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the Banner Banner

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The Banner Says...

A resolution for a good Ne'erday



by Sean Cairney

t is a question we all get asked this time of the year, "what is your New Year resolution?" As we start a new year fresh with good intentions, and promise of improving ourselves, many of us certainly try and come up with some manageable improvements we would like to see for ourselves.

This global phenomenon of selfreflection starts the year with the best of intentions but seems only some will follow through with the mental reset for all of 2024. I actually was not aware it was a woman with strong Scottish connections that started this unique way of wiping the slate clean and starting the year with new goals. Though the very first known New Year's resolutions in fact date back over 4,000 years ago to ancient Babylon. The Babylonians are said to have made a pledge to their gods during the 12-day January New Year festival called Akitu. If they fulfilled their pledge the gods would look favourably on them, their crops, animals and family.

Anne Halkett

However, it was not until 1671 that a New Year resolution was known to be written in Scotland. Anne Halkett was born in England in 1622 to parents from a prominent family of Scottish descent and would eventually herself move to Scotland in 1650. Anne was an educated woman, deeply religious, a talented writer, a mid-wife and part of Scotland's elite. In January 1671 Anne wrote in her diary a series of religious based pledges which she titled 'resolutions'. These were lists she made for herself to improve for the year approaching. This personal pledge would go on to evolve and become a New Year resolution for billions across the globe over hundreds of years. Anne herself would go on to live quite a life and wrote about much of 17th century Scotland and her works can be found at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. She was even involved in the dramatic rescue of James, Duke of York, who later became James II from Parliamentary captivity by disguising him as a woman! Anne lived a long life, for those times, and was able to make many resolutions each New Year and died at age 76 in Dunfermline, Fife in 1699.

It was not until 1671 that a New Year resolution was known to be written in Scotland.

In this issue

Perhaps one of your New Year resolutions is to travel back to Scotland?! 2024 is looking to be quite a year for both visiting Scotland and for Scottish culture across the world. After a few terrible years for tourism and events we look ahead to 2024's key happenings, destinations and anniversaries. I hope you get to enjoy some of Scottish culture throughout the year, regardless of if you are visiting Scotland or not.

One part of January tradition must be shortbread. January 6th is in fact National Shortbread Day and

shortbread is an icon of Scottish cuisine. There will be many Burns Night celebrations taking place across the world this month (see our events page for one perhaps close to you) and no doubt shortbread will be a part of many of them. We are delighted to have Sir Jim Walker speak to the Scottish Banner this month from Walker's Shortbread, this family business has an incredible 125 years of history-much to the delight of millions of people's tastebuds across the world.

Another tradition which will be carried out across the world this Hogmanay and Burns Night is raising a glass to have a wee dram, or two. Whisky is another one of Scotland's icons and this month we look at the history of Campbeltown, the small town on the Mull of Kintyre peninsula. Campbeltown is a major part of Scotland's whisky history and has even been referred to as 'Spiritsville', 'Whiskyopolis' and even the quite prestigious title of 'The Whisky Capital of the World.' Though diminished this region still has a proud whisky industry with more distilleries in the works, and I will raise a glass to that!

I have not yet decided whether to honour Anne Halkett and make a resolution for the upcoming year yet, but I am certainly looking to keep my connection to Scotland growing stronger. As 2024 unfolds before us I wish all our readers, advertisers and friends a wonderful happy, healthy and safe year ahead. I also wish all those across the world attending Burns Night events this month a wonderful time celebrating Scotland's bard Robert Burns.

Whether you make a resolution for the year ahead, or not, may it be a good one for all of us. Lang may your lum reek, as the Scots say traditionally at New Year, or to good health and long life or more literally 'long may your chimney smoke'. 🧩

Do you make New Year resolutions? 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: A Blackface sheep at the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere. Photo: GSA Biosphere.





SATURDAY APRIL 6TH HIGHLANDER PARK 8^{AM}-6^{PM}

- Highland Dancing Championships
- Piping, Drumming, and Pipe Bands
- 5K Kilted Trail Run
- Scottish Heavy Athletics

- Clan Village
- Beer Tent with Live Celtic Music
- Food & Merchandise vendors
- Massed Pipe Bands





FRIDAY NIGHT
Pipe Band March
& Ceilidh
Main Street

DunedinScottishArts.com

DunedinHighlandGames.com



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SCOT POURRI

Aw serene.

Send us your inquiries on life's little question marks.

Ever wanted to know what happened to your old pal from home, how to make your favourite Scottish meal, or wondered about a certain bit of Scottish history?

The Pride O' Luden Mains



Here is a Scots poem of mine which won the Allan Brownlee Quaich at Falkirk Writers Circle on 21st November 2023. At the meeting of Falkirk Writers Circle, the Allan Brownlee Quaich trophy was awarded by the Scottish poet Jim Carruth to Archibald Smith for his poem, The Pride of Luden Mains. Archie is better known for his short story books, Tales of Bogles and Brownies, and A Cantraip of Tales written under the name of Kennedy Smith.

The Pride O' Luden Mains By: Kennedy Smith

If ye gang doon by Luden's Lane Richt roon ahint Auld Jockie's hame, Just tak the pad ye wid ha' taen Doun by the brae An keep on gaun through glaur 'n rain Till Bottom Way.

For there you'll find, if ye tak tent, A smaw-bit mere the rains hae sent, A wee bit dub o' watter meant Fur slocken kye, Graced by a stane an' dark as Lent Placed there forbye.

And on this altar, aw in glory There wis a yin, so goes the story (And wha am I tae dout Red Rory?) A mass o' green; A muckle puddock sat in glory,

An' aw aboot a motley crew T'were Jessie, Maggs and - you know who! Plying their wares, some lassies do -Richt friendly lassies; Nae dout a day they'll come tae rue Ere this month passes.

The Laird -The Puddock - croaks and reigns An' roond aboot, his harem dames The mothers o' his tadpole bairns Wee shilpit froggies, Ken't as The Pride o' Luden Mains And feart by boggies.

Archie Smith Falkirk, Stirlingshire Scotland

Ed note: Thanks Archie for sending us this and congratulations on your winning poem.

Fire and Restoration: The castle has had its share of trials, including a devastating fire in 1715. However, it rose from the ashes through careful restoration efforts and remains an architectural marvel today. Dunnottar Castle stands not just as a symbol of Scotland's resilience but also as a testament to the enduring spirit of those who called it home. Explore the castle's hallowed halls and let history whisper its tales in your ear. The Kilted Photographer Scotland

Connect with Caledonia



I thoroughly enjoyed reading your November edition and was quite struck by the amazing front cover-showing such proud Scots honouring their traditions. I have read this issue from back to front and keep dipping into it for more. We Scots are spread across the globe, but we sometimes forget how amazing our culture really is, then I pick up a copy of the Scottish Banner and suddenly I become even more proud to be of Scottish blood! I absolutely love the Isle of Skye and really enjoyed the article on the Minginish Centenary Project taking place there, what a history which I was did not know about.

For those of us that live far from Scotland's shores it is a delight to connect with 'Caledonia' with the Banner, thank you for an excellent read! Claire Duncan Christchurch, New Zealand

Ed note: Thanks Claire for your kind comments and I am so glad to hear we help connect you to Scotland.

A life of pipes

My name is John Birkmyre Mills. I am 80 years old and was born in Dumbarton, 15 miles north of Glasgow. I played the pipes with a boy scout band, the Princess Louise Pipe Band, which was around since Queen Victoria's time, her daughter our patron. Dumbarton had two male pipe bands and one ladies pipe band. I went to the College of Piping in Glasgow and learned piobaireachd under Pipe Major D McLeod of Harris.

I played in the band from 1960-1966 when my grandfather sent me to Australia. My parents, sister and granny followed me two years later. My father was an English fisherman, who's boat was commandeered for Dunkirk. He was drafted into the navy and sent tout to Sydney as a labourer. I was three before he got home. I still play the pipes but don't run any hill races anymore. I bred Scottish Longhorn Cattle for twenty years and I still hunt deer. Queen Victoria sent the red deer to Queensland when she was told the animals here were slow moving. John Mills Coffs Harbour, NSW Australia PS: The Cutty Sark was built 500m from where I was born.

Provan Hall



Thanks very much for publishing the article on Provan Hall (Glasgow's Medieval Marvel, the Scottish Banner, December, 2023). I absolutely love to learn of the so many incredible historic buildings Scotland has to offer. I get over to Scotland at least every other year and Glasgow is always on my list of places to visit, and I will be sure to make a trip to Provan Hall to soak up the history there, I must confess I was not aware of this historic building nor the story around it. It really is incredible buildings are still standing from hundreds of years ago, with so much modern construction likely never being able to match this feat. Scotland keeps surprising me and though I have likely visited over 15 times, it still is a place I can discover more each time. Sometimes I feel I have barely scratched the surface!

This is why the Scottish Banner is still such a valuable publication to those of us 'Scottishfiles', as it tells many people about the story of Scotland not found in mainstream media.

Wishing all the writers, staff and readers of the Banner worldwide 'A Guid New Year'. David Crowles Carmel, Indiana

ED note: Enjoy your next visit to Scotland David and discovering Provan Hall.

Dunnottar Castle



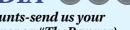
Perched on the rugged cliffs of northeastern Scotland, Dunnottar Castle's history is a tapestry woven with courage, battles, and legendary tales.

Witness to Wars: Throughout the centuries, this fortress withstood sieges and attacks, most notably during the Scottish Wars of Independence. It was here that Sir William Wallace, the legendary Scottish knight, once laid siege to the castle, leaving an indelible mark on its storied past.

Royal Connections: The castle has also played host to royals, including Mary Queen of Scots. During her visit in 1562, she sought refuge within these walls after a stormy sea voyage, adding a royal chapter to Dunnottar's story.

Smugglers' Lair: In the 18th century, Dunnottar became a haven for smugglers who took advantage of its hidden caves and treacherous coastline. It's said that contraband goods, including tea and brandy, were stashed away in the castle's secret chambers!

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA 1000



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The National Wallace **Monument**



Perfect lighting at The National Wallace Monument, Stirling. The Kilted Photographer

Glencoe



Stunning Glencoe. IG eadietam

Stirling Old Bridge



High above the 15th century Stirling Old Bridge. IG @thecanonkid

Isle of Lewis



Sea Stacks at Garry Beach, Tolsta, Isle of Lewis. Mik Coia

Pose your questions on Scottish related topics to our knowledgeable readership who just may be able to help. Please keep letters under 300 words and we reserve the right to edit content and length. Letters can be emailed to info@scottishbsanner.com or online at www.scottishbanner.com/contact-us, alternatively you may post your letters to us (items posted to the Scottish Banner cannot be returned). Please ensure you include your full contact details should you require a reply. This page belongs to our readers so please feel free to take part!

Scotland's Bard inspires almost 1,000 street and house names across the UK



obert Burns has inspired the naming of over 920 street and house names across the United Kingdom, according to research from Royal Mail. Although 46% of Burnsrelated streets are in Scotland, his legacy is felt strongly across the UK. Glasgow contains the most Burns-related addresses in the UK with 72 addresses inspired by Scotland's Bard. London (31), Ayr (26), Mauchline (18) and Greenock (16) complete the top five. Some of the more unusual Robert Burns-related addresses include 'Auld Lang Signs' graphic designers in Irvine, 'Haggis House' in Newbury, 'Old Whisky Road' in Dundee and 'Tam O'Shanter Drive' in Stirling. The research was conducted ahead of Burns Night, and the Royal Mail revealed that the legacy of Robert Burns extends to the naming of 724 streets across the United Kingdom and 202 houses, with hundreds of the nation's towns and cities containing at least one address inspired by the iconic poet and his works.

The Company analysed over 31 million addresses in its Address Management Unit to reveal the extent of the impact Scotland's Bard has had on the names of houses and streets across the UK. Although 46% of Burns-related streets are in Scotland, the spirit of 'Rabbie' is very much felt across the rest of the UK – with the word 'Burns' featuring in over 450 street names across the UK from Bognor Regis to Barry to Burnley.

The UK's most popular Burns-related street and house names are as follows:

Most Popular Street Names	Most Popular House Names
Burns Road (108)	Red Rose Cottage (22)
Burns Avenue (62)	Burns House (16)
Burns Close (54)	Burns Cottage (14)
Burns Street (43)	Baird House (13)
Burns Drive (25)	Burns Court (12)
Burns Way (24)	Burns Farm (8)
Burns Crescent (22)	Red Rose House (5)
Mossgiel Road (14)	Baird Court (4)
Paton Street (14)	Burns Cottages (4)
Jean Armour Drive (13)	The Burns (4)

The legacy of Robert Burns
The various homes that Robert Burns
lived in throughout his life are a primary
source of inspiration with 28 street names





including the word 'Lochlea', 47 street names including the word 'Mossgiel' and 11 with 'Mount Oliphant'. The women in his life have also proven to be muses for the nation's addresses, including 'Jean Armour Gardens' in Kirkcaldy, 'Clarinda Crescent' in Mauchline and 'Mary Campbell Court' in Barnet.

Some other fascinating facts unearthed by the research include:

Several addresses are influenced by some of the poet's most iconic verses, including 'Auld Lang Signs' graphic designers in Irvine, 'Red Rose Gardens' in Manchester and 'Tam O'Shanter Drive' in Stirling.

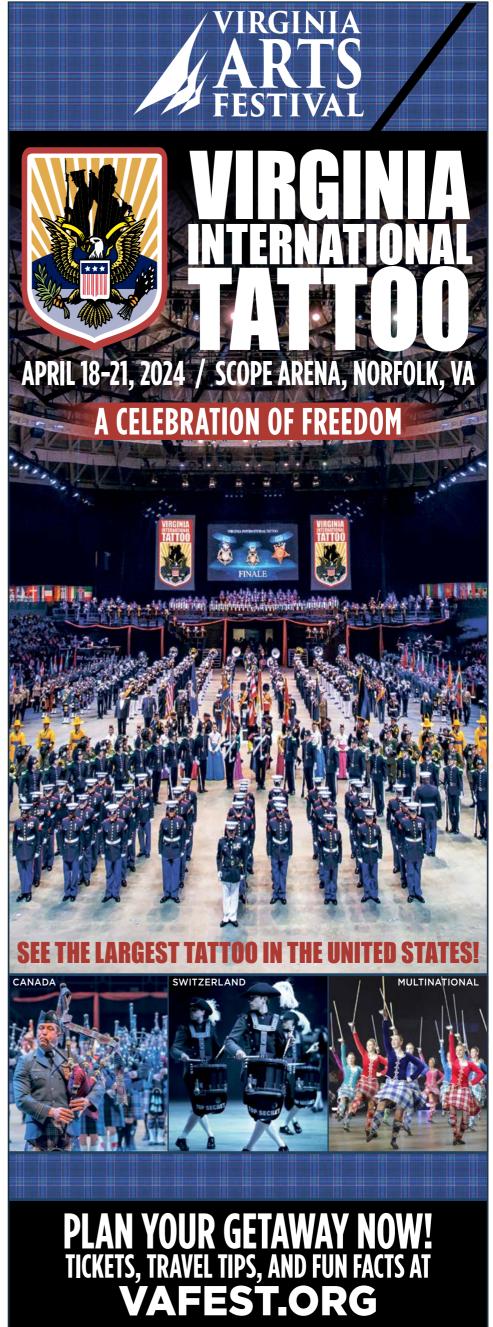
There are various street and house names around the country shaped by the more culinary aspects of Burns Night; including 'Haggis House' in Newbury, 'Neeps Croft' in Nottingham and Dundee's 'Old Whisky Road'.

'Burns Road' addresses exist all over London, including four in North West London and five in South West London. There is also a 'Robert Burns Mews' in Herne Hill.

Steve Rooney, Head of Royal Mail
Address Management Unit, commented:
"The work and life of Robert Burns
forms an important part of Scottish
history and the annual celebration
of Burns Night represents the longlasting impact Scotland's Bard has
had on the nation. Royal Mail delivers
to over 31 million addresses across
the UK, which puts us in the unique
position of having direct access to all
the amazing street and house names
across the nations. Our latest research
shows that the legacy of Robert Burns
can be felt across the entire UK."

The top 10 'Robert Burns hotspots	
of the LIK' are as follows:	

Glasgow (72 addresses)	Clydebank (15)
London (31)	Edinburgh (15)
Ayr (26)	Stirling (12)
Mauchline (18)	Kilmarnock (11)
Greenock (16)	Manchester (10)



IN SCOTLAND TODAY

Honours of Scotland shine once more



The Sceptre on a table being examined. The Honours of Scotland - the oldest crown jewels in Britain and among the oldest in Europe - have collectively returned to display at Edinburgh Castle after undergoing the most significant conservation work in their history.

The Honours, which consist of the Crown, Sceptre, and Sword of State, have held profound historical significance in Scotland for centuries. They were first used together at the coronation of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1543, and the Crown and Sceptre were presented to King Charles III at the National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication at St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh last year. Using a delicate touch and fine instruments, experts from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) cleaned the Honours to reduce tarnish and remove build-up of dust and grease. Though the Honours are made of enduring materials, their age and historic use has made them very fragile, and much of the cleaning process took place under a microscope to monitor any potential changes in their condition.

The project took place over several months, with individual items taken off display at scheduled points as part of the programme. Reed Hudson, Senior Metals Conservator at HES who led the conservation work, said: "The Honours of Scotland are unique among the HES Collections, and we want to ensure they always look their best when visitors come from near and far to see them. We undertake regular cleaning and condition checking of the Honours, but this project marks the first time they have undergone such significant conservation work in their long history. It's very rare that conservators can focus on just one project in this way and being able to spend this much time with the Honours has been a once in a lifetime experience. It has allowed me to really enjoy small details that I might have missed otherwise, like the figures of the saints engraved on the blade of the sword, or the beautiful floral motifs incorporated into the designs of the sceptre and scabbard. We are continually developing our methods of analysis and care to ensure that we are safeguarding our national treasures in the best possible way. This project has allowed us to learn more about the Honours and their history, and we hope to share our findings in the new year. Luckily, visitors don't need to wait that long to see the Honours again as they are now back on display together!"

Whilst conserving the Honours, the team also conducted analysis through a range of techniques, including X-radiography, portable X-Ray Fluorescence, and optical microscopy. This scientific analysis has revealed some intriguing new details about the Crown, showing that several gem settings on the Crown have been affixed with different kinds of pins throughout its long life. X-radiography will help identify the metals of which these pins were made, which will aid in the understanding of when these repairs took place.

The conserved Honours have also been digitally scanned to ensure that online documentation of these important objects is as comprehensive as possible.

2000-year-old Roman Road uncovered in a garden near Stirling



The site of an ancient Roman Road, described as the most important in Scottish history, has been discovered in a garden near Stirling. Dating back almost 2000 years, the cobbled road was built by the Roman armies of General Julius Agricola in the 1st century AD and would have connected to a ford that crossed the River Forth. It was uncovered during a dig in the garden of a cottage, located a few miles to the west of Stirling city centre and next to the 18thcentury Old Drip Bridge.

The road and the crossing would have been used again by the Romans in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD as legions launched fresh invasions of Scotland under the emperors Antonine and Severan. Many of the key historical figures of Scottish and British history also used the road for military campaigns given its strategic importance for crossing the Forth and reaching the Highlands, as well as its proximity to Stirling - Scotland's former capital city. Stirling Council Archaeologist Murray Cook, who led the dig, said: "This crossing would have been used by the Romans, the Picts, William the Conqueror, Oliver Cromwell and every King and Queen of Scotland, including MacBeth, Kenneth McAlpin and Robert the Bruce - but not Bonnie Prince Charlie who we know crossed the river at a ford at Frew to the west of Stirling. It is the most important road in Scottish history so it's an amazing discovery. To literally walk where Wallace and Bruce went, let alone the Romans, Picts and Vikings is astonishing. It has also never been clear before this find where this road ran. To the south the road heads towards Falkirk and would eventually take you to England. To the north, it would take you a crossing over the Tay and the edge of the Roman Empire."

The dig took place in the garden of the Old Inn Cottage, a former Drover Inn built in the 17th century. This year marks the 900th anniversary of Stirling as a Royal Burgh, founded by King David I in 1124.

St Kilda sea stack scaled for first time in over 130 years



A team of climbers has achieved the first ascent of a famous St Kilda sea stack in over 130 years, working with the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to plan the ascent safely and sustainably. The sea stack is known as 'The Thumb', or Stac Biorach, and has caught the imagination of explorers since 1890, although the St Kildans climbed it for centuries before that. |Leading the climb was Edinburgh adventurer and climber Robbie Phillips, who worked closely with the NTS to plan the ascent, ensuring they did not disturb the archipelago's precious seabird colonies or impact the landscape. The vertiginous climb up The Thumb was first documented by Martin Martin in 1698 in his book A Late Voyage to St Kilda. He vividly describes the terrifying feat young men would undertake to climb the rock pillar to catch birds and their eggs, without the security of any modern safety equipment. The 70m stack towers above the Atlantic Ocean; young men would scale the rock face with only a thin rope made of horsehair to pull them back to the boat should they fall.

Speaking about his trip to St Kilda, Robbie Phillips said, "Climbing The Thumb was like walking in the footsteps, or climbing in the fingerprints, of the St Kildans. It's a testament to their bravery and mental fortitude; to climb onto that sea stack 70m above the raging Atlantic without even shoes is wild to imagine. The St Kildans didn't just survive out here, they thrived with the skills they honed and the traditions they upheld." The location of the infamous climb remained a mystery until 1890 when Richard Manliffe Barrington completed it. With no resident St Kildans remaining after the island's evacuation in 1930, the legend of The Thumb threatened to disappear into history, until this recent ascent brought it back to prominence. Robbie added, "To have such a critical piece of climbing history in Scotland is hugely special to myself as a Scottish climber. This is a unique glimpse into the past that connects us in a meaningful way. That's why climbing is special, you can experience things exactly as the St Kildans did, albeit hundreds of years apart."

St Kilda is a dual-status UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of only 39 mixedstatus sites in the world, and it boasts an incredible amount of natural and cultural significance. The archipelago came into the National Trust for Scotland's care in 1957, and since that time they have worked hard to conserve and sustain the islands' heritage. Susan Bain, the National Trust for Scotland's Property Manager for St Kilda, said: "As a professional climber, Robbie had the skills and the back-up to attempt this climb safely, but it's important to emphasise that the landscape of St Kilda can be very challenging and everyone should be very mindful of its dangers as

well as its beauty. It is humbling to think about the St Kildans climbing this stack without modern equipment and communications. St Kilda has some of Scotland's – or the world's – most breathtaking scenery and wildlife.

These, together with St Kilda's stories, draw an increasing number of visitors. While we are delighted to share this natural and cultural heritage, we also have to be careful to make sure that visits are sustainably managed. It's important that visitors don't inadvertently harm the nature, beauty and heritage they have come to enjoy."

World's oldest scotch whisky found in Blair Castle auctioned



Whisky believed to be distilled almost 200 years ago, and possibly sipped by a young Queen Victoria, has been found behind a hidden cellar door in a 750-year-old castle in Scotland. Believed to be the oldest known Scotch whisky in existence, the incredible find recently went for auction bringing in nearly £400,000. In late 2022, Bertie Troughton, Resident Trustee at Blair Castle in Perthshire, found a number of old bottles in an unassuming cellar room. Around 40 bottles of whisky were discovered at the back of a shelf which are believed to have been distilled in 1833 and bottled in 1841 (the whisky was then rebottled in 1932). In November and December 2023, 24 bottles were sold exclusively at Whisky Auctioneer.

Authentication of the whisky by the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre via carbon dating supports that this whisky could be of early 19th century origin. Joe Wilson, Head Curator and Spirits Specialist at Whisky Auctioneer said: "Offering what is potentially the world's oldest scotch whisky at auction is truly a once in a lifetime occurrence. I'm fortunate to be well acquainted with old and rare liquid, as Whisky Auctioneer handles some of the world's rarest whisky bottlings. This, however, is a transcendent discovery that is sure to capture not just the imagination of the whisky industry but also those well beyond. If this whisky was distilled in the 1830s, then it was made during a fascinating period when whisky production was experiencing massive change following the 1823 Excise Act, making it a particularly exciting find for those interested in the history and heritage of the Scotch whisky industry." Angus MacRaild, an expert in old and rare whiskies and co-founder of Kythe Distillery, added: "This is a profoundly historic whisky and a remarkable artefact of Scottish distilling that is unlikely to ever be equalled in terms of provenance and preservation. That it has been carefully rebottled and preserved at natural strength, maintaining the freshness and power of this spirit for nearly two centuries is frankly, astonishing."

All together now-The history of the ceilidh

By: David C Weinczok





ilts whirling like dervishes, a tireless cascade of notes pouring from fiddles and pipes, and a mass of merry dancers moving as one - this is the quintessential modern ceilidh experience. However, much has changed in just a few centuries. If a time traveller from the 17th century Highlands found themselves attending a Hogmanay ceilidh today, they would not recognise the breathless scene before them. So, what are the origins of the ceilidh?

Ceilidhs as we know them originated in the 19th century amid a flourishing of Gaelic romanticism and civic clubs who revelled in communal dances. It was also a time when previously distinct dance and musical traditions were being blended together to create new genres, with ceilidhs formed from a fusion of Irish, Scottish, English, and Scandinavian folk traditions. The predictability of standard dances such as Strip the Willow, Dashing White Sergeant, and The Flying Scotsman helped everyone to take part and know what to expect. This marks one of the key differences between modern ceilidhs and their progenitors: spontaneity. Ceilidhs of old were organic, unorganised affairs, often prompted by the arrival of an out-of-town visitor or the unexpected but welcome creaking open of the front door at the end of a hard day's work. They were held in homes, not halls, and no evening of festivities was the same as another. It was, certain social conventions aside, a very informal affair. There might be thirty attendees or just a handful, the latter being no less a ceilidh than the former.

Storytelling

A ceilidh of this kind may have involved music and dancing if a skilled player was present, but the crux of it was storytelling. Stories centred on Ossian and the Fianna

were especially welcome. Until the end of the 19th century in Glen Lyon, any traveller who sought shelter among the homesteads of the glen would first be asked, "Bheil dad agad air na Fiann?" ("Can you speak of the days of Fionn?"). If the visitor answered in the affirmative then others from the community would be gathered to enjoy a long evening of stories, as well as to compare notes on different versions of well-known tales. If such a stranger called, the patriarch of the house would tell the first tale and the visitor was expected to regale the hosts well into the wee hours. If no guest was present and a ceilidh had come together naturally, it would usually wrap up around midnight.

bonding were an important part of any ceilidh. News would be shared, crafts and tasks would be done around the fringes of the peat fire, and youngsters especially were encouraged to test their wits with riddles and recitations. If one child did especially well, they would be granted the

Education and intergenerational

Iona Hall of ceilidhs. Photo: Gordon Bruce. title of Righ nan Tòimhseachan, the King (or Queen) of the Riddles. All benefitted from observing the skills of their elders, whether in the art of the story or of weaving and mending.

Homes in the Scottish Highlands and Islands were not the locked-up private domiciles that they are today, and the initiation of a ceilidh began not with a knock at the door but with someone sauntering straight in. One source from the Outer Hebrides recalls how, "doors were never closed except to an inhospitable wind." As for the proceedings themselves, "There were no formalities and no programmes. The events of the evening were spontaneous, unpremeditated and unrehearsed.

Coming together

Aspects of everyday life quite naturally became a part of the ceilidh's set dressing. The smoky reek of a peat fire was considered a mandatory element, not only to heat and light the room but to provide suitable ambience. The sounds of livestock, most often black cattle, were

ever-present, especially in the winter months when they were often kept in a subdivided section within the home. In the long dark of winter when it is pitch black by midafternoon and outdoor labour is difficult and dangerous, ceilidhs provided much-needed entertainment and uplifting to individuals and communities alike. They still do.

Ceilidhs could also be held as part of religious festivals. One such festival was the Latha Feille Brighde, the Feast of St Bridgid, held in Barra on February 1st. Once an annual event formally marked by the community, it fell out of fashion through the late 19th and 20th centuries. For the first time in a very long while in 2010, the feast was revived by Comunn Eachdraidh Bharraidh agus Bhatarsaigh (Barra and Vatersay Heritage Society) at the Dualchas (heritage centre) in Castlebay.

A figure of St Bridgid was made from corn sheathes and adorned by girls and women with clothing of seashells, primroses, crystals, snowdrops, and leaves. Entry to the heritage centre – a substitute for the blackhouses of old - was granted to the bearers of the figure, who chanted, "Brighde bhoideach oigh nam mile beus" ("Beautiful Bridgid, virgin of a thousand virtues"). Moving around the room in a circle, the girls held up the figure as people added adornments to it. It was then placed in a special bed, heralding the first day of Spring. Blessings were given, followed by a recitation of St Bridgid's genealogy and the ritual tasting of the bannock. This may not sound like any ceilidh you recognise, but its participants very much described it as one. The modern ceilidh may seem far from these origins, yet remains consistent in spirit. In English, 'ceilidh' literally means 'gathering'. Coming together with family and the community to bond, reminisce, sing and dance, and feel lifeful - especially at the coldest, darkest time of year - is the ceilidh's true meaning.



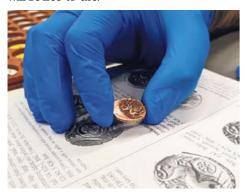


SCOTSPEAK

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

"I hope we will be able to find some of the stories, which might usually go untold, of the wide and diverse impact of the Second World War and ensure that these experiences are archived and made available online."

Dr Melissa Highton, Assistant Principal at the University of Edinburgh, said that precious stories that are fading fast from living memory are to be digitally recorded in a Second World War archive. People in Edinburgh given the opportunity to share their family's wartime experiences, which will be recorded in an interview setting. Associated objects - such as diaries, letters, medals, journals and ration books - will be photographed on the day. Transcribed interviews and photographs of the objects will be digitised and then uploaded to the online archive, Their Finest Hour. The archive, to be launched in June 2024, will be free-to-use.



"These coins haven't been properly catalogued in a modern sense, and now we've got over 200 coins from over 200 years of Celtic British history available on our

database worldwide to anyone who wants to look at them. The last time they were catalogued in any form was in a paper format in 1905, so over a century later, we've finally got them online. They're going to be really useful for researchers, for students, for teaching sessions from now on. And that's all down to the volunteers. Each of the three student volunteers were all given a different British Celtic tribe to look at and to work out what the coinage was and catalogue it. They all did a brilliant job. What I found most interesting, going through their work and being with them and talking to them, is the range of designs on the coins, because Celtic coins themselves can be absolutely mad. We're looking at a coin and we have no idea what we're looking at then you look at the description, but you still have no idea what you're looking at. But the more you handle them and the more you look at them, you see just how clever and imaginative the designs are. For me my favourite part of the project was getting to know the coins better."

Jesper Ericsson, Curator of Numismatics, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, said a collection of over 200 coins from over 200 years of Celtic British history is now available to a worldwide audience. The last time the coins held in The Hunterian, the University of Glasgow's museum, were catalogued in any form was nearly 120 years ago. You can view the newly digitally catalogued Celtic British coin by visiting the University Collections page and type 'Celtic British coin' into the search bar at: www.gla.ac.uk/collections/#/

"It's remarkable to think, as we prepare for the 900th anniversary of Stirling as a burgh, that our city is still giving up its historic and architectural secrets. This is another fabulous find that helps bring to life Stirling's central role in the power and politics of Scotland."

Stirling Council leader, Cllr Chris Kane, said as the remains of a lost defensive tower in Stirling's historic city walls have been uncovered. The location, in the old town cemetery, was used to guard an entrance next to what later became Cowane's Hospital and dates back to around 1547. The tower was used to protect Stirling during a period known as the Rough Wooing, when English forces under the Duke of Somerset attempted to force a marriage between Mary, Queen of Scots and England's Edward VI. It's believed the towers were last in operation in 1746 against Bonnie Prince Charlie, during the Jacobite Uprising, before falling into a state of



"The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) understands that connectivity is vital to support thriving rural communities and we're more than happy to work with providers to find appropriate places for

their facilities. We are deeply concerned by the approach being taken at the moment which seems to take no account of the nature, beauty and heritage of many locations. We are calling for urgent discussions to take place between government, stakeholders, communities of interest and the Shared Rural Network project teams to ensure that national targets and overall approach is reviewed and proposals within Scotland's highly sensitive and internationally valued landscapes are stopped. We can help providers find sites for masts and associated infrastructure in places where they can bring benefits to communities, while protecting the ecology, stunning landscape and views for everyone enjoying the tranquillity and unspoilt nature of these places. Scotland's beautiful places and views are amongst its most valuable assets, and we all have a responsibility to ensure that they are protected for everyone."

Stuart Brooks, Director of Conservation and Policy said the nationwide 4G expansion project is having a severely detrimental impact on the landscape in some of Scotland's most beautiful and remote locations, and the NTS is calling for a joined-up approach to protect Scotland's landscapes. A nationwide effort to extend 4G coverage to 95% of Scotland is leading to multiple planning applications being made to place masts and telecommunications infrastructure in some of Scotland's most scenic locations, including Torridon in the north west and the Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve.



Looking for a Burns Night event?



ooking for a Burns Night event near you? See our listings featuring Burns Supper's around the world at: www.scottishbanner.com/events

There you will also find an array of Scottish and Celtic events coming up in 2024 across North America, as well Scotland and Australasia.

Our events page is added to weekly so check regularly and make sure you get out and celebrate our culture in 2024!

Organisers are reminded they can add their event anytime at: www.scottishbanner.com/events/submit-an-event, this is a free community service.

SCOTWORD Here is a wee Scottish crossword for you to try! If you're stuck, answers can be found on page 26.

CLUES ACROSS

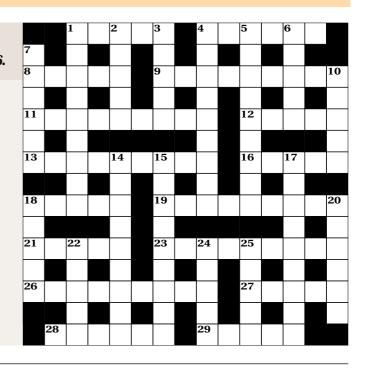
- 1) Scotsmen's shirts (5)
- 4) Upper edge of ship's side (6)
- 8) Kirk divider (5)
- 9) Impart knowledge (9)
- 11) Powerful whirlpool (9)
- 12) The westernmost island of the Inner Hebrides. (5)
- 16) Precious stones (5)
- 18) Clay pigment (5)
- 19) Many inhabit the Hebrides (9)
- 21) Under the doctor (5)

- 23) Highlander's weapon (9)
- 26) He looks after the reserves (9)
- 27) Representation (5)
- 28) Nation across the Channel (6)
- 29) The untrue image of the Scot (5)

CLUES DOWN

- 1) Found over the Border (9)
- 2) Smokes in Scotland (5)
- 3) Agitate in old Scots (5)
- 4) Object of games entrants (4,5)
- 5) Got to bed in it (9)

- 6) Participate in (5)
- 7) Dark Scot on the road (6)
- 10) Scots vegetables(5)
- 14) Recognised by secret signs (9)
- 17) He's Sandy for short (9)
- 18) Wise young flier (5)
- 20) An Australian lady (6)
- 22) Shout of approval (5)
- 24) The end of a Scots thread (5)
- 25) Young wool suppliers (5)





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Scotland is the place to be in 2024



here are many reasons to make Scotland the place to be in 2024; whether it's a newly discovered 5,000-year-old tomb in Orkney, or Shetland preparing for its first orbital rocket launch, Scotland offers wowmoments galore. Visitors in 2024 are guaranteed to make unforgettable memories while exploring the country's vibrant cities and stunning landscapes on new trails, or discovering exciting new attractions. The selection below is only a handful of Scotland's upcoming openings to look forward to in the year ahead, as the destination is ever-changing and ever-growing to provide the best visitor experience possible.

Perth Museum, Perth, Spring 2024



The new Perth Museum will open its doors in spring, Easter weekend of 2024 after a £26.5 million redevelopment project. The world-class cultural and heritage attraction will highlight the fascinating objects and stories that put Perth and Kinross at the centre of Scotland's story. The new museum will showcase various objects of interest, including the 3,000-year-old Carpow Logboat and the Stone of Destiny (one of Scotland's most significant historical objects, an ancient symbol of Scotland's monarchy that was used to crown Scottish Kings, returning to Perthshire for the first time in over 700years). Perth, one of Scotland's eight cities, sits on the banks of the River Tay in the east of Scotland, just a short journey from Edinburgh or Glasgow. Perth is nestled between two sprawling public parks, and has elegant Georgian townhouses, cobbled streets and medieval spires. Explore the monuments, the art gallery and museum before discovering the glorious Perthshire countryside. When visiting Perth, look out for the colourful sculptures in the Hairy Highland Coo Trail, coming to local spaces in summer 2024.

Scottish Crannog Centre, Perthshire, Spring 2024

The Scottish Crannog Centre is currently building a new museum located at the site of Dalerb on the North side of Loch Tay in Perthshire which is set to open in spring 2024. A crannog is a house built over water, usually with a bridge or causeway joining them to the shore, and visitors can step inside one to discover unique insight into life in the Iron Age. The aim of The Scottish Crannog Centre at Dalerb is to be the most sustainable museum in Scotland. The new visitor centre will showcase internationally significant archaeological collections, an Iron Age-inspired village of craft and technology demonstrations, and the first of three expert-led, but community-built, crannogs.

Braemar Castle, Aberdeenshire, Spring 2024

Built by the Earl of Mar in 1628, Braemar Castle has been a hunting lodge, fortress, garrison and family home. An iconic 17th century landmark in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, Braemar Castle is currently undergoing a £1.6 million restoration programme to re-render the exterior which aims to be complete by spring 2024. The castle's future rests with the small community of Braemar, and over the past ten years the village has been working to raise funds and gradually conserve and restore the castle to provide even better facilities for future visitors.

Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire, Spring 2024

An example of the best of Scottish Baronial architecture, Craigievar Castle fits naturally amongst the rolling hills of Aberdeenshire. The elegant pink tower of Craigievar Castle was completed in 1626 and is amongst the most loved in Scotland. The castle is currently undergoing a major conservation project to carry out essential maintenance work, including refreshing the lime wash that gives Craigievar its distinctive and beloved pink colour. Visitors will be treated to a grand reveal in spring 2024, when the new exterior is unveiled.

The 152nd Open at Royal Troon, Ayrshire, July 2024

Royal Troon's Old Course was founded in 1878, expanded to eighteen-holes ten years later and re-designed by five-times Champion Golfer James Braid ahead of its first Open in 1923. It will host its 10th Open from 14 to 21 July 2024.

The Playbill FringeShip, Edinburgh, August 2024

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world, including over 3,000 shows that span theatre, cabaret, and comedy shows. With visitors flocking to the city to experience the world-renowned festival, Playbill is launching the Playbill Fringeship, the official 'Floatel' of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Ambassador Cruise Line's Ambition – a sustainable and modern cruise ship – will be docked for a week in Edinburgh's buzzing port neighbourhood of Leith, from 8 – 15 August 2024, carrying up to 1,300 guests in cabins and suites.

Lost Shore Surf Resort, Edinburgh, September 2024

Lost Shore Surf Resort is coming to Edinburgh in September 2024, when it will proudly become Europe's largest inland surfing destination. Capable of generating up to 1,000 waves per hour, the state-of-the-art surf lake will be set within a 60-acre country park and will offer unique accommodation in the form of premium pods and luxurious lodges, a food market, retail spaces, and a wellness spa.

High Praise for the Far North...

The Far North of Scotland has been named as one of Lonely Planet's Best in Travel destinations for 2024. The region, which includes Caithness and Sutherland, is home to some of the country's most beautiful and special habitats including The Flow Country; the most intact and extensive blanket bog system in the world. The travel publication highlights the increased recognition the region may enjoy as The Flow Country aims to achieve UNESCO World Heritage status. Lonely Planet describes 2024 as 'the perfect time to make a trip to the Far North of Scotland, exploring both its unsung boggy interior and a coastline of heartbreaking beauty'.

And the South...

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Scotland's first UNESCO Biosphere, is celebrating the news that National Geographic Traveller (UK) has named it as one of the most exciting destinations for 2024 in its prestigious global Cool List. Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere's listing celebrates the reserve's natural heritage, its UNESCO designation and its recently extended boundary, which recognises the site's cultural significance. It was revealed earlier this year that the site has now almost doubled in size from more than 5,200 km² to almost 9,800 km² - incorporating Alloway (the birthplace of Scotland's national bard Robert Burns) and the Rhins of Galloway (Scotland's most southernly point).

And the Scottish Islands...

The Scottish Islands have been chosen as a 'Best Place to Go in 2024' by US travel media company, Frommer's. Frommer's describes the Scottish Islands as a 'breath of fresh air' and 'a world apart with more than a hint of magic to each of them'. With a shoutout to the white sandy beaches of Barra and Harris, the world's finest whiskies from Islay's distilleries, the dramatic sea stacks in Orkney and the wildlife in Shetland, their overview of this beautiful part of Scotland is just a glimpse into the many reasons why visitors should put the islands on their must-visit list.

Distillery news



From exciting new visitor attractions such as the first vertical distillery located in Edinburgh's trendy neighbourhood of Leith; and the Gin Bothy Experience where Scottish bothy traditions and culture meet tasting and retail; to innovative ways to make whisky production more sustainable (cue the distillery that recycles its hot air to heat the local swimming pool), there are endless reasons to explore the world of whisky and gin in Scotland. Not least the number of new openings to look forward to in 2024.

Dunphail Distillery, Moray Speyside, Now Open

Opened in 2023, Dunphail is a resolutely traditional distillery, dedicated to crafting the finest whisky the way it used to be made. It has been constructed from a one-time farm steading and sits in the beautiful countryside of the Speyside region. Their exclusive distillery hand-fill is available for visitors wanting to bottle their own whisky straight from the cask.

Eden Mill Distillery, St Andrews, Summer 2024

After lying still for over 150 years, Eden Mill brings the art of distilling back to this historical area in the form of a new distillery experience and a range of premium single malt whiskies and gins. The front wall of the building will feature large glass windows providing beautiful views out over the estuary and the iconic St Andrews skyline. All their electricity will be 100% renewable, coming from either the solar farm belonging to the University of St Andrews or other renewable energy sources. Additionally, the CO2 produced during the fermentation process will be captured for the University to use.

Edinburgh Gin Distillery & Visitor Experience, Edinburgh, Summer 2024

The Arches on East Market Street, in the heart of Scotland's capital city, will soon be home to the highly anticipated Edinburgh Gin state-of-the-art Distillery and Visitor Experience. The opening will mark the relocation of their distilleries from Rutland Street and Leith, uniting the essence of the brand under one roof. The meticulously designed brand home promises immersive experiences that will transport visitors on a journey filled with wonder.

Rosebank Distillery, Falkirk, 2024

After 30 years of closure, Rosebank Distillery, once the beating heart of the Scottish town of Falkirk, restarted production in summer 2023. The ancient buildings have been tirelessly restored. Three gleaming copper stills now take centre-stage in a magnificent glass-fronted still house. In the middle, proudly connecting Rosebank's past and future stands the towering 108ft distillery chimney stack, which has been a famous landmark in Falkirk for as long as anyone can recall. With the visitor centre set to open in 2024, whisky lovers can look forward to re-discovering the distillery during a range of tours and tastings.

Events

With atmospheric crowds, iconic venues and picture-perfect backdrops, Scotland plays host to world leading sporting events as well as music and cultural festivals. Edinburgh is the world's leading festival city with amazing events taking place year-round, including the world-renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In 2024, visitors can choose from small local events to large international crowds, see below to find out what's in store.

Celtic Connections, Glasgow, January/February 2024



Celtic Connections, Glasgow's annual folk, roots and world music festival celebrates its connections to cultures across the globe. From 18 January to 4 February 2024, over 2,100 musicians from around the world bring the city to life for eighteen days. During this time, there are concerts, ceilidhs, talks, art exhibitions, workshops and free events for visitors and locals alike to enjoy.

Spectra Festival of Light, Aberdeen, February

Spectra, Scotland's magical Festival of Light returns to Aberdeen from 8 – 11 February, shining a light on Scotland's glorious Northeast for the tenth time. Each year, the festival brings a spectacular programme of works by some of the world's leading visual artists, studios and companies to transform the Granite City with light, sound and eye-catching visual art.

World Athletics Championships, Glasgow, March 2024

Glasgow has a proven track record of hosting major sporting events and 2024 is no different! The World Athletics Indoor Championships will provide the city of Glasgow with three days of world class action from 1-3 March. There will be six sessions of sport filled with exciting competition in the Emirates Arena, with some of the best athletes in the world competing for prestigious World Indoor titles. Up to 650 competitors from more than 130 countries are expected to take part, competing in 26 events, 13 for men and 13 for women.

National Cyclo-cross Championships, Falkirk, January 2024

The 2024 National Cyclo-cross Championships will be held in Scotland for the very first time, in Falkirk's Callendar Park. The championships will take place over the weekend of 13 –14 January. Home to the 14th century Callendar House, the park provides a stunning backdrop to the racing, with the challenging course quickly becoming a firm favourite of riders and spectators alike.

World Orienteering Championships, Edinburgh, July 2024

While often thought of as a countryside sport, from 12 – 16 July 2024 orienteering will take over Edinburgh, when the Sprint World Orienteering Championships visit Scotland's capital city. Five days of racing –

for everyone from elite athletes to complete beginners – will showcase orienteering and allow people of all abilities to enjoy a world-class sport in a world-class city.

Cullen Skink World Championships, Moray Speyside, March 2024

Cullen Skink is a thick Scottish soup traditionally made of smoked haddock, potatoes and onions and takes its name from the town of Cullen in Moray, on the northeast coast of Scotland. On Sunday 17 March 2024, the Cullen Skink World Championships will take place in the Cullen, hosting two events – the Traditional Cullen Skink competition and Cullen Skink with a Twist competition – and spectators are welcome at both. Judges will taste each competitor's version in a blind tasting, with the contestant with the highest score being declared as the Cullen Skink World Champion.

Scotland on Two Wheels

There are many ways to explore Scotland, but cycling is one of the best. Cycling allows visitors to take their time and see more, relax and unwind, and be more eco-friendly all in one go. Visitors can choose to cycle one of Scotland's amazing long distance cycle routes, such as the new Kirkpatrick C2C, South of Scotland's Coast to Coast Cycling route from Stranraer on the west coast to Eyemouth on the east coast. This cycle route celebrates Scotland's rich history of innovation and the South's key role in the creation of the bicycle with its 250 miles of uninterrupted joy. In early 2024, the full cycle route will be launched with signposts along the way.

In August 2023, Glasgow was host to the UCI Cycling World Championships. It was the single biggest cycling event in history, bringing together for the first time 13 existing UCI World Championships into one mega event. To capitalise on the legacy of the event, five new cycling routes have been mapped out by Sustrans Scotland, with two in the Scottish Borders, one in Dumfries and Galloway, one in Glasgow, and one in Stirling. Find out more about these fantastic routes here to begin mapping out a cycling holiday in Scotland. In May 2024, Fort William in the Scottish Highlands will feature as one of 15 race weekends in the 2024 UCI Mountain Bike World Series.

For those looking for some culture with their active adventure, head to Orkney and cycle the new Hoy on Hoy route, a 31km road cycle inspired by six-time Olympic Champion, Sir Chris Hoy, which takes in the Scapa Flow Museum, ancient archeology and some of Orkney's best scenery.

Anniversaries



Scotland's history stretches back thousands and thousands of years and fascinating stories of the past await both in the country's vibrant cities and most remote islands. A number of big anniversaries in 2024 offer the opportunity for visitors to join local communities in the celebrations.

Stirling Celebrates 900 Years as a Burgh

Stirling, a Royal Burgh founded by King David I in 1124, is approaching its 900th anniversary, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in Scotland. Nowhere else in Europe can one traverse from a historic battlefield to a Celtic fort, a medieval palace, and the site of a Jacobite siege, all within a 15-minute walk. Visitors are encouraged to join locals for a year-long celebration of everything that makes Scotland truly unique, from the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie to the significance of tartan and the mysteries of Bloody Scotland.

Robert the Bruce's 750th Anniversary

Robert the Bruce is a ruler which the history books remember; many regard him as being Scotland's most successful monarch. With the 750th anniversary of his birth coming up on 11 July 2024 there has never been a better time to follow in the footsteps of Scotland's most famous king by exploring the Robert the Bruce Trail in the South of Scotland or other locations thought to be connected to him such as Scone Palace and Dunfermline Abbey. On the day itself, Maybole in Ayrshire near where Robert the Bruce is said to have been born will host the Robert the Bruce Heritage Day with medieval fun for the whole family.

HMS Unicorn's 200th Anniversary

First launched in 1824, *HMS Unicorn*– which can be visited in Dundee – is
the third oldest ship afloat in the
world and the oldest ship in Scotland.
In celebration of her 200th anniversary, no
less than two special presents have been
commissioned for the museum ship:
A new musical piece about her history will

be performed on board as part of a series of events during the anniversary year. And a newly designed statue, a 3 metre all-steel artwork of a unicorn rearing on its hind legs, is set to form the centrepiece of a new garden for *HMS Unicorn*.

The Kelpies Turn 10



Standing at 100ft tall and weighing more than 300 tonnes each, the magical Kelpies, located within Falkirk's The Helix Park, are the largest equine sculptures in the world. The stunning sculptures, created by artist Andy Scott 10 years ago, have become iconic on the landscape after being modelled on real-life icons of times gone by — Clydesdale horses Duke and Baron. During a free event on 27 April visitors can enjoy street theatre, storytellers and artists who will create a vibrant and colourful scene to experience alongside the spectacular sculptures, culminating in a big family ceilidh, pipe band demonstrations, not to mention a specially invited guestlist of Clydesdale horses to mark the breed's significant contribution to Scotland's industrial heritage and inspiration for Andy Scott's masterpiece. The day of celebration will be followed by a concert in the evening.



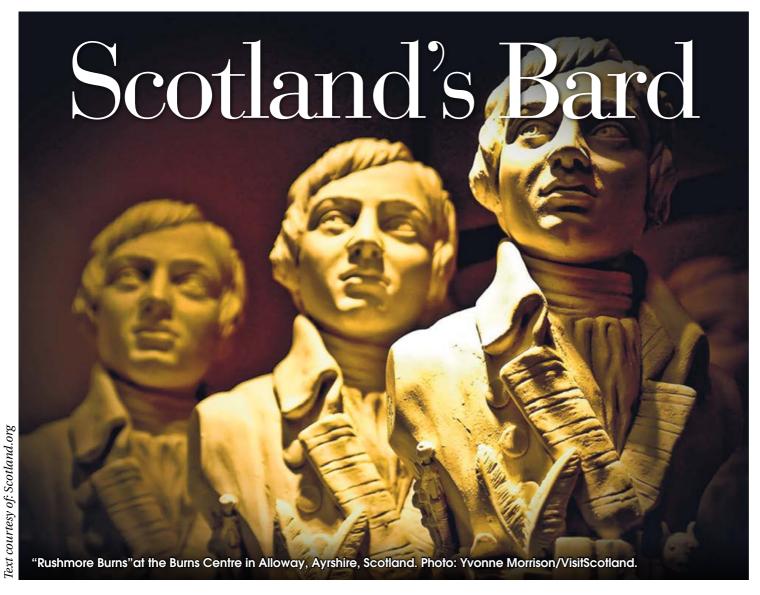
ow well do you know Scotland?
To test your knowledge we have assembled ten fun questions on its geography, history and culture—but if you get stumped, the solutions can be found underneath. Good luck!

- 1) Where does an Orcadian come from?
- 2) How did Scots actor James Finlayson find fame?
- 3) What is the shortest placename in Scotland?
- 4) Bonnie Prince Charlie died in Rome on January 31st but in which year? a) 1777, b) 1788 or c)1799?
- 5) On which river does Braemar stand?
- 6) In which Scottish palace was David Rizzio, Mary Queen of Scots favourite, murdered on March 9th, 1566?
- 7) What is a quaich?

- 8) To which island did Flora MacDonald escort Bonnie Prince Charlie after his defeat at Culloden?
- 9) What in Scotland is a mauk?
- 10) Urquhart Castle lies on the shores of which Scottish loch?

Answers

- 1) The Orkney Islands.
- 2) He was the moustachioed sidekick of Laurel and Hardy.
- 3) Ae in Dumfriesshire.
- 4) b) 1788.
- 5) The River Dee.
- 6) Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh.
- 7) A shallow, two-handed drinking vessel.
- 8) Skye.
- 9) A maggot, particularly the bluebottle maggot.
- 10) Loch Ness.



s William Shakespeare is England's national bard so Robert Burns is Scotland's. And over 250 years after he was born into a poor Ayrshire farming family the universal appeal of many of his poems and songs endures. Burns had a gift for putting himself into the shoes of others and sympathising with their plight. His greatest works gave a unique and vivid insight into the aspirations and anguishes of the brotherhood of man and his words maintain their powerful meaning today.

Robert Burns died in Dumfries on 26th July, 1796, on the same day that his wife gave birth to their ninth child, a son, Maxwell. He succumbed to a form of rheumatic fever, which would have been easily treatable today. In those days, however, the cause and remedy of his ailment were unknown and his demise was likely hastened by a course of seabathing in icy salt waters. To make matters worse, Burns died in debt, borrowing

from a cousin and an old patron, George Thomson, to bail himself and his pregnant wife out of trouble. The fact is that Burns had lived in near poverty most of his life. He had been engaged in heavy physical farm work since he was a young boy, in a harsh climate and on a very limited diet had taken its toll. He was only thirty-seven years old when he died. He was buried with full military honours as a member of the local volunteer militia, the Fencibles. Burns had joined up the year before as Britain was at war with France and there was a fear of invasion. Sadly, as is so often the case, Burns' genius was only widely recognised after his death.

Short life

In his short life he had written a host of poems and songs that would become cherished throughout the world. His words would reach far beyond his native Scotland and continue to resonate over two centuries later words about the human



spirit and condition, about nature, love, life and death that are as meaningful now as they were in Burns' time. Auld Lang Syne, Tam o' Shanter, Ae Fond Kiss, Red, Red Rose, Scots Wha Hae, A Man's a Man for A' That the list goes on and on. But who was this man who died young and in poverty in a small provincial town, who was almost instantly mourned by an entire nation and who is still revered over 250 years after his birth?

Burns was born on a wild and windy night in Alloway on the Ayrshire coast of Scotland, in the family house his father, William, had built with his own hands. Robert was the eldest of seven children. Burns' Cottage, now a museum, still stands today, although no longer set in rolling fields, but in the new affluent suburbs of the town of Ayr. Robert's parents were small tenant farmers. William and his wife, Agnes, struggled to make a living on poor soil. But despite their hardships they were keen to educate their offspring, so in 1765 Robert and his brother, Gilbert, were sent to a school two miles away at Alloway Mill. William then clubbed together with three local families to share a private tutor, a young man called John Murdoch, who taught Robert English grammar. He also made the children sing Psalms but, ironically, for someone who went on to pen some of the most well known songs ever written, Robert's voice was, according to Murdoch, "untuneable". When Murdoch took up a post at Ayr Academy in 1772, Burns' father tutored the boys at home, although they continued taking lessons at various other schools nearby.

The following year the family moved to another farm at Mount Oliphant, high on a hillside two miles from Alloway. The rent was steep and the sour upland ground was difficult to cultivate. Life was tough on the new farm. Since the family couldn't afford hired help, Robert did a full day's work in

the field and farmyard on a diet of oatmeal and skimmed milk even though they lived on a farm, meat was much too expensive.

On the long, dark, bitterly cold Scottish winter nights Robert was often to be found huddled under a single candle, with his nose buried in a book. By the time he was 21 he had read Shakespeare, David Hume, his favourite philosopher Adam Smith and everything in-between. These books helped to fuel his already burgeoning imagination.

Enjoyed the company of women He had already written his first love poems when he was fifteen, to a farmer's daughter from Dalrymple. It was the beginning of his life-long love of women and his celebration of them in poem and songs. Burns had many affairs throughout his life and enjoyed drinking with friends, but he was far from the over-sexed, booze-sodden farmhand of yore, a slightly misleading myth that has tended to overshadow his literary legacy. He fathered over a dozen children to various women, and his sexual behaviour was radical, especially in 18th century society. The handsome, charismatic poet undoubtedly enjoyed the company of women, from society ladies to servant girls. Burns' first child was by a servant, Elizabeth Paton, who worked at Lochlea farm in Tarbolton (the family had moved to the village when Robert was nineteen), and one of his most famous love affairs, though never consummated, was with the upper class Agnes McLehose, for whom he wrote the beautiful parting song Ae Fond Kiss.

Burns' greatest works gave a unique and vivid insight into the aspirations and anguishes of the brotherhood of man and his words maintain their powerful meaning today.

Burns acknowledging women as individuals who had valuable insights and opinions and were stimulating. He started a life-long correspondence with sometime patron, Mrs Frances Anna Dunlop, a well-to-do Ayrshire widow who admired his poems. In his work he managed to combine descriptions of his prurient exploits with the tenderest of emotions, memorably and simply expressed. Love (and lust!) and poetry were always to run together for Burns. By the time his first collection of poetry, Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect was published in July 1786 he had founded the debating society, the Tarbolton Bachelors' Club, gained a reputation locally as an outspoken critic of the church and became a freemason.

He had started writing seriously after his father's death in 1784 and this first collection, known as the Kilmarnock Edition' because that was where it was printed, emerged from the poems that had been passed around locally in manuscript form during 1784-85, gaining him regional notoriety. It included some of his best writing, including *The Twa Dogs, Address to the Deil, Hallowe'en, The Cotter's Saturday Night, To a Mouse*, and *To a Mountain*

Daisy, many of which had been written at Mossgiel farm, where the family had moved in 1785. Having already written a handful of poems in English, Burns found his true voice in the Scots language, writing in words that did not come from the classical dictionary but from everyday speech.

His poems touched on themes of injustice, hypocrisy, the hard life of the countryman, radicalism, anticlericalism, sexuality, gender roles, Scottish cultural identity and man's inhumanity to his fellow man. He wrote scathing satires and tender love songs delivered in a direct, playful, yet sympathetic voice that spoke to all walks of life.

Throughout his life Burns was on the side of the poor and the downtrodden and was always anxious to speak up for them. Inequality made him angry. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the French revolution in 1789 before it turned into a blood-bath, and supported the American struggle for democracy led by George Washington. Poetry was in Burns' blood but the book was also born of financial necessity. The farm at Lochlea, which he worked with his younger brother, Gilbert, provided little money and an increasingly desperate Burns had considered leaving for the West Indies to find a job as an employee on the slave plantations. He had even booked a berth on a boat to Jamaica but had postponed the trip on several occasions. The Kilmarnock edition got 612 advance subscriptions, mostly concentrated on around a dozen individuals who sold them on to other admirers.

By this time Burns had met and married Jean Armour, who bore him twins in September 1786, despite the strenuous attempts by Jean's father to prevent his daughter having anything to do with the poet owing to his opprobrious reputation. After an enforced separation Robert and Jean were reunited and she remained his long-suffering wife until his death. She had nine of his children and took in and nursed one of his several illegitimate offspring.

Heaven-taught ploughman

Burns arrived in Edinburgh, Scotland's cultural capital, in November 1786 as the sensation of the season. In a review of his poems in the literary periodical *The Lounger*, Henry Mackenzie coined for Burns the famous epithet of the "heaven-taught ploughman". It was a sentimental moniker that stuck, the image of the rustic bard with plough in one hand and quill in the other composing poems in the Ayrshire fields. But it was far removed from the reality of Burns' life, which had been one of toil and hardship.

Burns knew he was different and special and held centre stage in Edinburgh with his powerful charisma and passionate way with words. However, he was also aware of his low social standing in polite Edinburgh society. Poets were certainly not meant to be peasants and he found the drawing rooms of literary Edinburgh reeking with pretension, which he derided memorably in his famous poem *Address to a Haggis*.

In April 1787 an Edinburgh edition of Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect was published, containing 22 additional poems to the Kilmarnock edition, and was subscribed to by over 1300 individuals. But Burns sold the copyright of the book to William Creech for 100 guineas and despite further editions appearing in London, Dublin, New York and Philadelphia, he made no money from these. That same year the first volume of James Johnston's Scots Musical Museum, a collection of Scottish folk songs, appeared, including three songs by Burns. Burns would go on to contribute nearly 200 songs to future volumes of the publication, many published posthumously. He toured the Highlands and the Scottish Borders collecting old Scottish tunes to which he set his verses, thus helping to preserve the songs and keep a cultural tradition alive. Some of his more bawdy lyrics were collected in a notorious volume entitled The Merry Muses of Caledonia.

Despite his new-found fame in Edinburgh and beyond, Burns was struggling to support his family from either his poetry or the small farm he had leased in Ellisland, Dumfriesshire and he was forced to take a public service job in 1788. After a life-time of unrewarded toil he abandoned farming altogether in 1791 to become a full-time employee in the Dumfries excise, moving to a house in the town. Undeterred by ailing health during the winter of 1790, and depression about the fading prospects of the farm, his muse remained undimmed and he continued his prolific output of songs and poems, completing his most famous poem and arguably his masterpiece, Tam o' Shanter, in November that year.

Traditional Burns Suppers

Nowadays, the Bard is said to generate in the region of £200m every year to the Scottish economy. Not bad for a man who left debts of £14 when he died. Every year on the night of Burns' birthday, 25 January, or an evening close to it, his life and work are celebrated as Burns clubs all over the world from Alloway to Adelaide, Moscow to Milwaukee host traditional Burns Suppers. These informal suppers vary from club to club but the general format has remained the same since Burns' friends hosted the first recorded night in his honour around the anniversary of his birth in 1801.





Guests gather as at any informal function and the host says a few words of introduction before everyone is seated and the Selkirk Grace is said. A starter of soup, usually a Scots broth or Cock-a-Leekie, is eaten, before the centrepiece of the meal, a haggis, is brought in while a piper plays the bagpipes. The host then recites Address to a Haggis and at the lines 'His knife see rustic Labour dicht, An' cut you up wi ready slicht', draws and cleans a knife and plunges it into the haggis, slicing it open from end to end in dramatic fashion. A toast is then proposed to the haggis. Mashed potatoes (champit tatties) and turnips (bashed neeps) traditionally accompany the haggis.

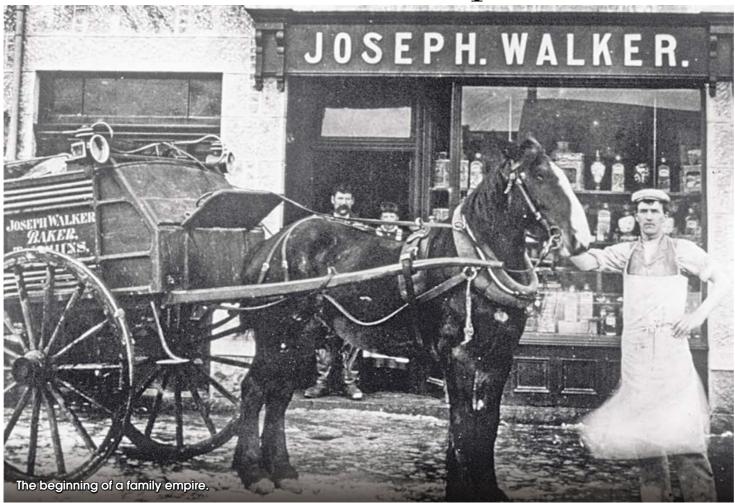
When the meal is over, one of the guests makes a speech commemorating Burns and proposes a toast to the great man, known as the *Immortal Memory*. A toast

is then made to the lassies' in recognition of Burns' fondness for the fairer sex and sometimes a female guest will reply with a humorous toast to the laddies'. Following the speeches there may be singing of songs by Burns and occasionally guests take to the floor in a whirl of Burns Scottish country dancing known as a ceilidh, although this is not a normal part of a Burns supper.

Finally, to conclude the evening everyone stands, joins hands and sings the song most associated with Burns worldwide, *Auld Lang Syne* a song which has become an international anthem of brotherhood and has been translated into more than thirty languages. The most important thing about a Burns Supper is to have fun. After all, the man you're paying tribute to was certainly not averse to a wee party himself!



Celebrating 125 years of Walker's Shortbread The Scottish Banner speaks to Sir Jim Walker



From a £50 loan and a small Scottish village bakery, to an iconic multinational household brand, the Walker's Shortbread family business continues to grow as they celebrate 125 years of their original recipe. In the last financial year, the business recorded a 16% rise in turnover as export revenues boosted by almost 10%. Australia has played a significant role in the growth of the business since its inception in the market in 1972, with Australians consuming the most shortbread per capita outside of Scotland, three times as much per capita than the US. The Scottish Banner spoke to Sir Jim Walker CBE, Director and third generation of Walker's Shortbread about the iconic product, brand and his love of Speyside.



In 1898 your grandfather Joseph Walker opened the doors to his very first bakery at just aged 21 with a loan of £50 and the ambition to bake "The World's Finest Shortbread" using just four ingredients. Do you ever wonder what he might think of the Walker's global brand today? And how does it feel to be a part of such a legacy?

JW: My Grandfather was a very down to earth man, and he would likely have said, "Well done and now let's get back to work!" It is a great honour to be a part of this business today and see what we have made of it so far. I have also made many friends around the world because of our products and it has been a wonderful business to be a part of.

Shortbread dates back well into Scottish history, with even Mary Queen of Scots being a fan. What is it about shortbread do you think people love so much the world over?

JW: I think it is the simplicity of shortbread that makes it so loved. If you make it well and keep to the true recipe people will love it. It is a fantastic treat and filled with history and a beautiful taste. Shortbread can be enjoyed at any time of day and at any occasion.



Walker's Shortbread is an iconic Scottish brand. How does it feel for you to know your family business has not only been such an international success story but that it also represents Scottish quality on the world stage?

JW: It is both wonderful and also a big responsibility. We are determined to keep our independence and keeping the product tasting as good as it has been each and every time. We are one of the largest Scottish ambient food exporters and are a brand now recognised across the world. By doing a simple thing well, being consistent and ensuring the product tastes the same every time in every country is what we strive for and achieve.

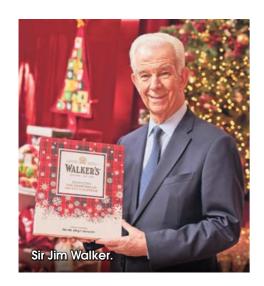
Many generations of locals have worked for Walker's creating a special and unique Highland community. Walker's is one of the largest employers in the local area. How does it make you feel to have such a positive impact on the local economy over several generations?

I think it is the simplicity of shortbread that makes it so loved.

JW: It makes us very proud, and we are determined to support the local community in every way. We are so dependent on the local community for a supply of first-class people who give a fair day's work and for many it is more than a job it is a way of life. Often two or three members of the same family will work at the company, and we try and work with our workers to be flexible as the locals are so valuable to us. I think there is an inter-dependency between ourselves and the local community, and we both greatly benefit from each other. We have wonderful staff, and we strive to create stable employment for generations of workers.

Walker's is today the largest familyowned biscuit manufacturer in the UK. How much of the company's success do you put down to being family owned and operated?

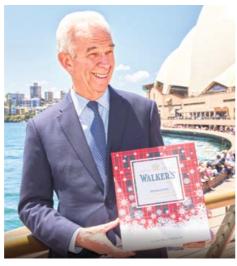
JW: A lot of our success comes down to us being a family owned and operated business. Much of our longevity is from being family owned, if we were a normal corporation, it can be all too easy to sell. For us we are just custodians of this generation, and each generation is



responsible to run the business and hand it over in a better condition in which they got it. So, we don't care how much we sell this year, or next year, we care desperately however how much we will be selling in twenty years' time. A huge order that is a one off is not that attractive to us, but an order that will run for years is the type of business we like and always look for.

The red tartan of Walker's packaging is so very iconic. How important is it for Walker's to include it and be known as a true Scottish company regardless of where their customers may be?

JW: Tartan for us is extremely important it is one of several things that defines us and our identity. We use tartan heavily and we always will. We are proud of our use of tartan and certainly not ashamed to incorporate it. Our products lend themselves well to a good strong tartan, partly because the product is indigenous to Scotland but also because we are a proud Scottish business.



Tartan compliments our brand, however anyone who thinks they can make shortbread and put some tartan on the box and it will sell is wrong. It will always be the product itself that will bring success in the long term.

Walker's Shortbread calls Aberlour on the banks of the River Spey in Speyside home. For those who may not have yet visited this area can you tell us about this beautiful part of Scotland?

JW: We are in the epicentre of the Scotch whisky industry. Four of the world's top five selling whiskies are within five miles of our factory. My office looks on to Macallan Distillery and many of the world's best distilleries are just nearby. Someone once asked me if Aberlour was like heaven as you have a shortbread factory at one end and whisky distillery at the other, and in between you can fish in the River Spey for next to nothing. It really is a beautiful part of the country with lovely valleys and the stunning River Spey,

which is extremely clean and why we have so many distilleries there. The river water has a peaty flavour which is an extremely soft water. If you like the outdoors and nature, you will love coming to Speyside as we have many varieties of birds and wildlife and walking tracks. It really is a true nature paradise.

In 2022 you were awarded a knighthood from His Majesty King Charles III. Just how does that make you feel to have been honoured in such a way, and as part of a multigenerational family business do you somewhat share that honour with your family members past and present?

JW: Absolutely, I am very honoured and proud to have received it. I received this because our company has been successful exporting and for employing so many people in our local area. I do recognise I received this because of the efforts of my grandfather, my father and uncle (James and Joseph) and my brother, my sister and myself. Sadly, my brother Joe passed away in October 2021 and my sister Marjorie who so loved Speyside has only very recently passed away. The award really was because of the efforts of so many people and I am so very fortunate it was presented to me.





30th Anniversary Panama City Beach Scottish Festival

March 2, 2024 Frank Brown Park Panama City Beach, Florida

Music by: Celtica Nova and Celtic Conundrum Highland Athletic Games, Whiskey Tasting, Axe Throwing, Kids Events, and so much more...

Tickets on sale now! www.pcbscottishfestival.com





THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

Names & Places In The News From Today And The Past

- 1 King James V married Magdalene of France. 1537
- 1 First celebration of New Year in Scotland on this date (was March $25^{\mbox{th}}$ till then). 1600
- 1 Charles II crowned at Scone, the last coronation on Scottish soil. **1651**
- 1 The constitution is drafted for the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, making it the oldest in Britain. $1783\,$
- 1 A Scottish Region of British Railways begins to operate as a result of nationalisation of rail transport in Great Britain under the Transport Act 1947. $\bf 1948$



- 1 The west coast shipping services of David MacBrayne are merged with those of the Caledonian Steam Packet Company as Caledonian MacBrayne. CalMac, is the major operator of passenger and vehicle ferries, and ferry services, between the mainland of Scotland and 22 of the major islands on Scotland's west coast. 1973
- 1 The United Nations examines claims of ownership of the Scottish island of Rockall (an uninhabited extinct volcano), after a request from Denmark, which has sovereignty over the neighbouring Faroes. The 1972 Island of Rockall Act, passed by parliament in Westminster, formally declared it to be part of Inverness-shire, though it is closest to North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. 2011
- 2 The Traverse Theatre opens in Edinburgh. The Traverse has embraced a spirit of innovation and risk-taking that has launched the careers of many of Scotland's best-known writers. 1963
- 2 Ibrox Park disaster, 66 supporters killed on stairway 13. The disaster led to the rebuilding of Ibrox Park as an all-seater stadium. 1971
- 3 General George Monck dies, he was Oliver Cromwell's Military Governor in Scotland. General Monck persuaded the British parliament to restore Charles II to the throne and was crowned King at Westminster Abbey on 23 April 1661. 1670
- 4-The death of George Cathcart. Cathcart was a doctor from Edinburgh who instigated the annual series of concerts now known as the Proms, short for promenade concert. $1951\,$
- 5 89,000-tonne Liberian-registered Braer oil tanker, carrying 84,500 tonnes of crude oil, hit rocks on Shetland Isles in heavy seas. 1993
- **6** A.J. Cronin, author of *Keys of the Kingdom* and creator of the British television series *Dr Finlay's Casebook* died. **1981**



- 7 Glasgow University founded at the request of James II and Bishop Turnbull. $1451\,$
- ${f 8}$ King Alexander I crowned. ${f 1107}$
- 8 The first newspaper in Scotland was published. *Mercurius Caledonius* offered coverage of "the Affairs now in Agitation in Scotland, with a Survey of Foreign Intelligence." It ceased publication on 28 March after only nine issues. **1661**
- $\bf 8$ Earl of Stair, held responsible for the massacre of Glencoe, died. $\bf 1707$
- 8 Rationing of sugar, bacon and butter introduced. 1940
- **9** The Diocese of Glasgow was elevated to an Archdiocese by Pope Innocent VII. **1492**
- 9 Income tax introduced for the first time, 1799

- 9 The first women's golf tournament took place in Scotland, at Musselburgh. 1811
- 9 Liner *Queen Elizabeth*, launched at John Brown's shipyard, Clydebank, in 1938, caught fire and sank in Hong Kong where it was to serve as a floating marine university. 1972
- 9 Author and *Scottish Banner* columnist Nigel Tranter died. Tranter published more than 130 novels and biographies during his 60-year-long career, most covering famous Scots and their place in the country's history. 2000
- 10 The Scottish Government announces that it plans to hold the independence referendum in the autumn of 2014. The No side won with 55.3% voting against independence and 44.7% voting in favour. 2012
- 11 John A MacDonald, first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, born at 20 Brunswick Street in Glasgow. 1815
- 11 The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Association was created. This independently funded service was responsible for Scotland's blood and blood products. The National Blood Transfusion Service in England and Wales was not set up until the 26 September 1946. 1940
- 12 John Buchan, author (39 Steps etc) and diplomat (Governor General of Canada, 1935/1940) died. 1940
- 13 Death of St Mungo, patron saint of Glasgow (and also known as St Kentigern) and is buried at his church in Clas-gu which later becomes Glasgow. 603
- 13 Mary Slessor, missionary in West Africa and known to many as "Ma", died in Calabar. 1915



- 14 Skye Terrier Greyfriars Bobby died after staying by his master's grave for 14 years. The terrier belonged to Edinburgh policeman John Gray who died of tuberculosis in 1858. His gravestone reads: "Let his loyalty and devotion be a lesson to us all". A statue of Bobby is now one of the most popular in Edinburgh. 1872
- 14 Alexander Graham Bell demonstrated his telephone to Queen Victoria. She made the first call in the British Isles from her residence on the Isle of Wight. 1878
- 15 Neil M Gunn, author of *The Silver Darlings* and many other books and short stories, died. 1973
- 15 The Great Glasgow storm leaves 20 dead across central Scotland including 9 in Glasgow. The hurricane was described as Central Scotland's worst natural disaster since records began and the worst gale in the United Kingdom. 1968
- 15 Strathclyde Regional Council applies for 250,000 summary warrants against residents refusing to pay the highly controversial "Poll Tax", introduced in Scotland in 1989. 1990
- 16 Treaty of Union of Scottish and Westminster Parliaments ratified. 1707
- Westminster Parliaments ratified. 1707

 16 Retreating Jacobite army defeated



17 - Duddingston Curling Society became formally organised, one of the earliest in the history of curling - though Kilsyth lays claim to a date of 1716. Curling dates back to the sixteenth century in Scotland, with Scots taking the sport across the world where it still flourishes. 1795

- 17 Author Compton Mackenzie (Whisky Galore etc) born. Whisky Galore is based on a real-life true story. In the middle of war time rationing, the SS Politician ran aground with a cargo of 264,000 bottles of malt whisky. 1883
- 18 Death of Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society from 1772-1778 and physician to King George III. Sometimes called the "father of modern military medicine", the Scottish-born physician focused on the need to adopt a clean medical environment for the treatment of wounded soldiers. He also coined the term "influenza". 1782
- 18 The launch of the Scottish Labour Party. The inaugural meeting of the breakaway party was held in Glasgow. It was formed as a result of the dissatisfaction several Labour MPs felt with their party over its stance on devolution for Scotland. 1976
- 18 Raasay House on Raasay off Skye was badly damaged in a fire. The building was undergoing a £4m restoration project. The former stately home had been run as an activity centre since 1984 and was being restored for that purpose again. The sprawling 258-year-old mansion once belonged to the Clan MacLeod. 2009
- 19 A Scottish army under the Earl of Leven crossed the river Tweed into England. It remained in England for three years playing an important part in the Civil War. 1644
- 19 Birth of James Watt, mathematical instrument maker, developed the steam engine, invented the condenser and copying machine. $1736\,$
- 20 The chemist Thomas Graham, was born. Graham is famous for discovering the diffusion rate of gasses, which is known as "Graham's Law". He is also called the "father of colloid chemistry", and was the author of, *Elements of Chemistry*. 1805
- 20 Benny Lynch crowned world flyweight champion. Recognised as probably the greatest boxer Scotland has produced, Lynch enjoyed a meteoric rise to the top of the sport. 1937
- 21 Sweetheart Abbey, near Dumfries, founded by Devorguilla, mother of John Balliol. 1290
- 22 Poet George Gordon Byron (later Lord Byron) born. He moved to Aberdeen at the age of four and attended Aberdeen Grammar School. The title was inherited from an uncle. 1788
- 23 James Stewart, the Regent Moray on the abdication of Mary Queen of Scots, murdered in Linlithgow, triggering civil war. 1570
- 23 William Hamilton, the Scottish Labour politician, died. He was MP for Fife West, 1950-74, and Fife Central, 1974-87. He became a controversial public figure due to his outspoken advocacy of Scottish independence and his dislike of the Royal Family. 2000
- 24 Birth of Publius Aelius Hadrianus, who built Hadrian's Wall to cut off Scotland from the rest of Britain. 76



24 - First train over Forth Rail Bridge. The bridge is considered as a symbol of Scotland and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. 1890

25 - Robert Burns born Alloway. Burns Night is celebrated around the world on this night. 1759 25 - First Minister Alex Salmond launches a consultation on the SNP Government's proposals for a referendum on Scottish independence. The referendum on Scottish independence was held on 18 September 2014 saw Scotland vote to remain part of the United Kingdom, with 55% voting against the proposal for Scotland to become an independent country and 45% voting in favour. 2012



- 26 One o'clock gun fired for the first time from Edinburgh Castle. The gun was created to complement a time ball on Nelson's Monument which was not reliable during Edinburgh foggy days. 1861
- 26 Kirkpatrick McMillan, inventor of the bicycle, died. The thought of patenting his invention or trying to make any money out of it never crossed MacMillan's mind, but others saw its potential, and soon copies began to appear. However, Macmillan was quite unconcerned with the fuss his invention had prompted, preferring to enjoy the quiet country life he was used to. 1878
- **26** The 1st Glasgow Scout troop was registered, the first to be formed. **1908**
- 27 Glasgow Herald newspaper first published. It is the longest continuously published daily newspaper in Britain. Today the paper is simply called *The Herald*. 1783
- 27 First public demonstration of TV by John Logie Baird. 1926
- 28 William Burke, murderer and body snatcher of "Burke and Hare" fame, executed. The duo was accused of killing 16 people over the course of 12 months, in order to sell their cadavers as "subjects" for dissection. 1829
- 29 The first adoption of GMT by Scotland. The subject has been the source of controversy ever since. 1848
- 29 Earl Haig, Commander in Chief of British forces 1915-18, founder of the British Legion, died. 1928
- 29 Members for Scottish Parliament (MSPs) vote 64–54 to back calls for a second Scottish independence referendum. 2020
- 30 King Charles I executed. His execution caused a change of sides by most of the Scots who had previously supported the Parliamentarians in the English Civil War as, for all his faults, Charles was still a Scottish Stuart king. 1649
- 31 Lachlan MacQuarie, the "Father of Australia" born Ulva. Lachlan Macquarie was the governor of the colony of New South Wales from 1810 to 1821, 1761
- 31 Charles Edward Stewart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie" died in Rome. 1788
- 31-270 Royal Navy servicemen were killed whilst on practice missions with other Royal Navy vessels in the Firth of Forth. 1918
- 31 *Princess Victoria*, Stranraer-Larne ferry, sank in a storm with the loss of 133 lives; 44 were rescued. 1953
- 31 The Scottish Court in the Netherlands convicts a Libyan and acquits another for their part in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 which crashed in Lockerbie in 1988. Lamin Khalifah Fhimah (aged 44) is cleared, but Abdelbaset al-Megrahi is found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment (in Scotland) with a recommended minimum term of twenty years. Megrahi was released from prison on compassionate grounds in 2009; as doctors reported he had terminal prostate cancer, and he died on 20 May 2012,aged sixty. 2001













Scotland's first UNESCO Biosphere named on 'Cool List' for 2024

he Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Scotland's first UNESCO Biosphere, is celebrating the news that *National Geographic Traveller* (UK) has named it as the only Scottish destination in the prestigious global Cool List for 2024. The "editors' selection of global destinations set to make the news over the next 12 months" identifies the top places around world "where tourism benefits communities and the environment as much as the visitors and locals themselves."

Cultural significance

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere's listing celebrates the reserve's natural heritage, its UNESCO designation and its recently extended boundary, which recognises the site's cultural significance. It was revealed earlier this year that the site has now almost doubled in size from more than 5,200 km² to almost 9,800 km² - incorporating Alloway (the birthplace of Scotland's national bard Robert Burns), the Rhins of Galloway (Scotland's most southernly point) and the marine environment out to 12 nautical miles offshore. The National Geographic *Traveller* listing also reflects the key role the Biosphere played in the development of the world's first UNESCO trail, a gamechanger for Scottish tourism.

Welcoming the news from *National Geographic Traveller UK* on behalf of



the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Partnership Board, Chair Melanie Allen, said: "We are thrilled that this year's National Geographic Traveller (UK) Cool List recognises the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere for developing tourism as a force for good. This is fantastic recognition of southwest Scotland as an outstanding visitor destination and highlights the importance of the Biosphere's collaborative approach - working with Biosphere Certified Businesses, strategic leaders and partners - to build a secure and greener economic future for Scotland and the UK. Thanks to this ethos visitors can truly enjoy Galloway and Southern Ayrshire safe in the knowledge that their visit is as good for our communities and environment, as it is for their soul. With its awe-inspiring natural landscapes, fascinating heritage, and culture, we already knew the Biosphere was 'cool' and now its official!"

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Director, Ed Forrest said: "It is crucial that we all work together to find new ways of tackling the biggest interconnected challenges of our time. UNESCO Biospheres provide a blueprint for living in cultures all around the world, and the proof of their value is already being realised, as people begin to realise that sustainability in living, learning and leisure has to become our societal norm. So, it is brilliant to see *National Geographic* Traveller has included the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere among the top places around the world where visitors can do this."

Stunning scenery

Congratulating the Biosphere, VisitScotland Destination Development Director Gordon Smith said: "The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere





is an area of outstanding significance for its geological and scientific interest, as well as its stunning scenery. Part of Scotland's UNESCO Trail, the Biosphere has a key role in contributing to make Scotland a world-leading responsible tourism destination and it is fantastic to see the Biosphere included in *National Geographic's Cool List* for 2024. This accolade will help shine the spotlight on the awe-inspiring beauty and diversity of the region as well as the invaluable work between the Biosphere and the local community."

Daniel Steel, Chief Executive of the Ayrshire and Arran Destination Alliance said: "There is a huge amount to be excited about in the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, so it's no surprise to hear it has been named on the *National Geographic Traveller Cool List*. This incredible accolade, and the UNESCO Biosphere's recently boundary extension, reflects Ayrshire's cultural significance and provides a fantastic platform to encourage visitors to enjoy our national assets in a sustainable way."

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme promotes a long-lasting connection between people and nature through over 740 designated sites across the world, including Yellowstone (USA), Niagara Escarpment (Canada), the Everglades (USA) and the Black Forest (Germany). National governments nominate Biospheres for UNESCO accreditation, which is then awarded by the Director-General of UNESCO following the decisions of the MAB international Coordinating Council. UNESCO Biosphere are models of sustainable development demonstrating how living in harmony with our natural environment is good for people, the economy and nature.

For more information about the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere, visit: www.gsabiosphere.org.uk



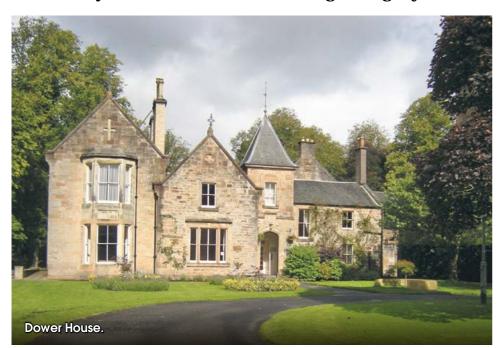


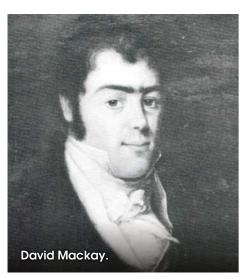
Did you know?

- Galloway & Southern Ayrshire (GSA)
 UNESCO Biosphere was designated in 2012, recognising the region's world class heritage and natural environments.
- One of a network of more than 740 UNESCO Biospheres in 134 countries, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire was the first such designation in Scotland.
- The GSA UNESCO Biosphere now covers almost 9,800 km² of southwest Scotland and is home to 110,000 people.
- Its original geographical boundary was based on catchments of the rivers flowing out of the Galloway Hills.
- The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere launched the innovative Blackface Wool Project, supported by the Blackface Breeders' Association and British Wool, to promote the versatility of local wool (an integral part of the local heritage and community) and its diverse potential as a sustainable resource.
- The GSA Biosphere is very much a part of Scotland's rural southwest, where the land and its uses remain integral to everyday life. Beyond its central Core Area the Biosphere is home to historic industries such as farming, fishing and forestry; a dynamic variety of micro-businesses and SMEs; and communities that range in size from tiny hamlets to small towns.
- The Biosphere and its partners are
 working together to promote the idea
 that ecologically sound activity can
 take place alongside conservation and
 research. Education, employment,
 tourism and enterprise can all be
 sustainable, and through a cooperative
 approach, they can achieve a balanced
 relationship between people and nature.
- Right across Galloway and Southern
 Ayrshire, the Biosphere celebrates
 positive cultural values and identity,
 to help people learn more about
 where they live and better understand
 the heritage they all share.
- The original biosphere boundary followed the rivers that flow out of the Galloway Hills through forests and farmland, historic villages and towns, all the way to a ruggedly scenic coast.

Creating the Burns Federation

Anne-Mary Paterson looks into the beginnings of the Robert Burns World Federation, and the man whose idea it was.





estminster Abbey may seem a strange place for the birth of a global Scottish institution. On 7th March 1885, one year after the one hundred and twentyfifth anniversary of Robert Burns' birth, David Mackay and a couple of friends were attending the unveiling of a bust of Burns in Poets' Corner. Walking along the Thames Embankment afterwards, David suggested to his fellow companions, David Sneddon and Colin Rae Brown that there should be an organisation that Burns Clubs and Scottish Societies around the world could join in order "to strengthen and consolidate the bond of fellowship currently existing among members of Burns Clubs." The idea did not lie stagnant for long because on 17th July 1885, the inaugural meeting of the Burns Federation took place at the George Hotel, Kilmarnock.

At this time, David Mackay was secretary of the Kilmarnock Burns Club, one of the oldest dedicated to the bard. David was born in Kilmarnock in 1844, the youngest of four brothers and one sister. David's first job after school was as a clerk in the Registrar's office. After two years, he moved to the grocery firm of Wm. Rankin & Son. Later on in the 1860s, he and his brother Adam took over the licensed grocery business of William Wallace & Co. This business was failing so the two brothers had to work hard to restore its fortunes and for it to become one of the most respected businesses in Kilmarnock.

In 1881, David was elected to the Kilmarnock Council. However, in 1887 due the pressures of his expanding business he stood down only to be re-elected in 1891. December of that year was to bring tragedy when his wife Alice died of pneumonia aged forty-four. He was a staunch Conservative and was one of the people instrumental in establishing Kilmarnock's Conservative Club. However, he was not bigoted in his ideas. Maybe he would not have disapproved of the adoption of Burns' works by communist countries because of the poet's supposed left-wing ideas. David was a very sociable and hospitable person and was involved in the bowling club and in winter with curling. He was also a keen angler. These activities must have contributed as well to the success of his business.

Westminster Abbey may seem a strange place for the birth of a global Scottish institution.

Freemason

Colin Rae Brown, one of his companions, was born in Greenock in 1821. He was involved in publishing, and this took him to London in 1862 where he founded the London Burns Club. While still in Glasgow, one of the newspapers he assisted in promoting was the Daily Bulletin, the first regular daily penny paper in Scotland. In it, he started the idea that there should be a national memorial to William Wallace. The now prominent monument on Abbey Craig, Stirling was completed in 1861. The other, David Sneddon was born in Airdrie. In 1843, he came to Kilmarnock to take up a post as an excise man, not unlike Burns himself. Known as a man of great energy, he soon joined the Kilmarnock Burns Club. He was also involved in the Volunteer Movement serving in the First Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

This led to his nickname *The Captain*.

Seventeen men attended the meeting at the George Hotel. Fourteen were from the Kilmarnock Club, two from Glasgow and Rae Brown from London. As David Mackay had suggested the idea of the federation in London, Rae Brown expressed a wish for the London Club to be designated the Number One club on the Federations Roll. This concept was mirroring the way Masonic Lodges are numbered. Many of the people attending the meeting were Freemasons as were Mackay, Rae Brown and Sneddon. However, they would be mindful as well that Robert Burns himself was a freemason for most of his short adult life. When he died, he was senior warden of the lodge in Dumfries. Masons are proud of the fact that many of his poems have Masonic content, in particular A Man's a Man for a' That. Having persuaded David Mackay that the London club should be the number one, Sneddon, with a twinkle in his eye, put forward the idea to the meeting. If there had been a vote, he would certainly have lost. He then read out the roll with London as number one but Kilmarnock was number zero, still giving it the distinction of being the premier club.

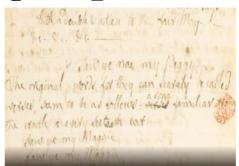
People's Poet

The Dalry Club established in 1825 claims to be the oldest. However, Kilmarnock was important in Burns life as it was here that John Wilson published the *Kilmarnock Edition* of his first poems. Because of money problems, Burns was considering emigrating to Jamaica and the publication was to finance this. All six hundred and

twelve copies sold in a month so he changed his mind, deciding that perhaps his work was of some worth. Membership of the Federation was slow to begin with but as news spread of the benefits of friendship and bonding particularly for clubs overseas, applications increased from around the world.

Now the Federation is involved in promoting the poet in more ways including work with schools and students and conserving buildings and places associated with Burns. Around three hundred clubs, mostly in the Englishspeaking world, are members, as well as several hundred individuals. His poems have been translated into many languages including Russian, Since the days of the Czar, throughout the Communist years and up to the present day, he is regarded as Russia's "People's Poet." In the twentyfirst century The Robert Burns World Federation as it is now called, is truly international but its headquarters are still in Kilmarnock at 3a John Dickie Street. Prior to this it was at the Dower House, Dean Castle Country Park. Dean Castle once belonged to the Earl of Glencairn, the man who encouraged Burns to go to Edinburgh after the success of the Kilmarnock Edition of his poems. As clubs around the world toast the haggis on Burns Night, perhaps three Victorian gentlemen are looking down, satisfied with their work.

Rare archive find offers glimpse of Bard at work



ages of Robert Burns' handwritten prose, written on his employer's stationery, suggest that the Scottish Bard's passion for poetry couldn't escape him during his working day. The 220-year-old manuscript from the University of Edinburgh's collection shows Burns' writing on paper featuring the red watermark of the government's excise office. The unique document contains notes and poetry that form part of Burns' essay, Notes on Scottish Song. The essay reflects upon his contributions to publisher James Johnson's much-loved collection of Scottish folk music, the Scots Musical Museum. Burns contributed a range of works to the folk music publication, including his famous version of Auld Lang Syne.

Celebrated Scottish poet

The celebrated Scottish poet and lyricist was employed at the excise office from 1788 until his death in 1796.

As an exciseman, he was responsible for collecting taxes and intercepting illegal goods, such as smuggled alcohol. Burns had previously struggled to earn money as a tenant farmer. The University holds several manuscripts from Robert Burns in its Centre for Research Collections, including 19 poems, 13 letters and extracts from Notes on Scottish Song. This insight into how Burns' may have spent his time at the excise office came to light through manuscripts bequeathed to the University by antiquarian David Laing. Studied by students, staff and available to the public, it is the University's largest archival collection and includes a wide range of historical manuscripts dating from the 16th to the 19th century. Alongside his notes on excise office stationery, the archive includes a letter to the Earl of Glencairn, a nobleman and patron of Robert Burns, asking for help in getting a job as an exciseman. His letter includes a copy of his well-known poem, Holy Willie's Prayer, a satirical rendition about kirk of Scotland elder Willie Fisher.

Paul Barnaby, Modern Literary
Collections Curator, the University of
Edinburgh, said: "Our collections have
many interesting stories to tell about
Robert Burns and it is fascinating to see
this unique insight into his life and career.
We are very fortunate to have these works
to help us to gain a broader understanding
into Scotland's most famous poet."



The Burns Supper is an institution of Scottish life: a night to celebrate the life and works of the national Bard. Suppers can range from an informal gathering of friends to a huge, formal dinner full of pomp and circumstance. For a Burns Night near you check our events page or host your own and celebrate Scotland's own Robert Burns on January 25th.



Shortbread

January 6th is National Shortbread Day. Celebrate the historic and classic Scottish treat enjoyed around the world known as shortbread. Enjoy a taste of Scotland today!

Ingredients:

125g/4oz. butter 55g/2oz. caster sugar, plus extra to finish 180g/6oz. plain flour

IN THE SCOTTISH KITCHEN

Method:

Heat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5. Beat the butter and the sugar together until smooth. Stir in the flour to get a smooth paste. Turn on to a work surface and gently roll out until the paste is 1cm/½in thick. Cut into rounds or fingers and place onto a baking tray. Sprinkle with caster sugar and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. Set aside to cool on a wire rack.

Burns Cottage pie



Ingredients:

1 tbsp. olive oil 1 large onion, chopped 2 carrots, chopped 560g/11/4lb. beef mince 400g can of tomatoes 290ml/10fl oz. beef stock 1 bay leaf 1 sprig fresh thyme, leaves stripped 2 tbsp. tomato purée salt and freshly ground black pepper For the topping $750g/1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. potatoes, peeled and chopped 225g/8oz. parsnips, peeled and chopped 2 tsp creamed horseradish 75g/2½oz. butter 55ml/2fl oz. milk

Method:

Preheat the oven to 190C/170C Fan/Gas 5. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onion and carrot and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the minced beef and cook for 3 minutes, to brown. Add the tomatoes, purée, beef stock, bay leaf and thyme.

Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Season. Meanwhile, to make the topping, boil the potatoes and parsnips in water until soft. Drain and mash with the butter and milk. Stir in the horseradish and season with salt and pepper. Spoon the meat into an ovenproof dish. Top with the mash and bake for 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

Scotch Broth



Ingredients:

250g/8oz. carrots, peeled, diced 250g/8oz. turnips, diced 2 onions, peeled, diced 1 celery stalk, diced 1 leek, white part only, sliced 75-125g/3-4oz. pearl barley 125g/4oz. dried peas, soaked in water for 4-5 hours, drained salt and freshly ground black pepper 2.3litres/4 pints lamb or mutton stock 85g/3oz kale, chopped (optional) salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Heat all the ingredients, except the kale, in a large saucepan until boiling. Reduce the heat and simmer gently for 2-3 hours, or until the peas and pearl barley are soft. Stir in the kale and cook for a further 10-12 minutes, or until the kale is tender. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Haggis, Neeps and Tatties

Ingredients:

400g/14 oz. of haggis – purchased from a good quality butcher
4 baking potatoes
50g/2oz. butter
50g/2oz. cream
1 turnip
8 shallots
1 sprig of thyme
3 cloves of garlic

3 cloves of garlic 50g/2oz. of sugar salt 200ml/7oz. of red wine 80ml/3oz. of port 500ml/17oz. of brown chicken stock

Method: Scrub the potatoes and bake them whole

10ml/.5oz of whisky

200ml/7oz. of cream

in the skins in the oven at 180 degrees until cooked. Remove from the oven and scoop out the flesh of the potatoes and pass through a fine sieve or potato ricer. Add in the cream and butter and mix. At the same time, peel and dice the turnip and cook in salted water then pass through a fine sieve or potato ricer. Follow the butcher's instructions for the haggis based on size. Use a round metal ring and layer

with one third of haggis layer followed by a third of mashed turnip before adding the mashed potatoes to fill the ring. To heat put in a medium oven until warm. Make a stock from the port, red wine, sugar, garlic, thyme and salt. Simmer in a pan together with the shallots until tender.

Remove the tough outside layer when cooked. Make a whisky sauce with the brown chicken stock and cream before adding the whisky at the end to taste. Serve the timbale of haggis with 2 shallots and the whisky sauce.

Cranachan



Ingredients:

570ml/1 pint double cream 85g/3oz. porridge oats 7 tbsp. whisky 3 tbsp. honey 450g/1lb raspberries fresh mint, to garnish

Method:

Toast the oats in a frying pan, being careful not to burn them. Lightly whip the cream until it reaches the soft peak stage, then fold in the whisky, honey, oatmeal and raspberries. Serve in dessert glasses garnished with a few raspberries and mint.

Orchard Kiss (Aye Fond Kiss) Ingredients:

2 shots of your preferred whisky ½ shot Elderflower Cordial 1 fresh lime wedge Fill with pressed apple and lemonade Garnish - apple slice on rim

Method:

Fill glass with cubed ice, squeeze lime over ice, add whisky, elderflower, apple and top with lemonade, stir and serve.

Bobby Burns



Ingredients:

50 ml/1.5 oz. whisky 20 ml/.65oz. sweet vermouth 10 ml/.35 oz. Benedictine liqueur 1 small handful ice cubes 1 twist lemon peel

Method:

In a cocktail shaker, stir the whisky, vermouth and Benedictine together with a handful of ice. Strain the mixture into a chilled martini glass and decorate with the twist of lemon.

Ambitious plans to create an iconic new visitor attraction in Caithness are a step closer to becoming a reality



fter a lengthy search for the perfect site, Caithness Broch Project announced that they have identified an area north of Latheron known as Flygla as the preferred site for the "Big Broch Build", with residents in the Latheron, Lybster and Clyth community council area now being asked for their views on a proposal to build a replica Iron Age Broch in their district.

Brochs are stone built, circular towers dating back over two thousand years. They are unique to Scotland and the greatest number of broch sites are in Caithness. The idea to build the first new stone tower since the Iron Age as a visitor attraction and archaeological and educational research centre is the vision of local charity, The Caithness Broch Project.

Unique Scottish structures

The charity's chairman, Robin Herrick, said: "We have found the owner and local representatives to be very supportive of our outline plans, and we look forward to consulting with the local residents and stakeholders in the coming weeks to ensure their insights and concerns are integral to the project's next steps." The charity believes that re-creating history through its "Big Broch Build" will show people what these unique Scottish structures would have looked like and experience how they were built. The Broch Project wants to use Iron Age construction techniques as much as possible. The charity believes the replica broch will also encourage more visitors to come to the area to visit the site, spend more time and money in the village and help create more jobs in the community.

Chairman of Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Council, Alan Tanner has welcomed the proposal. He said: "This ambitious project is spurred on by great enthusiasm and determination on behalf of the Broch Project committee and deserves all our support as a community." The charity is embarking on a community consultation exercise to hear the views of local residents, businesses and landowners. Community consultation runs until mid-January.

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Welcome to our "Clansified" listing of Scottish Clans, Societies and Clubs. If you would like to add your Clan please contact our office for full details. Our contacts are located on page 2. If you are contacting your Clan be sure to tell them you saw them in the Scottish Banner and please support these great community organisations.

Clan Baird Society Worldwide



from Baird, Barde, Bard, Beard, Beaird, Brd, Bayard, Bardt, Barth and Biard or varied

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Clan Baird Commander Richard Baird of Rickarton, Ury and Lochwood Rickarton House, Stonehaven, Scotland Hereditary President of Clan Baird Society Worldwide

Debra J. Baird, Ph.D. FSA Scot, CBSW Convenor Email: djbaird4@gmail.com Website: clanbairdsocietyworldwide.co.uk



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Email: kim.polley13@gmail.com www.clanchisholmsociety.org/ public/AUSmembership.php



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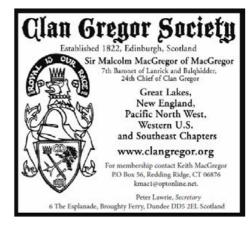
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Email: treasurer@clanmaclellan.net Invites all MacLellans and their descendants regardless of surname spelling to join in preserving our heritage. Various family names are MacLellan(d), McClellan(d),

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phone +1 519 507 4465

Europe. Will Tulling Europe. Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +31 655 774 425

Scotland & Northern Ireland. Moray G Cattanac SandNI.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +44 7810 860 528

NewZealand.Chairman@clan-macpl phone +64 274 587 812 ach USA. Dave McPherson phone +1 408 781 5199

England & Wales. William Macpherson EandW.Chairman@clan-macpherson.or phone +44 7877 363 507

New Zealand. Tony McPherson

Australian.Chairman@clan-macpherson.org phone +61 409 122 141

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/



CLAN LAMONT SOCIETY AUSTRALIA invites membership from Sept names refer to Web Site www.clanlamontaustralia.com

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

> For all enquires about the Clan and Membership contact :-

President Ian McLucas. Email ianandbevmclucas@bigpond.com

mobile 0448 778 799

Clan Mackenzie Society in Australia Inc.



Membership enquiries welcomed from Mackenzies of all spellings and Septs

Contact: N Dennis, 61 Alma Street, East Malvern 3145 Ph 03 9569 5716

Visit our website **Check out your Tartan and Sept** www.clanmackenzie.org.au

MACLEODS RICH IN HIGHLAND

TRADITIONS FOR INFORMATION:

WWW.CLANMACLEODUSA.ORG A.L. MACLEOD

3923 ROCKWOOD WAY #B WEST VALLEY CITY, UT 84120-6880



The Clan MacRae **Society of Australia** and New Zealand

If your surname is MacRae, or you are descended from a person having the surname MacRae (any spelling) or that of a Sept of the Clan then you are eligible to join our Society.

Australian Contact: Roslyn MacRae 0412 291 054 email: clanmacraeaustnz@gmail.com

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



Welcoming Little/Lyttle/Lytle and the like.

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

www.clanlittlesociety.org

Registered in the State of Georgia, USA Proud Member of **COSCA**



Information about the Clan and application for CMSA membership is available on the website or via the email address below

Membership is open to MacLarens (all spellings), Septs, individuals and families with an association to the Clan.

https://clanmaclarenau.org/ clanmaclarenau@gmail.com



CLAN MACNAUGHTON are invited to join our Worldwide Association to learn and share our MacNaughton and Scottish heritage. For more info go to clanmacnaughton.net or contact Mary Nivison Burton, Membership Secretary at:

membersec@clanmacnaughton.net

New Second Edition! A History of the Clan Macnachtan Paperback available through





Clan MacRae Society of North America

Granted Arms in 2008

We invite MacRaes of all spelling variations and their descendants to join our Clan MacRae Society. Learn your Scottish MacRae history and family lineage!

www.macrae.org Need more info? Contact: Bruce McRae, President 303-670-9611

brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com



Commander: Michael T. McAlpin

DISCOVER YOUR HERITAGE!

Contact: membership.macailpein@gmail.com Website: https://macailpein.com/



Clan MacLaren

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

Mark A. McLaren, President President@clanmaclarenna.org



Clan 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: kisimul@chariot.net.au



Clan Maitland Society

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

North America: Rosemary Maitland Thom rthomnvprdcan@aol.com www.clanmaitlandna.org Australia: Amanda Maitland

clanmaitlandaustralia@gmail.com 12 Settlers Way, Westleigh, NSW, 2120

New Zealand: Judette Maitland judette@xtra.co.nz 33 Disley Street, Highbury, Wellington 6012. NZ We welcome all with Maitland, Lauderdale, Maitlen and similar name spelling. See the entire list and your family history at: www.clanmaitland.org.uk

CLAN MUNRO ASSOCIATION

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



We would be pleased to welcome as a member. anyone interested in their Clan heritage with the names: Munro, Monro, Monroe and the septs, Foulis, MacCulloch Dingwall, MacLullich and

BECOME A MEMBER, CONTACT RAY MUNRO

munro.ray@hotmail.com **9** 0410 663 760

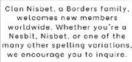


Membership cordially invited from those who are connected with this great Clan, i.e., Morrison, Morison, Gilmour, Gilmer, Gilmore, Murrison or descendants of eligible name.

www.clanmorrison.net

NESBITT - NISBET SOCIETY OF

MORTH AMERICA



Head to our official website to learn about our proud heritage. Our must-read section, "Notable Nisbets" chronicles Alexander Nisbet, Scotland's famous author of heraldry and other renowned ancestors.







clansutherlandsocietyaustralia@gmail.com http://goldenvale.wixsite.com/clansutherlandaus

Facebook: Clan Sutherland Society in Australia

Clan Sutherland Society in

Australia Inc.

Contact: M Williams, Secretary

& FAMILY ASSOCIATION



in the Americas.

Oliphant - Olyphant - Oliphint Olifant -Olifent and all descended

ClanOliphantMembership@gmail.com www.OliphantOfNorthAmerica.org

Clan Ross America



Nancy Ross-Anderson, VP Membership 15244 El Centro St., Hesperia, CA 92345 membership@clanross.org info@clanross.org

www.clanross.org



Clan Sinclair Australia

For further info contact President: WayneSinclair 0417 146 174 Secretary: Liane Sinclair 0410 045 263 E: clansinclairaustralia@hotmail.com

Membership and inquiries from all Sinclairs, Sinclair Septs and Sinclair descendants.

www.clansinclairaustralia.com



Caledonian Society of WA Inc.

Clan Wardlaw Association

Worldwide organization for all Wardlaws or related

families. We invite you to join us.

Email: clanwardlaw2004@gmail.com

'Wardlaw ivermair!'

www.clanwardlaw.com

Wardlaw Tartan and Ancestry Books

Through our platform of projects and events ASF

helps share and strengthen the heritage and cultural

message of Scotland's past and future. A bridge

between the United States and Scotland.

www.americanscottishfoundation.org

The American-Scottish Foundation

Scottish Associations and Societies

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

www.caledoniansocietyofwainc.com

Scottish Heritage USA, Inc.

Pinehurst, NC 28370

Welcomes membership of anyone interested in the exchange of people and ideas between Scotland and the United States.

> Write or phone for our free brochure. www.scottishheritageusa.org email: shusa457@gmail.com (910) 295-4448

Scottish Gaelic Language Classes:



Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:30 pm during school terms at

Faraday Street, Carlton and on Zoom. Contact: Maurice Fowler 0408 223 277 Email:scottishgaelicvictoria@gmail.com

Scottish Gaelic Society of Victoria

Founded in 1905

https://www.scottishgaelicvictoria.com

Còisir Ghàidhlig Bhictòria

Scottish Gaelic Choir of Victoria

Do you live in Melbourne? Are you interested in Gaelic and its music, or do you simply enjoy singing? Why not join us? Rehearsal times:

Tuesday 7-9pm during school terms, Term 1 2023 beginning 31st January at Kathleen Syme Community Centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton and on Zoom.

Contact Michael McNah Ph: 0439 869 061

mmcnab@scottishgaelicvictoria.org.au

OLIPHANT CLAN



The <u>only</u> home for all Clan Oliphant



Clan Sutherland Society of North America Inc.

The Society cordially invites membership of all Sutherlands (however the name is spelled) and historically associated families: Cheyne, Duffus, Gray, Frederith and Mowat.

Email: Secretary@ClanSutherland.org Website: www.ClanSutherland.org



Hunter Valley

Promotes and supports all forms of Scottish culture in Newcastle, Hunter Valley and surrounding areas. Members and interested people are welcome to attend activities such as Burns Night, Caledonian Night, St Andrew's Day, and other social functions

Web: hvscots.org Email: hunterscots@gmail.com P.O. Box 34, Kotara NSW 2289

The Society of St. Andrew of Scotland (Queensland) Limited ABN 30 093 578 860 Invites membership of all people of Scottish descent or association The Secretary, P.O. Box 352, Mt Gravatt, QLD 4122 www.standrewsociety.com

descendant of Pollock, Pollok, Pook, Polk, Polke, Paulk, Poalke, Poulk, Poolke, Pogue - you are cordially invited to contact:

> A. D. Pollock, Jr. PO Box 404 Greenville, KY 42345 e-mail: apollockis@comcast.net

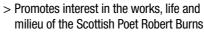


Youngs of Scotland in Australia

Invites membership from all those with the name of Young or ancestral ties to the name.

Convenor: Ian J Young AM FSAScot E: membership@clanyoungaustralia.com.au www.facebook.com/groups/youngsofaustralia/ https://clanyoungsociety.com/australia

The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne Inc.



> Celebrates Scottish Culture

> Conducts Annual Burn Supper, Poetry Afternoon & Pleasant Sunday Afternoon

For Membership Information contact: Secretary: Noel Wright (03) 8333 0973 Email: noelwright@netspace.net.au



Clan Ross n Australia

for information contact Commander Des Ross (By appointment David Ross Bt Chief of Clan Ross and Balnago

We would be pleased to hear from anyone with Ross Clan heritage and interest.

Contact: Commander Des Ross at lonepiper.ross@gmail.com M 0403 830 853 Ken Duthie JP Director of Publicity M 0409 322 374

YOUNGS OF SCOTLAND



Membership inquiries: Ms. Laura Young, 33 McKeen Street, Jarvis, Ontario, Canada N0A 1J0

4scottishthistles@gmail.com

The Scottish Australian Heritage Council



Membership is welcome from all of Scottish descent.

For information please contact members@scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

Find us on Facebook

www.scottishaustralianheritagecouncil.com.au

Víctorían Scottísh Union Inc

Umbrella group representing the interest of Scottish Clans and Societies in Victoria. Affiliated Clans & Societies

Brunswick Scottish Society Clan Donald Victoria Clan Hay Clan Macdonald of Yarraville Geelong Scottish Dance

Glenbrae Celtic Dancers Maryborough Highland Society Scottish Country Dance Society of Victoria Robert Burns Scottish Festival Camperdown The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne Warrnambool Highland Dance

Chief: Mr Grant McKinna resident Norman Macdonald Secretary Jan Macdonald Contact details:

Mobile 0438 584 930 Address: PO Box 116 Cobden Victoria 3266 www.victorianscottishunion.com



BELLINGHAM SCOTTISH GATHERING

Saturday June 1, 2024

Hosted by the City of Blaine, Washington U.S.A







Experience Pacific Northwest Beauty and Nature beside the Salish Sea

Nestled beside the Peace Arch and international border crossing into Canada with waterfront views of Semiahmoo Resort, Mount Baker and White Rock B.C.





FEATURING:

- City of Bellingham OpenHighland Dancing Championship
- Piping, Drumming & Bagpipe Bands
- Vendors, Clans and More!

Made possible in part by Tourism Promotion Grants from the cities of Blaine and Bellingham and from Whatcom County











WHAT'S ON - SCOTTISH EVENTS

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

Canada

JANUARY 2024

National Shortbread Day 6, Nationwide

Celebrate the historic and classic Scottish treat enjoyed around the world known as shortbread. Enjoy a taste of Scotland today!

A Celebration of Robbie Burns with Blackthorn 13, Coquitlam, BC

Celebrate Scotland's National Bard, Robbie Burns! Fiddler, Rosie Carver, with Celtic band Blackthorn and a special guest piper feature the musical traditions of Scotland with a special focus on Burns' songs and poems. Heart-wrenching airs and ballads, humorous songs with rousing choruses and lively jigs and reels are brought to life with Blackthorn's luscious harmonies and complex instrumentation. Info:www.eventbrite.ca/e/a-celebration-of-robbieburns-with-blackthorn-tickets-690314117107

St. Andrew's Society of Toronto Burns Supper 19, Toronto, ON

The St. Andrew's Society looks forward to holding their traditional Burns Supper, the event follows the time-honoured format with the Address to a Haggis, The Immortal Memory and Toasts to the Lassies and Laddies, at the University Club

Rabbie Burns Supper 19, Oakville, ON

Celebrating the life and poetry of Robert Burns at St Johns United Church, 262 Randall St. Info: www.eventbrite.ca/e/rabbie-burnssupper-celebrating-the-life-poetry-ofrobert-burns-tickets-747429189827

Burns Supper

20, Ottawa. ON

Celebrate Robert Burns with The Scottish Society of Ottawa. A night to celebrate the life and works of Scotland's Bard. Info: www.ottscot.ca

Robbie Burns Dinner & Dance 20, Flagstaff County, AB

A Burns dinner is a celebration of the life and poetry of the poet Robert Burns, the author of many Scottish poems. Join the Flagstaff Scottish Club to celebrate the Bard. Info: www.flagstaffscottishclub.com/robbieburns

Happy Burns Night

25, Nationwide

Celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Scottish poet Robert Burns. The tradition of the Burns Night Supper was first held in 1801 by the poet's friends, five years after his death.

The St. Andrew's Society of Montreal Burns Supper

25, Montréal, QC

Share a wee dram with friends, enjoy a traditional Scottish meal and raise your glass in a toast to the lads and lassies at L'Espace Canal at L'Ambroisie, 4020 Saint Ambroise St. Info: www.standrews.qc.ca/burns-supper.html

Burns Statue Celebration

25, Toronto, ON

12pm at the Robert Burns Statue (Allan Gardens -Sĥerbourne and Carlton). Everyone is welcome to celebrate of the birthday of Scotland's national bard. There will be piping, haggis, neeps, tatties, singing, and good cheer. Info: www.standrewstoronto.ca

Vancouver Ceilidh

26, Vancouver, BC

Ceilidh dance at Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson St, with live music by Calanais from 8 – 10:30. All dances taught, walked and called. No partner or experience necessary. Wear loose clothing (dancing is warm work) and flat, soft soled shoes. Lots of fun and refreshments. Info: www.vancouverceilidh.org

Scotword answers from page 6

Across:	Down:
1) Sarks	1) Sassenach
2) Gunnel	2) Reeks
8) Aisle	3) Steer
9) Enlighten	4) Gold Medal
11) Maelstrom	5) Nightgown
12) Tiree	6) Enter
13) Coalfield	7) Tarmac
16) Opals	10) Neeps
18) Ochre	14) Freemason
19) Islanders	15) Edinburgh
21) Locum	17) Alexander
23) Battleaxe	18) Owlet
26) Treasurer	20) Sheila
27) Model	22) Cheer
28) French	24) Thrum
29) Miser	25) Lambs

White Heather Pipes and Drums Robbie Burns Night

27, Aurora, ON

The evening is a celebration of the life and poetry of Robert Burns, and an evening full of entertainment, food and fun at Royal Canadian Legion105 Industrial Pkwy N. Info: www.whiteheatherpipesanddrums. com/robbie-burns-dinner

Burns Supper – RSCDS Vancouver Branch 27, Vancouver, BC

Traditional Scottish meal, entertainment and dancing to the Scottish music of Kilbirnie Station Band at the Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson St. Info: www.rscdsvancouver.org

Greater Moncton Scottish Association Robert Burns Dinner

27. Moncton, NB

Join the Greater Moncton Scottish Association at the Dan Bohan Centre in Riverview for an evening of music, poetry, kinship, and more. Info: https:// greater-moncton-scottish-association.square.site/

FEBRUARY 2024

Ashbridge's Bay Yacht Club Burns Night/Celtic Night 3, Toronto, ON

Join us for an evening to celebrate all things Scottish, in honour of Scotland's favourite poet, Robert Burns. We will have a Highland Dancing performance, live music from the wonderful Celtic band 'Poor Angus', and of course there will be haggis, neeps and tatties available for your tasting pleasure. Info: www.abyc. ca/events/robbie-burns-night-aka-celtic-night

2024 SFPDA Robbie Burns Night

3, Sherwood Park, AB

Join the Strathcona Firefighters Pipes and Drums Assoc. for a night of Scottish revelry at Caffrey's In The Park. It's time to celebrate the life and works of the legendary poet, Robbie Burns. Get ready for bagpipes, kilts, and plenty of haggis. Info: www.eventbrite.ca/e/2024-sfpdarobbie-burns-night-tickets-737955664257

International Scotch Day

8. Nationwide Raise a dram to a global celebration of Scotch

whisky. A day for people to come together and enjoy a drink while paying homage to the rich history and culture of Scotland.

Seachdain na Gàidhlig 2024/ World Gaelic Week 2024

19-25, Nationwide

Celebrating Scottish Gaelic across the globe. The theme for the 2024 edition of the cultural celebration is Do Chànan. Do Chothrom, which $translates \ to \ Your \ Language. \ Your \ Opportunity.$ Participants are encouraged to showcase how the Gaelic language benefits and enriches lives, opening doors for connections, collaboration and success. Info: www.seachdainnagaidhlig.scot

Vancouver Ceilidh

23, Vancouver, BC

Ceilidh dance at Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson St, with live music by Calanais from 8 – 10:30. All dances taught, walked and called. No partner or experience necessary. Wear loose clothing (dancing is warm work) and flat, soft soled shoes. Lots of fun and refreshments. Info: www.vancouverceilidh.org

Fergus Kilt Skate

25, Fergus, ON

Kilt Skate at the Centre Wellington Sportsplex. Tartan up and enjoy some skating, hot chocolate and shortbread and of course the sound of the bagpipes. Info: www.fergusscottishfestival.com

Great Canadian Kilt Skate 25, Glengarry, ON

Grab your skates and kilt and celebrate Canada's links with Scotland at the Great Canadian Kilt Skate. Info: www.kiltskate.com

USA

JANUARY 2024 National Shortbread Day

6, Nationwide

Celebrate the historic and classic Scottish treat enjoyed around the world known as shortbread. Enjoy a taste of Scotland today!

Florida Keys Celtic Festival 6-7, Marathon, FL

A weekend of Celtic celebration with music. Clans, athletics, food and more at Marathon Community Park, MM49 US Hwy 1 Ocean Side.

Info: www.floridakevscelticfestival.com Winter Storm

11-14, Kansas City, MO

The pipes and drums event with world-class concerts, competitions, and master classes. Info: www.mhaf.org.

Central Florida Scottish Highland Games

13-14, Winter Springs, FL Experience traditional highland athletics, dance, art, music, culture and food at Central Winds Park. Info: www.flascot.com

Burns Night Celebration

19, New York, NY

The American Scottish Foundation annual Burns Night Celebration, held in association with, and at the University Club. Info:www.americanscottishfoundation. com/events/2024-burns-night.html

Sharpe House's Robert Burns Night 2024 20, Statesville NC

Join for a night full of Scottish pride and celebration as we honor the legendary poet Robert Burns at the Statesville Civic Center. Info:www.historicsharpehouse.com

Happy Burns Night

25, NationwideCelebrate the anniversary of the birth of Scottish poet Robert Burns. The tradition of the Burns . Night Supper was first held in 1801 by the poet's friends, five years after his death.

2024 ASCI Robert Burns Night Supper

25, Asheville, NC

Asheville Sister Cities with sister cities of Dunkeld and Birnam, Scotland invite you to a charity benefit celebration of the 265th Birthday of Robert Burns, the Bard of Scotland at the Biltmore Double Tree Hotel. Guests enjoy a Three Course Dinner, full Robert Burns Night ceremony with Scottish music, poems & songs. An optional Guided Scotch Whisky Tasting and Robert Burns Poetry and Song Seminar will also be available. Info: www.ashevillesistercities. org/event/2024-robert-burns-night-supper

Robert Burns Dinner Celebration

27, Reno NVNevada Society of Scottish Clans presents its 41St Annual Robert Burns Celebration and Whisky Tasting, at Grand Sierra Resort & Casino. Info: www.nvssc.org

Rabbie Burns Supper 27, Cincinnati, OH

Celebrate Robert Burns with The Caledonian Society of Cincinnati, with an evening of Scottish entertainment, including pipes & drums, highland dancing, Scottish country dancing, and more. Info: www.caledoniansociety.org

Burns Night Dinner

27, Huntersville, NC

A celebration of Scottish heritage and culture at Historic Rural Hill for the annual Burns Night celebrations. Info: www.ruralhill.net.

Robert Burns Supper

27, Los Angeles, CACelebrating the life and works of Robert Burns with

the St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles at the Four Season, Beverley Hills. Info:www.saintandrewsla.org

Alma Highland Festival & Games Burns Supper 27, Alma, MI Celebrate the great Scottish poet, Robert

Burns at Alma College Chapel. Info: highland@almahighlandfestival.com

Siren City Pipe Band presents a Burns Supper 27, Norfolk, VA

Join Siren City Pipe Band for their Third Annual Burns Supper: a formal gala with raucous entertainment to support Siren City Pipe Band at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel. Info: www.scpb.rsvpify.com

Scottish American Society Of South Florida Burns Supper

27, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Celebrate the bard with Scottish American Society Of South Florida for food, music and poetry at Tropical Acres Steakhouse. Info:www.sassf.org/Burns-supper

FEBRUARY 2024

Balmoral Winter Workshop

Balmoral will offer a weekend-long Winter Workshop for Pipers & Drummers. This workshop will take place online, via Zoom. Workshop attendees receive instruction on the Great Highland pipes and Scottish smallpipes. Info: www.balmoralschoolofpiping.org

Cumberland Scottish Rite Burns Night

${\bf 3, Cumberland, MD}$

Join the Cumberland Knights of St. Andrew for our 18th Annual Burns Supper celebrating the life and poetry of Bro. Robert "Rabbie" Burns at Cumberland Masonic Temple, 15 Greene St. Info: www.cumberlandscottishrite.org

Sarasota Highland Games & Celtic Festival 3, Sarasota, FL

Pipe bands, Clans, entertainment and more in Sarasota. Info: www.sarasotahighlandgames.com

Tallahassee Highland Games 3-4, Tallahassee, FL

From traditional Highland games to music,

food, and so much more, there's something for everyone to enjoy at Apalachee Regional Park. Info: www.TallyHighlandGames.com

Great Kilt Skate 2024

4, Concord, NH Calling all skaters! Bring your skates and don

your tartan (kilts if you have them. but any tartan works!) at White Park to enjoy a bit of ice time together celebrating a now international event. Info: www.nhscot.org/events/kilt-skate-2024

International Scotch Day 8, Nationwide

Raise a dram to a global celebration of Scotch whisky. A day for people to come together and enjoy a drink while paying homage to the rich history and culture of Scotland.

Suncoast Highland Games 10, Sarasota, FL

A celebration of Scottish & Celtic heritage, with Celtic music, Scottish clans/societies pipe bands, bagpiping competition (EUSPBA), heavy athletic events and more at Manatee Fairgrounds. Info: www.suncoastscots.com.

Mount Dora Scottish Highland Festival 17-18, Mount Dora, FL

A family-friendly event that celebrates Scottish culture and is packed with lots of fun and entertainment for everyone. The festival features bagpipers, highland athletics, Celtic music, highland dancing, a tartan parade, contests, kids' activities, food, merchandise vendors, and more at Elizabeth Evans Park. Info: https://ci.mount-dora.fl.us/698/Mount-Dora-Scottish-Festival

Asheville Celtic Festival 17-18, Fletcher, NC

A winter indoor/outdoor Celtic Festival bringing the Celtic Spirit of the Seven Nations to the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, at the Davis Center at the WNC Agricultural Center. Info: www.ashevillecelticfest.com

Seachdain na Gàidhlig 2024/ World Gaelic Week 2024

19-25, Nationwide

Celebrating Scottish Gaelic across the globe. The theme for the 2024 edition of the cultural celebration is Do Chànan. Do Chothrom, which translates to Your Language. Your Opportunity. Participants are encouraged to showcase how the Gaelic language benefits and enriches lives, opening doors for connections, collaboration and success. Info: www.seachdainnagaidhlig.scot

Scotland

JANUARY 2024 Kirkwall Ba'

1, Kirkwall, Orkney

A great Orkney tradition which sees almost the entire town turned into a football pitch for a chaotic and competitive kickabout. Info:www.bagame.com

National Shortbread Day

6, Nationwide
Celebrate the historic and classic Scottish
treat enjoyed around the world known as shortbread. Enjoy a taste of Scotland today! **Burning of the Clavie**

11, Burghead, Moray
A fire festival unique to Burghead, which greets the New Year. The significance of the 11th January dates back to the 1750's, when the Julian calendar was reformed in Britain. Every 11th January the flaming Clavie (a barrel full of staves) is carried round the town followed by a large great the farmer barrel for the property of the property large crowd. Info: www.burghead.com/clavie

Scalloway Fire Festival

Scalloway, Shetland
Shetland's ancient capital hosts the first of
Shetland's annual fire festivals. Info: www. scalloway.net/events/fire-festival

Celtic Connections

18-February 4, Glasgow Glasgow's status as a UNESCO City of Music will be well and truly on display as more than 300 events bring 25 venues across the city to life, welcoming a host of unmissable music across its 18 days. The UK's largest Celtic, world and roots music festival. Info:www.celticconnections.com

Scotland's Trade Fair Spring

21-23, Glasgow Trade only event for Scottish retailers at the SEC. The Show will feature the best of what Scotland has to offer in terms of gifts, homeware, fashion, textiles, jewellery and crafts. Info: www.scotlandstradefairs.com

Happy Burns Night 25. Nationwide

poet Robert Burns. The tradition of the Burns Night Supper was first held in 1801 by the poet's friends, five years after his death. **Burns Supper**

Celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Scottish

25, Bo'ness Celebrate the birth of our national bard, Robert Burns, we are delighted to be hosting a Burns Supper at the Corbie Inn, Bo'ness. Info:www.corbieinn.co.uk

Burns Supper and Bothy Ballads

Did you know that Robert Burns has strong links to the Cabrach? Join the folk of the Cabrach community for a traditional Burns Supper, ballads from the Bothy and stories of Scotland's national bard. Info: www.cabrachtrust.org

Burns Supper

27, Glasgow Join The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow for an evening of traditional Scottish celebration, with fine dining, whisky and entertainment. This annual traditional Burns Supper is one of their favourite and most popular fundraising events bringing together a diverse

College community for an evening of exquisite

food, friendship and fun. Info: www.rcpsg.ac.uk Scottish National Whisky Festival

27, GlasgowA definitive whisky and cultural experience, the Festival brings together a line-up of some of the best exhibitors from across the whisky industry, with hundreds of whiskies and other spirits available to sample over each session. Info: www.swg3.tv

Up Helly Aa 2024

30, Lerwick, ShetlandThe Up Helly Aa fire festivals are amongst the

biggest annual celebrations in Shetland. Inspired by Shetland's Viking past, communities across the islands come together for a night of guizing (dressing up), burning torches through the streets and dancing the night away to traditional Shetland music. Info: www.uphellyaa.org

Campbeltown - Scotland's Whiskyopolis

Campbeltown was once considered the whisky capital of the world in the Victorian era when it was home to more than 30 distilleries. Now there are just three but there is a whisky renaissance going on there – three more distilleries are planned for the area, two already with planning permission. Campbeltown may be the smallest of Scotland's five distinctive malt-producing regions, but it is big with whisky history, and a bright future, as Judy Vickers explains.





or Scotch whisky fans there isn't any time of year which isn't the right time for a wee dram. But there is something about January - from Hogmanay to Burns Night - which makes this month particularly suitable for a tot of the water of life. Whisky has been made in Scotland since at least the 15th century but it was a mainly undercover illicit operation until the 1820s when changes in the excise law saw legal distilleries spring up and boom all around Scotland. And nowhere did they boom more than in Campbeltown. The small town lies near the bottom of the Kintyre peninsula and these days is considered a fairly remote, tucked-away part of the Scottish mainland. But back in the 19thcentury, the town's natural assets helped it to become home to more than 30 distilleries and saw it earn the nickname "Whiskyopolis", the whisky capital of the world, with the highest income per head in the country.

Now there are just three distilleries left; Springbank, Glengyle and Glen Scotia. But with three more distilleries planned, and rumours of others to come, it looks as if the fortunes are on the up for the only town in Scotland considered a whisky-producing area in its own right.

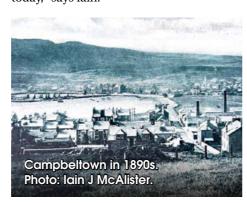
Spiritville

Back in the days of steamers and before railways and roads became the main form of transport, Campbeltown's natural harbour gave it a key advantage in the emerging industry. Iain McAlister, Glen Scotia distillery manager and master distiller, explains: "Campbeltown has the most fantastic harbour in the world, so goods – barley, casks, equipment – could be taken in and out easily."

That harbour also gave the town good links to markets – Glasgow was within easy reach as was Ireland, and the US and Canada, where many Scots had settled after being forced from their land during the Clearances and were keen to have a taste of their homeland. "There were 30-plus distilleries which came and went. It was the renewables of its day – local entrepreneurs were looking to invest in these new distilleries, it took off here like nowhere else and that really continued until the original owners started to die off," says Iain.

In 1887 Campbeltown had 21 distilleries and was producing more than nine million litres of spirit a year in town of just under 2000 people – no wonder its other nickname was Spiritville. The town's skyline was spiked with distillery chimneys and its loch harbour filled with boats, serving both the whisky and the then booming herring industry.

But just a few decades later, that picture had changed. The First World War, followed by Prohibition in the United States, then the Depression of the 1930s, saw the whisky industry decimated in the town. Communication methods had been changing over the years too - Speyside was now more accessible and its lighter whiskies were becoming more fashionable and seen as better for blending."It had run its course. Distilleries were being bought just to close them down to eliminate competition as they were seen as inefficient and by the time the Second World War came there were just three distilleries and there was no recovery until today," says Iain.





Campbeltown's distinctive whiskies

The three distilleries which survive today, only two of the same which were left in the 1930s, have had chequered histories to reach the 21st century. Iain's distillery, Glen Scotia, was founded in 1832 by Stewart Galbraith. The Galbraith's held it during the 19th century, but then it was bought by Duncan MacCallum who had an expansive portfolio of distilleries but who tragically drowned himself in 1930, supposedly because he was swindled out of a large amount of money in a dodgy business deal. Iain, however, has his doubts, as MacCallum still left £200,000, a substantial fortune in those days. The distillery changed hands several times and was in the doldrums when it was bought in 1996 by its current owners the Loch Lomond Group. Since then, its fortunes have been reversed and it now produces 700,000 litres a year – 5,000 casks – and has won numerous awards including the top prize for its single malt in the 13 to 15 year old category at the Scottish Whisky Awards.

The other two distilleries are both owned by the Mitchell family who have been bound up with whisky-making in Campbeltown since the 17th century. Springbank was founded 1828 on the site of Archibald Mitchell's illicit still who was already a partner at Rieclachan Distillery, one of the now vanished distilleries of the town. It might have survived to the present day, but Springbank has had a stormy history, literally and metaphorically. In 1883 when wild weather caused the distillery chimneys to collapse and when it was forced to close between 1926 and 1936 due to the effects of Prohibition and again in 1979, reopening in 1989.

Glengyle was begun by William Mitchell, part of the same family, in 1872, when he broke away from his brother John, the Springbank owner, but was hit badly by the First World War and closed in 1925. It was given a new lease of life in 2000 when it was bought back by the Mitchell family and reopened, producing its first whisky again in 2014 under the name Kilkerran. Now those three will be joined by three more distilleries, including Witchburn, which aims to be one of the most environmentally friendly distilleries; Machrihanish Distillery which hopes to become Campbeltown's first farm-to-bottle distillery and the Dal Riata distillery, which will be located overlooking Campbeltown Loch.

And unlike many other industries, Iain says the three established distilleries will welcome their new counterparts, helping to create a whisky renaissance in the town. Iain says: "There has sometimes been an air of sadness to what Campbeltown had been but I think it's being appreciated again." And he says there is an appreciation of Campbeltown's distinctive whiskies, which he says have a saltiness, an oiliness and are a little bit "funky" which set them aside from any other Scottish whiskies. "It's a very complex whisky with something you can't quite put your finger on. It's not a straightforward whisky."









ast year was a special year, with so many piping and drumming events around the world back to full strength, with musicians travelling across the world to perform, compete and see friends again. Looking ahead to 2024, we are sure that this year there will be more of the same!

The first piping and drumming event of the new year happens in the Southern Hemisphere, with the Waipu Highland Games, which encompasses the New Zealand Open Solo Piping Championships taking place on 1St January.

The National Piping Centre's home city of Glasgow comes alive at the darkest time of year, as the UK's premier celebration of Celtic music, Celtic Connections presents a full 17-day programme from 18th January – 4th February celebrating 31 years of world music. Piping and drumming features across the programme, in so many forms from emerging talent on the Danny Kyle stage through to headlining traditional music concerts from Breabach, Project SMOK, Finlay MacDonald with Jose Manuel Tejedor and a concert by 2023 world champions People's Ford Boghall and Bathgate Pipe Band and the National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland. Head over to the website now find out more www.celticconnections.com.

As well as Celtic Connections, solo pipers are heading to Kansas City once again this January as Winter Storm, organized by Midwest Highland Arts Fund, returns from 11th – 14th January, after a successful return in 2023. The Competition League for Amateur Solo Pipers also returns in January, with an in-person event in Glasgow on 13th January. This league has an overall and online-only titles so you can compete as an amateur solo player from anywhere in the world. The latest

online event saw competitors from Hong Kong to Hawai'i join the event! If you are an amateur player and would like to find out more go to www.theclasp.co.uk.

Southern Hemisphere

With summer in full swing in the Southern Hemisphere there is a plethora of pipe band events, solo competitions and more. After the Waipu Highland Games on 1st January, comes Turakina Highland Games on the 27th January. From the 10th – 14th January, the Royal New Zealand Pipe Band Association will host its summer school in Christchurch for young musicians. This Summer School is the perfect opportunity to learn from world class tutors, and it showcases some of the best talent New Zealand has to offer.

On 17th February the National Piping Centre Junior Piping Championship returns, one of a host of fantastic contest for young pipers aged Under 18 across the country every year. It aims to encourage all young players to compete, with chanter competitions through to Piobaireachd events.

In Australia, Ballarat Grammar School in Victoria will host its annual pipe band contest on 2ndMarch and Haileybury Pipe Band Contest takes place on 17th March. Back over the Tasman Sea, the New Zealand Pipe Band Championships will take place in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland with over 50 bands registered to take part in a huge two days of contest on 15th – 16th March.

On 23rd March, the adult solo piping season kicks off in Scotland with the Duncan Johnstone Memorial Competition which is held at The National Piping Centre and managed by the Competing Pipers' Association for B and C graded pipers. On 24th March the Victorian Pipe



Band Championships take place at the Melbourne Highland Games and Celtic Festival and the Hastings Highland Games in NZ takes place over Easter Weekend, with a huge focus on solo piping with their Commun na Piobaireachd Clasp, Gold and Silver Medals and Premier light music competitions taking place.

The bi-annual Australian Pipe Band Championship will return om 13th April 2024 in Maryborough, Victoria, with bands from across the country as well as the Australian Drum Major Contest taking place. Also in April will be the inaugural World Amateur Champion of Champion Solo Piping Competition, which will feature the 10 top amateur solo players from around the world being invited to take part. This event is designed to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the launch of The Competition League for Amateur Solo Pipers (CLASP), and will be online and available to watch worldwide. Find out more at www.theclas.co.uk

World Pipe Band Championships

As we move into the Scottish summer (keeping everything crossed for some sunshine!) the piping season begins in earnest with a huge range of Highland Games across the country, all of which feature some kind of piping with pipe bands, solo piping and ceilidhs across Scotland. August 2nd -3rd sees the 75th Glengarry Highland Games, which includes the North American Pipe Band Championships. This year's World Pipe Band Championships has been announced as the 16th and 17th August. Keep up with all the pipe band news at www.rspba.org

Piping Live! returns in full force to the streets of Glasgow in the run up to the World's once again as Glasgow hosts the world's biggest week of piping! This year, we are celebrating the $21^{\rm St}$ edition of our festival running from $10^{\rm th}-18^{\rm th}$ August, which attracts



performers and audiences from across the world. In 2023, we welcomed performers from Estonia, Ireland, Brittany and Northumbria performing on their own styles of bagpipes, as well as Scottish Pipe Bands from Malaysia, USA and Canada and from across Scotland. We can't wait for the this year's festival – keep up with what's happening and register for email updates at www.pipinglive.co.uk

At the end of August, the piping world turns its focus to top level solo competition, with the Argyllshire Gathering taking place in Oban on $21^{\rm St}$ and $22^{\rm nd}$ August, and the Northern Meeting in Inverness happening on $29^{\rm th}$ – $30^{\rm th}$ August. These see the world's best solo performers gather to compete for the most prestigious solo piping prizes, as well as a chance to qualify for the Glenfiddich Piping Championship.

The Glenfiddich Piping Championship takes place at the end of October each year, and in 2024 will celebrate its 51st event on Saturday 26th October. 10 competitors will gather at Blair Castle to compete in Piobaireachd and March, Strathspey and Reel disciplines to be crowned champion. As it is a special year there will be a host of extra special moments planned. Tickets to join us in person at Blair Castle or to watch through the livestream will go on sale around mid-July through the National Piping Centre website. Over this same weekend, the New Zealand Silver Chanter competition takes place on $26^{\mbox{th}}$ and 27th October for this 48th event.

But October isn't all about solo piping, as on Saturday 19th October, the World Solo Drumming Championship takes place, here in Glasgow, with the best drummers gathering to compete of several rounds to be crowned the best. In a year of firsts for Boghall and Bathgate, who won their first World Pipe Band Championship, their Lead Drummer Kerr McQuillan won his first World Solo Drumming title, edging out the champion of the previous 10 years, Steven McWhirter. This will be a hotly contested event in 2024, that's for sure!

The Glenfiddich Piping Championship marks the end of the 2024 season, only for the 2025 season to start the very next weekend in London with the Scottish Piping Society of London's annual competition, which celebrates its 86th year in 2024. Also, in the USA and Canada there are a number of piping events through November, with the An Crios Gréine - Sun Belt Invitational Solo Piping Competition taking place in Florida and the George Sherriff Memorial Invitational for amateur players taking place in Hamilton, Ontario. Dates for these events will be confirmed later this year. So, if you are travelling this year, come and hear piping in Scotland or look out for it around the world!

You can find out more about all The National Piping Centre's projects at www.thepipingcentre.co.uk or get the latest news and results from the piping world at www.bagpipe.news which will give you details of events happening across the globe.



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30th anniversary of the Panama City Beach Scottish Festival



By: Dawn Nezat

Panama City Beach Scottish Festival

he Celtic Heritage Alliance is proud to present the 30th anniversary of the Panama City Beach Scottish Festival on March 2nd, 2024. Get ready for a captivating celebration of culture and heritage! As the waves of the Gulf meet the shores of Florida's breathtaking coastline, a different kind of excitement is set to ensue. This festival is not just a mere event; it's a journey into the vibrant traditions of Scotland, right in the heart of Panama City Beach. From the mesmerizing sound of bagpipes echoing through the air to the graceful movements of traditional Scottish dancers, this festival promises a day filled with top-notch entertainment and an unforgettable fusion of Scottish and coastal charm.

Northwest Florida was predominantly settled by Scottish and Irish immigrants. As the Florida Panhandle's largest and longest running Scottish Festival, we are proud of our ancestors and strive to honor their culture with our festival, fundraisers, and educational events throughout the year.



Our local Scottish Festival started 30 years ago as an outreach of Grace Presbyterian Church in Panama City. Early on, the festival was small and was held as an outreach of the church. Then church members, John and Patty McIlroy, Scottish entertainers, took charge of the festival, brought in other Celtic entertainers, Celtic food, and merchandise vendors and the festival grew. The festival did not yet have a full Highland Games. A few athletes were invited and put on games demonstrations for the crowds. Then Pipe bands from around the region would be invited and the festival grew. Eventually John and Patty, with the help of several local people, started our host band, the Panama City Pipes and Drums.



The sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Scotland

Eventually an athletic director was found, and the Highland Games became an important part of the festival. The Panama City Scottish Festival and Highland Games were born. Over the years many people, church members and non-members, took leadership roles. The games grew to an all-day event with highland games, musical entertainment, pipe bands, dancers, food and merchandise vendors, car shows, and much more. The festival eventually outgrew the church and had to find a larger venue. In 2016 we moved to Frank Brown Park and became the Panama City Beach Scottish Festival and Highland Games. This, our 30th anniversary, has been dedicated to John and Patty McIlroy. Without their leadership and guidance early on, we would not be here today. Flowers of the Forest dear friends.

It's a journey into the vibrant traditions of Scotland, right in the heart of Panama City Beach.

On the 2nd of March in 2024, we are proud to mix the Florida sunshine with the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Scotland! Our bands this year are Celtica Nova, who received the "International Celtic Artist of the Year" award at the 2019 Australian Celtic Music Awards. Co-headlining is Celtic Conundrum, known for creating new traditional music, exceptional harmonies, and heart stopping vocals! Four of the best Pipe and Drum bands in Florida will provide us not only with the sights but sounds of Scotland. Highland dancers, axe throwing, kid's games, and of course, the everpopular Highland Athletic competition will round out the entertainment. Be sure to check out one of the many vendor booths for Celtic-inspired merchandise, or head over to the Clan Village to show off your Celtic pride. Wet your whistle at the Whisky Tasting tent (tickets required), Tea Room, or Beer Tent and enjoy your favorite Celtic food at one of the many food vendors.

Our Festival Highland Games include:

- "Open" Stone Throw
- Light Weight for Distance Throws (LWFD)
- Heavy Weight for Distance Throws (HWFD)
- Weight Over Bar (WOB)
- The Scottish Heavy Hammer
- The Caber
- The Sheaf Toss

We are proud to announce that ticket prices are the same as last year and include parking. Buy your tickets now at www.pcbscottishfestival.com.
Whisky tasting tickets include Festival ticket.

For more information, to sign up as a sponsor or vendor, or to buy tickets, go to www.pcbscottishfestival.com







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