wardlaw Association
USA*

Ed note: Congratulations to all for reaching these milestones and thanks for all your efforts in fostering your Scottish community.

Save Gaelic at Aberdeen University

You may have seen but our University currently has a consultation which if goes through will cut the language department. This will mean the Gaelic as well as other language departments will be lost. This will obviously be damaging to Gaelic and provide far less opportunity for students to study or learn Gaelic within Scotland, especially at degree level. It would take away 25% of the universities you can study Gaelic at and damage the Gaelic community of the North-East greatly.

Would you help support the #saveuolanguages campaign and draw attention to this issue. We need as much pressure as possible on the University to reverse this decision!

*Tapadh leibh,
Jordan
Aberdeen University Celtic Society
Scotland*

Canadian Blood Services

Here is an important story for Scottish expats living in Canada. Those who lived in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK and in the Irish Republic during the mad cow outbreaks will now be able to donate blood, which began in December. The Canadian Blood Services have updated their eligibility criteria and are excited to welcome more new donors who wish to make all the difference for patients across Canada.

If you've lived or spent time in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland or France during the 'mad cow disease' outbreak of the 1980s and 1990s, you may now be eligible to donate blood, plasma and platelets in Canada.

I am a recipient and in return I volunteer with the Canadian Blood Services.

Thank you,
*Brendan Read
Canada*

The Celtic Nations Monument



Thank you for reporting on *The inauguration of the Celtic Nations Monument (the Scottish Banner, December, 2023)*. I am a regular visitor to Brisbane and will be sure to visit this monument for myself. Like likely many readers I have blood lines that are not just Scottish but a healthy dose of Irish, Welsh and English flowing through me. If I had to choose, I would identify most as Scottish but I am so proud of my Celtic DNA mosaic. We Celts moved across lands in our history and few likely can today say there are just simply Scots, Irish or Welsh. As an Australian it is a very nice touch to know the Brisbane Celtic Stones are configured in the shape of the Southern Cross. Perhaps other *Scottish Banner* readers who come to Brisbane may also make a stop at this new monument which celebrates us.

I get *the Scottish Banner* each and every month and love the news, history and general comradery each issue brings. I also always learn something new and that is what life is all about.

Best wishes for the year ahead to all the writers, staff and readers across the world.

*Janice Mackean
Noosa, Queensland
Australia*

Braemar Castle



Braemar Castle is a historical gem located near the village of Braemar in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Constructed in 1628 by John Erskine, the Earl of Mar, as a hunting lodge, the castle has witnessed several pivotal moments in Scottish history. Initially built to assert the Earl's dominance over the rising power of the Farquharson's, it was replaced by an older structure that succeeded the 11th century Kindrochit Castle, strategically located for historic crossings of the Grampian Mounth.

Throughout its history, Braemar Castle has played various roles—a hunting lodge, fortress, garrison, and family home. The castle was involved in the Jacobite risings, first burned down in 1689 by John Farquharson, the Black Colonel, to

prevent its use by Government troops, and later, after the Earl of Mar's forfeiture following the 1715 Jacobite rising, it was purchased by the Farquharson's and used to garrison Hanoverian troops. The Castle's architecture features a five-storey L-plan structure with a star-shaped curtain wall and three-storey angle turrets, reflecting its storied past.

The Farquharson clan reclaimed the castle in 1831, turning it into a family home and even hosting Queen Victoria in 1834. The castle underwent extensive renovations in 1896 and has been occupied intermittently by the Farquharson family since then. Since 2006, the castle has been leased to the local community and is run by local charity, Braemar Community, with extensive restoration efforts underway to preserve its historic fabric.

For those who appreciate the blend of natural beauty and historical intrigue, Braemar Castle and the surrounding Aberdeenshire countryside offer an authentic Scottish experience, complete with stories of the past and a community-driven present.

*The Kilted Photographer
Falkirk, Scotland*

Family tartan

I wonder if anyone could point me in the direction of how to find out what my ancestors family tartan would have been?

Sherrie Sheemaker

E-mail: sherrie.hatter@gmail.com

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



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

Castle Stalker



Stillness around Castle Stalker.
The Kilted Photographer

Edinburgh Castle



Front door views at Edinburgh Castle.
Derek A Grist

Heilan Coo's



IG: eadietam

Edge O' The World



Going back in time in the Hebrides.
Mik Coia

Snow place like Scotland



Skiing and snowboarding

Scotland's five ski centres offer the best outdoor skiing and snowboarding in the UK. Surrounded by beautiful Highland and Aberdeenshire scenery, the country's ski centres are accessible from all of Scotland's cities, suitable for both beginners and seasoned skiers or boarders. Depending on the weather, the snow season typically runs from December through to April, but be sure to find the latest news, ski conditions, webcams, weather forecasts, lift and road status updates, plus details of indoor and artificial slopes below:

Glencoe Mountain-Sledging at Glencoe Mountain is great fun for the whole family and what's even better is that it's free! Take a fantastic ride on the Chairlift and enjoy the views before taking the short walk to the Plateau Cafe and collecting a sledge from the bunkers just outside the cafe. Enjoy racing down the 75-metre slope before savouring a yummy hot chocolate to finish off a fun day. Those looking for more of a thrill can hire skis and snowboards to sample the steepest snow run in the UK - 'The Flypaper' before retiring to the on-site micro lodges for a night of regaling and rest. For more information and to book, please visit: glencoemountain.co.uk

Snowsports at Nevis Range-Boasting Carbon Neutral status, Nevis Range has a variety of runs from gentle beginner slopes by the Gondola Top Station to more advanced off-piste runs in the Back Corries. Drawing thrill-seekers and nature

enthusiasts alike, the panoramic views of the surrounding mountains add a touch of magic to every descent. Nevis Range isn't just for skiers. The winter landscape transforms into a white canvas for snowshoeing and winter hiking. Guided trails lead adventurers through silent forests, where the only sounds are the crunching of snow beneath boots and the occasional call of a distant bird. For more information and to book, please visit: www.nevisrange.co.uk

Snowsports on Cairngorm Mountain- Located in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, with 30km of ski runs, 13 lifts and a fully maintained freestyle park, skiing and snowboarding is sure to provide a brilliant day out, catering to both beginners and experts alike.

Snow with four legs

Sled dog racing experience- Sled dog racing is the world's fastest growing winter sport and Scotland is where it's happening. There are over 150 competitive teams in Scotland comprising of Siberian Huskies; Alaskan Malamutes, Samoyeds, Eskimo Dogs and purpose bred Eurohounds. These dogs are elite athletes, as well as beloved pets, and they live to run. The sport takes place on forest tracks (kinder on the dogs' feet) and there are races and training areas from Dumfries and Galloway in the south to Inverness-shire in the north. Spend time in nature and get set to be immersed and impressed with the ultimate husky experience - with the opportunity to drive a personal dog team on some of the best trails around.



Siberian Husky Sled Dog Adventures are in Stonehaven, for more information, please visit: www.huskyhaven.co.uk. Or visit Blairgowrie at Bowland Trails for the Siberian husky experiences, sled dog school of excellence and training centre. For more information and to book, please visit www.bowlandtrails.com.

Meet reindeers! Roaming freely since 1952, visit Britain's only free-ranging herd of reindeer in their natural environment, The Cairngorm Reindeer Herd. These tame and friendly animals are a joy to all who come and see them, learn all about these fascinating creatures with a guided walk right in amongst them, visitors can get up close and experience feeding these magical beings by hand - with nutritious, reindeer friendly, nibbles supplied.



Are you visiting Scotland over the winter months? There's nothing better than wrapping up warm and getting outside, especially knowing that the reward for a day well spent embracing the elements is warming up by the fire with a hot chocolate, or a wee dram, as part of a winter break in Scotland.

Scotland is the place to be as winter begins to call, opt for one or more of the following winter experiences from the speed of sled dog racing to idyllic ice skating, or an adrenaline-fuelled weekend of skiing and snowboarding!



Tartan of the Month

Love of Scotland Tartan

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).

This month Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, the day celebrates love. This tartan was designed by Olly Bobbins in Perthshire as a follow up tartan in their 'Memories of Scotland' range. The colour palette has been selected based on their 'Memories of Scotland' tartan, incorporating the purples and pinks that were chosen for their representation of Scottish Heather.

This has been combined with a strong red and white, for the wild roses that are also intended to be indicative of classic love, lending itself to the name. This tartan (reference: 13897) was designed by Joe Rodger and registered in May, 2023.

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WHOLESALE AVAILABLE

SCOTSPEAK

Scotspeak is a selection of quotes which made headlines in Scotland last month on a variety of current Scottish affairs.



“This milestone heralds a new era for space in Scotland. As the UK’s first licensed vertical spaceport, SaxaVord and Scotland can soon be a gateway to space, deploying cutting edge small satellites into orbit for international and domestic customers alike. Space continues to be a great opportunity for Scotland; including for our economic development, the key role it plays in helping us fight the climate crisis and the power it has to inspire discovery and innovation in the next generation. The Scottish Government’s aim for Scotland to become a multi-billion pound industry and Europe’s leading space nation has taken a significant step towards becoming a reality.”

Scottish Innovation Minister Richard Lochhead MSP said a significant historic milestone has been achieved by SaxaVord Spaceport with the award of a licence by the Civil Aviation Authority. It becomes the first licensed vertical launch spaceport in the UK and Western Europe following extensive assessment by the space regulator to check that appropriate safety, security and environmental criteria are met, and that SaxaVord in Unst has suitable infrastructure, equipment and services to accommodate vertical space launches. The not-too-distant future could see Scottish built rockets launching Scottish satellites from a Scottish spaceport.

“I’m feeling unimaginable relief. If the liquidator is as good as their word, then the renovations can happen quite quickly once the structural work has been completed. We are talking late spring early summer for its reopening. It has been a terrible few years and I could have walked away with the insurance money but I would never have done that as I want to see it thriving again. I would always stand by my cafe.”

The Elephant House café owner David Taylr said after fire destroyed the famous Edinburgh café in 2021. The Elephant House was used regularly by an unknown JK Rowling to write her global phenomenon *Harry Potter*.



“Our new charging solution is a huge step in bringing EV (electric vehicle) charging kerbside and exploring how we can address key barriers customers are currently facing. Working closely with local councils in Scotland and more widely across the UK, we are at a critical stage of our journey in tackling a very real customer problem that sits at the heart of our wider purpose to connect for good. This is a key step in our mission to build products and services right now that work for the future, with positive transformation at the heart.”

Tom Guy, Managing Director, Etc. at BT Group said that it will power up its first EV charging unit built from a street cabinet traditionally used to store broadband and phone cabling. Etc. has announced its first installation location in East Lothian, Scotland, with further pilots to roll out across the UK in the coming months. Developed to help solve EV charging infrastructure needs by repurposing existing street furniture, the pilots will explore how this solution could be scaled to address the lack of chargers on UK roads.

“The Folk Club has become a cornerstone of the Scottish folk scene, and we’re so grateful to all our members and everyone who’s supported us over the last five decades. We’ve had performers and music lovers coming from all around the world to perform here and get a taste of a real Scottish folk club, and we can’t wait to welcome even more people through the doors this year. It’s fantastic to be overseeing the programme for Edinburgh Folk Club’s 50th anniversary celebrations. We’ve got an incredible array of performances lined up in the coming months, with even more details to be announced, to celebrate this milestone in suitable style, with thanks to funding from Creative Scotland. I would encourage everyone to take a look at the full programme and come along to see what we’re about!”

Edinburgh Folk Club Chair, John Barrow, said the Edinburgh Folk Club is celebrating 50 years at the heart of the capital’s traditional music scene this year, with an exciting array of gigs and events lined up in the coming months. Since first opening in September 1973 in the basement of the Chaplaincy Centre in George Square, Edinburgh Folk Club has grown a large and loyal following of local music lovers, as well as attracting visitors from all over the world.



“We are delighted to be in the running for the Book of the Year at the Current Archaeology Awards. The book brings together a decade of research and excavation to show a new viewpoint on this critical era in Scottish history. Our discoveries have revealed a sophisticated society, in touch with trading networks that extended across Europe and creating large, hierarchical settlements. We are delighted to be able to share the new perspectives on the Picts with audiences both through the book and in the Digging for Britain and Lost Cities TV series. The BBC crew for Digging for Britain accompanied us on excavations at Mither Tap a summit on Bennachie, near Inverurie, where we have been able to confirm Pictish occupation in the 7th and 8th centuries AD, helping us to better understand the timelines of Pictish settlement. The Lost Cities series with Albert Lin features our work at Tap o’ Noth and a range of other Pictish sites including Burghead”

University of Aberdeen Archaeology Department Professor Gordon Noble said that work led by a team from the university to uncover the history of the Picts has been shortlisted for a prestigious book award and will feature in two forthcoming television series. The Picts have long been regarded as a mysterious people, leaving behind little evidence of their presence other than their iconic carved stones. Their image in ancient culture was of a ‘barbarian’ and war-like society. The Picts are first mentioned c. AD 300 and in the 4th century they defied

the might of the Roman Empire only to disappear at the end of the first millennium AD. They laid the foundations for the medieval Scottish kingdom and research led by Professor Noble and his team has produced critical new insights into the culture of a highly sophisticated society. **“The National Trust for Scotland understands that connectivity is vital to support thriving rural communities and we’re more than happy to work with providers to find appropriate places for their facilities. We are deeply concerned by the approach being taken at the moment which seems to take no account of the nature, beauty and heritage of many locations. We are calling for urgent discussions to take place between government, stakeholders, communities of interest and the Shared Rural Network project teams to ensure that national targets and overall approach is reviewed and proposals within Scotland’s highly sensitive and internationally valued landscapes are stopped. We can help providers find sites for masts and associated infrastructure in places where they can bring benefits to communities, while protecting the ecology, stunning landscape and views for everyone enjoying the tranquillity and unspoilt nature of these places. Scotland’s beautiful places and views are amongst its most valuable assets, and we all have a responsibility to ensure that they are protected for everyone.”**

Stuart Brooks, the National Trust for Scotland’s Director of Conservation & Policy said says the nationwide 4G expansion project is having a severely detrimental impact on the landscape in some of Scotland’s most beautiful and remote locations and is calling for a joined-up approach to protect Scotland’s landscapes. A nationwide effort to extend 4G coverage to 95 per cent of Scotland is leading to multiple planning applications being made to place masts and telecommunications infrastructure in some of Scotland’s most scenic locations, including Torridon in the North West and the Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve. The charity says these developments are often planned for places completely unsuited to development and, if approved, would have a detrimental impact on their ecology, stunning landscape character and quality, views and the tranquillity and unspoilt nature of these special places.

SCOTWORD

Here is a wee Scottish crossword for you to try! If you’re stuck, answers can be found on page 24.

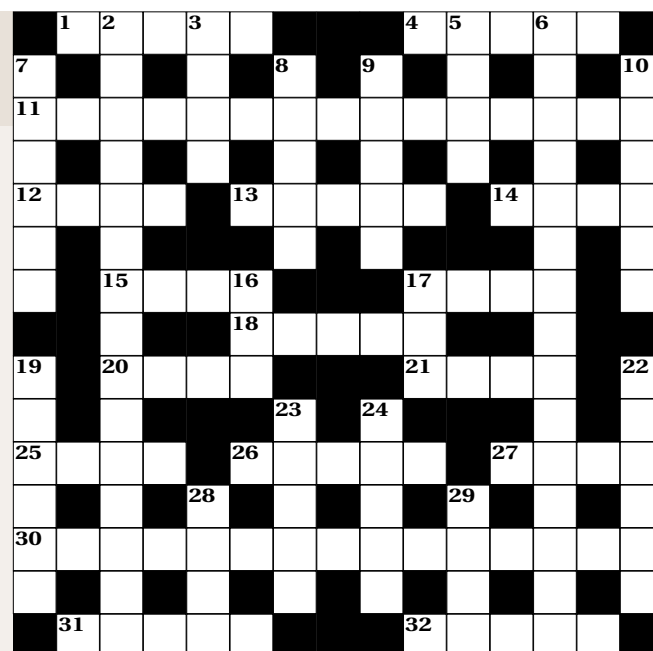
CLUES ACROSS

- 1) A lively, cheerful Scot (5).
- 4) A disaster for this piper! (5).
- 11) Scots hero (3, 3, 9).
- 12) A pressing club! (4).
- 13) Part of 6 Down (5).
- 14) Family group (4).
- 15) Dancers are on them (4).
- 17) Scorch the Scots stream! (4).
- 18) Endure to a Scot (5).
- 20) Scotland’s fastest flower! (4).
- 21) Great to a Scot (4).

- 25) A Scots dip! (4).
- 26) With pan their sweets! (5).
- 27) Unusual to a Scot (4).
- 30) Scots love song (7, 4, 4).
- 31) Port Ellen is its chief town (5).
- 32) Male animals (5).

CLUES DOWN

- 2) East coast delicacies (8, 7).
- 3) Scots weighing machine (4).
- 5) West coast firth (4).
- 6) A games event (8, 7).
- 7) Dull to a Scot (6).
- 8) A young salmon (5).
- 9) A crowning palace (5).
- 10) Home for Orcadians (6).
- 16) Fit for a pig (3).
- 17) Plead for (3).
- 19) A Scots refuse dump (6).
- 22) Dirty and untidy (6).
- 23) Famous Scots regiment (5).
- 24) A kilt protector! (5).
- 28) A Faroes’ gull (4).
- 29) Scots fuel (4).



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National Trust for Scotland becomes the ‘safe haven’ for famous Charles Rennie Mackintosh tea rooms in Glasgow



Mackintosh at the Willow. © Gibson Digital / National Trust for Scotland 2023.



Mackintosh at the Willow in Glasgow's Sauchiehall St today. © Gibson Digital / National Trust for Scotland 2023.

Scotland's largest conservation charity, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) joined The Willow Tea Rooms Trust to announce that Mackintosh at the Willow, in Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street, is to become part of the NTS's portfolio of heritage properties. The Trust's intervention, made at The Willow Tea Rooms Trust's request, following difficult trading conditions which threatened the future of Mackintosh at the Willow, has secured this important and original work by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Enabled by support from its members and donors, the National Trust for Scotland is using £1.75 million of its reserves and acquisition funds to secure the property, with vital additional help given by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), Glasgow City Council, Celia Sinclair Thornqvist MBE and her husband, Rolf Thornqvist. As a result, the property will continue trading as normal with many jobs preserved.

The unique vision of Mackintosh

Mackintosh at the Willow, which dates to 1903 and was purchased, saved and restored by Celia Sinclair Thornqvist MBE and The Willow Tea Rooms Trust between 2014 and 2018, is the last remaining original of the several tea rooms designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, working with his wife Margaret Macdonald, for pioneering Glasgow entrepreneur Miss Catherine 'Kate' Cranston. The restoration resulted in one of the most spectacular heritage attractions in the city, restoring and recreating jewel-like interior designs and a frontage that pay testament to the unique vision of Mackintosh and Macdonald.

The early 20th century patrons of the tea rooms had never seen anything like

these designs before and they quickly became a popular setting in which to socialise, particularly for women seeking a safe space for refreshments and conversation. The tea rooms are cited worldwide in architectural histories as one of Glasgow's most important contributions towards modernism and they were, alongside Mackintosh and Macdonald's other works, highly influential in Europe and elsewhere from the moment of their opening. Although the tea rooms have in the last year attracted over 230,000 visitors, the cumulative impacts of the disruption caused to Sauchiehall Street by the second fire at the Glasgow School of Art and the COVID pandemic had adversely affected the tea rooms' income, despite the underlying business model being sound. As a consequence, given the importance of the site to Scotland's national heritage, the National Trust for Scotland was approached last year to consider options that would ensure the tea room's long-term security and sustainability.

One of the greatest architects of the 20th century

Phil Long OBE, the National Trust for Scotland's Chief Executive, said: "Mackintosh is one of the greatest architects of the 20th century, respected internationally for his breathtaking and innovative design. People from around the world travel to Scotland to see his and his wife Margaret Macdonald's brilliant work together. As the custodians of one of Mackintosh's other rare masterpieces, the Hill House (on which Macdonald also collaborated), we see the acquisition of Mackintosh at the Willow as a perfect fit. The brilliant restoration by The Willow Tea Rooms Trust gifted back to the nation an exceptional example of architectural heritage that we are proud to bring into our care. Despite difficulties that were outwith the control of The Willow Tea



Ladies' Room, 1905. Photo: The Hunterian, Uni of Glasgow.



The interior today.

Rooms Trustees and the management team, the work they have done with their staff in welcoming visitors, running community learning and outreach and in providing an exceptional heritage experience is exemplary – and we are certain we can build on their achievements to ensure the long-term sustainability and survival of this wonderful place on behalf of Glasgow and Scotland."

Celia Sinclair Thornqvist MBE, Founder, Past Chair and Trustee of The Willow Tea Rooms Trust (WTRT), said: "From the beginning, it was our aim to restore and conserve this last remaining and most beautiful example of Mackintosh's masterful designs for tea rooms to the highest possible standards. Through this new partnership, I am delighted and relieved that a way has been found to sustain this global icon in Glasgow and Scotland, so that it can continue to be protected and shared. I alone cannot take all the credit for the initial rescue of Mackintosh at the Willow and proving its worth. Many others played a part which enabled the financial independence needed to allow us to function as a living, breathing museum. Fate though intervened: Unexpected events in the form of the two serious fires at the Glasgow School of Art closed down Sauchiehall Street for many months and were followed by COVID lockdowns and yet another fire nearby. These proved to have baleful impacts on our trading and business plan. We were able to survive this despite the odds, but it was proof of the vulnerability of a single standalone charitable Trust, and it was resolved that we needed to find another way forward. We wanted to ensure that Mackintosh at the Willow would be in the hands of people who shared our ethos and passion for the heritage this place represents – and that is why we are so glad that we have been able to come to this arrangement with the National Trust for Scotland."

Mackintosh at the Willow formally became one of the National Trust for Scotland's properties in January 2024. The property is within walking distance to the National Trust for Scotland's Tenement House in Glasgow's Garnethill, which offers a contrasting but complementary



View of Sauchiehall Street looking E., 1910-12. Copyright Dr Chris Jones Collection.

experience of Glaswegian life at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The tea rooms also join other Trust properties in the region – Alexander 'Greek' Thomson's Holmwood in Cathcart and Greenbank Garden in Clarkston. Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Hill House, which is currently undergoing a multi-million-pound restoration under a protective 'box', is also owned by the National Trust for Scotland and is just over an hour away from Glasgow by train.

Background information on Mackintosh at the Willow can be found at: www.mackintoshatthewillow.com/our-story

Did you know?

- Charles Rennie Mackintosh is perhaps the greatest and best-known Scottish architect. He was born on 7 June 1868 in Glasgow.
- Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh was born on 5 November 1864 in Tipton, Staffordshire. She created several important interior schemes with her husband, including designs for House for an Art Lover in 1900, and the Willow Tea Rooms in 1903.
- Miss Catherine 'Kate' Cranston was born on 27 May 1849 in Glasgow. Her status as one of Scotland's most important female entrepreneurs was recognised in 2018 when it was announced that she would feature on a design for The Royal Bank of Scotland £20 note - the first woman other than Queen Elizabeth II to be depicted on a Scottish banknote.
- The original Willow Tea Rooms Building was initially opened by Miss Cranston and designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh with design input from his wife, Margaret Macdonald in 1903.
- Mackintosh first worked for Miss Catherine 'Kate' Cranston in 1896, designing murals of her new Buchanan Street tearooms.
- In 1898, he then worked on her existing Argyle Street tearooms designing the furniture and interiors and by 1900 Miss Cranston commissioned him to redesign an entire room in her Ingram Street tearooms (the restored Oak Room from which is now on show at V&A Dundee).
- This ultimately led to a commission for the complete design of the proposed new tearooms in Sauchiehall Street in 1903. Mackintosh for the first time was given responsibility for not only the interior design and furniture, but also for the full detail of the internal layout and exterior architectural treatment.
- The resultant building came to be known as the Willow Tearooms, now known as Mackintosh at the Willow, and is the best known and most important work that Mackintosh undertook for Miss Cranston.

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.



Pheasant life.

Greetings from Scotland where the pheasants are massing by the bird table. With the ground frozen, these multi-coloured fowls scrat about, gobbling up the scraps that fall from on high. They are always on the alert, though, and with good reason. With dogs and hunters around at this time of year, our wildlife is understandably nervous. By the time you read this, the shooting season will be over, and Mr Pheasie will strut more confidently around the grounds.

Animals that have been making headlines

More generally, it is the larger animals that have been making headlines here. First there was Fiona, the sheep rescued from the foot of a remote Highland cliff. How the poor beast got down there in the first place, we do not know, but it appears that she had been stranded on her own for more than two years. Dubbed Scotland's 'loneliest sheep', her plight tugged at hearts.

She seemed so forlorn there on a windswept coast. Her fleece had grown so long it was dragging behind her. And so, as this hardy ewe began to make international headlines, a campaign got underway to save her. Folk sent money to help with a rescue mission.

The hapless ewe was finally saved by a team of farmers who winched her eight hundred feet up the cliffside. Fiona is now recovering at a visitor farm near Dumfries. Which is a town near where we live. So, when the place re-opens in the spring, I am hoping to go along and meet my namesake. By the way, I hear she is settling in very nicely; seemingly none the worse for her isolated ordeal, and now featuring in campaigns to combat loneliness.

Then there is Yampil. A black bear named after a town in Ukraine. Who has just arrived in Scotland after being rescued from an abandoned zoo. Yampil is eight years old and is one of the few zoo animals that survived a Russian attack. Badly injured by an exploding shell, he was nursed back to health and brought across Europe to find a new home. He has found it at an animal rescue centre near Edinburgh. The Five Sisters Zoo cares for numerous wild creatures, among them a collection of reptiles, an Arctic wolf – and Scotland's only cheetah. And now it is home to Scotland's only Asiatic brown bear. 'Five Sisters' is an apt name. Close to the zoo are five giant oil-shale heaps, or 'bings'. Imposing and coppery red, these mountains of waste are a unique feature in the West Lothian landscape – and testimony to a Scottish oil boom.

James Young

It was a Glasgow-born chemical engineer who first came up with the idea of distilling paraffin from coal. James Young discovered how to make this precious lubricant some years before the first oil well was drilled in America. And, here in Scotland, the stuff was much needed.

As they say, nature is a wonderful thing...

In the Victorian age, paraffin was used for lighting and to support the industrial revolution. With poverty and clearance in Highland villages, men had flocked from the countryside to find mechanised work, and by the early twentieth century some twelve thousand people were employed in West Lothian mines and refineries. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Bathgate was booming, but there was growing competition from abroad, with petrol increasingly seen as a more economical source of energy. By the 1960s, all of Scotland's oil-shale sites closed, leaving behind them a mountainous red legacy of waste.

Today the great mounds that are the oil-shale Seven Sisters are a great tourist attraction. There is even an oil shale museum and an oil-shale trail to follow. And all to remember the father of the oil industry. The legend that was 'Paraffin' Young lives on for the man who was inducted into the Scottish Engineering Hall of Fame; schools and streets bearing his name and universities extolling his work.

There's no doubt that those with Scottish blood have been remarkable in the fields of engineering and science: John Logie Baird (television), James Clerk Maxwell (electro-magnetics and physics), Alexander Graham Bell (telephone), James Watt (steam engine), Joseph Black (carbon dioxide discoverer)... The list goes on and it is inspiring to hear the stories. But back to less clever things. The MacGregor is busy chopping up a fallen tree. He is using one of his chainsaws – what is it about men that they need to have so many?! - to cut logs that, when dried, will keep us warm in wintertime. The pheasants have gathered round. They do not seem at all phased by the noise. They perch on the fence and watch. Hoping perhaps that the odd beetle or worm will get dislodged from the bark... As they say, nature is a wonderful thing...

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The Dunedin Highland Games and Festival



The 56th Dunedin Highland Games and Festival will be held at Highlander Park, in Dunedin, Florida, on Saturday, April 6, 2024 from 8am until 6pm. The annual Scottish festival, presented by the Dunedin Scottish Arts Foundation, has been held in Dunedin since 1967. It was first presented as a coordinated fundraiser event for the Dunedin middle school, high school, and City of Dunedin pipe band programs while simultaneously presenting a Scottish event for the Dunedin community. The Dunedin Scottish Arts Foundation maintains this tradition today by donating the proceeds of the Highland Games back to those same three pipe band programs each year.

Since 1967, the event has grown to become one of the largest events in the United States, attracting the largest gathering of piper's drummers and Highland dancers in Florida each year. For the 2024 event, the festivities will kick off in downtown Dunedin on Friday afternoon, April 5th. There will be a "Highland Games kickoff party" with live Celtic music and food vendors Friday afternoon, and a Parade of Pipe Bands and Clans in the evening down Main Street in downtown Dunedin. This will be a fun

and exciting way to celebrate Tartan Day 2024 and an excellent start to the Dunedin Highland Games and Festival.

Saturday, April 6, 2024 is the big day at Highlander Park in Dunedin, Florida. All parking is off-site and free for the Highland Games, at the nearby Dunedin High School and two local Churches, with complimentary continuous shuttle service all day. Gates will open to the public at 8 AM. Tickets are \$25 at the gate and can also be purchased in advance for \$20 online at Eventbrite.com. There are also VIP tickets available which covers entry to the Games plus access to the VIP tent which includes catered food throughout the event, as well as complimentary beer, wine, soda, and water. Tickets for the VIP tent always sell out fast.

Something for everyone to enjoy
There is something for everyone to enjoy at the Dunedin Highland Games and Festival. We expect to welcome upwards of 50 Scottish Clans and Societies to our Clan Village area at the game. This is a fun opportunity to learn more about the various Clans represented as well as a chance to explore your own genealogy connections. There are live Celtic music bands performing throughout the day,

both in the Clan Village area and in the Main Entertainment Tent/Beer tent area. There are also demonstrations of Traditional Scottish Country Dancing.

Scottish Heavy Athletics competitions start early in the morning and always attract a large audience. Events such as the hammer throw and caber toss are always crowd favorites.

The Opening Ceremony at noon is an event you don't want to miss, featuring pipe bands, and the Parade of Clans. The 2024 Florida Open Highland Dance Championship will feature hundreds of Highland dancers from all over North America and Scotland competing in various traditional Scottish Highland dance events. This event has grown so large that it now runs inside the auditorium of the Dunedin Community Center in Highlander Park.

Bagpipes, drumming, and pipe bands are a highlight of the Dunedin Highland Games. Solo piping and drumming competitions

will start at 8 AM. The Dunedin Scottish Arts Foundation proudly brings in Adjudicators from all over North America and Scotland of the highest caliber, which in turn attracts piping and drumming competitors of a high standard. The pipe band contests will begin in the afternoon, and the Closing Ceremonies, where all bands will play together, will be the largest massed bands event in Florida, consisting of hundreds of pipers and drummers. It is an impressive and majestic presentation that is not to be missed! There are lots of vendors to explore at the Dunedin Highland Games. A vast variety of Celtic merchandise vendors, as well as a large variety of food vendors, offering selections from hamburgers and chicken tenders to Scottish meat pies! The committee hope to welcome you to Dunedin on April 6th and wish you a great day at the Highland Games.

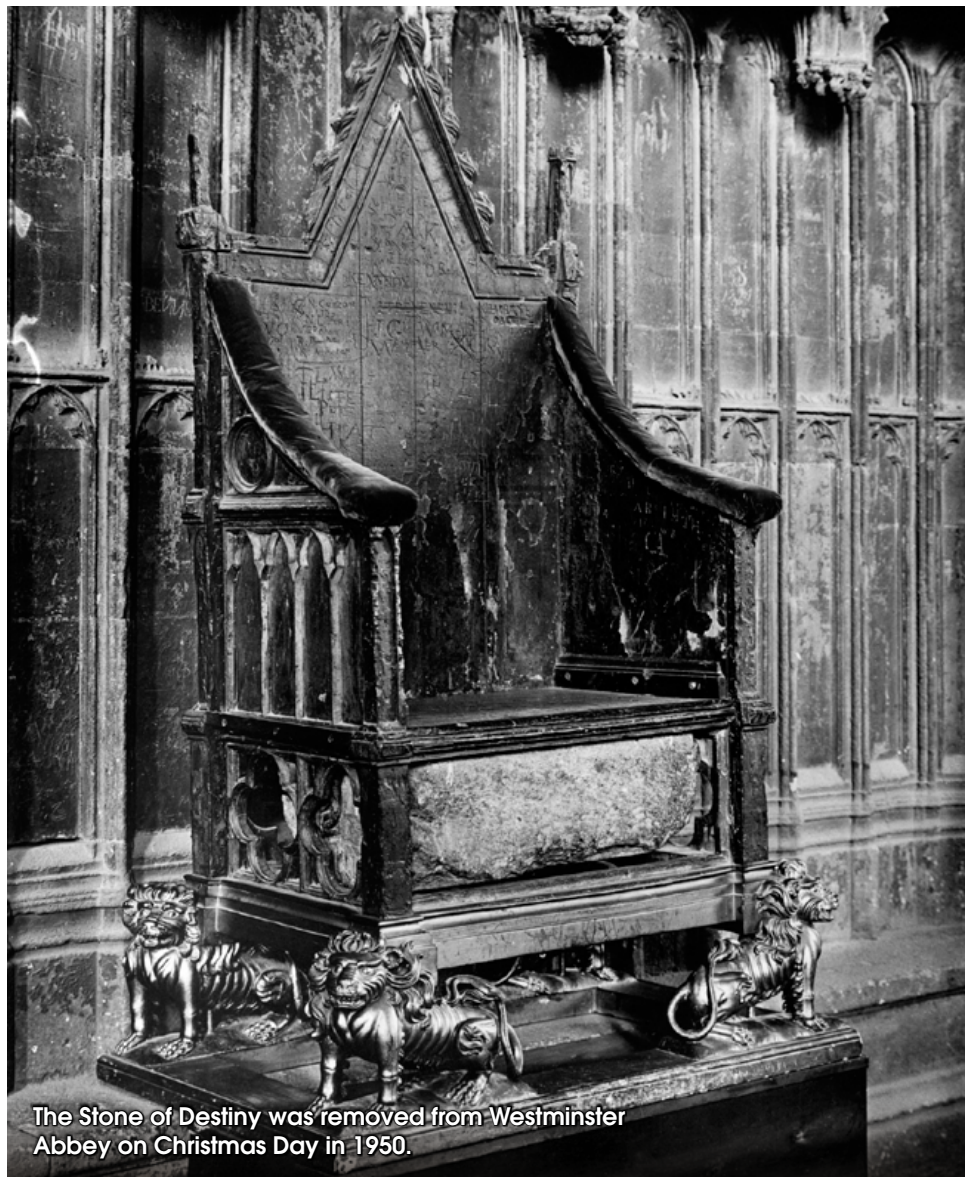
For the latest information on the Dunedin Highland Games and Festival, please visit www.dunedinhighlandgames.com and follow them on Facebook.



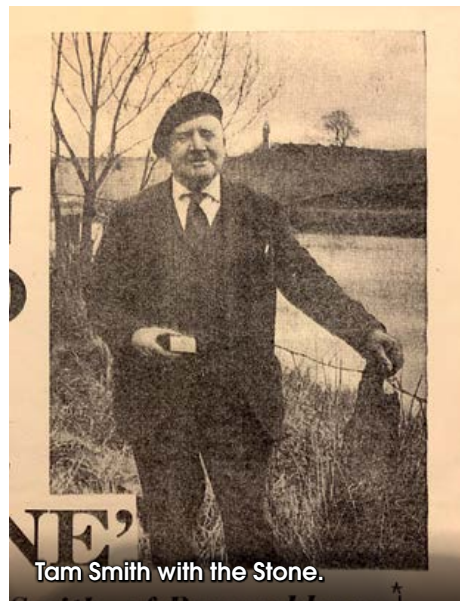


‘Okay Tam where is it?’

Aberdeen GP on how his grandfather kept the Stone of Destiny hidden in 1950.



The Stone of Destiny was removed from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day in 1950.



Tam Smith with the Stone.

He was proud of his part in it

He spoke to the *People's Journal* in 1967, omitting some of the more sensitive details to avoid implicating others, but Tam's exploits became part of his family lore. And his grandson, former Aberdeen GP, Ken Lawton, has talked about the background to one of the more remarkable incidents in Scottish history. He said: "Tam was born in the Gorbals (in Glasgow) in 1890 and he always had a great social conscience and I can remember him with a sticker on his car saying 'It's Scotland's Oil' in the 1970s. He was a true nationalist and was quite happy to play a role in keeping the stone hidden from the authorities, despite all their efforts to track down it down.

They even hired a psychic

"In his terms, the stone hadn't been stolen, but brought back to where it belonged in the first place, and he even took a little bit of the artefact which he kept in a matchbox in a secret drawer and which he would show a few of us at family gatherings. Months passed and the police grew a little desperate. They even tried out a Dutch psychic, who told them that the stone was hidden near a graveyard and close to a small bridge – and both of these fitted the location of my grandfather's workshop. But they had no joy in their hunt and Tam always thought it was appropriate that here was the stone hidden in a place which just happened to be in Bannockburn."

Eventually, in April 1951, the police received a message and the stone was discovered on the site of the High Altar at Arbroath Abbey, where, in 1320, the assertion of Scottish nationhood had been made in the Declaration of Arbroath. And, although it was returned to Westminster Abbey early in 1952 – more than two years after Hamilton and his colleagues launched their audacious plan – no action was taken against the quartet of students because it was deemed it would not be in the national interest to punish them in the courts. To some, they were "heroes", to one or two others, they were 'traitors' and that political divide has never healed. Indeed, an argument broke out in recent weeks when it emerged that a "missing" fragment of the Stone of Destiny had been kept out of the public gaze at the SNP's headquarters.

Party politics spilled over again

Shadow secretary for business, economic growth and tourism Murdo Fraser MSP said: "It may be fanciful to restore this fragment to the Stone of Destiny, given the claim that it results from the damage caused when it was stolen in the 1950s. The crucial thing is to get it on public view, and not kept in a cupboard in an SNP office. People will be delighted to see it alongside the stone in Perth, in the splendid new museum which has been funded thanks to the UK government."

However, another perspective was offered by the Alba MP, Kenny MacAskill, who is convinced that the events of more than 70 years ago made a powerful statement. He said: "The stone is part of Scottish history, both past and more recently. The actions of those who stole or liberated it were more than just a jolly jape. It was an attempt to keep Scottish identity alive and to push for Scotland's distinct nationhood. Those involved deserve enormous credit, because there must have been huge risks for them at the time.

It is a part of who we are as Scots

"The steps later taken, even by Michael Forsyth, an arch unionist (the Stone of Destiny was officially returned to Scotland in 1996 and put on display in Edinburgh Castle) were doubtless partly triggered by that and were a recognition of its symbolic importance. Whilst a growing number of people in Scotland now veer towards republicanism it doesn't diminish the history and status of the stone. It is part of who we are as Scots. As for a fragment of it going to Perth Museum, then why not?"

Ken Lawton has spoken about his grandfather Tam Smith's role in hiding the Stone of Destiny in 1950. Ken Lawton has no doubt that Tam, who died in 1987 at the grand old age of 97, and who celebrated his platinum (70th) wedding anniversary to Janet the year before, would be delighted that the stone was back home. And, for him at least, a small part of it never went away.

Tam was buried with the fragment

He said: "My grandfather was a humble man, but he took his responsibilities seriously when it came to the stone. He never identified who it was who came to his yard back in 1950 and, although he wasn't part of the plot, he was proud to be a link in the chain." Ken added: "He was also thrilled he had a small fragment of the stone in his possession from when he was its guardian and I'm sure it was buried with him in Bannockburn Cemetery. It was a different time then, but I'm glad that his story is finally being told."



Tam and Jenny Smith in the 1950s.

A massive manhunt was sparked after the stone was removed from Westminster Abbey by four students, and Tam Smith from Bannockburn played his part in the now infamous episode Neil Drysdale reports.



Tam Smith spoke about hiding the Stone of Destiny to the *People's Journal* in 1967. Pic: Ken Lawton.



A young Ian Hamilton (centre).

removed from Westminster Abbey by four students on Christmas Day a few weeks earlier. As a staunch nationalist, Tam was interested in the story, not least because of the manner in which the youngsters, Ian Hamilton, Gavin Vernon, Kay Matheson – who hailed from Wester Ross, and Alan Stuart, had managed to "liberate" the Stone of Scone – the ancient artefact upon which Scottish monarchs had been crowned – despite a massive manhunt by the authorities.

Suddenly, though, there was a visitor in his presence. It was a senior police officer, a decent chap who enjoyed a natter, but was well aware of his compatriot's political leanings and thought it would be funny to raise the subject of the missing stone. "Okay, Tam, where is it?" he asked, as the prelude to the pair sharing a laugh. If only he had known that the prized item was sitting just a few feet away! In the aftermath of the heist, the monument, dating back to the 13th century, had become too hot to handle, but one of Tam's close friends called at his workshop in Stirling early in January with his car and trailer and asked: "Are you 100% Scotsman?" Quick as a flash, he replied: "I am 200%, if that is possible. Bring it in. I had guessed that the cargo on his trailer was the stone."

The Stone of Destiny was removed from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day in 1950. Tam Smith was as busy as ever in his engineering workshop early in 1951. But, as he took a breather, his eyes focused on a newspaper which conveyed how police forces across Britain were searching for the Stone of Destiny, which had been

IN SCOTLAND TODAY

Bid for Affric & Loch Ness National Park launched



A bid to nominate Affric and Loch Ness as Scotland's third national park has been launched, with organisers saying the area's globally important natural and cultural heritage deserves protection and celebration. The partnership behind the proposal says the area of the Scottish Highlands is one of the world's most beautiful places, and national park status would benefit current and future generations. It would empower local communities, and open up economic opportunities including nature-based jobs, allowing people of all ages to keep living and working in the area, they say. Strathglass Community Council, supported by a range of partners, is leading the national park nomination, which would include part of Loch Ness and Trees for Life's Dundreggan Rewilding Centre in Glenmoriston to the south, Kintail to the west and Beauy to the east. The Scottish Government has promised to create at least one new national park by 2026, and the current nomination process closes on 29 February 2024.

Scottish national parks aim to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of outstanding world-class landscapes with special qualities. National park status also promotes the understanding, enjoyment and sustainable use and development of the area. Local people have a greater say in decisions affecting the park compared with other areas. The Affric and Loch Ness National Park partnership believes the new national park will promote sustainable tourism and visitor management to an area which includes Glen Affric, a 30-mile nature reserve with ancient Caledonian pine woodland, that is widely regarded as one of the most scenic glens in Scotland. They say a national park designation will also create sustainable employment and housing opportunities in these rural communities, and provide access to funding and infrastructure to protect and enhance the landscape and improve biodiversity.

Humphrey Clarke, Chair of Strathglass Community Council, said: "We are leading on the nomination process and want to hear and represent the views of local people and stakeholders. We believe Affric and Loch Ness National Park would enable local people to protect and enhance our natural environment for future generations, while providing opportunities for sustainable employment and housing. The area is already popular with visitors, providing an important income stream in rural areas, and national park status would provide access to funding and empower local people."

Bid for historic Inverness church fails



Community group Friends of the Old High Church have been unsuccessful in their bid to purchase Old High Church in the Highland city of Inverness. The landmark Old High sits on the banks of the River Ness, and was closed for worship in 2022, and the Church of Scotland soon after put it on the market. The groups Crowdfunder page stated: "The Old High Inverness has been closed as a place of worship and put on the market for offers over £150,000.

The Friends of the old High want to be able to purchase the building to preserve its historical importance. The site of the Church was where St Columba preached in 565AD. The tower was used as a prison for Jacobite prisoners after the battle of Culloden and executions took place in the grave yard. The very popular *Outlander* books written by Diana Gabaldon feature the Old High Church. The Old High also houses the Cameron Memorial and their Colours are laid down there. Under our proposals this historic past will be available for all to enjoy." Friends of the Old High had been campaigning to save the city church from potential commercial sale. The church was on the market for offers over £150,000.

Enshrining Gaelic and Scots in Scotland's future



Proposals to help the Gaelic and Scots languages prosper in the years ahead have been set out in legislation by the Scottish Government. One of the key proposals in the Scottish Languages Bill is the creation of new Areas of Linguistic Significance, which would give Gaelic communities a greater say in how the language is supported locally. The Bill also provides greater support for Gaelic medium education and strengthens and adjusts the functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig to help it continue to contribute to the promotion of Gaelic. The Bill also provides the first ever legislative protection for the Scots language, strengthening support for it in public and community life. Schools will be supported to introduce Scots

into their curriculums, recognising its place as an invaluable part of Scotland's culture. The Scottish Government will be required to promote and support Scots language education and to report on progress. Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills Jenny Gilruth said: "Gaelic and Scots are fundamental parts of Scotland's heritage – but the Scottish Government is determined that the languages will be supported to ensure they are also integral to our future. Learning is at the heart of our plans: by encouraging and supporting learners, we can help more people to engage with the rich history of our languages through song, poetry and literature recognising the richness and diversity of Scottish society. It is important that Scotland unites behind a commitment to ensure our languages have a positive future for years to come."

Major planning application submitted for new £2 billion Edinburgh neighbourhood



One of the most significant and sustainable urban expansions of Edinburgh in a generation is a step closer to reality following the submission of a major planning application to the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). West Town Edinburgh Limited, the development consortium headed by Drum Property Group which owns more than 200-acres of prime development land to the west of Edinburgh, has unveiled ambitious proposals for West Town, a new homes-led 'twenty-minute' neighbourhood set to transform Scotland's capital. The 205-acre West Town site – located between Ingliston Park and Ride and the Gogar Roundabout at the western gateway of Edinburgh – is regarded as one of the most strategically important large development areas in the UK. The £2-billion project is set to become the biggest, single homes-led development in Edinburgh in modern times, significantly addressing the city's well publicised 'housing emergency' whilst providing an outstanding quality of life in a brand-new, sustainable mixed-use community. Development proposals follow guidelines set out by CEC's City Plan 2030 which identifies the area as having the potential to become a vibrant, high-density city extension with a capacity for 7,000 homes – along with the necessary employment, commercial, leisure and community facilities required for a 20-minute neighbourhood.

Proposed facilities include schools, medical provision, civic and community space as well as bars, restaurants, cafes, retail and other commercial spaces. There are plans for 27 acres of accessible green space – including a large 5.5-acre

central park, several 'pocket' parks and a 'wildlife' corridor, criss-crossed by a network of cycle, running and walking tracks. The Edinburgh Tram route runs directly through the site and a new tram stop will be created to ensure the whole development has access to quick and efficient public transport. Welcoming the planning application submission, Graeme Bone, Drum's Group Managing Director said: "We now have the opportunity to make West Town an exemplar, sustainable 20-minute neighbourhood on a par with the best new developments taking place across the UK and Europe. This planning application is a significant milestone in realising the ambition we share with the council both for the local area and for the city, further strengthening the long-term collaborative process that is set to deliver a major transformation of the west of Edinburgh. The amount of space on the site combined with its superb location allows for a natural extension for the city providing 7000 mixed-tenure homes and new jobs in a new 20-minute neighbourhood. West Town has direct access to some of the best public transport in Scotland – the tram line travels through the site and there are integrated rail, cycle and road connections, creating a strategic gateway to Edinburgh."

Record broken for world's most expensive Scottish whisky



Photo: Sotheby's.

An extremely rare bottle of whisky has been sold by Sotheby's auction house for £2.1m. The Macallan 1926 broke the record for the most expensive wine or spirit ever sold at auction. The Macallan 1926 has always been regarded as the most sought-after Scotch whisky, as illustrated by the previous top sum of £1.5m achieved by Sotheby's in 2019, which set the previous auction record for any bottle of wine or spirit.

After being aged in sherry casks for six decades, just 40 bottles of The Macallan 1926 were bottled in 1986, representing the oldest Macallan vintage ever produced. The 40 bottles were reportedly not made available for purchase; instead, some were offered to The Macallan's top clients. The appearance of any of these bottles at auction over the years has resulted in extraordinary results - across 2018 and 2019, the auction record was broken three times by three of the different variations. When sold in 2018, it became the first bottle of whisky to surpass £1 million.



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The Hebridean Baker at Home

The Scottish Banner speaks to Coinneach MacLeod

The bestselling author of *Recipes & Wee Stories from the Scottish Islands* and *My Scottish Island Kitchen* is back with his third, highly anticipated cookbook. *The Hebridean Baker at Home* shares stories and adventures alongside his best selection of recipes yet. Coinneach MacLeod took the time to speak to the Scottish Banner on his new book, celebrating Hebridean culture and his love of the Gaelic language.

Your new book brings Hebridean tradition to the table with everything from bake goods, to comfort food, to having a dram. What is one dish you would recommend to a visitor to the Hebrides to try?

CM: When you arrive off the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry onto the Isle of Lewis, make your first stop the iconic Charles MacLeod Butchers, their award-winning Stornoway Black Pudding is worth travelling across the world for. I have it with breakfast, lunch and dinner! (my Black Pudding Meatballs feature in my new cookbook).

Food often tells the story of people, and you very much tell a Hebridean story with yours. What is it about Hebridean cuisine do you love the most?

CM: Our island recipes have been shared by generations, they are comforting, nostalgic and hearty. You will never leave hungry from a Hebridean kitchen table, be it in mind, spirit or belly!

Your new book is not just great traditional recipes but also includes Hebridean folklore, history and the how to find the best secret beauty spots across the islands. Why did you want to share these aspects of the Hebrides in your cookbook?

CM: As Hebridean folk, we are proudly Scottish, but we are a wee bit different! I want to share the stories of these amazing islands that make us unique. Showcasing our history, legends & tales and hope it inspires people to want to learn more and come visit.



You have been recently named Scotland's Food & Drink Influencer of the Year. How does it make you feel to be such an international ambassador of not only the Hebrides but Scotland itself?

CM: I am so humbled and unbelievably proud. I pinch myself every day that I can represent Scotland in everything I do. Scotland, for me, has the most wonderful homegrown produce, from our land, sea and distilleries! I love sharing them with folk around the world.

You are also passionate about the Gaelic language and recently swapped the kitchen for the recording studio and teamed up with your partner Peter MacQueen to record a Gaelic rendition of *Auld Lang Syne*. Can you tell us more about the project and might any future releases be on the cards?

CM: Peter and I won the Royal National Mòd as a duet in 2019 and since then have performed at cèilidhs and events around the world. We are both passionate about the traditions of the Scottish New Year, so we spent time researching traditional tunes and poems on Tobar an Dualchais (tobarandualchais.co.uk), and got the wonderful musician Sileas Sinclair to make new arrangements of these songs. Along with that, we found a Gaelic translation of *Auld Lang Syne* by the Rev. Roderick MacDonald and went into the studio as the Hogmanay Boys with producer Brian McAlpine to record it. The feedback has been phenomenal from folk around the world, and we were stunned to hear it played on BBC Radio 2 (in between Paloma Faith and James Blunt) on Hogmanay! We will definitely be back in the studio again this year to record another track!

This month will see you on a book tour taking in cities across Canada and the USA, including a special event with *Outlander* author Diana Gabaldon. Can you tell us more and just how excited you are to again connect with the North American Scottish diaspora?

CM: I am so excited to be returning to North America for my fourth tour. To be visiting new cities that I haven't been to before including Vancouver, Calgary, Asheville, Houston, Scottsdale, Jacksonville and Pittsburgh along with returning to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago and Toronto. These events are like nothing else! I tell Scottish stories, sing Gaelic songs, share recipes and there are lots of laughs (and a few drams)! Please join us, all the tour info is at hebrideanbaker.com/tour and I will be returning in July and September for more dates.





The Hebridean Baker shares one of his delicious recipes with Scottish Banner readers

Atholl Brose Cheesecake

Serves 4-6

Imagine Atholl Brose as a 15th century Scottish drink reminiscent of a Bailey's Irish Cream! Now you'll realise why this is the perfect flavouring for this creamy, no-bake cheesecake. Remember you'll need to start your prep at least a day before you'd like to make the cheesecake. I have made enough for you to share a dram of the Brose while you devour this delicious dessert. Slàinte!

Ingredients:

For the Atholl Brose

250ml whisky
70g oats
3 tsp honey
40ml double cream

For the cheesecake

100g butter
250g digestive biscuits, crushed
600g cream cheese
35ml Atholl Brose
100g icing sugar
300ml double cream
100g grated chocolate

Method:

To make the Brose, pour the whisky over the oats in a bowl and rest under a clean dishtowel for 24 hours.



The next day, use a muslin (or cotton dishtowel) to squeeze out the whisky into a fresh bowl. Be sure to get every last drop! You can discard the oats.

Warm up your honey for 10 seconds in the microwave and whisk into the Brose mix.

Add your cream and whisk again. Now let it rest in the fridge for at least four hours.

To make the cheesecake, melt the butter in a pan, remove from the heat and add the crushed digestive biscuits. Mix well until the biscuits have absorbed all the butter.

Press into the bottom of a lined 18cm springform tin. Place in the refrigerator and allow to set for one hour.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Lightly whip the cream cheese then beat in the Atholl Brose and icing sugar. Whip the cream and fold in along with the grated chocolate. When smooth, spoon evenly onto the biscuit base.

Refrigerate and allow to set for a further two hours, then serve with a dram of Atholl Brose.



CM: The Hebridean Baker began as a way for me to tell myths and legends of the Hebrides while baking cakes – and things haven't changed much over the past four years! If you follow my Instagram account @hebrideanbaker, yes, there will be recipes – but they are mixed in with hikes in the Scottish mountains, Gaelic song, trips to our off-grid cabin on the west coast and meeting lots of islanders along the way!

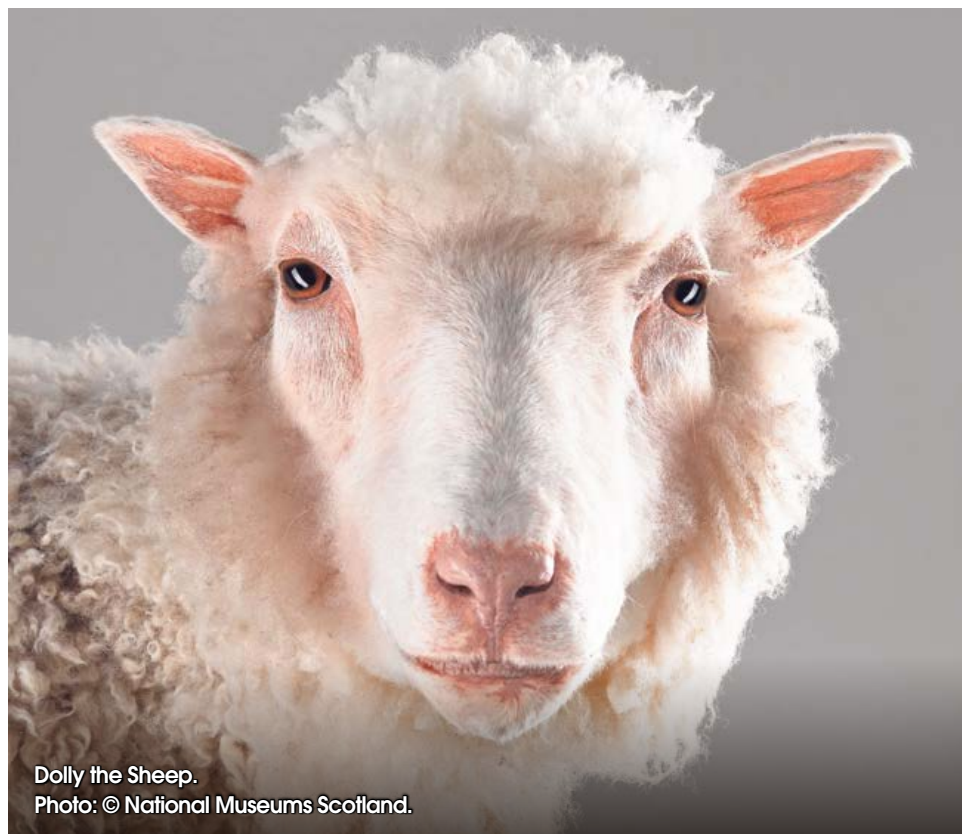
And finally, Coinneach if you were having a special guest to your home and could prepare just one dish for them what would it be?

CM: Well, when she hosts my event in Scottsdale, Arizona, I will be inviting Diana Galbaldon to visit my kitchen in the Hebrides – and there is no doubt we will be sharing stories over a cuppa and a thick slice of Cloutie Dumpling!

The at Home is out now. For information on the book or the book tour see: www.hebrideanbaker.com.

The Hebrides an incredible history with its own unique language, traditions and legends. You seem to have really got a great 'recipe' of sharing both Hebridean food and culture with readers, how important is it for you to bring both elements into your books and videos?

National Museums Scotland gifted fleece of Dolly the Sheep



Dolly the Sheep, National Museum of Scotland
Photo: © Ruth Armstrong Photography.

fleece and these remarkable instruments to the National Collections, thanks to the generosity of Dr William A. Ritchie. Dolly the Sheep represents one of the most important scientific advances of the 20th century. Her fleece will now be available to researchers ensuring Dolly's contribution to science continues for generations to come."

Extraordinary scientific achievement

Dr William A. Ritchie, said: "When Dolly the sheep was introduced to the world the scientific community went wild. The impossible had been achieved, and to make the story even more remarkable, some of the equipment used to produce this breakthrough was handmade in the Roslin institute's workshop just outside Edinburgh. It is only fitting that the equipment and the fleece are reunited with Dolly in Scotland's National Collections to add to the story of this extraordinary scientific achievement."

Following a five-day quarantine in the National Museums Collection Centre freezer,

the fleece has joined a range of material associated with Dolly, including her skeleton, death mask and fellow cloned sheep Morag and Megan. In addition to the material on display, National Museums Scotland holds a huge and globally significant collection across many disciplines and subject areas. Open to research, these collections inform and inspire the science of the future.

Dolly the Sheep was born in 1996 at the Roslin Institute just outside Edinburgh. Her birth captured the public imagination and transformed scientific understanding of biology and medicine. Inspired by the adult mammary gland cell used to create her, Dolly was named after Dolly Parton, the country and western singer. She spent her entire life in Roslin where she gave birth to six healthy lambs and died in 2003 aged six. Preserved on a custom-built fibre glass frame, Dolly has been on display at the National Museum of Scotland for almost 20 years and remains one of the museum's most popular exhibits.



Curator Sophie Goggins with Dolly the Sheep fleece. Photo: © Duncan McGlynn.

National Museums Scotland has acquired a fleece from Dolly the Sheep. The fleece, which recently appeared on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, has been donated to the National Collections by Dr William A. Ritchie, the embryologist on the Roslin Institute team that created Dolly, the world's first mammal cloned from an adult cell. The fleece is from Dolly's second or third

shearing and has been gifted to National Museums Scotland along with scratch-built lab equipment including sharpened glass pipettes, and an electrical fusion machine. The bespoke tools were crucial to the success of the Roslin Institute's ground breaking cloning procedure.

Sophie Goggins, Senior Curator of Biomedical Science at National Museums Scotland, said: "We are delighted to add Dolly's

THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - Alexander Selkirk, a sailor from Lower Largo, Fife, rescued after four years on the island of Juan Fernandez, 400 miles off the coast of Chile; his story inspired Daniel Defoe to write *Robinson Crusoe*. **1708**

1 - Author Muriel Spark born. She is most well known as the author of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, written in 1961, a touching and funny portrait of an individual and eccentric Edinburgh teacher during the inter-war period, and the effect she has on her pupils. **1918**

2 - Feast and legal Quarter Day of Candlemass.

2 - James I married Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, in London. **1424**

2 - Battle of Inverlochy, one of the Duke of Montrose's victories over the Covenanters, killing 1,300. **1645**

2 - Birth of James Chalmers in Arbroath - he devised the adhesive postage stamp. **1782**

3 - General Monck's regiment entered London, having marched from Coldstream in the borders. The regiment kept order during the period of the restoration of Charles II. It continued as a standing regiment of the British Army, becoming known as the Coldstream Guards. **1660**

4 - Charles II proclaimed king in Edinburgh - but not in England. **1649**

4 - Prince James Francis Stuart, the Old Pretender, left Scotland after a stay of only three weeks, effectively bringing the first Jacobite Uprising to an end. **1716**

4 - Honours of Scotland put on display in Edinburgh Castle after being rediscovered by Sir Walter Scott. The jewels consist of a sword, crown and sceptre. The three items were first used together during the coronation of Mary, Queen of Scots and last used for the coronation of Charles II in 1651. During the Second World War, they were hidden in different parts of Edinburgh Castle in case of German invasion. **1818**

5 - John Witherspoon, clergyman, writer, President of Princeton University 1768-94, signatory to American Declaration of Independence 1776, born in Gifford, East Lothian. **1723**

5 - John Boyd Dunlop, who patented the first practical pneumatic tyre, born Ayrshire. **1846**



5 - SS *Politician* ran aground on Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides during gale worse winds, creating the basis for Sir Compton Mackenzie's novel *Whisky Galore*. **1941**

6 - Queen Anne, last of the Stuart monarchs, born. **1665**

6 - King Charles II, the "merry monarch" died. His last words to his brother James were "Don't let poor Nellie starve" - a reference to his favourite mistress, Nell Gwynne. **1685**

6 - Representation of the people Act received Royal assent, granting votes to women over the age of 30. **1918**

6 - King George VI dies and Queen Elizabeth II becomes the UK's longest serving monarch. **1952**

7 - Battle at Glenfruin when the MacGregors slaughtered a number of Colquhoun's - the origins of the banning of the MacGregor name. **1603**

7 - The Old Pretender's Jacobite army disbanded at Aberdeen, ending the 1715 uprising. Thirty years later his son, Charles, would try again to recapture the throne for the Stuarts. **1716**

7 - 12,000 players and spectators descended on the frozen Lake of Menteith for Scotland's only outdoor curling tournament, known as the Bonspiel or the Grand Match. **1979**



7 - Ness Viaduct at Inverness is washed away by floods, isolating the rail system to the far north for more than two years. The central parapet and two 73ft spans of the 127-year-old Ness Viaduct washed away into the River Ness. **1989**

8 - A contingent of a thousand Scots, commanded by the brothers John and William Stuart, headed to the relief of the beleaguered French garrison at Orleans. The expedition ended in disaster when the force was defeated by the English at Rouvray Saint Denis and both Stuarts were killed. **1429**

8 - Mary Queen of Scots beheaded at Fotheringay Castle after nearly 20 years of imprisonment. At the time of her death, Mary was 44 and had outlived three husbands. **1587**

9 - Gordon McQueen, 25-year-old Scotland central defender, becomes Britain's first £500,000 footballer in a transfer from Leeds United to Manchester United. **1978**

9 - John Noble, co-founder of Loch Fyne Oysters and Loch Fyne Restaurants died. It began as an umbrella and a trestle table and then transferred to a cowshed. Soon the venture became a restaurant, and then evolved into a chain of oyster bars. **2002**

10 - Robert the Bruce murdered John 'Red' Comyn in Dumfries. Bruce met Red Comyn at the old Greyfriars Church and killed him at the high altar and Bruce began his bid for the throne. **1306**

10 - Lord Darnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots, assassinated. **1567**

10 - Death of Lord Joseph Lister, pioneer of surgery and antiseptic at the University of Glasgow and Glasgow and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. **1912**

11 - Coldest temperature ever recorded in Scotland, -27.2 (-16.96F) at Braemar. **1895**

11 - Author and politician John Buchan died in Canada. **1940**

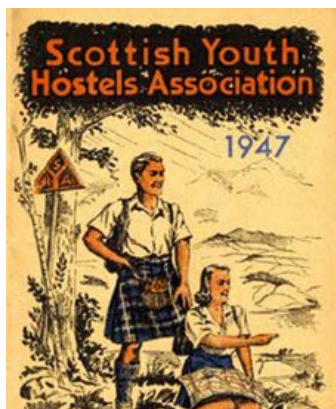
11 - Tolls are removed from the Erskine Bridge, the Tay Road Bridge, and the Forth Road Bridge. These bridges were the last three remaining toll bridges in Scotland. **2008**

12 - George Heriot, goldsmith to King James VI and founder of Heriot's School, died. The school was originally founded as Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh. He is thought to be the inspiration for the character, Georgie Heriot, in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Fortunes of Nigel*. **1624**

12 - Rev Henry Duncan, founder of the world-wide savings bank movement, died near Ruthwell. **1846**

13 - Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Dalriada and the Picts, died at Forteviot. **858**

13 - Massacre of 38 of the Clan Macdonald by government order at Glencoe. **1692**



13 - Scottish Youth Hostel Association formed. Now rebranded to Hostelling Scotland, the not-for-profit charity, has today over 60 youth and affiliate hostels around Scotland. **1931**

14 - Mary Queen of Scots meets Lord Darnley for the first time. They married in July 1565. **1565**

14 - Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone (Patent 174461). Two hours after it was lodged, his rival, Elisha Gray, applied for a similar patent. Bell's was granted. **1876**

14 - Dolly the sheep died. Dolly was a female domestic sheep, and the first cloned mammal (at the Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh) ever to be created from an adult cell, her birth was of huge excitement both to the scientific world and to the public. **2003**

15 - The Caledonian Railway company opened. The Caledonian Railway ran trains from London to Glasgow and was in fierce competition with the Edinburgh based North British Railway. **1848**

15 - Decimal currency introduced, abandoning 12 pennies to a shilling and 20 shillings to a pound. **1971**

15 - Nicola Sturgeon announces her resignation as First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party after eight years in the role. Sturgeon is Scotland's longest serving First Minister. **2023**

16 - Government forces under Lord Loudon attempted to capture Prince Charles Edward Stewart at Moy Hall. **1746**

16 - Scottish actor, author and artist John Cairney was born in Glasgow. Best known for his one-man shows on Robert Burns, Cairney also starred in BBC's *This Man Craig* and films *A Night to Remember*, *Cleopatra* and *Jason and the Argonauts*. John Cairney died in 2023 and was due to be honoured in the New Year Honours list for 2024. **1930**

16 - Scottish crime and science fiction writer Iain Banks was born in Dunfermline, Fife. He was named one of The 50 greatest British writers since 1945 and sadly Banks died from cancer on June 9, 2013. **1954**

17 - King James V passed a law which recognised Scotland's gipsies. **1540**

17 - James Renwick, last Covenanter to be executed. **1688**



17 - Release of Bill Forsyth's Scottish cult film *Local Hero*. The film is about an American oil company representative who is sent to the fictional village of Ferness on the west coast of Scotland to purchase the town and surrounding property for his company. **1983**

18 - Glasgow's Queen Street train station opened. Originally called Glasgow Dundas Street the station was built by Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway to link the thriving city of Glasgow to the nation's capital. The station and line took four years to build. A £120m redevelopment recently took place to see the station into the future. **1842**

19 - James Douglas retook Roxburgh Castle and razed it to the ground. The Black Douglas, as he was known, and sixty men gained access to the castle by climbing the castle walls using hooked scaling ladders. **1314**

19 - Ronald Belford "Bon" Scott died in London. Born in Forfar in Angus, Scotland, Scott spent his early years in Kirriemuir before moving to Australia. Scott was the lead vocalist and lyricist of the hard rock band AC/DC from 1974 until his death in 1980. **1980**

20 - King James I murdered in Perth by a group led by Sir Robert Graham. **1437**

20 - Orkney and Shetland annexed from Norway. **1472**

20 - Gordon Brown, former UK Prime Minister (2007-2010), born in Giffnock, Renfrewshire. **1951**

21 - Intercity railway between Glasgow and Edinburgh opened by Queen Victoria. **1842**

21 - Eric Liddell, *Chariots of Fire* athlete, winner of 1924 Olympics 400 metres, died in Japanese internment camp in China. **1945**

22 - David II died at Edinburgh Castle. **1371**

22 - King Robert II crowned. **1371**

23 - Battle of Roslin in which a Scots army of 8,000, led by Sir Simon Fraser, Sinclair of Rosslyn and the Red Comyn, surprised an English army of 30,000 led by Sir John Seagrave and defeated them. **1303**

23 - James Herriot (pen name of James Alfred Wight), author of *All Creatures Great and Small*, died aged 78. **1995**



24 - Steam train, the *Flying Scotsman* went into service with London and North Eastern Railway (LNER), on the London (King's Cross) to Edinburgh route. The train was the first and the first to reach speeds of 100 mph. **1923**

24 - Scottish footballer Denis Law who played for Manchester United and Scotland, born in Aberdeen. **1940**

25 - Bishop Henry Wardlaw established St Andrews as a university although it was not officially inaugurated until 4 February 1414 when a Bull of Foundation was promulgated by Pope Benedict XIII. **1412**

26 - Philip van der Straten, a Fleming, was granted Scots naturalisation and set up a factory in Kelso, thus starting the Border woollen industry. **1672**

26 - Robert Watson Watt demonstrated radar for the first time. **1935**

26 - Entertainer and singer/song writer Sir Harry Lauder died. Lauder had become the highest-paid performer in the world and was the first British artist to sell a million records. **1950**

27 - Battle of Ancre Moor in which Scottish forces, led by Earl of Douglas, defeated an English army twice their size. **1545**

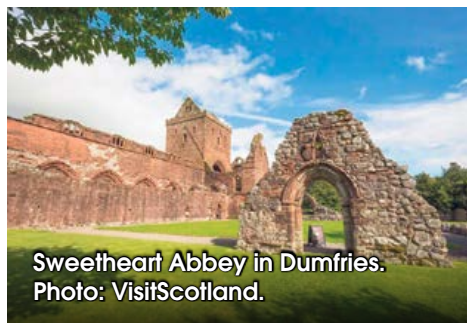
28 - Second National Covenant signed in Greyfriars Churchyard. The document was a direct response to Charles I's attempts to introduce a Book of Common Prayer across the whole of Britain, as Presbyterians were incensed that the General Assembly had not been consulted. **1638**

29 - Patrick Hamilton was burned at St Andrews for the crime of heresy. Hamilton is regarded as the first Protestant martyr in Scotland. After studying in Europe, where he came into contact with the ideas of Martin Luther, Hamilton began to preach Protestant ideas in Scotland, leading to his arrest. Hamilton was sentenced to be burned at the stake but, horrifically, his inexperienced executioners underestimated how much kindling would be needed, and the fire petered out with Hamilton badly burned but alive. In all it took six hours for the flames to consume Hamilton. **1528**



29 - The famous Glasgow theatre, The Pavilion, celebrated its opening performance. **1904**

Love from Scotland



Sweetheart Abbey in Dumfries. Photo: VisitScotland.

With more couples than ever before choosing to tie the knot in Scotland there has never been a better time to escape to Scotland for a romantic getaway unlike any other. From jaw-dropping vistas and cosy hideaway nooks, to luxurious castle stays, Scotland ticks all the boxes for the perfect romantic trip. Escape to the wilderness with a loved one, discover centuries of love stories and heartbreak from some of our great romantics or even head to one of Scotland's bustling cities for a date night to remember. Reach those big, romantic milestones by popping the question, renewing vows or tying the knot and choose from a wide variety of venues and backdrops from ancient opulent castles to cutesy cottages and even Highland Safaris- there is something to suit every couple.

Here is a summary of just some of the most beautiful romantic stays, activities and locations that lovebirds from near and far can discover in Scotland.

Romantic locations



Eilean Donan Castle. Photo: VisitScotland.

Said to be named after Queen Victoria following her visit to the area in 1866, The Queen's View has since become one of the most photographed areas in Scotland. Soak in the views of the Perthshire forests and woodlands and enjoy the vista that overlooks Loch Tummel- a view truly fit for royalty. Stay at the lovely Saorsa Hotel in Pitlochry, the UK's first vegan hotel for award-winning luxury.

Visit the south west coast of Harris in the Outer Hebrides and walk along the Caribbean-like Luskentyre Sands, named one of the best beaches in the UK. The beach boasts miles of unspoilt, white sands and stunning crystal-clear waters. Nearby is the island of Taransay with dramatic hills and gorgeous sand dunes. Fall in love with the cottages at The Sheep Station close by.

Take a trip to one of Scotland's most iconic castles, Eilean Donan Castle. This fairy tale- like castle sits on its own little island, overlooking the Isle of Skye, at the point where three sea-lochs meet and is surrounded by rolling hills and forested mountains. It is no wonder that so many people flock to the west coast to catch a glimpse of this gorgeous vista. For those moving onto Isle of Skye, stay at the nearby island of Raasay, a 25-minute scenic

ferry ride from Skye and a truly romantic and wild place. The Raasay House is a beautiful and historic hotel which offers an abundance of activities for couples.

Where better to take a sweetheart than Sweetheart Abbey in Dumfries? Visit the beautiful red-sandstone ruin of the 13th century and discover the history behind it. The Abbey was originally founded by Lady Dervogilla of Galloway, in memory of her husband Lord John Balliol. When her husband died in 1268, Lady Dervogilla, had his heart embalmed and placed in an ivory casket which she carried with her everywhere. When she died, she was laid to rest with her husbands and the monks renamed the abbey in memory of her. When sweethearts are finished sightseeing, relax at the Cairndale Hotel and Leisure Club, a close 15-minute drive from the abbey.

Cosy getaways



Meeting locals at the Woodman's Hut. Photo: VisitScotland.

Check out these romantic getaways that will make the perfect gift for a later date.

Cook someone special a delicious meal using some of Scotland's finest ingredients with the help of Ballintaggart Farm's Cook School. Choose from a range of classes and courses, from short mini masterclasses to full day experiences, and receive top tips from Ballintaggart's culinary experts. Enjoy the delicious meal then sneak away to a cosy farmhouse room complete with outdoor terrace and firepit overlooking the farm and the Perthshire countryside.

Hide away in a treehouse or hunker down in a hobbit hut. Nestled in the Perthshire countryside near Dunblane is Craighead Farm, home to Craighead Howf, a handcrafted and luxury glamping provider for adults only. The accommodation ranges from quirky little huts and summerhouses to treehouses and even cottages complete with hot tub, sauna and whisky lounge. The perfect get away for any couple.

Soak up the beautiful surroundings in the Woodman's Hut. Based in the heart of the Cairngorm National Park beside the Fhuarian burn, complete with stargazing roof, peat fired chimenea burner, eco-hot tub and gorgeous view of the Cairngorm mountains, these little cottages make for the perfect escape with that someone special.

Live it up like royalty at Glenapp Castle on the Ayrshire coast. The luxury Scottish Baronial-style castle is complete with turrets and towers set on 36 acres of beautifully restored gardens with spellbinding views of the Isle of Arran, the Irish Sea and beyond for the ultimate fairy-tale experience. With 17 beautifully designed guest rooms, an award-winning restaurant and even bespoke Hebridean Sea Safari and glamping experiences, a stay at Glenapp is truly an exclusive experience.

For a date night to remember



Glasgow. Photo: VisitScotland.

Have a romantic night stargazing with someone special at The Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park, the UK's first ever dedicated dark sky park and home to the Scottish Dark Sky Observatory or see the breathtaking Aurora Borealis and catch glimpse of green, red and purple hues dancing in the sky on one of Scotland's northern islands such as Orkney or Shetland.

Head to Glasgow and catch a gig in the UNESCO city of music. The city is home to some of Scotland's most prestigious venues such as The SSE Hydro, King Tuts Wah Wah Hut and The Barrowland Ballroom and there are various gigs and shows being hosted all over the city every day. This is definitely the key to any music lovers' heart.

Board the Jacobite steam train and be whisked away on what is described as one of the best train journeys in the world and float through the romantic scenery of the West Highlands. On the two-hour journey from Fort William to Mallaig, discover Ben Nevis, Glenfinnan and Arisaig and take in the nearby lochs, glens, rivers and mountains and even spot Scotland's small isles on a clear day. What a way to discover the Highlands with a loved one!

Perfect places to say 'Aye Do'



Dundas Castle. Photo: VisitScotland.

Experience 5 star- Scottish hospitality in total privacy with Highland Safaris. Be whisked away to the top of a 1600 ft mountain overlooking the Appin Valley and length of Glen Lyon and after saying the all-important 'I do's', enjoy some of the finest Scottish fare, whiskies and traditional music and dance the night away in proper Highland style.

Experience a real-life *Outlander* wedding at Dundas Castle in their Auld Keep, complete with a traditional Scottish piper, a medieval banquet and a gifted replica of Claire's ring by Scottish jeweller Hamilton and Young. The wedding breakfast is served in the castle's Stag Chamber and whiskies enjoyed by the characters Claire and Jamie are shared with guests before an evening of fireworks and ceilidh dancing.

Say aye in a renovated Abbey turned whisky distillery at Lindores Abbey Distillery in Fife. Have exclusive use of the entire distillery and grounds and even enjoy a dram or two whilst celebrating with loved ones.

For more inspiration for a holiday to Scotland, check out www.visitscotland.com



Ballater in the heart of Royal Deeside. Photo: VisitScotland/Richard Elliot.

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 Scottish clan has the Fairy Flag, which is said to make them invincible in battle?
- 2) In the game of curling, how many stones are thrown to complete an end?
- 3) In the novel *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson where is Uncle Ebenezer trying to transport young David Balfour?
- 4) Ballater lies on the banks of which Scottish river?
- 5) What is a spurtle?
- 6) How long is Loch Ness? a) 36.4 km, b) 40.3 km or c) 28.6 km?
- 7) Andrew is also the Patron Saint of Russia. True or false?
- 8) Which Scottish football team are known as "The Pars"?
- 9) Which ship was sunk by a German U-boat in Scapa Flow in 1939?
- 10) Robert Livingstone, son of explorer David, died fighting for the Confederates in the American Civil War. True or false?

Answers

- 1) The Clan MacLeod.
- 2) Sixteen.
- 3) To the Carolinas.
- 4) The River Dee.
- 5) A wooden implement for stirring porridge.
- 6) a) 36A km.
- 7) True.
- 8) Dunfermline Athletic.
- 9) *HMS Royal Oak*.
- 10) False. He died fighting for the Union.

Happy Valentine's Day!

After all the food and fun of the holiday's one would think February is a quiet month, however with Pancake Day or Shrove Tuesday (Feb. 13th) and Valentine's Day (Feb. 14th) it certainly is going to be a tasty month!

Hot whisky pancakes with raspberries

Ingredients:

- 55g/2 oz. plain flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 medium-sized egg
- 150 ml/¼ pint milk
- 2 teaspoonfuls peanut oil
- 300ml/½ pint freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tablespoonfuls honey
- 15g/½ oz. butter
- 3 tablespoonfuls whisky
- 175g/6 oz) fresh raspberries
- Icing sugar, to dust
- Cream or Greek yoghurt, to serve

Method:

Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and crack the egg into the well. Gradually whisk in the milk to form a smooth batter. Heat a medium non-stick frying-pan. Add a little oil and wipe out with kitchen paper. Pour enough batter into the pan to coat the base, then cook for about 1 minute. Loosen the edges with a long-handled turner, flip the pancake and cook for minute more. Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining mixture to

IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN

make 3 more pancakes. Set aside. Pour the orange juice into the frying-pan and add the honey and butter. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes to concentrate the flavours and thicken the sauce slightly. Stir in the whisky. Carefully fold each pancake in half, then in half again to make a triangle, and slide them into the simmering sauce. Heat for 30 seconds to warm through. Transfer the pancakes and sauce to a serving plate and sprinkle with raspberries. Dust lightly with icing sugar and serve with cream or Greek yoghurt. Serves 4.

Forfar bridies



In yesteryear, bridles were made and sold at local markets, and may have got their name from one such seller, Maggie Birdie of Glamis. Another tale claims that, often served at weddings, they took their name from the bride. Whatever the origin — they taste delicious!

Ingredients:

- 800g/1¾ lb. sirloin steak
- Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoonful dry mustard powder
- 1 large onion, grated
- ½ cupful suet
- ¼ cupful rich beef stock
- 2 x 285g packets flaky pastry

Method:

Pre-heat the oven to 400F/200C/Gas Mark 6. Brush a 30 x 28 cm (11 3/4 x 11 inch) baking tray with oil, Trim the meat of excess fat and cut it into 5mm (¼ inch) cubes. Place it i a medium-sized bowl, add the seasoning and mustard, onion, suet and stock, and mix well. Roll-out the pastry and cut it into six circles 17cm/6 ¾ inches in diameter. Divide the meat between the pastry circles and brush the outer edge of half the circle with water. Bring the pastry over the filling to form a half-moon, pinch or flute the pastry edge and stand upright on a tray. Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling. Bake for 20 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 350F/180C/Gas Mark 5. Bake for a further 60 minutes until it is firm and lightly browned. Makes 6.

Scottish scones



Ingredients:

- 450g/1lb. self-raising flour
- 2 level tsp. baking powder
- 50g/1¾oz.caster sugar
- 100g/3½oz. butter, softened, cut into pieces
- 2 free-range eggs
- a little milk
- handful sultanas (optional)

To serve

- strawberry jam
- clotted cream

Method:

Preheat the oven to 395F/200C Fan/Gas 7. Lightly grease two baking trays. Put the flour, baking powder and sugar in a large bowl. Add the butter and rub in with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Crack the eggs into a measuring jug, then add enough milk to make the total liquid 300ml/10fl oz. Stir the egg and milk into the flour – you may not need it all – and mix to a soft, sticky dough.

Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface, knead lightly and work in the sultanas, if using. Roll out to a rectangle about 2cm/¾in thick.

Cut into as many rounds as possible with a fluted 5cm/2in cutter and place them on the prepared baking trays. Brush the tops of the scones with a little extra milk, or any egg and milk left in the jug.

Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until the scones are well risen and a pale, golden-brown colour. Lift onto a wire rack to cool. Eat as fresh as possible.

To serve, split the scones and serve with strawberry jam on the plain scones along with a good dollop of clotted cream.

Valentine cupcakes

Ingredients:

- For the cakes:
- 125g/4oz. unsalted butter, softened
- 125g/4oz. caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs
- 125g/4oz. self-raising flour
- 150g/5oz. raspberries
- 6 passion fruit, sieved pulp only
- a little milk, to loosen the mixture as necessary

For the icing:

- 500g/1lb 1½oz. icing sugar
- 160g/5½oz. butter
- 1 vanilla pod, seeds only
- 2-3 drops pink liquid food colouring
- 50ml/1¾oz. milk
- hundreds and thousands

Method:

For the cakes, preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Sit 12 paper cases in a muffin tray.

Beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat until well combined.

Fold the flour, raspberries and passion fruit pulp into the mixture until almost smooth. If the mixture looks too stiff, add a little milk, as necessary.

Divide the mixture among the paper cases then bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool in the tin for 10 minutes. Turn the cakes out onto a wire rack and set aside until completely cooled.

For the icing, using an electric whisk, cream the icing sugar and butter together until light and fluffy. Whisk in the vanilla pod seeds and food colouring. Gradually whisk in enough milk to form a smooth paste.

Spoon the icing into a piping bag with a large star-shaped nozzle and pipe the icing over the cake. Sprinkle over the hundreds and thousands.

Chocolate shortbread truffles

Ingredients:

- 250g/9 oz. good-quality dark chocolate
- 100g/3½ oz. butter, unsalted
- 100g/3 oz. shortbread, crushed to crumbs
- 1 tablespoonful whisky or Drambuie
- 2 tablespoonfuls cocoa powder, sifted

Method:

Over a low heat, melt the chocolate and butter then stir in the shortbread crumbs and whisky or Drambuie and mix thoroughly. Transfer to a shallow bowl and leave to cool, then chill for about two hours to firm it up.

With a teaspoon, scoop out some of the mixture and form it into balls with the palms of your hands. At this point it may appear hard, but it will soon soften up with the heat from your hands. Place the cocoa powder in a small bowl and roll each ball in this, then place on a board while you prepare the rest. The truffles will keep well for a few days in an airtight tin. Makes approximately 24.

Scottish raspberry romance



Ingredients:

- 1 shot scotch whisky
- 1 shot Chambord Rose Champagne

Method:

Pour whisky and Chambord into a flute glass, then add in rose champagne to fill. Delicious!

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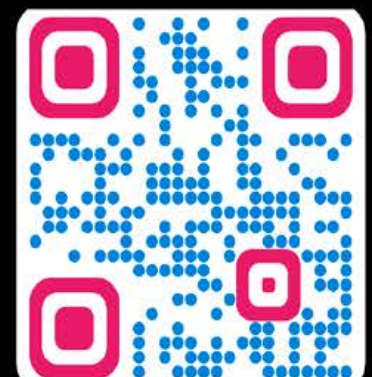
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Clan Macnachten Association Worldwide

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Clan MacNeil Association of Australia

For all enquiries about the clan and membership contact: John McNeil

21 Coopers Avenue, Leabrook, South Australia 5068
Phone: 08 833 33990
Email: malcolmjmcneil@outlook.com



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Clan MacNicol

Chief: John MacNeacail
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Contact: Secretary Mal Nicolson
55 Arcadia Ave
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www.clanmacnicol.org



CLAN LAMONT SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

invites membership from Sept names refer to Web Site www.clanlamontaustralia.com

Clan Chief Peter Lamont of that Ilk resides in Sydney Australia.

For all enquires about the Clan and Membership contact :-
President Ian McLucas.
Email ianandbevmclucas@bigpond.com
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Scott McInnis, Member Services: scott@macinnes.org or visit www.macinnes.org



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Harold MacCaig MacHaigh Tolmie
Lewis MacCaskey MacRaild Williamson

- NSW, ACT & Qld - Peter Macleod 02 4397 3161
- Victoria & Tas - David Dickie 03 9337 4384
- South Australia - Alex McLeod 08 8327 0925
- Western Australia - Ruth MacLeod 08 9364 6334

• Email: peter.macleod@exemail.com.au



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

Canada: Denise Lagundzin
Canada.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
phone +1 519 507 4465

Europe: Will Tulling
Europe.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org
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Scotland & Northern Ireland: Moray G Cattanach
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USA: Dave McPherson
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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/>



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: clanmacraeastnz@gmail.com

NZ Contact: Sue Tregoweth
email: sue.treg1@gmail.com

NESBITT - NISBET SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA



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WWW.IBYDEIT.ORG

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Clan Sutherland Society in Australia Inc.

Contact: M Williams, Secretary

clansutherlandsocietyaustralia@gmail.com
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New Zealand: Judette Maitland judette@xtra.co.nz
33 Disley Street, Highbury, Wellington 6012. NZ

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for information contact Commander Des Ross
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We would be pleased to hear from anyone with Ross Clan heritage and interest.

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The 59th anniversary of the Phoenix Scottish Games



Guest international pipe band, the Ingersoll Pipe Band, from Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada.

Scotland returns to the Desert Southwest during the weekend of March 1st thru 3rd, 2024 with the 59th annual Phoenix Scottish Games to be held at new Gilbert Regional Park in Gilbert, Arizona. You don't need to be Scottish to enjoy the games featuring full Highland pageantry with pipes and drums, Highland dancers, athletics, Celtic bands, and Gathering of the Clans. As you move from area to area within the festival, you'll be treated to a variety of live entertainment, interactive displays, and athletic events.

The event hosts championships for Highland dance and pipe band. In addition to those competitions, you won't want to miss numerous performers of traditional folk, bluegrass and rock music their sound rooted in Scotland.

Watch in awe as highland athletes make it look easy to throw a log bigger than a telephone pole or toss a hammer farther than you can throw a ball! Events include the Caber Toss, Sheaf Toss, Hammer Throw and "Putting the Stone" with male and female competitors of all ages from across North America.

Returning this year will be the twilight tattoo Friday March 1st. Those in attendance can enjoy an amphitheater concert showcasing the sights and sounds of Scotland underneath the Arizona desert sky! Performers will include Celtic music, a military band, Scottish dancers, traditional pageantry and of course pipes and drums.

Deep ties between Arizona and Scotland

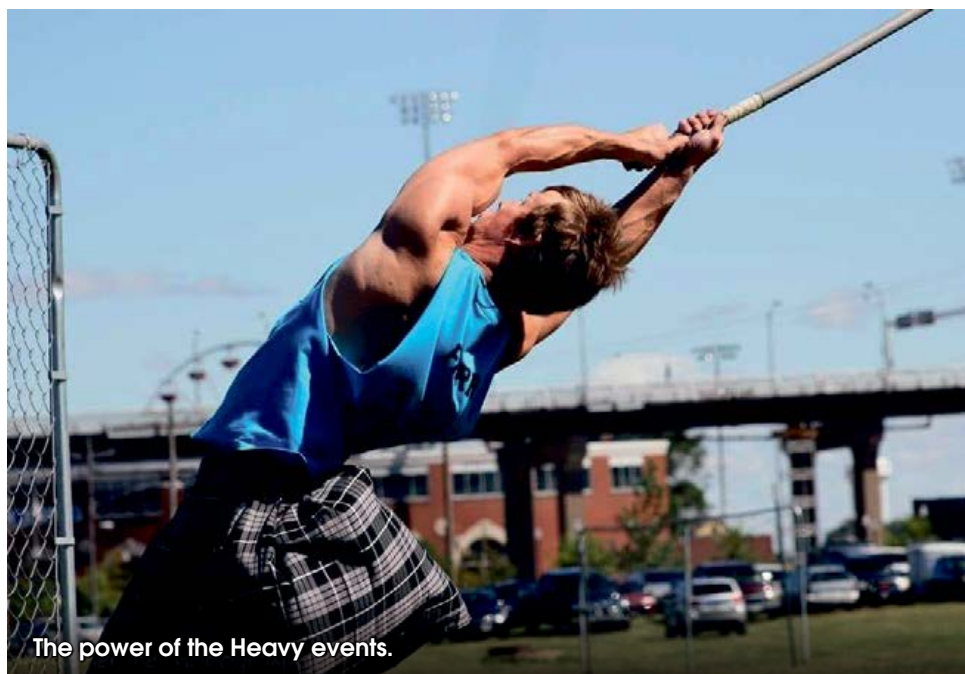
All ages will have fun in the Celtic Village, featuring a variety of Celtic merchants with clothing, music instruments, jewelry, baked goods and other traditional culinary delights that you won't find at any other festival - traditional shortbread cookies, highland beef dishes and more. There will be Scotch Whisky Tasting where you can enjoy a dram and hear about the whisky making process of each expression. Car lovers don't forget to vote for your favorite vintage vehicle at the British Car Display and show. If you are curious about your heritage, join us in the Clan and Genealogy area. Arizona has over 175,000 Scots, you could be one of them! Everywhere you look you can see deep ties between Arizona and Scotland. Douglas, Arizona was named for a Canadian-Scotsman, and the Rose Tree Museum in Tombstone, Arizona features a rose tree grown from a cutting shipped to a young Scottish bride from her family in Scotland in 1885.

But even if you don't have any ties to Scotland, you will enjoy yourself at 59th annual Phoenix Scottish Games. As long as you relish good music, food, and fun, you'll have a great time. The Phoenix Scottish Games are produced by the Caledonian Society of Arizona, the largest Celtic organization in the state, promoting Scottish culture through art, education and athletics. Funds raised at the event supports scholarships to aspiring and professional Highland athletes, musicians, and dancers and/or other individuals or organizations whose mission, project or program promotes Scottish heritage.

The Phoenix Scottish Games takes place March 1-3, 2024 at Gilbert Regional Park, Gilbert, Arizona. For tickets, including VIP, and full event information see: www.phoenixscottishgames.com.



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By: Jackie Sangster

Learning Manager at Historic Environment Scotland

Whisky Galore- The story of a close-knit community

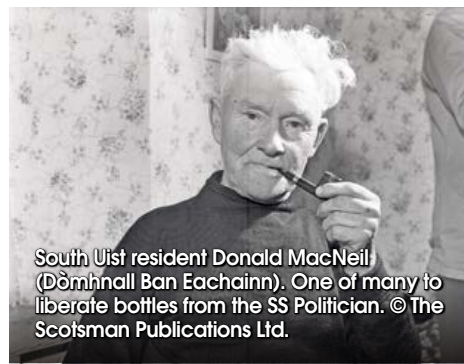
Head into the archives of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to discover the true story which inspired Whisky Galore and go behind the scenes of a comedic cinema classic.



A film poster for the 1949 release of Whisky Galore. © Scottish Life Archive.



Joan Greenwood, Bruce Seton and Mary McNeil in Whisky Galore. © Hulton Getty.



South Uist resident Donald MacNeil (Dòmhnall Ban Eachainn). One of many to liberate bottles from the SS Politician. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd.

A great Scottish tale published in 1946, Compton MacKenzie's *Whisky Galore* was inspired by real-life events surrounding the grounding of a cargo ship off the Western Isles. Three years later, the *SS Politician* and the Highland Nectar whisky she carried were further immortalised on screen. On the anniversary of the February event, we use HES Scran archives to explore a classic of Scottish storytelling.

Disaster for SS Politician

The *SS Politician* launched in 1921 under her original name *SS London Merchant*. Sold in 1935, she was renamed and became affectionally referred to as Polly by her crew. Then during the World War Two, she participated in the Atlantic convoys supplying goods between Britain and the USA. On the morning of 5 February 1941 she set sail from Liverpool bound for New York, carrying many thousands of bottles of Scotch whisky amongst a mixed cargo. Her consignment also included significant amounts of Jamaican currency. The *Politician* became stranded on submerged rocks along the eastern coast of Eriskay by Calvay, though there is some dispute over the precise location.

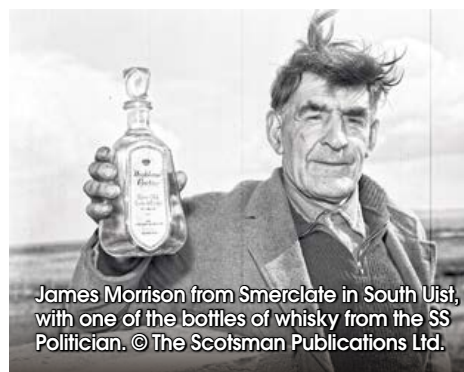
The hull was breached, and S.O.S. messages were sent from the ship. Once the crew were safely on shore, the Hebridean locals set about trying to "recover" the whisky. About 24,000 bottles were salvaged. In the ensuing days, police and customs officers from the mainland searched the entire island with the result that several islanders were jailed for theft. These events would go on to be immortalised in the book and film, *Whisky Galore*.

Compton MacKenzie

Although born in Hartlepool, England in 1883, Compton MacKenzie found much inspiration in his adopted Scotland. His love of Scotland extended beyond his writing. Best known as an author, he also worked as a soldier, secret service chief, actor, broadcaster and editor. He also made his mark on Scottish politics.

Once the crew were safely on shore, the Hebridean locals set about trying to "recover" the whisky.

He became deeply involved with nationalist politics and was a founding member of the Scottish National Party. The latter years of Mackenzie's life were spent living on Drummond Place in Edinburgh's New Town. But when he died on St Andrew's Day 1972, he was taken for burial at Eoligarry on Barra. MacKenzie was



James Morrison from Smerclate in South Uist, with one of the bottles of whisky from the SS Politician. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd.

particularly well placed to expand upon the events of the *SS Politician*, as from 1934 he had lived at Suidheachan, Northbay on the island of Barra. He used this as the background to the picture of island life presented not only in *Whisky Galore*, but also in his second such comic novel, *Rockets Galore*.

The heart-warming film version of *Whisky Galore!* was released into UK cinemas on 16 June 1949. Directed by Alexander MacKendrick, this Ealing Studios classic had a star-studded, mostly-Scottish cast including James Robertson Justice, John Duncan Macrae, Basil Radford, Bruce Seton, Joan Greenwood and the much loved Gordon Jackson, to name a few. Mackenzie himself appeared in a film, in the role of Captain Buncher, the master of *SS Cabinet Minister*. The film version of events concerns the fictitious Hebridean islands of Great and Little Today, where a cargo of 50,000 bottles of whisky is salvaged from a shipwrecked freighter, the *SS Cabinet Minister*, by the islanders, whose own supplies have tragically run dry. It then follows the escapades of locals trying to hide the whisky from the customs and excise men sent to find it. The location for filming was the island of Barra, obviously close to Mackenzie's heart with its stunning coastal line. Many islanders were used as extras.

Worldwide fame and a local legacy

Like other Ealing Studio comedies of the post war era, *Whisky Galore!* lures the audience into rooting for the underdogs. Throughout the film there's a great sense of community, as the islanders rally together to outwit the authorities.

The film manages to incorporate local traditions, folk music and Gaelic language into the final cut. In doing so it employs something known as the "Kailyard effect" from Scottish literature. For example, in a scene after bottles have been liberated, the men of the island celebrate the return of whisky. They drink and sing together in puirt à beul, or mouth music. All-in-all it is a joyous event with the illicit whisky being the trigger. Through such use of nostalgia and certain stereotypes, the film elicits a respect for the islanders and sympathy to their response to the complicated situation which has arisen.



The grave of Sir Compton MacKenzie. © Newsquest (Herald & Times).



'Suidheachan', the house built by MacKenzie beside the Cockle Strand on Barra. © Newsquest (Herald & Times).

Almost making the viewer complicit in their violation of the rules and regulations.

When released, the film was embraced by cinema goers and critics alike. In France it is known as *Whisky à Gogo*, however when released in the USA in December 1949 it had to drop the whisky reference. There were restrictions on the use of the names of alcohol in titles so the film was rebranded *Tight Little Island*. In 1988, the first pub on the island of Eriskay was built, it was named *Am Politician* in honour of the stricken cargo ship. Today it still houses some of the artefacts retrieved from the ship, worth a visit for a wee dram if you're in the vicinity.

Explore more Whisky Galore! There's more iconic Getty Images stills from Whisky Galore! in the Scran archives, plus much more material relating to the SS Politician, Compton MacKenzie and the stars of the film. See: www.scran.ac.uk. Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. For more details see: www.historicenvironment.scot.



John McInnes toasts Am Politician, January 1988. © The Scotsman Publications.



Sir Compton Mackenzie in 1933. Photo: © Hulton Getty.



Dunedin Highland Games & Festival

SATURDAY APRIL 6TH

HIGHLANDER PARK 8^{AM}-6^{PM}

- Highland Dancing Championships
- Piping, Drumming, and Pipe Bands
- 5K Kilted Trail Run
- Scottish Heavy Athletics
- Clan Village
- Beer Tent with Live Celtic Music
- Food & Merchandise vendors
- Massed Pipe Bands

**FRIDAY NIGHT
Pipe Band March
& Ceilidh
Main Street**


Dunedin Scottish Arts
FOUNDATION


DUNEDIN
Home of Honeymoon Island

 ST. PETE
CLEARWATER

DunedinScottishArts.com

DunedinHighlandGames.com

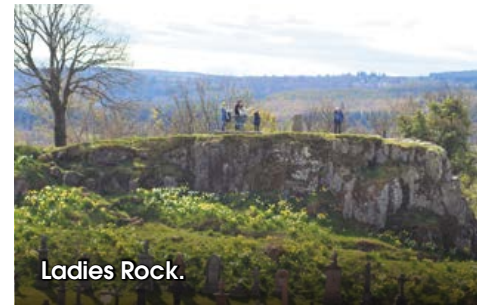


SCAN TO
BUY TICKETS

By: David McVey

Stirling's Royal Mile

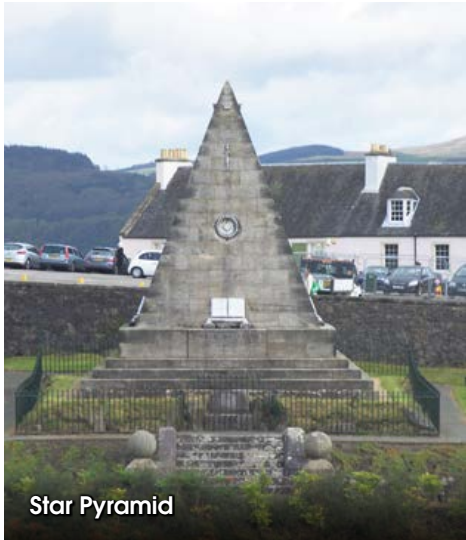
Stirling is one of Scotland's top historic centres and created as a Royal Burgh, 900 years ago, in 1124. The city is dominated by the imposing Stirling Castle, perched high above the streets filled with Scottish history. Below the castle however the visitor will find historic gems around every corner, as David McVey explains.



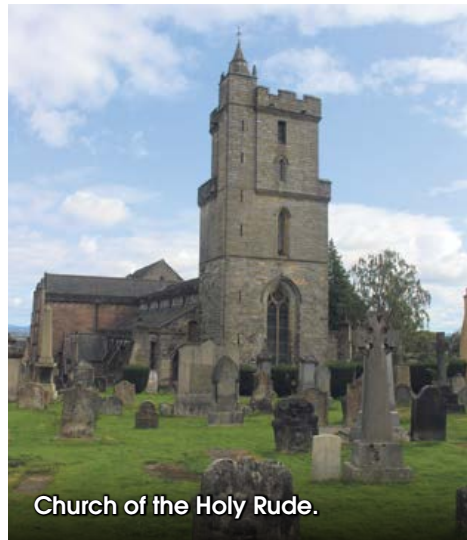
Ladies Rock.



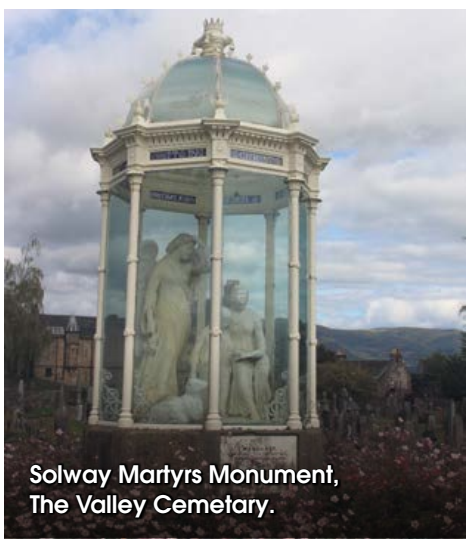
Summit of Ladies Rock.



Star Pyramid



Church of the Holy Rude.



Solway Martyrs Monument, The Valley Cemetery.

All images courtesy of David McVey.

Stirling Castle is generally pretty busy. No wonder; it's one of Scotland's world-class tourist destinations and a visit there is something you will not forget. Stirling's historic quarter, leading down to the city centre from the Castle, is full of other historic surprises and delights. Two parallel streets, Spittal Street which becomes St John Street, and Baker Street which becomes Broad Street, climb the hill and join to form Castle Wynd, the final approach to the Castle. This, if you like, is Stirling's Royal Mile. But except for the Castle itself, there are no crowds like those in Edinburgh.

Holy Rude

The Castle's best-known near-neighbour is the historic Church of the Holy Rude. 'Rude' is an old word for 'cross', 'Holy Rude' being the same as 'Holyrood' in Edinburgh. Much of the church's interior is now Victorian, including almost all of the stained glass, but the building dates back 600 years. It was one of the earliest churches in Scotland to embrace the Reformation and is now the only surviving church in the United Kingdom, besides Westminster Abbey, to have hosted to a coronation - the infant James VI in 1567.

There's a memorial in the church to John Cowane, a wealthy merchant who died in 1633; his grave is in the old kirkyard outside. He left a legacy for the building of an almshouse, Cowane's Hospital, for elderly merchants. The building is still there, across Mar Place from the kirk.

A trust was formed with Cowane's legacy in 1637 and construction of the hospital began then. Originally it provided accommodation for 12 ailing merchants but has since served a number of uses. In the Victorian era it became the home of Stirling's Guild of Merchants and the breathtaking interior dates from then. The building has recently been subject to a two-year refurbishment. The exterior is pretty much as it was when built, with Biblical texts, a belltower and a painted statue of John Cowane that was added in 1650. The statue is said to jump down from the tower and dance a jig at Hogmanay! Cowane's Trust still exists nearly 400 years on (it's the second-oldest charitable trust in Scotland) and still funds charitable work in the town.

Outside the building is a bowling green that dates from 1712, Scotland's oldest. In the gardens are two large cannon with a story to tell. They were forged in the Carron Works, just down the road near Falkirk, and were sold to the Russian navy. They were captured by the British during the Crimean War, returned home, and have been at Cowane's Hospital since 1857. The building is free to visit. For considerably more you can hire it for events. A small takeaway café operates from the building during opening hours. However, Cowane's Hospital isn't the only repurposed historic building in this part of town.

Old Jail

Further down St John Street is Stirling's Old Town Jail. From 1847 this was indeed the town's prison and is now a popular visitor attraction. The jail replaced the confinement facilities in the Tolbooth, a mostly 18th century building that housed a number of municipal services including courts of law. Since 2000, the tollbooth has also been re-used as an arts and performance venue.

The former Erskine Marykirk church is next door to the Old Jail. This church's origins are in the 18th century when the splendidly-named Revd Ebenezer Erskine led a secession from the established kirk. Stirling Youth Hostel now occupies the footprint of the 1826 church building but its impressive façade has been retained. In the grounds is an 1859 monument to Ebenezer Erskine.

More repurposing. The Portcullis Hotel, at the foot of the Castle Esplanade, is popular with castle visitors. The building dates from 1787 and was originally the town's grammar school. It was replaced in 1856 by Stirling High School in nearby Spittal Street. In turn, this school moved to new buildings in 1962 and the old High School now serves as the Stirling Highland Hotel. A remarkable feature of the school was its astronomical observatory, gifted by future Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in 1889. It is still in working order, giving the hotel a possibly unique selling point.

The Valley Cemetery

Adjacent to the Holy Rude kirkyard is The Valley Cemetery. The Valley is the dip between the Castle Rock and the church, and it's possible that this was the setting for tournaments and jousting in Stirling Castle's heyday. In the centre is a natural outcrop known as Ladies' Rock, the spot from which, supposedly, ladies could watch the fun and games. Scott describes it in *Waverley*: *Waverley could not have failed to admire the mixture of romance and beauty which renders interesting the scene through which he was passing - the field which had been the scene of the tournaments of old - the rock from which the ladies beheld the contest, while each made vows for the success of some favourite knight.* It's still a great spot.

The cemetery was opened here in 1858, the brainchild of William Drummond, 'seedsman and evangelist'. It is laid out very differently from the higgledy-piggledy kirkyard with broad avenues allowing carriage access to every grave. The cemetery was designed as an improving and instructing experience, with statues of Reformation heroes and heroines, including John Knox and Andrew Melville. There is a striking memorial, encased in glass, to Margaret Wilson and Margaret McLachlan, the Wigtown Martyrs. They refused to acknowledge James VII as head of the Church of Scotland and were executed by being tied to stakes as the Solway Firth tides approached, even though a reprieve had been issued. Adding to the instructive impact of the Valley cemetery, across a narrow lane is the Drummond Pleasure Ground, which was developed between 1862 and 1863. Drummond intended this as a green and pleasant location for people to stroll on Sundays while ingesting symbolic truths about their faith. Its focus is the

bizarre Star Pyramid, a monument to the Covenanting martyrs designed by William Barclay for Drummond. Drummond intended the Pleasure Ground to be separate from the Valley Cemetery, a place for pleasant learning and reflection, not a burial place. As it turns out, there is a burial there, just one, Drummond himself. He died in 1888.

Stirling's history

I think it would be possible to spend an entire day taking in Stirling's history without going near Stirling Castle. Of course, that would be absurd; the castle is unmissable. And, in normal times, your entry to the Castle also includes a guided tour of Argyll's Lodging on Castle Wynd. Begun in the 1500s, it is an impressive townhouse with a complicated history of rebuilding and repurposing. By the 1670s it was occupied by the 9th Earl of Argyll, hence the name. In the 20th century became the town's Youth Hostel. It came into the care of Historic Environment Scotland when the Scottish Youth Hostels Association took over Erskine Marykirk Church. At the time of my most recent visit Argyll's Lodging was undergoing maintenance work. Check online for likely reopening dates to avoid disappointment.

It's home to a fantastic castle, but so much more than that. Spend some time in Stirling's Royal Mile.



Auld Staneybrecks. Statue of John Cowane on the tower of his hospital.



Inscriptions on Cowanes Hospital



Cowanes Hospital, interior.