



the Scottish Banner



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A' Bhratach Albannach

Volume 47 Number 9 NEWS FOR GLOBAL SCOTS March 2024

Two tickets to 'Barradise'

» Pg 7



Burgh Hall

A repurposed gem

» Pg 23

The Rugged Island

A Shetland Lyric

» Pg 14

	Scotland's oldest tartan recreated » Pg 3
	Finding Scotland's 'lost' ice age pinewoods » Pg 8
	Defending the Realm-Hackness Martello Tower and Battery » Pg 11
	The Clan MacEwen search for a Chief » Pg 25



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The Banner Says...

Celebrating a Celtic mosaic



by Sean Cairney

Scotland is a land of rugged landscapes, ancient castles, dramatic history and haunting bagpipe melodies and certainly has its very own unique and rich culture, but it also shares deep-rooted connections with other Celtic nations.

Celtic DNA

A letter we ran in the February edition caught my eye as our reader claimed to mostly be Scottish but also had a 'Celtic DNA mosaic' and 'a healthy dose of Irish, Welsh and English' flowing through them. I am sure many of us do, and some may not be aware of how far reaching our Celtic bloodlines travel. I know our family blood is multi-generational Scottish but can also be traced back to the cathedral town of Letterkenny in north-west Ireland for example.

This month some of our Celtic family celebrate their unique, but linked, cultures. The Welsh will be celebrating the life of their patron saint, St David, and the Welsh culture on March 1st. Saint Piran's Day is celebrated each year on 5th March in Cornwall and the Irish will be out in full force on March 17th in a sea of green celebration.

Part of tradition

Whilst there is no one 'Celtic language' there is an estimated two million speakers of the six Celtic languages in existence (Breton, Cornish, Irish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh).

Irish (Gaelic) speakers are by far the highest of that number, with an estimated over one million speakers. This is followed by Welsh and Breton speakers. Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig) comes in fourth and is a language we highlight regularly in this publication, and the Highlands and islands remain strongholds of Gaelic culture in Scotland. Positively more than 1.5 million people have started learning Scottish Gaelic on Duolingo (a language learning app) since it launched four years ago. Finally Manx and Cornish round up the six Celtic languages still spoken today.

Storytelling is a big part of all Celtic cultures. What Celt doesn't love to tell a tale, these parts of social history are passed down generation to generation and weave themselves into the story of the nation and part of tradition. Legends, folklore, mythology, facts and fiction all create enchanting tales of magic, heroes, and otherworldly creatures for Celts. Cornwall, Scotland and Wales all lay some claim to King Arthur for example. While the Irish, Scots and Manx all share the mythological Celtic ancestor, Cailleach, the veiled goddess of winter. Of course, one place we all revel in storytelling is in Celtic music, the stories, humour and sense of place a melody can give is an integral part of any Celtic nations culture and melody.

In this issue

International Women's Day takes place this month on March 8th, we are again highlighting another great Scottish female trailblazer. Pioneering Glasgow-born filmmaker Jenny Gilbertson created documentary films of a Shetland life that is no more. She also went on to make her mark on Canadian film. You can catch her work this month in Scotland or from home via a special livestream.

One of Orkney's many historic sites is Hackness Martello Tower and Battery which was built to protect British convoys in the early 1800s. Fortunately the site never had hostile action happen, but it does offer a unique insight into what military life was like more than 200 years ago.

Dunoon Burgh Hall opened in 1874 to celebrate the conferring of Burgh status for the town and was built to provide the local community with a public hall, municipal offices, and the very first theatre in Argyll. Over the last 150 years this Category B-listed Scottish Baronial landmark has hosted numerous events and been a focus for community celebration and connection and we are fortunate to highlight yet another great Scottish historic building.

Celtic spirit

The link Scotland has with other Celtic nations, transcends borders, and is woven through a history, language, culture, and a shared sense of Celtic identity. Whether through folklore, music, landscapes, food or shared struggles, these bonds remind us that the Celtic spirit endures and we certainly all share some common ground with one another.

Scotland of course runs through the veins of most reading this, and the Scottish Banner itself, but that does not mean we don't celebrate, champion and appreciate the incredible Celtic cultures found across the Celtic nations. Celts travelled far and wide before borders were a thing, and perhaps many of us can link our bloodlines across Europe. Could you have more than just Scottish ancestry and your blood line links to Ireland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Cornwall, Brittany or Galicia? Beyond that of course many may link to a variety of European and beyond ancestries. Being a Celt is like being part of an even larger family, and that surely must be one of the great aspects of our shared Celtic spirit.

Do you have a variety of Celtic ancestry? Do you follow any Celtic traditions outside of Scottish? Do you have any comments from the content in this month's edition? Share your story with us by email, post, social media or: #ScottishBanner, #TheBanner

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We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy this edition.



Gracing our front cover: The welcoming committee on Barra. Photo: VisitScotland/Kenny Lam.

Scotland's oldest tartan recreated



From left to right: James Wylie, Assistant Curator, V&A Dundee; Peter MacDonald, Head of Research & Collections, The Scottish Tartans Authority; Nick Staff, Sales Director, House of Edgar; John McLeish, Chair, The Scottish Tartans Authority and Emma Wilkinson, Designer, House of Edgar.



The team at Macnaughton Holdings have reconstructed the Glen Affric tartan to continue to its legacy.

Discovered approximately forty years ago in a peat bog, the Glen Affric Tartan underwent testing organised by The Scottish Tartans Authority last year to confirm it was the oldest surviving piece of tartan, dating from 1500-1600 AD and went on to be exhibited at the V&A Dundee. Although earlier cloths have been discovered in Scotland, this is the first to show a distinctive tartan pattern with multiple crossing lines of different dyed yarns.

The House of Edgar, home to some of the finest and most respected craftspeople in the industry, worked under the guidance of Peter Macdonald, tartan historian and Head of Research & Collections at the

Scottish Tartans Authority to recreate the Glen Affric tartan for people to wear as it could have been when it was first dyed then woven. It features the colours that dye analysis of the original tartan had confirmed – this included the use of green, yellow and red, which would have come from woad or indigo to create the green along with other natural dyes. This, along with the determined thread count, helped The House of Edgar bring this piece of Scottish history back to life.

Emma Wilkinson, the Designer for House of Edgar who worked on the project commented: "I create new tartans every day but this project is truly special - a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to recreate a piece of history. Tartan is such an iconic piece of Scotland's identity and it has been a true pleasure to see this fabric come back to life to be enjoyed for generations to come."

Reach back in time and touch history Peter E MacDonald, Head of Research & Collections at The Scottish Tartans Authority, said: "It was a privilege to examine the Glen Affric specimen which represents an extraordinary survivor of our textile history. The dye-analysis, Carbon14 dating and a detailed study of the piece, together with a collaboration with House of Edgar, has brought back to life a tartan that allows us to reach back in time and touch history. It is quite special to see the tartan remade as it could have been 500 years ago."

The reconstructed tartan is included along with 28 contrastingly new tartans

in The House of Edgar's new collection entitled Seventeen Eighty Three, the year in which the company first started textile production. James Wylie, Assistant Curator from the V&A Dundee, added: "The Glen Affric tartan took the world by storm when it was revealed prior to the opening of V&A Dundee's *Tartan* exhibition and continued to be a major draw for many visitors over the months. I am delighted that V&A Dundee could contribute to the preservation of this significant artefact. More so, I am excited its legacy can now live on through the studious efforts of The Scottish Tartans Authority and House of Edgar in reinterpreting its design, for the enjoyment and interest of all who cherish tartan's historic allure."

The new Glen Affric tartan is available for businesses to purchase from The House of Edgar and the public can request it from any Highlandwear supplier, with a percentage of all sales going to The Scottish Tartans Authority to support its work preserving the fabric of the nation.



Emma Wilkinson, Designer, House of Edgar & Peter MacDonald, Head of Research & Collections, The Scottish Tartans Authority.



The picturesque town of Tobermory. Photo: VisitScotland.

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

- 1) Where was Sir Walter Scott (1777-1832) born?
- 2) What is the correct spelling - a) Inverary, b) IInverairry or c) Inveraray?
- 3) For what was Niel Gow famous for?
- 4) In which Scottish city would you watch athletic events in Meadowbank Stadium?
- 5) In Scotland what is a sweer-up person unwilling to do?
- 6) The Moulin Moors lie just north of which picturesque Scottish town?
- 7) Tobermory is the chief town on which west coast Scottish island?
- 8) Which clan is believed to have the oldest banner?

- 9) Which playing card is also known as the "Curse of Scotland"?
- 10) Approximately how far is Glasgow from Edinburgh - a) 29 miles, b) 41 miles or c) 53 miles?

Answers

- 1) College Wynd, Edinburgh.
- 2) c) Inveraray.
- 3) He was a great Scots fiddler and composer.
- 4) Edinburgh.
- 5) Get up in the morning!
- 6) Pitlochry.
- 7) Isle of Mull.
- 8) The Clan Mackay, whose banner is Bratach Bhan.
- 9) The Nine of Diamonds - said to be the card on which the Duke of Cumberland scribbled the order to give no quarter at Culloden.
- 10) b) Approximately 41 miles.

SCOTI CREATIONS





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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?

Scotland's Bard



All articles in *the Banner* are of interest but I especially enjoyed the article on Walker's Shortbread, the only brand I buy, and the article of Scotland's Bard (*the Scottish Banner*, January, 2024). Reading of Robbie Burns brought to mind an epitaph written for a paternal cousin a long, long, time ago and subsequently passed down through the many generations of my family and finally to my dad, then me, Willie Michie was a school teacher.
'Here lies Willie Michie's banes, o stain when ye Tak him, gie him the schoolin' o yer weans, For clever diels he'll mak them.'

These are words from our beloved Bard that probably the most ardent Burns followers have never known, an honour to have this precious wee piece of Burns history in our family.

Thanking you for such a grand publication, eagerly anticipated each month.

Mrs Margaret Michie Benney
Craigieburn, Victoria
Australia

Ed note: Thank you Margaret for sharing such a great piece of your family history, by such a great Scot!

Aberdeen snowed under



Just left Melbourne. Our last day of our holiday with our Daughter and family, they took us to the first day of the tennis, we had a great time, my wife Olive who loves her tennis couldn't believe she was there.

The weather was amazing, and we came back to lots of snow as shown.

Best regards,
Alan Goltman
Aberdeen, Scotland

Ed note: From Melbourne to Aberdeen in January is a big weather difference Alan, glad you enjoyed the tennis and hope the snow has cleared at home.

The pronunciation of Gaelic and Celtic

Can any of your readers put us right on the pronunciation of Gaelic and Celtic? Is it Gaylic and Seltic or Gallic and Kehie? We were once told that people who "have the Gaelic" say Gallic but those who don't say Gaytic! And why is the Glasgow football team pronounced Seitic and not Keltic?

Perhaps some of *the Scottish Banners* readers can explain the differences in pronunciation and give us the correct way to enunciate these age-old expressions?

We love reading *the Banner* each and every month, each issue is filled with so much great stuff, and we always go back to it over the months and learn more and dream of our next Scottish trip.

Tim and Flora Christie
Wellington, New Zealand

Ed: I am sure some readers can help you Tim and Flora.

Burns Nights in Australia



Thought you might enjoy these photos of my son and his friends celebrating Burns Night. Hay Clan, Forbes and Stuart represented. With a public holiday the day after, Australia Day. How good is that?! Slainte!

Leigh Olsen
Daisy Hill, Queensland
Australia

Ed note: Thanks Leigh for sharing and great to see the Clans well represented.

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



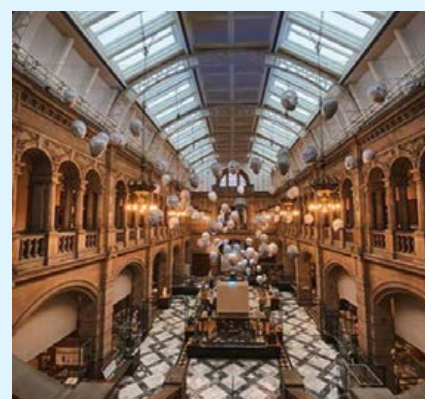
Sent to our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts-send us your photos or letters via social media (#ScottishBanner or #TheBanner):

Stirling Castle



Stirling Castle surrounded by autumn.
Robert Gibb

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum



Inside the amazing Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow.
Colfin Captures

Glencoe



A frosty start to the day at Blackrock Cottage, Glencoe.
Derek A Grist

Loch Etive



Reflection perfection at Loch Etive.
Mik Coia

The Man Who Thinks He Can

To all those 'Doubting Thomases' out there, here is an old Scots poem that will hopefully make you think again!

The Man Who Thinks He Can

*If you think you are beaten, you are,
If you think that you dare not, you don't,
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.*

*If you think you'll lose, you've lost,
For out in the world you'll find,
Success begins with a fellow's will,
It's all in the state of mind.*

*If you think you are outclassed, you are,
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before,
You can ever win a prize.*

*Life's battles don't always go,
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later the man who wins,
Is the man who thinks he CAN.*

Craig Neale
Evanston, Illinois
USA

Ed note: Thank you Craig for sharing these great words of positivity.

Walker's Shortbread



What a lovely interview you had with Sir Jim Walker. The brand is known the world over, especially with us Scots, but to see a face behind such a huge family business is wonderful. The Walker family clearly have a recipe for success with their amazing shortbread. I keep shortbread in our pantry year-round as it such a lovely wee treat with a cuppa and I have never had a visitor to our home who has not enjoyed it. I am so impressed Walker's is still run as a family business, they really are such an international name in business, I had no idea they were still family operated. As they say the classic Scottish icons are shortbread, whisky and tartan.

Your website is filled with great articles and information, which I really enjoy.

Marg Smith
Pickering, Ontario
Canada

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SCOTSPEAK

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



"It's been a privilege to work on such an extraordinary piece of Scotland's history. Approaching this ancient jigsaw puzzle required careful consideration and it was important to make sure we could display the piece in a manner as near as possible to how it would have looked 2,000 years ago. I'm thrilled that it can now be seen by audiences in a new light and has been preserved for generations to enjoy."

Bethan Bryan, Assistant Artefact Conservator at National Museums Scotland, said an exceptionally rare piece of Roman armour from National Museums Scotland's collection has been painstakingly reconstructed from dozens of fragments. Dating from the middle of the second century, the brass arm guard will be seen in its entirety for the first time in almost 2000 years when it goes on loan to the British Museum for the major exhibition *Legion: life in the Roman army* (at the British Museum until June).

The arm guard is the most intact example of its kind and one of only three known from the whole Roman Empire. The armour was discovered in over 100 pieces at the site of the Trimontium fort near Melrose in 1906.

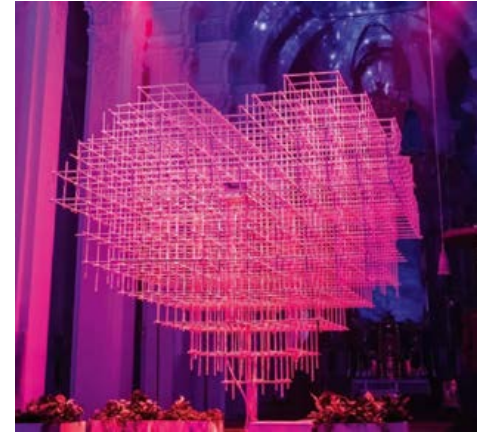


"These encouraging statistics reinforce the resilience, creativity, commitment and innovation of Scotland's tourism and hospitality sector - especially in response to what has been an incredibly challenging time. Scotland's unique culture, history and landscapes, plus global events such as the Scottish Open Golf Championship, the UCI World Cycling Championships and Edinburgh's world-renowned festivals, draw visitors from across the world. Tourist numbers and spending in Scotland has recovered faster than the UK as a whole - and overseas visitors are returning here in greater numbers following the pandemic."

Scotland's Tourism Minister Richard Lochhead said that overseas visitors are coming to Scotland in greater numbers than before the pandemic. Figures published by the Office for National Statistics show that Scotland has staged a stronger post-pandemic recovery than the UK as a whole, welcoming 1.4 million international tourist visits from July to September last year - up 14% on the same period in 2019. At the same time, the number of visits in the UK as a whole was down compared to the same period in 2019.

"Faclair na Gàidhlig Board of Management are delighted to launch both the new Ionad Faclair na Gàidhlig and the new Faclair na Gàidhlig website. Ionad Faclair na Gàidhlig, based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and the new website are important milestones in the development of the inter-university project, Faclair na Gàidhlig, the aim of which is to produce a high-quality dictionary for the Gaelic language."

Dr Gillian Munro, Principal investigator for Faclair na Gàidhlig, said at the launch of their new website and Ionad Faclair na Gàidhlig (Centre for Faclair na Gàidhlig) at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Faclair na Gàidhlig will provide an authoritative, comprehensive and accessible historical dictionary of Scottish Gaelic, facilitated by the development of ground-breaking dictionary technologies. Ionad Faclair na Gàidhlig is a long-term partnership initiative involving Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture, and the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Strathclyde.



"It goes through different phases, it's showing what a heart can do. It burns, it pulsates, it's even bleeding. It's music, it's light, it's a three-dimensional experience for all the senses. Lots of people are worried and afraid that our world as we know it is falling apart, in many ways and for many reasons, and to come back to what's really important again in life. And I think that is a lack that is getting bigger and bigger, that empathy, the talking to each other and showing emotions and at the end of the day, love."

German artist Michael Pendry said of his of his recent art installation *Heart* at Edinburgh's St Giles Cathedral. *Heart* features a large glowing heart celebrating the life and legacy of the great poet Robert Burns. The historic St. Giles' Cathedral is on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh and this year celebrates its 900th anniversary.

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 Gaelica
 Jamison
 La Unica
 Mudmen
 Seven Nations
 Steel City Rovers
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SCOTWORD

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

CLUES ACROSS

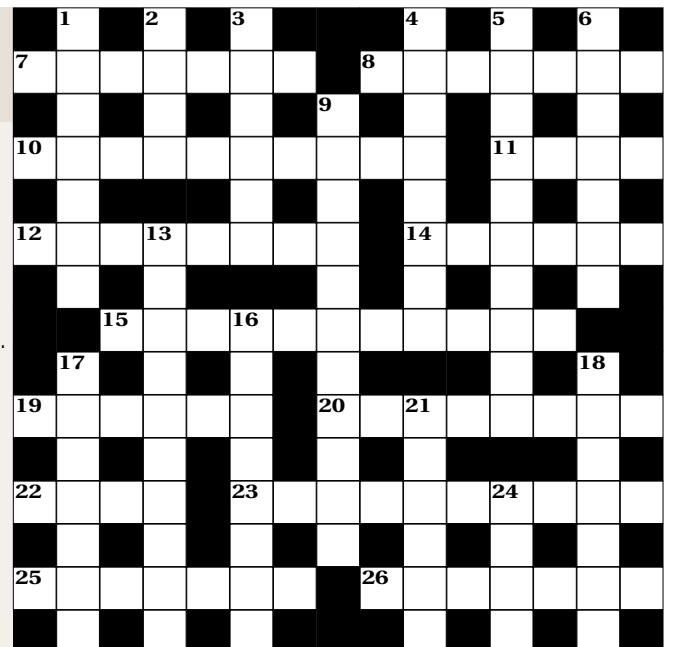
- 7) Time to roam in Scotland! (7).
- 8) Burns birthplace (7).
- 10) Fishing port south-west of Girvan (10).
- 11) Melodies (4).
- 12) Moveable Scots households! (8).
- 14) A soft, porous cake (6).
- 15) This Scot is his bond! (4,7).
- 19) Condensed antacid (6).
- 20) They take illegally (8).

- 22) The female deer (4).
- 23) This Scot created a bond! (3,7).
- 25) Fussy to a Scot (7).

CLUES DOWN

- 1) For ancient dates! (7).
- 2) Scottish first course! (4).
- 3) Colourful pigment (6).
- 4) Old high-ranking noble (8).

- 5) Waterway at Inverness (5, 5).
- 6) Top fastener (7).
- 9) Site of 1745 victory (11).
- 13) Town 3 miles north of Dumbarton (10).
- 16) 8 or 9 irons! (8).
- 17) The National Guard (7).
- 18) Parents' parent! (7).
- 21) At sea! (6).
- 24) Ben More is on this island (4).



Two tickets to ‘Barradise’

By: Frank Mosley



The flight to ‘Barradise’. All images courtesy of Frank Mosley.

On the morning of my big birthday, I opened the envelope which Julie had propped against my cereal bowl and found the best present I could have hoped for – two return tickets from Glasgow to Barra – and the chance for both of us to fulfil an ambition. Inspired by the writings of Sir Compton Mackenzie, the much-loved film version of his *Whisky Galore* story and captivated by tales of Barra as recounted by *The Coddie*, we had long hoped to visit the island. Now, the seats on the little plane which connects Barra to the mainland had been reserved and all I had to do was to book an hotel and hire a car.

Scotland’s magnificent west coast

A call to the Castlebay Hotel quickly secured our room with a grandstand view of the comings and goings of the Caledonian MacBrayne’s ferry but a search of the internet could give me no car hire companies. I rang the Castlebay Hotel again and my query was quickly answered – “You just need to call Mr MacNeil and you’ll be fine” said the hotel receptionist in her delightful, lilting voice. I rang the number given and an equally lilting voice bade me leave a message and assured me that my enquiry would be answered promptly. Given that I was calling from our home in France I was a little dubious

but, true to his word, a little while later Mr MacNeil phoned back. We had a pleasant exchange about the weather in France and the weather on Barra, and it transpired during our conversation that Mr MacNeil used to ‘Drive the prawns from Barra down to Spain’. My mind’s eye pictured a weatherbeaten islander herding a shoal of recalcitrant crustaceans over the Pyrenees until, thankfully, a refrigerated lorry was mentioned! I offered my credit card to secure the booking but the kindly Mr MacNeil told me just to present myself at the airport café, ask for the keys and pay when I returned the car. “What about insurance?” I asked. “Och, it’ll be insured just fine” he replied. I was about to bid Mr MacNeil goodnight when I remembered to ask what kind of car I had just hired. He chuckled, “Och, it’ll be a nice one....” A most enjoyable experience and a simple, honest business arrangement – so unlike the usual morass of paperwork and hidden extras.

On the morning of departure from our son’s home in Glasgow we awoke to blizzard conditions (yes, in April!). Thankful that our taxi was equipped with 4-wheel drive we made it to the airport only to be greeted by the news that the runway on the neighbouring island of Tiree was snowbound, and that our flight to Barra would be delayed until further notice. However, just as we

reached the limit of our tolerance for airport coffee, the snow stopped, the sun shouldered through the clouds, our tiny plane skittered along the runway – and we were on our way!

Those seasoned travellers on the Glasgow – Barra route will know what a memorable experience it is to fly at relatively low level along Scotland’s magnificent west coast and to sweep in to land on the cockle strand of Traigh Mhor is simply breathtaking (the Glasgow to Barra service is the only scheduled flight in Europe to land on a beach - with its timetable dictated by the tides!) We touched down in a shower of spray and taxied to the tiny terminal building. The steps arrived and we walked across the white sand to reclaim our baggage and collect the keys of Mr MacNeil’s hire car. (It was indeed, ‘a nice one!’) So began a wonderful week on Barra.

Barradise

As an artist specialising in Scotland’s scenery, I was instantly captivated by the interconnected islands of Barra and Vatersay. Julie and I were blessed with long days of sunshine and blue skies and we walked on as many beaches as we could: Traigh Mhor, Halaman Bay, Eliogarry, Sgurabhail and through the famous gate to Vatersay Bay. Pristine sands in myriad hues, crystal clear waters in greens, blues and a turquoise almost blindingly vivid. At times, spectacular waves breaking over some of the oldest rocks in the world. At Vatersay’s Siar Bay we stood in silence at the simple memorial to the 350 emigrants, bound for Canada, who drowned in 1853 when a ferocious storm drove their ship, *The Annie Jane*, aground. Somewhere, beneath our feet, we knew their bodies lay, where they were hastily buried – the islanders having no means to cope with a loss of life of such magnitude. Back across the causeway to Barra, we climbed the island’s highest peak, Heaval, and marvelled at the panorama of Castlebay below us – Kisimul Castle, ancient seat of the Clan MacNeil at its centre-point. Near the summit we stood by the statue of Our Lady Star of the Sea and

watched, enthralled, as an eagle soared majestically above our heads. Returned to Castlebay, we sat in the sunshine outside the Post Office tearoom drinking coffee and chatting to the island’s friendly policeman. On a land mass with barely more than 1,100 inhabitants and an almost zero crime rate we were intrigued to know how he filled his duty hours. “Simple” he smiled. “In the morning I drive slowly round the island in a clockwise direction. After lunch I drive round anti-clockwise...” Even our relaxed pace of life at home in rural France seemed hurried by comparison!

Everyone we met had a smile and a welcoming word and if we left only our footprints on the beaches, we knew we would carry a part of this island ‘Barradise’ in our hearts forever. All too soon it was time to return our car and board our Glasgow flight. As the plane climbed up from the beach and the beautiful islands of Barra and Vatersay fell behind us, I knew that I had found more than enough inspiration for my next series of paintings and that, someday soon, we would return.

Frank Mosley is an artist inspired by Scotland. For more information and to view Frank’s work see: www.frankmosleyart.com



Barra arrival.



Frank Mosley arriving at Barra.



Traigh Nisabost - Isle of Harris



Halaman Bay - Isle of Barra



Eliogarry Beach - Isle of Barra

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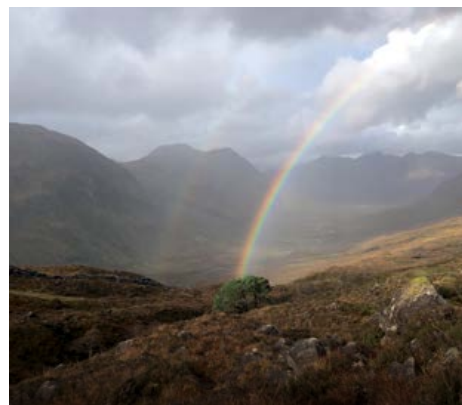
www.frankmosleyart.com



Finding Scotland's 'lost' ice age pinewoods



A 'lost' native pinewood of wild Scots pines. Images courtesy of Trees for Life.



Caledonian pinewoods are globally unique and support rare wildlife.

resilience will be assessed. The charities will then work for the recognition and recovery of the discovered wild pinewoods, including by presenting findings to landowners and managers.

Scotland's national tree

The unique status of Caledonian pinewood was first documented by HM Steven and A Carlisle in their 1959 book, *The Native Pinewoods of Scotland*, which included 35 sites. In the 1990s, the then Forestry Commission Scotland compiled a register, which became the Caledonian Pinewood Inventory. Last updated in 1998, the Inventory recognises 84 sites. Last year, a major Trees for Life study into the health of 72 of these known pinewoods concluded many are on a 'knife-edge' – with high deer numbers, non-native conifers, lack of long-term management, and climate breakdown representing major threats to their survival. The rewilding charity is calling on the Scottish Government to help tackle the nature and climate emergencies through landscape-scale action to save the woodlands, including through targeted funding for restoration and major reductions in deer numbers.

The need for urgent upscaling of political and public action to save the Caledonian pinewoods was spotlighted by a parliamentary debate held in the Scottish Parliament on 24 January, held to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the Scots pine becoming Scotland's national tree.

For more details, visit treesforlife.org.uk.

A new project from Trees for Life and Woodland Trust Scotland aims to discover Scotland's 'lost' native pinewoods – home to wild Scots pines with an ancestry that can be traced back to the end of the last ice age – so they can be saved and restored before it's too late. Caledonian pinewoods are globally unique and support rare wildlife including red squirrels, capercaillie and crossbills.

Yet less than 2% of the Caledonian forest, which once covered much of the Highlands, survives. Just 84 individual Caledonian pinewoods are now officially recognised, having been last documented more than a quarter of a century ago.

The Wild Pine Project

But Woodland Trust Scotland and Trees for Life have become aware of other lost wild pinewoods, and from historical documents and anecdotal reports, more are thought to exist. The charities have teamed up to identify and save these forgotten pinewoods through the Wild Pine Project, beginning with the western Highlands, where Scots pines form part of Scotland's rare temperate rainforest. Wild pinewoods have declined over the centuries, and today their recovery is often hindered by overgrazing by herbivores.

"Lost pinewoods are at particular risk because they are unrecognised and undocumented. We want to find them,

assess their condition, and revive them before they are lost forever. Finding these pinewoods requires a lot of detective work. They are often small and remote, hidden in ravines safe from deer. Pines, or their remains, are often found scattered among birchwood too" said Jane Sayers, Wild Pine Project Officer.

The Wild Pine Project is identifying lost pine sites by tracing their history through the centuries using historical evidence, including maps which date as far back as the 1500s. Once potential sites are found, historical, ecological and landscape evidence will help establish whether they are wild or planted, and their health and

Henry Bell's Comet Designated *Wreck of Europe's first commercial steamship designated as a scheduled monument.*



A sepia archive illustration of the Comet passing by Dumbarton Castle. Image © The Mitchell Library, Glasgow City Libraries and Archives.

The wreck of Europe's first commercial steamship has been designated as a scheduled monument by Historic Environment Scotland. This follows the recent discovery of the wreck of Henry Bell's *Comet* in the fast tidal waters of the Dorus Mor, west of Crinan, Argyll and Bute.

Created by Henry Bell, a noted 19th century entrepreneur from Helensburgh, *Comet* was a wooden paddle steamer, built in Port Glasgow by John Wood & Sons in 1811-12. Designed to carry passengers between Port Glasgow and Helensburgh, the name 'Comet' is a direct reference to the Great Comet of 1811, a celestial event in which a comet passed by the earth and was visible to the naked eye for 260 days.

Comet was operational for eight years on the Clyde, then the Forth and from September 1819, on a new Glasgow to Fort William service. Wrecked off Craignish Point, west of Crinan, on 19 December 1820, the vessel is believed to have split in half after running aground due to a navigational error. *Comet* was carrying no passengers at the time of its loss, and Henry Bell and the crew managed to get safely ashore. A dive survey by Wessex Archaeology in September 2021 confirmed that the visible remains of the wreck which survive on the seabed are likely to be from the front half of the ship. These include the engine assemblage, possible flue and paddle shaft. Further elements of the wreck are likely to survive nearby.

Historic marine protected (MPA) areas are usually the favoured designation for marine heritage sites in Scotland. However, in this instance, it has been decided to designate the wreck as a scheduled monument. This offers protection to this potentially vulnerable wreck as an interim measure until a decision is taken by the Scottish Government on designating the site as a Historic MPA.

National importance

Dara Parsons, Head of Designations at HES, said: "In September 2020 we were invited to assess the remains of *Comet* for designation following its discovery by members of Dalriada Dive Club, Oban. There are very few examples of pre-1820 steamships known in the UK.

As such the remains at the site of the *Comet* are extremely rare and merit further detailed study. Henry Bell's *Comet* is of international significance as Europe's first commercial steamship and occupies an important place in the history of steam-powered navigation. By designating the wreck with scheduled monument status, this means that visitors can dive on the wreck but must not disturb the wreck or remove artefacts without scheduled monument consent from Historic Environment Scotland, to help protect the remains of this significant vessel."

Tony Dalton, who coordinated the search for the wreck site, commented: "Over three years of research, exploration and survey by a small group in Argyll established the correct facts behind the wrecking of *Comet* and enabled us to pinpoint the site. Together with Glasgow Museums it was very much a team effort, leading to diving and discovery by John & Joanne Beaton, together with images of the engine, two centuries after it sank. *Comet* was one of the earliest steamships to be wrecked in Britain, and the initial survey by Wessex Archaeology reveals a wealth of surviving artefacts that can improve our understanding of very early steamships. We are all delighted that *Comet* is given the vital protection of designation so that further surveys can gain more knowledge and understanding from this wreck of national importance."

More information on the Comet and its status as a scheduled monument can be found on the HES Portal: <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot>

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TENEMENT TALES - By: Brian Diamond

Canadian Brian Diamond has developed a collection of short humorous stories which were written to create a book that he could give to his 13 grandchildren. The stories are 100% true and accurately portray his childhood growing up in a tenement in the industrial suburb of Springburn in Glasgow in the 1940's and 50's.



Introducing Liam the Ox, Oxley

This story begins in 1948 in the baby class at St Aloysius Primary School, I was none too happy to be there the first week and cried all the way to school screaming "I'm no goan", "Aye you'll go" says my mother dragging me all the way there every day. I tried everything to avoid school and became quite adept at developing instant diarrhea at 8am every school morning, but my mother always won.

The Ox

Now in my primary class was an exceptionally large kid from Cowlairs Road, named Liam Oxley, he was a whole head bigger than any kid in the first three classes at primary school and earned his nick name 'The Ox'. Now as all of you god fearing Springburnites know only too well, the single most frightening thing that ever came out of Cowlairs Road was Jimmy Donnolly's funeral hearse, "don't ever let him burry me" were the eternal words on my father's lips. Being of Irish descent, Mr. Donnolly was generally appointed to

convey the Springburn Roman Catholic community to their final resting place. Apparently, on some previous occasion, one of Mr. Donnolly's funeral usher teams had a little too many to pre funeral alcoholic drinks and mishandled one of my dad's friends casket on the last flight of stairs on the way down from the three storied top tenement landing. The casket apparently fell on the stairs and slid majestically into the close followed by a gaggle of funeral staff, way too much for my father who had us all promise that "even for free", said Mr. Donnolly should never inter him.

Well for me, Liam Oxley may have been the second most frightening sight coming out of Cowlairs Road, he was never a bully, just a sullen child with a temper who used his height and weight to achieve his goals. Now, one of the positive things about growing up a street urchin in Springburn was that one quickly learned 'street smarts', and as Kenny Rogers sang "You have to know when to hold'em, know when to fold'em, know when to walk away, and know when to run." For me, this applied to Liam, I steadfastly stayed well clear of him all through primary and up to pre high school, we barely spoke a word because I always wanted to stay on his right side.

Flash forward seven years to about 1955, I am attending an evening's boys club which was held in St Aloysius High School. The club was run by a Mr. Ward and a Mr. Fitzpatrick, both teachers at the school, two really great teachers who were prepared to give up their free time to keep us off the street two nights a week.

We played games like crab football and a host of other things, but for me the highlight was a boxing class using small 6-ounce gloves. This was nothing professional about this, no headgear or gum shield's etc., just an imaginary ring, and a timekeeper and over time I became pretty good at this.

Well on this particular evening we were almost ready to go home, I was sitting on the benches when a commotion broke out, and there was Liam 'The Ox' Oxley hitting a little guy named Thomas Haveron. I should have remembered my father's advice, "keep your nose out of other people's business and you'll come to no harm".

Lace me up

Alas that evening I forgot, and seeing the injustice of a bigger child hitting a smaller child, even though the smaller child probably earned it as he always a nuisance and had a smart mouth retort for everything. I simply said "Liam, leave him alone, he is too small for you", the words barely out my mouth and Liam is all over me and we are falling through the benches. Mr. Ward appears and separates us with the following words of wisdom, "If you two guys feel like that about each other, then get the gloves on and go three two minute rounds." I'm a redhead, my dander is up and forgetting that discretion is the better part of valour I say, "lace me up". Now if any of our readers have ever boxed, the first lesson is to have a cool, calm, and detached attitude, to look and think what you are doing, have a strategy and try to execute it. I knew that, but on this particular evening I forgot all the

golden rules and set out to hurt Liam with my 6-ounce gloves, all those years of caution in avoiding him thrown to the wind.

For the first two rounds I was like Mohammed Ali (my humble opinion of course) I was floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee, well ahead on points and for any boxer that should have been enough. Alas, for me this was not about winning on points, I wanted to hit him hard, clearly the wrong emotional strategy. In the third and last round, I am counting down the seconds looking for my opening and with just seconds to go, suddenly there it was, he opened up. I confidently, shifted my weight to my left foot and started to deliver my killer right uppercut which would have been a solid blow to his chin.

Now while I was busily calculating all of this strategy, Liam had started to swing a haymaker right hand punch at me, a blind man would have seen it coming, not me. I think that it travelled all the way from Winnipeg in Canada to Springburn, I never saw it coming until I danced in to deliver my 'Coup De Grace' killer right uppercut and his haymaker exploded on my jaw and knocked me out cold. When I came to, Liam was long gone and one of my front teeth was broken, my mother will kill me was my first thought, I should have listened to my father. That happened in the last week of the qualifying class before going to high school and I never ever saw Liam again as we went to different secondary schools. I had my tooth crowned and reminded by my father to stay out of other people's business regardless of the problem.



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 tartan was created for the 'Remembering Together: Scottish Borders' project which marks the experiences of the covid

pandemic in the Borders. This tartan is the result of a co-creation process with people from across the Borders, led by artists Alister Lownie and Katherina Radeva. The colours and pattern are intended to reflect the very varied experiences of participants, and a desire for the new tartan to be a link between their communities. Remembering Together is a project to co-create memorials which honour the people lost, mark what has been lost and changed, and preserve the best of what was learned and created together during the Covid pandemic. This tartan (reference: 14195) was designed by Alister Lownie and Katherina Radeva and registered in January, 2024.

Experts begin to put flesh on the bones of Southern Borders' turbulent history



Bedrule Castle view to Minto.

Medieval Borders community

Although the archaeological remains in the valley and its uplands, from pre-Roman up to early medieval times, it reveals a long history of human settlement. However, there is scant understanding of these settlement's chronology, patterns and hierarchies. Even the history of this district during the centuries of Anglian Northumbrian domination after c.600 AD is a blank, despite it lying so close to both the early monastic centre at Old Melrose and the minster church at Jedburgh, where an Augustinian priory was founded by Bishop John of Glasgow. As Professor Oram explains: "The valley of the Rule Water is a clearly-defined territorial block containing all of the environmental elements needed to support an agricultural population. It is likely to have formed the estate of a man of rank from as far back as the Late Antique Little Ice Age, right through the 6th century plague pandemic (and resulting decimation of the population), to the build-up of human settlement again in the 11th century, as glimpsed in the shadowy figures who emerge in a fragmentary parchment record soon after 1100."

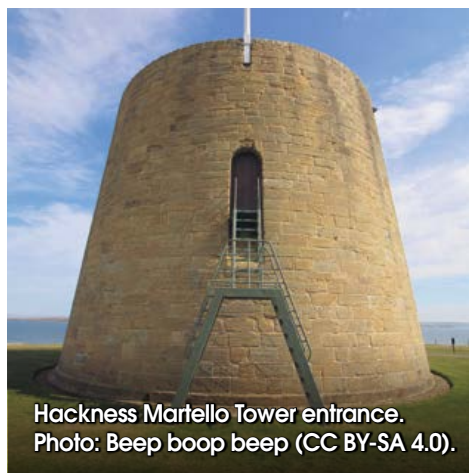
Said Professor Jane Bower, CSBNP chair: "This review of the Rulewater Valley's archival records complements recent archaeological findings with help, from local schoolchildren and volunteers, that provide a vital piece of the jigsaw needed to build up a picture of this late medieval Borders community. We are very grateful to have had the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland come on board alongside the local community and so many of our other supporters."

New research by Scottish Mediaevalist experts is helping to build up a picture of everyday life in the rural Borders community of the Rule Valley, much of which was devastated in 1545 during the 'Rough Wooing' instigated by Henry VIII – to build on work already carried out by Archaeology Scotland with help from local schoolchildren and volunteers. As little is known about life in the valley pre mid-16th century, Stirling University's Professor Richard Oram and Tom Turpie were tasked with delving into the dispersed archival records of the development and everyday life of this part of the rural Borders.

Their research has provided a greater understanding of the area's economy, society and culture, and fills a critical gap in the interpretation of the mainly archaeological evidence already collected as part of the Twelve Towers of Rule initiative, a project managed by the Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park (CSBNP).

By: Eric Bryan

Defending the Realm - *Hackness Martello Tower and Battery*



Hackness Martello Tower entrance. Photo: Beep boop beep (CC BY-SA 4.0).

At the peak of the Napoleonic Wars when American, French, Danish and Norwegian privateers would go north round Orkney or through the Pentland Firth to harass Scandinavian and British merchant shipping, Longhope Sound in Scapa Flow in the Orkneys offered refuge from the attacks. The merchant ships would rendezvous in Longhope Sound, organise into convoys, and with Royal Navy protection ply the Baltic trade routes.

To defend the anchorage, a battery and Martello tower were constructed at Hackness on the island of South Walls in 1813-14. A sister tower was also built at this time, across the water to the north at Crockness on the island of Hoy. In tradition, the marauding and pillaging of Scottish-American naval captain John Paul Jones have been associated with instigating the construction of the defences. The Hackness tower, situated about 200m from the battery, has three floors. The ground floor housed the water cistern, powder magazine and supply stores. On the first floor, which was accessed by a removable wooden ladder, were quarters for 14 soldiers and an NCO. A 24-pounder gun was mounted on the top floor.

24-pounder cannons

On 14 August 1814 Sir Walter Scott paid a visit to the Hackness battery and tower, then still under construction. Scott reported on this episode, and expressed his scepticism about the military effectiveness of the towers in his account, *Northern Lights, or a Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht to Nova Zembla and the Lord knows where in the Summer of 1814*: 'At a little distance from this battery they are building a Martello tower, which is to



Cantick Head Lighthouse, South Walls, Orkney. Photo: Renata (public domain).



Powder magazine at Hackness Battery. Photo: Beep boop beep (CC BY-SA 4.0).

cross the fire of the battery, and also that of another projected tower upon the opposite point of the bay. The expedience of these towers seems excessively problematical. [...] In the case of Long-Hope, for instance, a frigate might disembark 100 men, take the fort in the rear – where it is undefended even by a pallisade – destroy the magazines, spike and dismount the cannon, carry off or cut out any vessels in the roadstead, and accomplish all the purposes that could bring them to so remote a spot, in spite of a serjeant's party in the Martello tower, and without troubling themselves about them at all.'

The Hackness battery was armed with eight 24-pounder cannons. These were mounted in a V configuration on traversing carriages, putting the entire Longhope Sound in their firing line. A sloped parapet assisted in aiming and firing the guns. The battery also held a powder magazine, supply store and soldier's barracks. Despite the construction and careful preparation, none of the defences apparently saw enemy action by the end of hostilities in 1815. The Hackness Battery is one of the few from the period, and is the best preserved example. For decades, when the battery was rarely occupied by military staff, locals used the battery as a croft and held dances and gatherings in the barracks.

No armed conflict ensued

In 1866 in reaction to the possible threat posed by the American Fenian Brotherhood, the battery and armament were upgraded. Five 68-pounder cannon replaced the 24-pounders at the battery and tower. The four at the battery were positioned to fire through wall embrasures. The barracks were rearranged so that the master gunner and NCOs had separate quarters. Other changes included the addition of a cookhouse, guard house and

Martello Towers

In 1794 the French military mounted two small cannon on a stone round tower at Mortella Point, Corsica. The pair of cannon repelled an attack of two British warships, which combined carried 106 guns in firepower.

The effectiveness of the Corsican tower led the British to build more than 100 Martello towers along the south coast of England in response to Napoleon's 1803 threat to invade. The only Martello towers built in Scotland are those at Hackness and Crockness, and one standing sentry at the port of Leith, Edinburgh. The Leith Martello Tower – locally called Tally Toor – was built in 1809 to protect Leith Harbour, the docks and the City of Edinburgh. The tower was constructed on Mussel Cape Rocks at a cost of £17,000. As with the Hackness and Crockness defences, the Leith tower didn't see any military action.

The Royal Engineers renovated the tower in 1850, and Lieutenant-Colonel Yule added a trefoil gun emplacement. Leith artillerymen were stationed at the tower until 1869. The tower is now partially buried due to land reclamation in the harbour, and sits on the Leith Docks' eastern breakwater.

latrine blocks. But again no armed conflict ensued, and as of 1883 only two soldiers manned the Hackness defences. Perhaps the only time the cannon were fired was on a day in 1892 when the Orkney Volunteer Artillery held drills and target practice. Even during the two world wars the Hackness and Crockness defences were quiet. Circa 1900 the Hackness Tower gun was removed. On display now at the tower is a 64-pound cannon contemporary with the 1866 weapon.

Now in the care of Historic Environment Scotland, Hackness Martello Tower and Battery is open to visitors Monday to Thursday from 1 April to 30 September. Exploration of the site is by guided tours only; these are scheduled at 10:15am, 12



Cannon atop Hackness Martello Tower. Photo: Beep boop beep (CC BY-SA 4.0).



Hackness Battery barracks. Photo: Beep boop beep (CC BY-SA 4.0).

noon and 2:30pm. It's recommended to book tickets well in advance, which can be done through the Historic Environment Scotland website. Crockness Martello Tower is situated north of the hamlet of Crockness and Crock Ness Point. A twin of the Hackness tower, the Crockness tower is not open to the public.

For more details: www.historicenvironment.scot.

Sout Walls and Hoy

With an area of 1100 hectares, South Walls was formerly a tidal island but was joined to Hoy by a narrow causeway constructed in 1912. South Walls forms the southern border of the Longhope anchorage. At Cantick Head, at the end of a long peninsula on the south-eastern coast of the island is the Cantick Head Lighthouse.

David and Thomas Stevenson oversaw construction of the lighthouse which began in 1856. The lighthouse went into service in 1858, and wasn't converted to automatic operation until 1991. Hoy, with an area of 143 square kilometres, is the second largest island in the Orkney archipelago. The island has some of the tallest seacliffs in all of Britain, with those at St John's Head reaching 350m. The most mountainous of the Orkney Islands, Hoy's highest point – and the highest in the archipelago – is Ward Hill which summits at 481m. Hoy also has some of the most northerly woodlands in the British Isles.

Clan MacEwen Family Convention

Reconnecting people to the Clan's History and Heritage

June 6-9, 2024 Otter Ferry, Argyll and Bute



Those with the MacEwen surname, spelling broadly defined, are invited to attend the MacEwen Family Convention on 08 June 2024 at Otter Ferry, Argyll, Scotland at 15:00.

This meeting will seek to affirm the Clan's position on the matter of the Chiefship of MacEwen, a post which has been vacant for more than 500-years.

The Convention will be held in the presence of a Supervising Officer from the Court of the Lord Lyon.

Candidates and those wishing to vote need to establish they are MacEwens (which may include all recognised spelling derivatives), by birth and / or are descended from MacEwens of Scotland are asked to please email [Ross McEwen \[ross@ClanMacEwen.com\]](mailto:Ross@ClanMacEwen.com)

For more information on the work of the Clan, and the Convention, please visit www.ClanMacEwen.com

IN SCOTLAND TODAY



Photo: Shetland Islands Council.

Shetland's Up Helly Aa breaks all male tradition

This year's Up Helly Aa fire festival in Lerwick has broken a 143-year-old tradition, by welcoming females of all ages into its main procession squad for the first time. Up Helly Aa is a historic event which takes place on the streets of Lerwick, Shetland.

Europe's largest fire festival traditionally takes place every year on the last Tuesday in January and attracts visitors from both near and far and marks the end of Yuletide and a tribute to Shetland's Viking heritage. The event celebrates Shetland's Norse heritage Viking links and the very first torchlit procession took place in 1881. Tradition had dictated women were not part of the main squad celebrations, as they were expected to prepare the halls with food and drink for the men. For several decades several Shetlanders have been trying to include women in the iconic celebration on the Scottish calendar. This year saw women wielding axes for the first time and joining hundreds of men dressed in traditional Viking outfits and carrying flaming torches through the narrow Lerwick streets.

For the first time in 2023, Up Helly Aa guizers were able to manage their squads in keeping with the spirit of the festival, with no gender restrictions. The decision to relax the long-standing custom was taken by the Lerwick Up Helly Aa Committee after members discussed how to take the event forward following a two-year absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2024 the Jarl was joined in his squad by one of his daughters and three nieces. This was first occasion where there has been female participation in the Jarl Squad (the parades leading procession). Shetland also runs a variety of smaller fire festivals from January-March.

New pterosaur from Skye reveals the hidden diversity of the Middle Jurassic



Image © The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London/Mark Witton.

A newly described species of flying reptile is helping to bridge a major gap in our knowledge of pterosaur evolution. Discovered in Scotland, *Ceoptera evansae* shows that Middle Jurassic pterosaurs were more species-rich than previously realised. A well-preserved fossil uncovered on the Isle of Skye has been revealed as a new species of pterosaur. With an estimated wingspan of 1.6 metres, *Ceoptera evansae* would have soared through the Jurassic skies over 165 million years ago. Its fossil gives scientists an insight into a poorly understood time during pterosaur history, when well-preserved remains are hard to come by.

Professor Paul Barrett led the expedition which discovered the fossil and has co-authored the description of the new species said; "This new species is the first of its particular group to have been found in Scotland, and is only the second flying reptile to be named from the country. It reveals that these animals were much more widespread than would otherwise be known from their generally patchy fossil record, and dates important events in pterosaur history to an earlier time. It also adds another species to the growing fauna we have from the Scottish Middle Jurassic, where we already know of an ancient aquatic turtle, dinosaurs, fossil mammals, salamanders and another pterosaur. As fossil vertebrates are poorly known in the Middle Jurassic, Skye is proving an important locality in increasing our knowledge of this period." The fossil was discovered in 2006 near Elgol on the southwest coast of the Isle of Skye during a Natural History Museum field trip.

Paul added: "This area of Skye is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, so we could only collect specimens from rocks that had fallen naturally onto the beach. While crawling over these boulders to examine them for fossils, we noticed a few bones sticking out." The team's research has now culminated in the specimen being formally described as a new species. The genus name is derived from the Scottish Gaelic word for mist, 'ceò', in reference to the Isle of Skye sometimes being known as the Isle of Mist, combined with the Latin word for wing.

Shetland on track to be smokefree



The Shetland Islands have been highlighted by the organisation Go Smoke Free as a standout area of the UK for smoking cessation efforts in a recent study. The study used nearly a decade of Office of National Statistics data and placed Shetland as the second most progressive county in the UK, with plans to achieve a smoke-free status by 2026. Richmond upon Thames just outside of London topped the list, securing a score of 99.9, signalling its plans to be smoke-free by 2025 and showcasing an average smoking reduction rate of 4.7%. Shetland, despite its small population, reports only 9.1% smokers in 2022, a substantial drop from 15.8% in 2015.

Shetland's score highlights its great progress, and it is now projected to achieve smoke-free status by 2026, showcasing dedicated efforts in reducing smoking rates. The Shetland Islands' achievement to creating a healthier environment and health of its people is notable, considering its small population of around 22,800. The region witnessed a remarkable decline in the smoking population, showcasing a reduction rate of 6.7% since 2015. NHS Shetland has previously agreed to add its name to a national charter for a "tobacco-free generation".

Transforming digital connectivity to Fair Isle



The first businesses on Fair Isle have been connected to full fibre, almost two years ahead of schedule. The subsea cable stretches 68 miles from the Shetland to Orkney Islands, with Fair Isle reached by a spur line. A post office and shop are among businesses which are already connected and

all premises on the island can now order the service. In what is believed to be a world first, communications company Openreach had to deploy innovative engineering to boost the signal strength – a super-powered adaptation of technology currently delivered in many homes – due to the distance between the islands. Stackholl Stores and Post Office was connected during the Christmas period to full fibre, Postmistress Fiona Mitchell said: "We are a small population and want to grow and encourage people to be a part of our community. Getting a full fibre connection so that people can more easily work and live here is a major part of that. We need all hands-on deck to make the island run." The project represents the greatest distance that Openreach has transmitted a continuous full fibre signal anywhere in the UK. Installations were carefully planned on the National Trust for Scotland-protected island, which is home to rare nesting birds and contains habitats of scientific and conservation value.

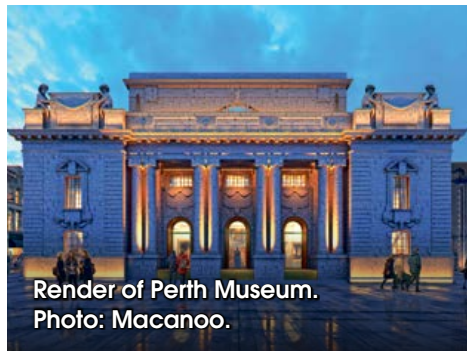
Aberdeen's cruise sector growth to deliver £4.5 million regional windfall



Port of Aberdeen is gearing up to welcome over 100 cruise ships annually by 2027, promising a major economic boost for local businesses and communities. The number of cruise calls has grown by over 130% since 2022, rising from 21 to 50 so far scheduled in 2024. This has increased guest numbers from around 3,000 up to 34,000 expected this year, buoyed by the arrival of larger ships at the port's new Aberdeen South Harbour. With each cruise call to Scotland generating an average spend of £134 per passenger, the potential boost to the regional economy is significant. In 2024, this could total over £4.5 million and potentially exceed £20 million in subsequent years if guest numbers reach 150,000.

The port will welcome a new size and scale of cruise ships this year, including the Costa Favolosa, a 290m-long ship with a capacity exceeding 4,000 guests and crew. Joining her are maritime giants such as the 253m-long *AIDA Sol* and *AIDA Diva*, alongside exclusive vessels like the returning *Sea Cloud Spirit* and other boutique ships. Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, Port of Aberdeen said: "With South Harbour complete, we are fully focused on consolidating and accelerating growth in this key sector. This will be largely driven by increasing the number of larger cruise ships visiting the region and we're having positive discussions with existing and prospective customers to secure this business. We're confident that our world-class facility, coupled with the amazing destination, will position Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire as one of the UK's top cruise destinations."

Jacobite treasures will go on public display for the very first time at the new Perth Museum



Render of Perth Museum. Photo: Macanoo.

The new Perth Museum will open to the public this month at Easter Weekend. As part of the new permanent display, Bonnie Prince Charlie's sword and a rare Jacobite wine glass will both go on public display for the very first time. This will be the first time the sword has returned to Scotland since it was made in Perth in 1739. Bonnie Prince Charlie's solid-silver hilted broadsword was made by Perth craftsman James Brown, believed to have been given to him in 1739 by James Drummond, the 3rd Duke of Perth. It would have been an important symbol of Charles Edward Stuart's claim to the Scottish throne whilst the Jacobite court was in exile in Rome in 1739.

Significant pieces of Jacobite history

The stunning Jacobite wine glass will also be seen at Perth Museum for the first time and features the Duke of Perth's family motto, 'Gang Warily'. It has recently been acquired by Culture Perth & Kinross, the charitable trust which will run Perth Museum in partnership with Perth & Kinross Council, and with support from the National Fund for Acquisitions. James Drummond, Duke of Perth, played a vital role in the last Jacobite Rising of 1745-6. He raised a regiment in Crieff and met Charles Edward Stuart in Perth in September 1745 where he was appointed joint commander of the Jacobite forces. Although Drummond was well-liked by the prince and his men, he was an inexperienced soldier. He was a member of the Jacobite 'Council of War' for the invasion of England, and attempted, but failed, to induce the clans to charge at the enemy during the final defeat at Culloden. He escaped but died a few weeks later at sea in May 1746.

JP Reid, Senior New Projects Officer, Culture Perth & Kinross said, "We are thrilled to be able to publicly display these two significant pieces of Jacobite history for the first time. Perthshire sits at the heart of the Jacobite story: the scene of large-scale pitched battles like Killiecrankie and Sheriffmuir, besieged homes, scorched-earth warfare and warring kinsfolk. The Drummonds are key players in the 50 years of uprisings from 1689 – 1746. Three generations of committed Perthshire Jacobites, they gambled and lost everything in their support of the exiled Stuarts." These two new objects will be viewed alongside other significant Jacobite material from the Perth and Kinross museum collections including a rare and ornate 'star' targe or Highland shield, possibly made by William Lyndsay. Lyndsay was a shieldwright from Perth responsible for equipping many of the Jacobite troops during their occupation of Perth.

Cradle of Scotland

Perth Museum will tell the story of Scotland through the story of Perth as the nation's first capital: how the Kingdom of Alba was forged in the area known as the 'cradle of Scotland', and where the modern Scottish nation was later shaped through writers, artists and thinkers connected to Perth. From when the first Scottish King was inaugurated on the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Stone of Scone, the city became a medieval powerhouse driven by technological innovation, powerful national and international political alliances, and major economic forces which shaped both ancient and modern Scotland. The Stone of Destiny is returning to Perthshire from Edinburgh Castle, close to its origins at nearby Scone, for the first time in over 700 years. As the centrepiece of the new museum, the Stone will be free for all to visit.

Charles Kinnoull, Chair of Culture Perth & Kinross, said, "The collections held here in Perth and Kinross are recognised for their national significance and are in constant development. The opportunity to bring new objects such as this beautiful Jacobite glass and sword alongside loans from national partners and the existing collections and the Stone of Destiny, all within a stunning new home in the former City Hall is one which I could not be more excited about. The collaboration between many different partners to bring all this about in the heart of one of Scotland's oldest cities has been outstanding."

Carpow Logboat

Other items on display at the Museum include the 3,000-year-old Carpow Logboat. The logboat is 9 metres long and the largest object going on display. Carved from a single 400-year-old oak tree trunk, it then lay buried in the banks of the River Tay, near Perth, for 3,000 years until it was discovered 22 years ago. The vessel is a rare survival of the Bronze age due to the peaty soil composition of the Perth and Tay Estuary area, a unique environment that preserves ancient organic material that would usually be lost to time. Radiocarbon-dated to around 1,000 BC, the logboat is one of the oldest



Perth Star Targe. Steel, wood, brass, 1740s. Photo: Julie Howden.



Render of the Main Hall inside Perth Museum. Photo: Mecano.

and best-preserved of its kind in Scotland, giving a tantalising glimpse of the thriving life and advanced technology of the past on Perth's doorstep. When the logboat returns to public display this month, it will be shown alongside some of the other fascinating Bronze Age finds from the river, notably swords and other metalwork that highlight the importance of the River Tay in everyday and ceremonial life.

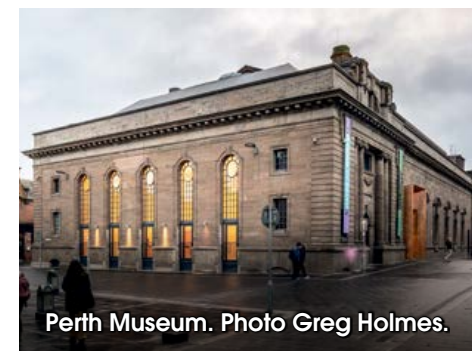
Perth Museum will be a new addition to an already vibrant cultural scene in Perth and Kinross which includes the recently transformed Pitlochry Festival Theatre, a facelift for Perth Art Gallery and the ongoing expansion of the Iron Age Crannog Centre in Highland Perthshire. The new museum represents a major investment in the economic and community wellbeing of the area as part of a wider regeneration strategy for Perth. The Museum, which has undergone a £27m transformation of the former City Hall, is housed in a heritage Edwardian building that once served as a gathering place hosting everything from markets and concerts to political conferences and wrestling matches.

The Museum will also feature a café, shop, learning and event spaces, and a major exhibition programme throughout the year.

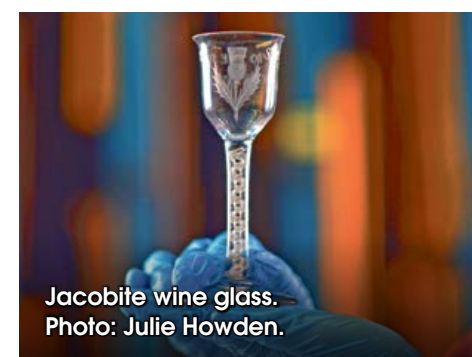
Perth Museum has also announced that *Unicorn* will be the first exhibition when the doors of the new museum open. *Unicorn* is the first major UK exhibition to explore the cultural history of Scotland's

national animal from antiquity to the present day. Through the material culture of this mythical beast the exhibition will explore themes such as Scottish Royalty and national symbolism that also relate to the objects and stories on display in the new permanent galleries.

The new Perth Museum will open its doors in Perth on Saturday 30th March 2024. For more information see: www.perthmuseum.co.uk



Perth Museum. Photo Greg Holmes.



Jacobite wine glass. Photo: Julie Howden.

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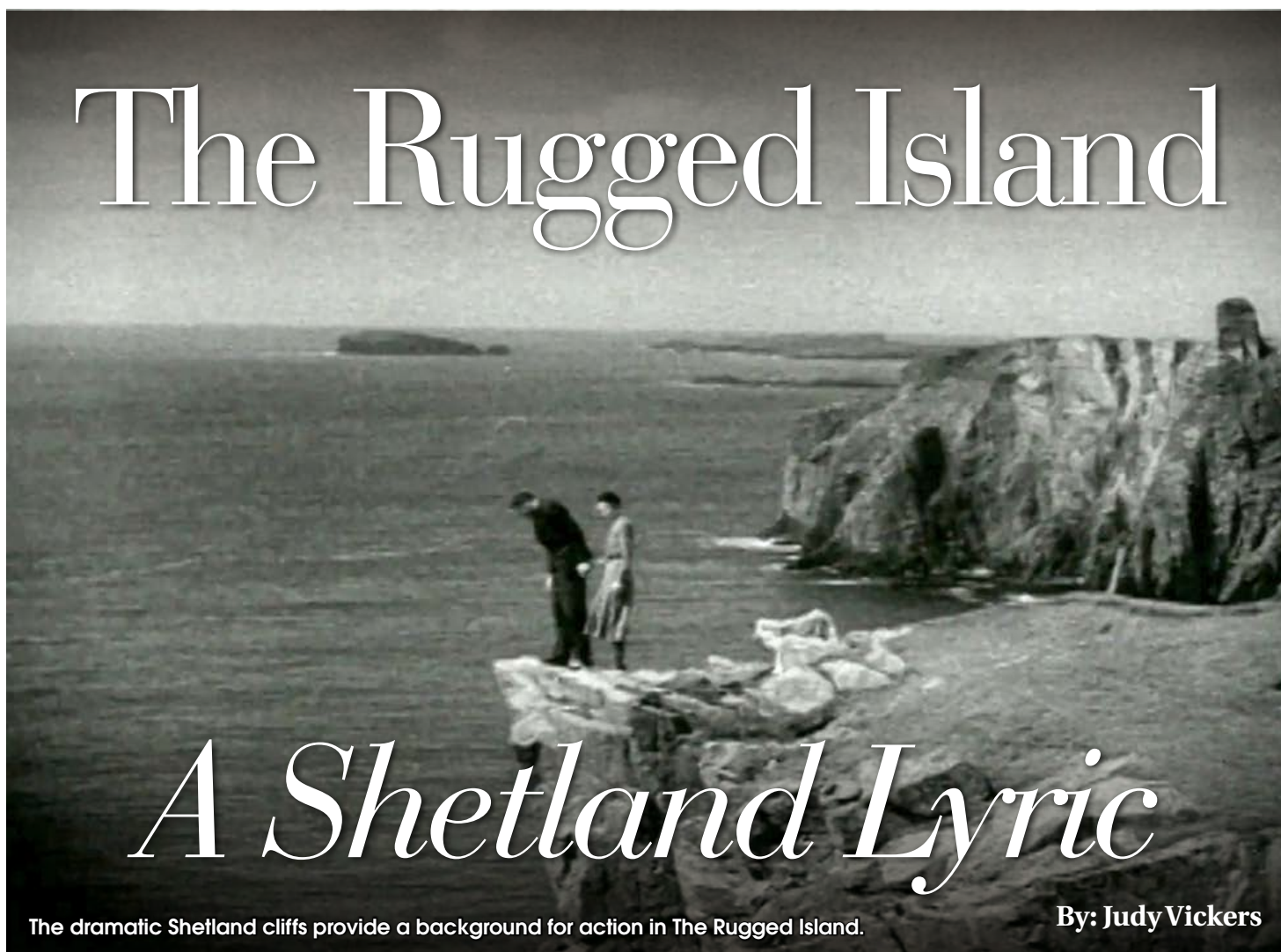
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WHOLESALE AVAILABLE



The dramatic Shetland cliffs provide a background for action in *The Rugged Island*.

By: Judy Vickers

This month a 90-year-old silent film shot in Shetland is being shown as part of The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival, Scotland's only festival of silent film. The Rugged Island was made by the pioneering Scottish female filmmaker Jenny Gilbertson about crofting families and life in Shetland. This piece of historic Scottish cinema, which includes new commissioned music played and composed by Shetland people, will be livestreamed so anyone interested globally can see it, as Judy Vickers explains.

She was the middle-class, university educated daughter of a well-off merchant who left city life in Glasgow behind to become a pioneering documentary maker on the bleak, windswept crofts of Shetland in the 1930s. Now, 90 years on, Jenny Gilbertson's only drama film is being

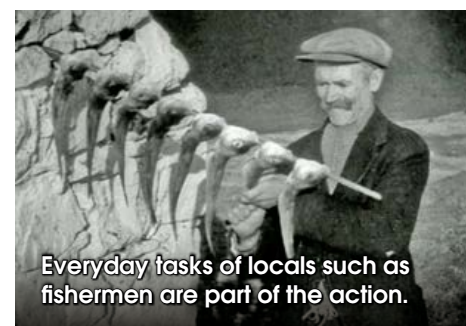
showcased once more – shining a light on both those who eked out a way of life in tough conditions and the remarkable story of the woman herself. *The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric* is being shown this month at the Hippodrome cinema in Bo'ness, on the banks of the Forth, as part of its annual silent film festival – and is also being livestreamed worldwide with a newly commissioned score from Fair Isle multi-instrumentalist and composer Inge Thomson and Shetland-born musician Catriona MacDonald.

The realities of Shetland at the time

The 1933 film was made single-handedly by Gilbertson, who wrote, shot and edited the 56-minute movie with a cast of mainly locals – there was only one professional actor, Enga Stout.

It tells the tale of a young couple facing a dilemma; whether to take up the invitation of her uncle to join him on his farm in Australia or to stay and work the family croft in the land of their birth. *The Rugged Island* was not the first film Gilbertson had shot on Shetland – she had also made a series of short documentaries where she developed her quiet observational style and endeared herself to the locals who took the Glaswegian to their hearts.

Gilbertson, nee Brown, had been born in 1902 in the city where her father was an iron and steel merchant. With his backing, she studied at Glasgow University, then headed to London for a secretarial course in 1929. The typing and shorthand took a back seat, however, after she saw a screening of a film about Loch Lomond; inspired to become a film-maker herself, she bought a 16mm camera, headed up to Shetland, where the family had taken summer holidays, and made her first film, a documentary following a year in the life of the island and its inhabitants. That film, *A Crofter's Life in Shetland*, made in 1931, shows the men and women of the island carrying out their everyday tasks of digging peat, planting potatoes, knitting and fishing. "She spent a lot of



time with people, getting to know them and really getting into the rhythm of their lives. Her filming was very natural. That's what makes it so exquisite," says Shona Main, a film-maker based in Shetland and a researcher into Gilbertson's life.

On its premiere in Edinburgh, it caught the eye of "the father of British and Canadian documentary making" John Grierson, who was effusive in his praise, saying she had "broken through the curse of artificiality" and was "an illuminator of life and movement". Perhaps as important as his encouragement was that he went to buy a series of her short films made on Shetland for the General Post Office Film Unit in London. Inspired by his mentorship, she bought a 35mm camera and headed back up to Shetland to make *The Rugged Island*, which although it was a fictional story still very much reflected the realities of Shetland at the time, from the scenery and the people to the crofting and the choice the couple in the movie face.

"Her filming was very natural. That's what makes it so exquisite."

Crofting life

Emigration from Scotland had built during the years of the Clearances in the 19th century and hit its peak in the 1920s when it is estimated around a fifth of the working population left the country, many on ships sailing from the Clyde to Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the United States – although ironically in the 1930s, when Gilbertson was filming, there was a surge in people coming back as the worldwide economic downturn took hold.

And the record it shows of crofting life at the time is also hugely important, says Donna Smith, chief executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation. "Crofting is an integral part of the culture in the Highlands and Islands, it is a social heritage thing, not just economic," she says. Modern crofting emerged from the Clearances of the 17th and 18th century, when landlords evicted tenants from their land to create large pastures for more economically profitable sheep but it also left vast areas depopulated. It was only at the end of the 19th century that new laws stopped this.

"The 1886 Crofting Act gave crofts a clear status, tenants were given absolute security of tenure and the Act gave them the right to a fair rent," says Donna. "There are a lot of crofts which were registered in 1886 which are still in the same family because the Act gave tenants the right to pass the croft on. There are duties



Bringing in the hay on a croft in a scene from *The Rugged Island*.



Fishermen feature in *The Rugged Island*.



The wild and beautiful land and seascape.

attached to a croft, including living within a certain area and looking after the croft. A croft is a smallholding with a home built on it and common grazing rights, usually on a nearby open hillside.

Crofts were deliberately created to be small, they were never about making money, it's about keeping people in the rural townships. Some people make all their living from crofts but many also have other jobs." Today those other jobs (there are just under 3,500 crofts on Shetland now, a number which has not changed significantly since Gilbertson's day) can include holiday accommodation; in the 1930s they were more likely to be knitting for the women and herring fishing for the men. "People might think why put in all the hard work on the land when it doesn't make enough to live on, but it's not about the money, it's about the stewardship and management of the land. A lot of places would not be populated if it wasn't for crofting. It's a massive part of Scotland's history," says Donna.

One of the pioneers of female film-making

And Gilbertson's films perfectly captured this sentiment and sense of belonging without being over-romantic, says Shona. "It's not the overblown kind of film we think of when we think of silent films because it's something rooted in reality," says Shona. "She was an extraordinary film-maker because of the time she took and the very careful looking and listening. It was a particular time before the oil, before life changed and people lived incredibly frugal lives but they are not shown as victims, they are not romanticised."



Boats in The Rugged Island.

Shetland became her home after she married her leading man from *The Rugged Island*, Shetland farmer Johnny Gilbertson and became a mother of two girls, to an outsider perhaps a strange move for a city girl. But Shona says: "I think she found middle class Glasgow stifling. All those balls, and bridge and golf. She wanted connection and friendship - and that's what she got and then attended to, both in Shetland then later in the Canadian Arctic."

But times were changing. Talking pictures had become all the rage and in a bid to make her film more up-to-date and appealing to cinema audiences, she sank £100 of her own money to commission a score to accompany it - "a fantastic amount at that time," says Shona. It means that there is both a silent and sound version of the film but unfortunately for Gilbertson, while the movie was a success, her distribution company had gone bust and she never saw a penny back on her investment. "It then becomes incredibly expensive to make a film, war arrives and Johnny goes to war and there was no money at that time so she has to give up film-making," says Shona.



The couple facing the dilemma of whether to stay or go to Australia in The Rugged Island.

She spends the next 30 years as a teacher, mother and wife in Hillswick in Shetland but her career as a film-maker has an unusual post-script. After retiring in 1967 and the death of her husband, she takes her craft up again, this time across the Atlantic.

She goes out to Coral Harbour in Hudson Bay to film life in an Inuit settlement. "She spent nine years out there, making extensive films and building long-term relationships with the people there," says Shona. Well into her 70s she was still making films, including for the BBC and the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), once travelling 900 miles north of the Arctic Circle at the age of 76 to make *Jenny's Arctic Diary*, her films still showing the gentle intuitive touch of her Shetland creations. One of the pioneers of independent, female and documentary film-making, she died in 1990.



Shetland film-maker and Gilbertson researcher Shona Main.

The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric will be screened as part of HippFest at the Bo'ness Hippodrome on Wednesday 20 March and will be livestreamed online via HippFest at Home, www.hippodromecinema.co.uk/silent-film-festival.

Minke whales visiting Scotland's west coast set European record



Scotland's west coast seas are a vitally important area for minke whales - with some of these spectacular but vulnerable marine mammals notching up Europe's longest sighting histories of almost 30 years, research by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust shows. A newly published digital catalogue - bringing together photographic identification records submitted by members of the public over three decades - shows that more than 300 individual minke whales have been identified in the Hebrides since 1990. A third (33%) have been seen more than once - some over many years and others numerous times. A minke whale named Snowy has visited the region over an astonishing 27-year period - the longest known history of sightings for this species in Europe. A whale known as Knobble holds the title for the most frequently recorded minke whale in the Hebrides, having been spotted more than 60 times since 2002, mostly in waters around the Isle of Mull.

Whale Track

Minke whales migrate to western Scotland's seas each summer to feed in the exceptionally rich waters. The substantial timespan of the research is shedding new light on their lives, and is building a long-term picture about their numbers, range and behaviour, and how best to protect them. "Photographs are a powerful tool for strengthening our understanding of whale movements and the threats they face - providing vital evidence for effective conservation," said Dr Lauren Hartny-Mills, the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's Science and Conservation Manager. "This catalogue of identifiable whales is testament to the dedicated community of citizen scientists who diligently submit their sightings and photographs to us. Thanks to so many people over 30 years, we know our seas are world-class habitats which need to be better protected and restored."

Thousands of photographs a year are shared with the Trust by the public and wildlife watching crews through

a community sightings website and smartphone app called Whale Track. Photographs are also collected by volunteers during the Trust's research expeditions on its research yacht *Silurian*. Researchers then use photo-identification to look for specific markings or features to identify and catalogue individual whales, dolphins, porpoises and basking sharks seen in the region. While some minke whales have only been recorded once so far, more photographs - whether past or present - from the public will help researchers establish if these individuals have also been making return visits or were just passing through Scottish waters.

Effective conservation

Sea Life Mull's wildlife guide Andy Tait, who has submitted thousands of images over the past 30 years, said: "By using the new online catalogue, anyone can match their sightings with known individual whales. They might even discover a new whale that can be added to the catalogue, which is really exciting. This is citizen science in action, and the great thing is that anyone can get involved."

The new online catalogue is helping the Trust's scientists assess the health of the whales, and threats facing them. Marine ecosystems are under threat from human activities including warming seas due to climate change, pollution, and habitat degradation. Scars and injuries have revealed that 22% of minke whales have at some point been entangled in marine litter and fishing gear, which can cause mobility problems, injury and even

death. Minke whales are also a target species for commercial whaling in Iceland and Norway. Whales hunted there are believed to be from the same population as those identified in the Hebrides, but their movement patterns are not fully understood. The Trust hopes its catalogue will help strengthen international understanding of whale movements through collaboration with researchers in other countries, and contribute to wide-scale conservation action to protect these animals throughout their range.

The Trust's marine scientists are carrying out further in-depth analysis of the photo-identification findings, to better understand how faithful minke whales are to the Hebrides and to identify any specific areas of importance. This is crucial for effective conservation and management strategies. The Trust, based in Tobermory on Mull, says there is still much to be discovered. Although record-breaking Knobble has become a local celebrity - starring in a children's book, Facebook page and song on YouTube - Knobble's sex, or where the whale goes in winter, are still unknown.

The Trust is asking people to submit photographs of whales and dolphins through its Whale Track website whaletrack.hwdt.org or free smartphone app, or by emailing sightings@hwdt.org. The charity is also recruiting paying volunteers for its annual research expeditions onboard *Silurian*.

The Minke Whale Photo-Identification Catalogue for the West Coast of Scotland 1990-2020 is available on the Trust's website at www.hwdt.org.

THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

1 - The Advocate's Library (known as the National Library of Scotland since 1925) opened by its founder, Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate in Edinburgh. **1682**

1 - Actor David Niven was born, roles included *The Pink Panther* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Niven had claimed several times that he was born in Kirriemuir, but according to his birth certificate, was born in London. **1910**

1 - Scots voted in favour of Devolution, but failed to reach the required 40% of the population in favour of implementing it - due to 36% of the electorate not voting. **1979**

1 - Authorities confirm the first case of the global COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland, the index case of coronavirus being a traveller having returned from Italy. **2020**

2 - King Robert II born in Paisley, the first monarch of the House of Stewart. He was the son of Marjorie Bruce, daughter of Robert the Bruce, and Walter, High Steward of Scotland. Robert acted as regent three times during the reign of his uncle, David II, and acceded to the throne in 1371. He died in 1390 and was succeeded by his son Robert III. **1316**

3 - Robert Adam, architect, died. Among his many works were Culzean Castle, Fort George, The Town House, Inveraray and Glasgow Trades Hall. **1792**

3 - Alexander Graham Bell born Edinburgh. Bell was scientist, inventor, engineer, and innovator who is credited with patenting the first practical telephone and died in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1922. **1847**

4 - Sir Henry Raeburn, renowned for painting the portraits of many of the citizens of Edinburgh, born. **1756**



4 - Forth Rail Bridge opened by Prince of Wales. The bridge spans the Firth of the River Forth to link Fife to Edinburgh by railway, was the world's earliest great multi-span cantilever bridge, and remains one of the longest. It is considered a symbol of Scotland, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **1890**

4 - Jim Clark, Formula 1 World motor racing champion, born Fife. **1936**

5 - King David II born. **1323**

5 - Flora Macdonald, who helped to save Prince Charles Edward Stewart during his flight after the defeat at the Battle of Culloden, died in Kingsburgh, Skye (in the same bed in which Bonnie Prince Charlie had slept during his escape). **1790**



5 - *The Maid of the Loch* paddle steamer was launched, she was built in Glasgow and was the largest ever vessel to be built for an inland waterway in Britain, this was also the last of a series of steamers to sail on Loch Lomond, dating back to 1818. **1953**

6 - King James II decreed in an Act of Parliament that there should be regular target practice and military parades and that "football and golf be utterly cried down and not used". This was the first time that the games had been mentioned in Scottish documents. **1457**

6 - Scotland's first radio broadcast took place. The broadcast took place from Rex House, 202 Bath Street in Glasgow. By the summer of 1924, stations had opened in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and, by the eve of the Second World War, over 90% of the Scottish population were served by BBC transmitters. **1923**

7 - The world's first golf club was founded in Edinburgh. The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers held their first meeting on Leith Links and petitioned the Edinburgh Council to provide a silver club for competition. **1744**

8 - Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows* born in Edinburgh. **1859**

8 - The *Oor Wullie* cartoon strip first appeared in *the Sunday Post*. **1936**

9 - David Rizzio, Mary Queen of Scotland's secretary, murdered by Lord Ruthven in the Palace of Holyrood. **1566**

9 - *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith published. **1776**

9 - Scottish faith healer John Alexander Dowie died in Illinois, USA. Edinburgh born Downie believed in the power of prayer only for curing ailments and banned followers from eating certain food, drinking and smoking. **1907**

10 - St Kessog, the Irish missionary in the Lennox area and southern Perthshire, was killed. Kessog was Scotland's patron saint before Andrew, and his name was used as a battle cry by the Scots. Son of the king of Cashel in Ireland, St Kessog is said to have worked miracles, even as a child. **560**

10 - Birth of James Herriot, author of *All Creatures Great and Small*. **1916**

11 - The birth of Binkie Stuart, the child film actress, in Kilmarnock. Born Elizabeth Alison Fraser, she was hailed as Britain's answer to Shirley Temple and enjoyed huge fame as a child star. **1932**

11 - Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, died. **1955**

12 - The last salmon was caught in the River Kelvin. The salmon population in the river had been in decline due to the rise of industrial pollution in the area. However, in February 1999, after £43 million of investment, salmon again spawned in the river and anglers were allowed back. **1852**

12 - Miner's strike at Polmaise Colliery. It is the first mine in Scotland to witness a walkout of its workers. **1984**

13 - Death of poet and historian John Barbour, author of *The Bruce* recounting the history of King Robert I. **1395**

13/15 - Blitz of Clydebank by German Luftwaffe. **1941**

14 - The birth of Scottish lawyer, Dame Margaret Kidd. Not only was Kidd Scotland's first woman advocate, but she was also the first woman King's Counsel in Britain and the first woman to plead before the House of Lords. **1900**

14 - First television programmes broadcast in Scotland. **1952**

14 - Stirling is granted city status in the United Kingdom by the Queen to mark her Golden Jubilee. 2024 marks Stirling's 900th anniversary as a Royal Burgh. **2002**

15 - Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh founded Advocates' Library "equipped with works written by lawyers". **1689**



15 - The end of two nights of heavy German bombing of Clydebank. The Clydebank Blitz, as it became known, destroyed a third of the buildings of Clydebank, leaving 35,000 people homeless. A thousand German bombers were used in the raid and the devastation of the town was so complete that only eight buildings remained entirely unscathed after the bombing. To further compound Clydebank's misery, only two enemy planes were shot down. **1941**

16 - King Robert the Bruce convened his first parliament, at St Andrews. **1309**

16 - Death of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, chief of the Fraser clan. He developed the Commando force in the British army and was active in the Dieppe Raid (1942) and the D-Day landings (1944). **1995**

16 - Scientists identify a gene variant that is known to increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and trace it to people with Orkney Island heritage, more specifically those with ancestry on the island of Westray. **2023**

17 - Treaty of Edinburgh between King Robert I and Edward III which recognised Scotland's independence, ending the 30 years of Wars of Independence. **1328**

17 - Scotland won Rugby "Grand Slam" at Murrayfield Stadium - the first time in 59 years. **1984**

18 - Earl of Leven raises a Border regiment to hold Edinburgh against the Jacobites. It later becomes the King's Own Scottish Borderers. In 2006, the Kings Own Scottish Borderers Regiment was amalgamated with the Royal Scots to form the Royal Scots Borderers, which became the 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland. **1689**

19 - King Alexander III died after crossing the river Forth to Fife at Queensferry. **1286**

19 - David Livingstone, missionary and explorer, born Blantyre. **1813**

20 - King Malcolm IV born. **1141**



21 - National Gallery of Scotland opened in Edinburgh. It is located on The Mound in the heart of the capital. **1859**

21 - Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh opened, becoming the home of Scottish rugby. Scotland marked the occasion by beating England 14-11 and winning their first Grand Slam. Unfortunately, the Scottish rugby team have only managed to repeat this success twice more, in 1984 and 1990. **1925**

22 - Neil Gow, first of a famous family of fiddle players and composers, born at Inver, near Dunkeld, Perthshire. **1727**

22 - Last fully public hanging in Scotland - that of Joseph Bell in Perth. **1868**

23 - The Free Church of Scotland settlement at New Edinburgh, New Zealand was founded under Rev Thomas Burns, a nephew of the poet Robert Burns. The settlement later became Dunedin, one of the largest towns in the country, and one which still retains a distinctive Scottish character. **1848**

23 - Roddy McMillan, the Scottish stage and TV actor, was born. His credits include the TV series, *The View From Daniel Pike*, and the play, *The Revellers*. However, he will be most fondly remembered for his portrayal of Para Handy, the captain of the *Vital Spark* in the much-loved television series of the 1960s. **1923**

24 - Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland on the death of Queen Elizabeth I and the succession of King James VI of Scotland. **1603**

24 - An estimated one million people watched the *Queen Mary* leave the Clyde for the first time. However, the sailing did not quite go to plan: despite extensive dredging having taken place, the liner ran aground twice on the way to Gourock. **1936**

25 - King Robert I ("The Bruce") crowned at Scone. Bruce was crowned by Bishop William de Lamberton in front of the banner of the kings of Scotland, wearing royal robes which had been hidden from the English. **1306**

25 - The Commercial Bank of Scotland was founded in Edinburgh by John Pitcairn, Lord Cockburn and others. **1810**

26 - Car driving tests introduced for the first time. **1934**

27 - King Robert II crowned at Scone. **1371**

27 - King James VI died at Theobalds Park, Hertfordshire and buried at Westminster Abbey. Succeeded by his son, King Charles I. **1625**

27 - Scottish chemist Sir James Dewar, inventor of the Dewar Flask, which later became known as the Thermos flask, died. **1923**

27 - David Coulthard, Grand Prix racing driver born in Twynholm, Dumfries and Galloway. **1971**



27 - Humza Yousaf is elected as the Leader of the Scottish National Party and subsequently, First Minister of Scotland. He is the youngest holder of the position in history at just 37 years of age upon entry to office, the first from an ethnic minority background, the first Muslim to hold the office and the first First Minister with facial hair. **2023**

28 - King Robert the Bruce captured Berwick on Tweed. **1318**

28 - The Scots Guards Regiment was formed when King Charles I issued a commission to the Marquess of Argyll, Chief of Clan Campbell, authorizing him to raise in Scotland a regiment of 1,500 men. The King's 'Lye Guard of Foot' became the Scots Guards. **1642**

29 - The Royal Society of Edinburgh incorporated by charter. **1783**

29 - Longannet, Scotland's last deep coal mine, closed, ending centuries of mining tradition. The Fife mine was put into liquidation after being flooded on the 23rd, when a dam separating old workings from new seams under the river Forth collapsed. **2002**

30 - Edward I of England sacked the Scottish town of Berwick. The English army destroyed the town and decimated the population of around 15,000. This act was retaliation for the widespread carnage perpetrated in the north of England, and what Edward considered to be the treacherous stab in the back of the Scottish-French alliance. Berwick was rebuilt by Northumbrians, and the Scottish-English border forever after remained north of this town. **1296**

30 - King James I captured by English near Flamborough Head on his way to France. **1406**

31 - General Patrick Gordon was born. Gordon led a remarkable life. Upon leaving Scotland, he entered the Russian army as a major and soon rose to become a close advisor to Russian Tsar, Peter the Great. Gordon rose to the rank of General-in-Chief and was made an admiral of the Russian navy. **1635**

31 - Scottish Regalia (crown, sceptre and sword) saved from invading army of Oliver Cromwell by James Granger, minister at Kinneff, Aberdeenshire, after they had been smuggled from Dunnottar Castle which was under siege. **1652**



31 - Buchanan Galleries shopping mall opened to the public in Glasgow city centre, part of Glasgow's Style Mile shopping precinct. **1999**



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Irish colcannon



Ingredients:

500g/1lb2oz. floury potatoes, cooked
250g/9oz. cabbage, shredded and lightly steamed
2 tbsp cream (optional)
salt and black pepper
1 large or 2 small onions, sliced thinly
a little bacon fat, beef dripping or other oil, for frying

Method:

Sieve or mash the potatoes and mix with the cabbage and cream. Season well with salt and pepper.

Fry the onion in the fat over a moderate heat until it is soft and beginning to brown.

Using a spatula, press half the potato and cabbage mixture in an even layer on to the onion and fry for 4-5 minutes until it is well browned and crispy underneath.

Cut the mixture into 4 quarters with the spatula or palette knife and turn them over carefully so that the crispy bit is uppermost. Press the remaining potato and cabbage mixture on to the first layer and after a few more minutes, cut and turn again.

When the bottom is again browned, you will have a crispy top too, a crispy bottom, and a crispy layer in the middle.

Leek and potato soup

Ingredients:

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, sliced
225g/8oz. potatoes, cubed
2 medium leeks, sliced
1.2 litres/2 pints vegetable stock
150ml/5fl oz. double cream or crème fraîche
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onions, potatoes and leeks. Cook for 3-4 minutes until starting to soften.

Add the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Season well and simmer until the vegetables are tender.

Whizz with a hand blender or in a blender until smooth. Reheat in a clean pan, stir in the cream or crème fraîche, heat through and serve.

Classic Cornish pasty



Ingredients:

For the pastry:
500g/1lb 1oz. strong bread flour
120g/4oz. vegetable shortening or suet
1 tsp. salt
25g/1oz. margarine or butter

175ml/6fl oz. cold water
1 free-range egg, beaten with a little salt (for glazing)
For the filling:
350g/12oz. good-quality beef skirt, rump steak or braising steak
350g/12oz. waxy potatoes
200g/7oz. swede
175g/6oz. onions
salt and freshly ground black pepper
knob of butter or margarine

Method:

Tip the flour into the bowl and add the shortening, a pinch of salt, the margarine or butter and all of the water.

Use a spoon to gently combine the ingredients. Then use your hands to crush everything together, bringing the ingredients together as a fairly dry dough.

Turn out the dough onto a clean work surface (there's no need to put flour or oil onto the surface because it's a tight rather than sticky dough).

Knead the dough to combine the ingredients properly. Use the heel of your hand to stretch the dough. Roll it back up into a ball, then turn it, stretch and roll it up again. Repeat this process for about 5-6 minutes. The dough will start to become smooth as the shortening breaks down. If the dough feels grainy, keep working it until it's smooth and glossy. Don't be afraid to be rough – you'll need to use lots of pressure and work the dough vigorously to get the best results.

When the dough is smooth, wrap it in cling film and put it in the fridge to rest for 30-60 minutes.

While the dough is resting, peel and cut the potato, swede and onion into cubes about 1cm/½in square. Cut the beef into similar sized chunks. Put all four ingredients into a bowl and mix. Season well with salt and some freshly ground black pepper, then put the filling to one side until the dough is ready.

Lightly grease a baking tray with margarine (or butter) and line with baking or silicone paper (not greaseproof).

Preheat the oven to 170C (150C fan assisted)/325F/Gas 3.

Once the dough has had time to relax, take it out of the fridge. The margarine or butter will have chilled, giving you a tight dough. Divide the dough into four equal-sized pieces. Shape each piece into a ball and use a rolling pin to roll each ball into a disc roughly 25cm/10in wide (roughly the same size as a dinner plate).

Spoon a quarter of the filling onto each disc. Spread the filling on one half of the disc, leaving the other half clear. Put a knob of butter or margarine on top of the filling.

Carefully fold the pastry over, join the edges and push with your fingers to seal. Crimp the edge to make sure the filling is held inside – either by using a fork, or by making small twists along the sealed edge. Traditionally Cornish pasties have around 20 crimps. When you've crimped along the edge, fold the end corners underneath.

Put the pasties onto the baking tray and brush the top of each pasty with the egg and salt mixture. Bake on the middle shelf of the oven for about 45 minutes or until the pasties are golden-brown. If your pasties aren't browning, increase the oven temperature by 10C/25F for the last 10 minutes of cooking time.

We celebrate our Celtic cousins of Cornwall, Wales and Ireland who will be celebrating St David's, St Piran's and St Patrick's Day this month. People in Wales and those of Welsh origin celebrate the life of their patron saint, St David, and the Welsh culture on March 1st. Saint Piran's Day is celebrated each year on 5th March as the national day of Cornwall. The Irish Saint Patrick will be celebrated across the world on March 17th by the Irish community. As our Welsh cousins would say, Iechyd da or good health!

Welsh Bara Brith



Ingredients:

450g/1lb. dried mixed fruit
250g/9oz. brown sugar
300ml/½ pint warm black tea
2 tsp. mixed spice
450g/1lb. self-raising flour
1 free-range egg, beaten

Method:

In a large bowl soak the fruit and sugar in strained tea and leave overnight. Next day preheat the oven to 170C/325F/Gas 3. Line a 900g/2lb loaf tin with baking parchment.

Mix the remaining ingredients into the fruit mixture and beat well.

Pour the mixture into the loaf tin and bake the oven and bake for 1½ hours or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.

Cornish Strawberry Shortcakes

Ingredients:

170g/6oz. strawberries
150ml/¼ pint double cream
3 tbsp sugar
15g/½ oz. butter
2 large freshly baked scones
1 tbsp (or extra to taste) Grand Marnier, or preferred orange-flavoured liqueur

Method:

Slice the strawberries lengthwise. Place in a bowl and gently toss the strawberry slices in the sugar and set aside for as long as possible. Place the scones on a baking tray and put to warm in a low oven. In a second bowl, whip the cream with the liqueur until the cream is standing in soft peaks. Take the warmed scones out of the oven, split each in half widthways and spread two bottom halves with butter or margarine.

Arrange a thick layer of strawberry slices on top of each buttered scone half. Cover generously with cream. Place the two unbuttered scones halves on top, cover with another thick layer of cream, strawberry slices and use any cream left. Arrange any remaining strawberry slices decoratively around the shortcakes and serve immediately.

Quarter of a million records added to ScotlandsPeople



Sir Robert Watson-Watt. Photo: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

in defeating Germany in World War II, and the marriage of a former Russian spy Victor Konstantine Kaledin who married in Scotland and latterly pursued a varied career as a novelist and clairvoyant.

Fascinating source of information

Every year, birth records that are 100 years old, death records that are 50 years old and marriage records that are 75 years old are added to the site, allowing family historians and researchers to access them anywhere and at any time. National Records of Scotland Chief Executive Dr Janet Egdell said: "The start of the year and the arrival of another major release of scanned records to ScotlandsPeople is one of the eagerly anticipated moments of our year. Being able to access these records from the comfort of your own home or office allows people the freedom to research when it suits them. They are a fascinating source of information and I'm delighted we are able to bring them to people in this format. We are highlighting these individuals as a reminder that when it comes to history, no matter what our achievements in life, we are all included."


For further details see:
www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

A double agent, a historical novelist and a pioneer of radar technology feature in the 250,000 records newly released online by National Records of Scotland.

Among those records now available on the ScotlandsPeople website are; the birth of the Scottish author, Dorothy Dunnett who was internationally recognised for her historical fiction novels, the death of Brechin-born scientist Sir Robert Watson-Watt whose discoveries played a key role



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- Gather the Clan, as directed by our Chief, Alistair of Fordell

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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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Chief: John MacNeacail
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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.
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- NSW, ACT & Qld - Peter Macleod 02 4397 3161
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- 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
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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/>

By: David McVey

Burgh Hall - A repurposed gem



In my recent visits to Scotland's historic buildings, a recurrent theme has been repurposing. Too many late 20th and early 21st century structures are abandoned once their initial user discards them; they quickly become derelict, and are often bulldozed for redevelopment. Happily, many of our older buildings prove to be endlessly adaptable and find new and useful lives. In Stirling we saw several historic buildings that have found new uses as hotels, tourist attractions, youth hostels and events venues, and that still look as impressive as ever. The same applies to the rejuvenated Provan Hall in Glasgow.

Now we come to Dunoon's Burgh Hall, at the corner of Argyll Street and Hanover Street in the small Argyll town. It dates from 1873, with its official opening a year later. This period was perhaps the height of the golden age of Victorian municipal buildings when civic pride and confidence ensured that they were built on the grand scale. The hall was needed because Dunoon had become a burgh in 1868 and the machinery of local government had to go somewhere.

A creative achievement in itself

The building was not just a place of work for council officials or a place for paying rent or bills. It housed Argyll's first theatre and over the years saw much jollity - dances, ceilidhs, concerts and the like. And these events occurred in a building that was a creative achievement in itself.

The architect was Robert Alexander Bryden and the general look was Scottish baronial (it was the Victorian era after all) in grey schist, the rock of which so much of the Southern Highlands is built. Bryden also designed the building's neighbour, St Cuthbert's Church, which is sadly now demolished. The theatre, or assembly hall, was designed to seat 700 people.



The hall's main window was designed by a celebrated stained-glass maker, James Ballantine; he must have been good because he even wrote some standard textbooks about painted glass, and won a competition to decorate some of the windows in the House of Lords. His design featured a scary-looking Viking, complete with one of those winged helmets that we're now told Vikings probably didn't wear, armed with a spear and shield. Interestingly, the face of the Viking is believed to be that of Bryden, the building's architect! A creative thank-you, perhaps, from the glassworker for commissioning him.

Over the years, minor alterations and extensions were made to the building, but from the 1950s, the new Queen's Hall at the other end of Argyll Street began to supplant many of the functions of the Burgh Hall and in 1975, with the reorganisation of Scotland's local government, the very idea of the burgh became extinct and the building no longer had a clear purpose.

In the ensuing decades, the Burgh Hall was only used sporadically, and its fabric deteriorated. By the end of the century, plans were being made to redevelop the building as housing. A company called Fyne Homes bought the building in 2001 but there were many objections to their project and planning permission was refused. It looked as if the building might just moulder away, awaiting demolition. Happily, in 2008, a charitable body, The John McAslan Family Trust, bought the Burgh Hall from Fyne Homes (who by now were probably glad to get rid of it) for a token £1. The vision was for a facility that would serve the local community, a centre for culture and the creative arts. A great deal of fundraising was needed before the vision could become a reality, and a lot of work had to be done to restore the building's stained glass. The poor Viking in particular had faded a great deal but now he's as good as new. The refurbished and repurposed building was finally opened in 2017 by then First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon.

Beating heart of the community

The building hosts creative spaces for local artists but it is also the home to ongoing art exhibitions. Some of these have had no small ambition, with past shows featuring the likes of Edgar Degas, Andy Warhol, and

the much-loved Scottish-based artist Joan Eardley. The Burgh Hall's café ensures that it's the beating heart of the community and that even people on low incomes can come along and experience great art and perhaps have a go themselves.

2023-24, of course, sees the 150th anniversary of the completion and opening of the original Burgh Hall and the venue has begun a crowdfunding effort, aiming to raise £50,000 by June 2024 (with 150 people being urged to donate £150, nicely foregrounding exactly the anniversary that's being celebrated).

Happily, many of our older buildings prove to be endlessly adaptable and find new and useful lives.

Central to the success of the Burgh Hall was Colm Docherty, an artist himself who not only curated exhibitions on site but also taught art and encouraged local people to try it for themselves. Sadly, Colm died in a road accident in 2022; in some ways the 150th anniversary initiatives are also a memorial to him.

The project began in August 2023, marked by local children burying a capsule full of items that sum up the experience of being a young person in Scotland in 2023. The idea is that it'll be recovered in 50 years - the 200th anniversary of the Burgh Hall.

I wonder how many of those youngsters will still live locally and remember what they put in there? The Burgh Hall has influential friends. Actor Gaia Wise (daughter of British acting royalty Dame Emma Thompson and Greg Wise) is a supporter and describes the Hall as 'a place for art, artists and the community to come together, drink tea, laugh, sing, dance and celebrate.' Which can never be bad things. Gaia sees Colm Docherty as her mentor in terms of art and so is keen to support the project.

So, if you're around Dunoon make sure you call in at the Burgh Hall, see what's on and have something in the café. You'll be in a building with a history that has found new purpose. And a new purpose always means the start of a new history.



Photo: Peter Sandground.

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The Clan MacEwen search for a Chief



Clan MacEwan, Otter Ferry, June 2023.

In June 2024, Clan MacEwen will come together for what might well be the most momentous gathering in its entire history. The Scottish part of that history began in the 11th century when the Irish prince Ánrothán Ua Néill of the powerful O'Neill dynasty, descendant of the legendary Niall of the Nine Hostages, left Ireland for Kintyre. He died in 1036 with several Clans – Lamont, Maclachlan, MacNeil, MacSween and MacSorley among them, as well as MacEwen – claiming descent from his line.

The MacEwens developed into a leading Dalriadic Clan and had their first Chief in about 1200. Seven more Chiefs followed and in 1429 Swene MacEwen of Otter was recognized as the ninth Chief of Clan MacEwen. At this point, however, things went awry and in March 1432 Swene, presumably in a state of some desperation, resigned his title to the Barony of Otter to his feudal lord, King James. The King restored Swene to his title but designated Gillespie Campbell as heir to the Barony of Otter. When Swene died (it is not sure exactly when), the Barony passed into the hands of the Campbells.

Clan MacEwen Society

Since then, the MacEwen Clan has been landless and Chiefless, sometimes officially designated “a broken Clan”, and always looking forward to better times and back to its time of glory as one of the leading Clans in the West of Scotland. When the 19th century brought greater awareness of Clan histories, the MacEwens made sure to establish as theirs the beautiful restrained tartan they wear, their crest – the stunted oak tree uttering forth new growth – and motto – “Reviresco” which translates as “We Shall Rise Again” or “We Grow Green”. In the 21st century, the Clan decided to add the war cry “Cómhla!” (“Together!”) and a cap badge of yew to its armoury of treasured symbols.

In the 1950s several leading members of the Clan had approached the poet and politician, Sir John McEwen, 1st Baronet of Marchmont & Bardrochat, to see if he would be interested in becoming the 10th Chief of the Clan. He declared an interest in doing whatever he could for the good of the Clan and slowly, slowly, wheels began to turn. While three further Baronets lived and died, not a great deal was achieved

but in 1994 the Maclachlans spurred the Clan Ewen Society (as it was called from its foundation in 1977, now, since 2019, the Clan MacEwen Society) into action. The Maclachlans made the erroneous claim that the MacEwen Clan was a sept of the Maclachlan Clan but there was nothing to be done about this because the MacEwens had no representation on the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, because they were chiefless. The Society approached Sir John McEwen, 5th Baronet, who responded as his grandfather had done.

Since then, after immense volumes of correspondence mainly with the Lyon Court, much assisted by the late great genealogist, Hugh Peskett, the MacEwen Clan has made considerable progress. In 2014 Sir John McEwen was appointed Commander of the Clan for an initial period of five years. In 2019 the appointment was ratified by the Clan. Throughout, Sir John (an actor and playwright, husband of Rachel and father of four) has been actively seeking out further claimants to the Chiefship, especially searching for anyone who might lay claim to descent from the last known Chief, Swene MacEwen.

Family convention

No one else has as yet come forward but the search will continue until the Gathering on June 8th when a senior member of the Lyon Court will attend the “Family Convention” and, if all goes well, by the end of the day the MacEwen Clan will have a Chief once more.



John and family.

The jollification of an inauguration should follow in due course, but the solemn moment of restoration will occur – if all goes to plan – in June. This all depends on the Clan having proved itself over the last ten years to be organized and thriving which, as burgeoning membership and gathering-attendance figures show, it certainly is. In common with most Scottish Clans, much of its energy comes from the diaspora, from the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in particular, but Clan MacEwen is rooted in Scotland and Scottishness and its Commander, Chair and Vice-Chair all live in Scotland.

In June 2024, Clan MacEwen will come together for what might well be the most momentous gathering in its entire history.

It is very aware, however, of its international identity and indeed exults in it. It has two pipe bands, one German, one Australian, members in France, the Netherlands, Italy and many in England, and it takes seriously its responsibility as a global organization, even if rooted at Kilfinan on the shores of Loch Fyne, where the Chair of the Society now lives.

Responding to the 21st century, the Clan sees itself as a force for good and wants particularly to be known as “The Clan That Plants Trees” and “The Clan That Speaks Gaelic (or tries to)”. The Clan woodland, by its ancestral homeland at Tighnabruich, is just now being planted. The Clans in the 21st century of course play a very different part to that played by their ancestors, but they remain of deep importance and considerable power. The task of all of them is to remain relevant and benevolent, Scottish and international, steeped in history but forging ahead into the future.

Clan MacEwen, with a vibrant and relatively youthful leadership group with imaginative and innovative commissioners in every part of the diaspora, has already proved itself more than up to the task of Clanship in the 21st century. All it needs now ... is a Chief.

For more information on the work of the Clan, and the Convention, please visit: www.ClanMacEwen.com.



Culloden 2022.

The Black Watch Memorials in Dundee - A Fundraising Appeal

Within Dundee, Scotland, there are two Memorial projects relating to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) that require substantial amounts of financial assistance in order to make them fitting Memorials to Scotland's illustrious and famous Regiment.

Project A – The Black Watch Memorial at Powrie Brae, Emmock Road, Dundee

On the front of the statue plinth, the inscription states, “To the memory of all ranks of the 4th and 5th Dundee and Angus Battalions of the Black Watch who died in the Second World War”. The Memorial on its original site to the north of Powrie Castle, was unveiled by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on 15th October 1959 in front of 3,000 people. In 1985, when the A90 Dual carriageway was constructed, the Memorial became rather isolated, therefore it was decided to move the Memorial to its present position on Powrie Brae, Emmock Road. In April 2023 on the conclusion of various inspections of the Memorial and surrounding grounds, it was agreed that immediate and substantial refurbishment was required to ensure that this famous Memorial was displayed in its full glory.

Project B – The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) Memorial on Black Watch Parade, Dundee

Colonel Alex Murdoch, a previous Chairman of the Black Watch Association, had a desire to have a Statue (Memorial) erected in Dundee to commemorate The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) 1739-2006.

After a few meetings with Dundee City Council representatives, the proposal was not to erect a single Memorial, but to create a Walkway using the length of Black Watch Parade to tell the story and history of the Regiment. Black Watch Parade runs along the water's edge from the Tay Road Bridge to just before the V & A Museum. This location, in Dundee with its back to Angus, looking across towards the Kingdom of Fife and looking westwards up the River Tay towards Perthshire takes in the four traditional recruiting areas of our illustrious Regiment.

At both ends of the walkway could be large modern metal sculptures containing either a Black Watch Badge or Red Hackle with part of the history embedded into the sculpture. Along the route, paving slabs would be etched with significant events such as Battle Honours and specific timelines in our history. QR Codes would be placed along the walkway, allowing users to obtain further information via the Black Watch & Museum website.

If you can help please go to: www.justgiving.com/campaign/the-black-watch-regimental-trust. For information on The Black Watch Regimental Trust Ltd see: www.theblackwatch.co.uk.

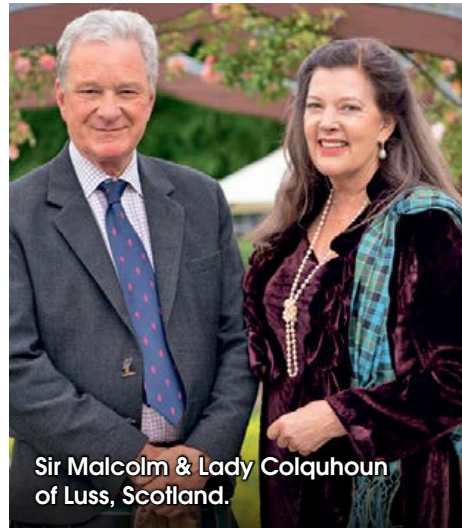


The Black Watch Memorial at Powrie Brae.

Six Scottish Clans to celebrate their heritage and renew alliances at Kilts & Cowboy Boots



Enjoying an old-fashioned tug-of-war among clans.



Sir Malcolm & Lady Colquhoun of Luss, Scotland.



Parade of Tartans at the Luss Games.

A little background history: For hundreds of years Scottish clans in the Lennox fought for domination and resources. Ancient alliances between the MacFarlane's and MacGregors against Clan Colquhoun are well documented. The Battle of Glen Fruin is one of the most famous events. In modern times, clans in the U.S. share space in Scottish Games across the country. The movement is fast growing -- an estimated 25 million people in the US are of Scottish descent. The lifting of lockdowns and social restrictions, following the recent COVID 19 pandemic, has generated even more interest in games, as 2023 saw a record number in attendance. "People are looking for community, and the Scottish Games provide it," says Lloyd-Stern. "It's the chance to meet new people, enjoy the outdoors, hear traditional music, and sample some haggis -- perhaps even try a shot of Scottish whisky."

- Discover more about your heritage during Introduction to Genealogy & DNA, led by resident scholar Tiffany McCarter-Evans.
- Meet your Clan Chief and enjoy a drink at the Clan Drink Reception, Friday, April 5.
- Test your knowledge of Scottish history and culture at How Scottish or Nottish Are You? Prizes will be awarded to the top team.
- Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss will give opening remarks at the Kilts & Cowboy Boots Dinner on Saturday evening, followed by line dancing. Formal dress, along with cowboy boots and hats. So, shine up your boots, grab your hats and join us for what will be a very special gathering in San Antonio.



Clan chieftains leading the Parade of Tartans (left to right): Madame Pauline Hunter of Hunterson, Chief of Clan Hunter; The Marquess of Graham, Clan Graham; Sir John MacEwen, Chief of Clan MacEwen; Michael MacFarlane, President of Clan MacFarlane; Angus John Baillie-Hamilton Buchanan - Younger of Buchanan, Clan Buchanan; Michael Lloyd-Stern, Executive Director, Clan Colquhoun.

Kilts & Cowboy Boots will take place in San Antonio, Texas April 4-7th. For further details see: www.clancolquhoun.com/san-antonio

San Antonio Scottish Games

In the US, the Highland Games are a unique mix of the sporting, the cultural and the social. They usually comprise a program of field and track events, piping and Highland dancing competitions and 'heavy events' like the tug-o-war, the hammer throw and tossing the caber. Kilts & Cowboy Boots is a pre-event to the San Antonio Scottish Games. Held at the Omni La Mansion del Rio along the historic Riverwalk, events include:

- We kick-off the weekend with a Whisky & Wine Tasting, featuring local wines from Texas, along with whisky flights from four regions of Scotland.
- Who has the loveliest knees? The Bonniest Knees Competition will settle it! Open to anyone wearing his or her kilt.



Tossing the caber -- it's heavier than it looks!

It's time to put an end to hundreds of years of fighting. In a spirit of camaraderie and friendly competition, six warring clans from Scotland's eastern Loch Lomond region will travel across the Atlantic to the US to fellowship, feast and renew alliances. The first-ever "Kilts and Cowboy Boots," sponsored by Clan Colquhoun International Society, is an exciting three-day event, to be held April 4-7 at the Omni La Mansion del Rio, San Antonio, Texas. The event coincides with the San Antonio Scottish Games & Festival, held April 5-6 at Helotes Festival Grounds, Helotes, Texas, USA.

Bringing together clans

Several Clan Chieftains from the Loch Lomond area are expected to attend the event, including His Lordship James Graham, Sir John MacEwen, and Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss. Invited clans include: Colquhoun, MacFarlane, MacEwen, Graham, Buchanan and Hunter. Members and guests of the six clans are invited to join in the inaugural celebration. "This is a historically significant event," says Michael Lloyd-Stern, executive director of Clan Colquhoun International Society. "We're bringing together clans in our shared love of Scotland and its heritage. But instead of fighting, we will be feasting -- and line dancing, Texas style!"



Aerial view from Loch Lomond clans at an evening event.

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