

SCOT POURRI

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

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

Dumbarton Castle



Dumbarton Castle commands a striking presence as it sits on a volcanic rock overlooking the Firth of Clyde. Its history is as remarkable as its landscape, having been a royal refuge, a military stronghold, and a silent witness to many significant events in Scotland's past.

With roots stretching back to the Iron Age, Dumbarton was once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde. Its strategic position made it a coveted asset through the centuries.

In the year 870, the Vikings, led by the fierce Olaf and Ivar, laid siege to the castle, known then as Alt Clut, the rock of the Clyde. This stronghold was the

heart of the Kingdom of Strathclyde. The Vikings encircled the rock, cutting off any escape, and after a brutal four-month siege, they conquered the fortress.

By the Middle Ages, it became a formidable fortress, with Scottish kings like Alexander II and James IV strengthening its defences.

The castle played pivotal roles during the Wars of Scottish Independence and saw action up to the Second World War. It's also famed for being the prison of William Wallace for a short period before he was taken to London for execution.

Today, Dumbarton Castle stands not just as a monument to Scottish resilience and strategy, but also as a treasure trove for history enthusiasts. The twin peaks of the rock, known as The Beak and The Summit, provide panoramic views that are well worth the climb, offering a serene vantage point to ponder the turbulent history that unfolded below.

Thomas Lamont
The Killed Photographer
Falkirk, Scotland

The search for Nessie



The following is a true story! It was misty and somewhat cool August 1997 afternoon, we visited from our 2 year home in Castiogne Dela Steverie in Italy to Loch Ness! While my beautiful wife Serene and our two Scottish friends were watching me at the beach side of the loch from the top of Castle Urquhart, I stood close to the edge and said in a yelling voice, "Hey Nessie, if you are real, I demand you show yourself!" All of a sudden I saw ripples in the water, and heard a loud grumbling sound! I ran so fast to the Castle that you would have thought that I was Eric Liddell, the Great Scottish Olympian runner of *Chariots of Fire* movie fame! The moral of this story is, if you don't want to get eaten by Nessie, then don't tease or challenge her!

Cordially,
Pastor Joseph Captain Scotland Culp
Pickerington, Ohio
USA

Family research help

I wonder if any readers can help me please? I am doing my family history. My family came from the Scottish Borders and belonged to the Free Church of Scotland. What I am in need of help with is where the files and records are kept. My family is Johnston/Johstoun. I am getting back into family research so I would appreciate any help I can get. I have been told these people were around 1800?

Valerie Vale
31 Henty St
Pakenham, Victoria
3810, Australia

Tartan Day in Ottawa



The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band in Ottawa, Canada enjoyed a big Tartan Day weekend in their nation's capital which saw a new Tartan Day Expo added to the National Tartan Day Celebrations held for the 16th time on Parliament Hill. The Expo saw many exhibitors of Celtic fare, fashion and homemade creations, there was live music, and refreshments, and lots of wonderful raffle prizes – and an audience of hundreds that came out to support this inaugural event. The following day, the massed band was joined by friends in the dancing community – highland, step, and Scottish country- as well as singing and corgis on parade for an exceptional day marking heritage and tradition. It was also the first time the band's new Patron was out to support their efforts, His Excellency Mr. Whit Grant Fraser, C.C., who enjoyed the day's celebrations very much. He was moved by the talents of many, and gave his support of everyone's great work.

We look ahead to trips to Scotland, Ireland, the Invictus Games 2025, and more – and you can be part of our adventures. Visit us at www.sospb.com for all the details.

Bethany Bisaillon
Sons of Scotland Pipe Band
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
www.sospb.com

Tartan Day

In the April issue of *the Scottish Banner*, you asked the question of what we thought about the varying dates for Tartan Day. I must admit that I find the date of 6th of April for Tartan Day in Canada and the USA a bit strange as the date has nothing to do with actual tartan and in fact, it's doubtful that it even existed back then considering the oldest tartan pattern known is dated between 1500 and 1600.

Yes, they made it about the Declaration of Arbroath but that was in 1320 when Canada and the USA didn't exist as we know it. Australia and New Zealand got it absolutely right by celebrating International Tartan Day on the 1st of July, the actual date of repeal from the banning of wearing tartan from the Act of Proscription in 1747.

Well done Down Under.

Best regards,

Frank McGregor
Tasmania, Australia

Tartan Day April 6 in Canada

I think likely April 6 was selected for Tartan Day in Canada due to our nation's celebration of Canada Day being July 1st annually-where we celebrate all cultures of all Canadians both born to Canada, and those who have made Canada their home, after arriving from elsewhere in the world. I'm a born Canadian, second generation with my Grandparents emigrating from Scotland in the 1920's, and married to a

first generation Canadian, whose parents arrived from Scotland shortly before his birth in the 50's-he always jokes he was "made" in Scotland, but "born" in Canada.

T. Murray
Canada

The Kelpies



Well who else would want to feed the Kelpies!? After reading the April copy of *the Scottish Banner* with the 10th anniversary of the Kelpies I had to send you this photo of my wife Trudi.

David Mackenzie
Mornington, Victoria
Australia

What is my Clan?

Hi there, my maiden name was Crighton. It was, I believe, originally spelt Crichton but one of my grandparents changed it back in the day. Do you know what clan the name belongs to?

Thank you,
Jane
jane55@icloud.com

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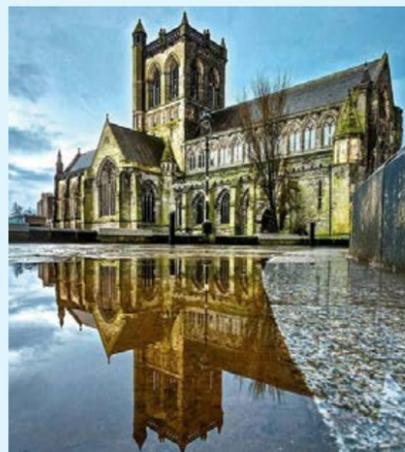
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MV Dayspring



Sun shines on the Corpach shipwreck.
Mik Coia

Paisley Abbey



A reflective Paisley Abbey.
IG: eadietam

Portpatrick, Dumfries and Galloway



A hoose with a view!
Colfin Captures

Bauchaille



A misty Bauchaille never fails to impress.
Ronald Stokes