

SCOTTISH FIELD

A brown and white speckled dog, possibly a Springer Spaniel, is running through a snowy field. The dog is looking towards the camera with its tongue out, and its ears are flapping. The background is a soft-focus snowy landscape under a pale sky.

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*Pages of
fashion &
interiors*

Diana Gabaldon

*The woman
behind
Outlander*

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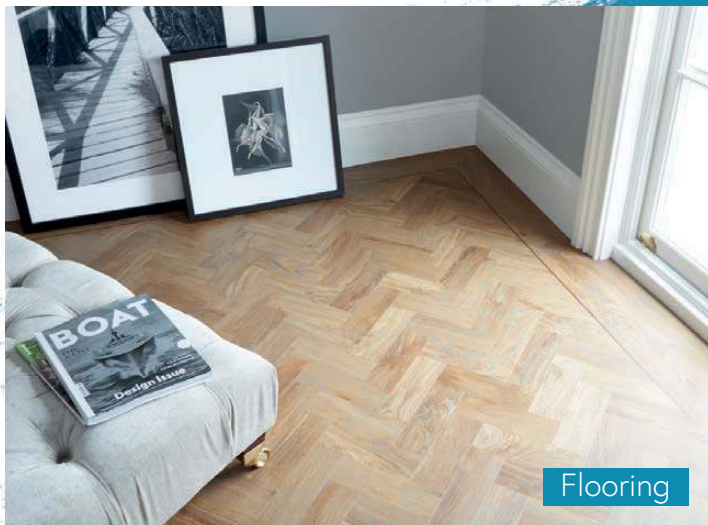
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Welcome



Thank the Lord that 2019 is out of the way. It's been a bad-tempered old year, what with elections and Brexit and the performance of Scotland's rugby and football teams.

So, as I look forward to 2020, I'm determined to ensure I achieve something that I can look back on with pride this time next year. Which brings me to my New Year's resolutions...

I have many of these, and most of the printable ones revolve around visiting the few places in Scotland that I have yet to spend any time in. There will always be obscure places that I'll never get to, but I'm talking about major oversights such as towns and inhabited islands.

Bizarrely, Helensburgh – little more than a stone's throw from where I lived

for the best part of two decades – is the most obvious oversight, and one that I already have plans to remedy very soon.

As for islands, I'm afraid the residents of at least two of Tiree, Colonsay, Barra and Jura need to be warned of an incoming invasion.

But then that's the joy of this time of year, sitting in the kitchen with a dram during the dark, stormy evenings of mid-winter, working out where to go when good intentions can be translated into an avalanche of energy immediately after the clocks change.

I'll be sharing my travels with readers in these pages and on our website, but of far greater interest is where you will go. So let us know where you're going, where you've been, where we should go, and how it was for you.

Richard Bath, Editor

Contributors this month...



CAL FLYN
Scottish Field's wildlife columnist goes on the trail of the mysterious and often elusive feral goats that inhabit the vertiginous slopes of Scotland's Highlands and islands.



SANJEEV KOHLI
One of Scotland's best-loved comedians tells us how he narrowly escaped a career in finance to star in *Still Game* and become the voice of Scotland's fitness.



ED TAYLOR
An architect and urban designer who specialises in urban regeneration, Ed explains how the use of colour can foster civic pride and be a catalyst for genuine and lasting change.

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Hector, a WCS photographed bounding through the snow at Kingussie by Barry Folan

All photographs, unless otherwise stated, are by Angus Blackburn

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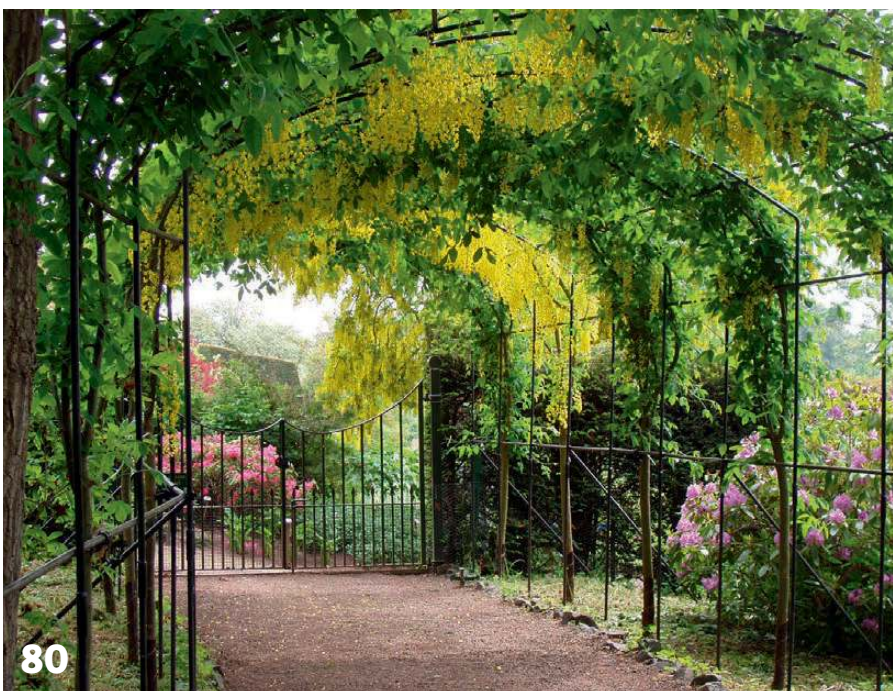
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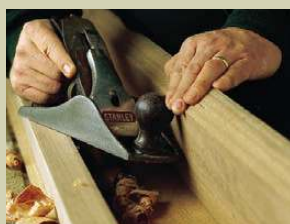


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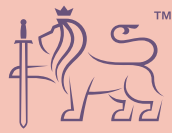
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Letters

Any whisky in a storm

Many years ago (I am now 87) I was one of about a dozen passengers on a small boat out of Ullapool en route to the Summer Isles to view the flora and fauna. As we left the sun was shining and the sea was calm. All was soon to change however. Once in unsheltered waters a howling gale rocked the small vessel alarmingly and high waves lapped at the gunwales.

Suddenly the boat's engine cut out and we began to fear for our safety. The boat's tannoy then crackled into life. 'My name is MacKenzie – your skipper. I have a weather forecast due in five minutes so we will just sit here and wait for it. My deckhand will be round shortly to take orders for tea and coffee. They cost 50p but if you would like something in it, it will be £1.' I assumed the something was not milk and took the £1 option. I was not disappointed.

After some 20 minutes, during which the gale got even worse, the tannoy again crackled. 'I have just had the forecast and there is no wind at all here.' On reaching the isles, MacKenzie decided that the sea was too rough to attempt a landing but, expertly, navigated as close to land as safety allowed.

It was an exciting trip and the highlight was undoubtedly MacKenzie's cocktail – the coffee with something in it...

Simon Urquhart, Forfar

HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT

My granny contacted Scottish Field by telephone a couple of weeks ago with a question about a recipe for apple cake that appeared in the December issue.

Caryl (my granny) made the cake and was very excited about it – asking me to send a photograph of everyone eating it. Hopefully this finds its way to Steph who was

very helpful.

**Imogen & Caryl
Matthews, Chichester**



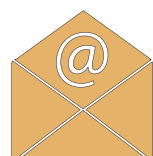
SOMETHING FISHY

I have just read Michael Wigan's latest column on fish farming [Rattling the Cage, January 2020].

What a dreadful, biased anti-salmon farming diatribe. I don't know who he is or where he gets his information, but the picture he paints is so far detached from the reality of the Scottish Salmon farming industry as to be absolute nonsense.

Please, if you intend to carry articles on the industry which produces Scotland's largest food export of a product which is highly rated around the world, make it balanced.

John S Whitehead, Upper Largo



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Letters

A HAPPY ENDING



I've just finished reading Morag Bootland's article on puppy farming [Paws for Thought, Jan 2020] and thought I'd let you meet our 'farmed puppy', Ralph.

Ralph was a couple of months old when we got him. A lady had bought a springer spaniel from a pet shop which was renowned for selling farmed puppies. She'd been offered a choice of two and selected the stronger. But she couldn't forget about the other sick looking little puppy and went back to the shop the next day to buy him. She named him Little John, but was unable to keep two dogs so gave him to a local pet rescue charity along with strict orders that he must only go to an exceptional home. Little John was very sick and riddled with worms, but the charity got him up on his feet.

When we heard about him we were desperate to give him the home he deserved. We were checked out and it was decided that our house, in the middle of a field, was perfect. We renamed him Ralph and he's had a wonderful life. He's an old gentleman now and can no longer enjoy long walks through the countryside due to his arthritis. But he's very happy.

Puppy farming is a disgrace. It's done by heartless, greedy people with no conscience. It should be stamped out. Not every puppy is as lucky as Little John.

Christine Walker, Cumbria

WE HAE MEAT

Joanna Blythman's Viewpoint article on vegetarianism and veganism [November 2019] was timely and sensible.

As a child in 1950 I spent two weeks at a vegan hotel in the Lake District. My family was friendly with the proprietors and it was with some shock that within two years they were displaying serious neurological and dietary deficiencies and were hospitalised – since this was before the days when the finer elements of human nutrition had been elucidated. One of them died as a result.

We now have a greater understanding of fundamental dietary requirements but the mistake is still being made in assuming that the nutritional requirements of the pregnant mother, her developing foetus and growing children are the same as those required for a normal human

adult. Some American and French obstetricians recently observed that 'one cannot grow a healthy foetus on a solely vegan diet'.

Even for the adult, the requirement for the vegan to increase the intake of pulses, soya (a usual crop when the forests of South America are cleared) and so on, depends upon huge importation of foodstuffs at immense energy transportation cost.

Such vegetable crops are frequently sourced from countries which do not have anything like the pesticide safety controls if the EU/UK, not to mention the fact that those countries often urgently require those foodstuffs for themselves.

Neurotic fashion must not be allowed to obscure the realities of our medical biology.
**Christopher Ogilvie
Badenoch, Roxburghshire**

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Readers' photos



Above: *Wild on the tops, Carn an Tuirc* taken by Marion McM. **Far right:** *Hamilton Mausoleum* taken by Andrew Murray. **Right:** *Gairloch* taken by James Lauridsen.



Left: *Polar Express* taken by GH Clark. **Above:** *Mist in Strathconon, Scottish Highlands* taken by Scotsapes.



SNAP HAPPY

No one loves a good photograph showing the variety of life in Scotland more than us. We also love seeing your photographs too, so lovely readers, upload your photos today and you might find your work appearing here

Left: Glasgow University taken by The Jacobite.

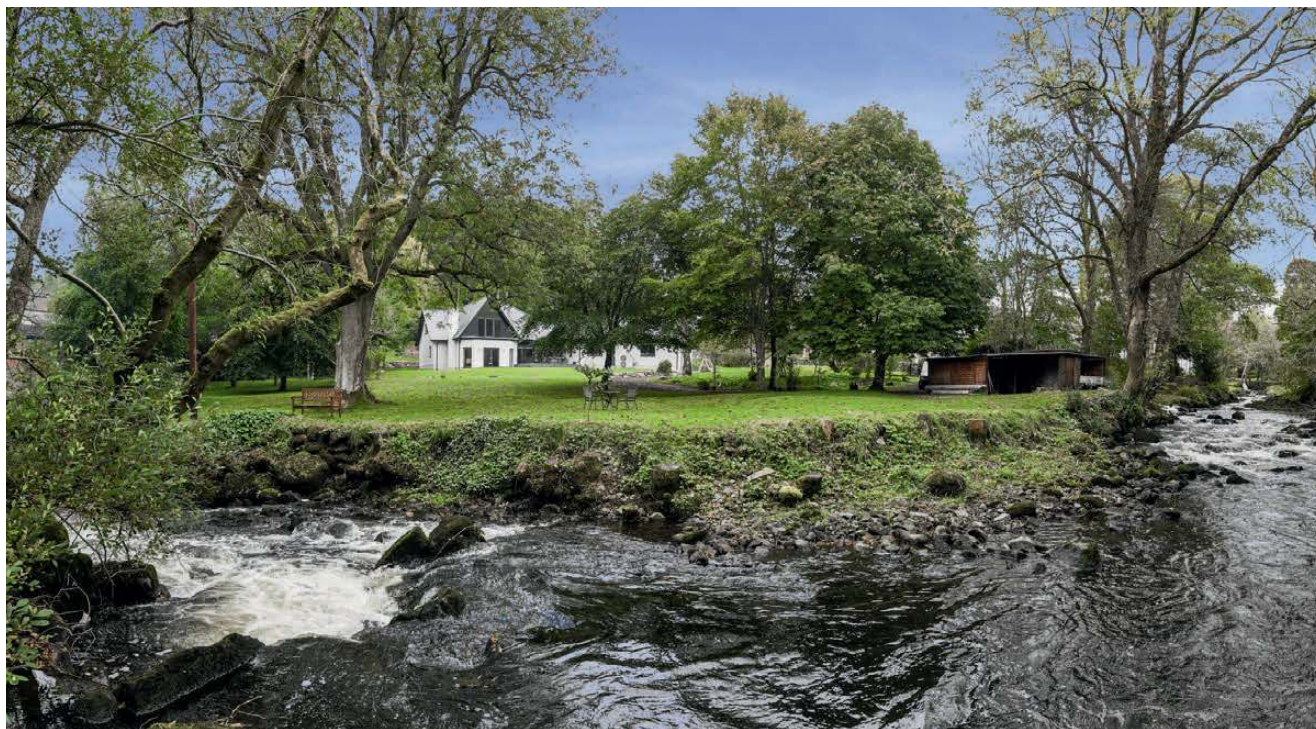


Far left: Buachaille Etive Mor taken by Claire Poole. **Above:** Great Spotted Woodpecker taken by Laurie Brett. **Left:** Sunlight through autumn leaf taken by James Johnstone.

To upload your photographs to our online gallery go to www.scottishfield.co.uk into our 'Living' section where you will find Readers' Photos. To appear on these pages your images must be downloadable. We choose our favourites every month. Phone pics are fine and the group is easy to use so why not upload some today?



PROPERTY *market*



Property of the month

Bargorge, Barhill Road, Dalbeattie, Dumfries and Galloway

Selling Agent: Galbraith

Tel: 01556 505346

Offers Over: £585,000

Bargorge is a stunning newly constructed detached property in an attractive edge of town location, yet within a rural setting. A high standard of finish has been applied throughout. Bathrooms have a marble finish and the hallway and living room benefit from stunning engineered oak flooring. There is a contemporary fitted open plan kitchen and six bedrooms, with the sixth capable of doubling up as a cinema room. The property has large windows looking to the garden. The garden extends to the Barr Burn and continues beyond to the woodland. The property also has lower running costs with both solar and air source heating.



Clockwise from top:
The Barr Burn running through the Bargorge grounds with fishing; the family room; the living room; the modern open plan kitchen; the exterior.



Development opportunity of the month



Craigeuan Coach House and Steading, Crieff

Selling Agent: Bidwells

Tel: 01738 630666

Guide price: Offers over £565,500

Craigeuan Coach House and Steading has the potential to create a superior family home with stabling, workshops and storage, which could be converted to a range of uses or to form additional residential units. Originally built to provide ancillary accommodation to the main estate house of Cultoquhey between 1818 and 1822, the property would benefit from internal refurbishment and possibly a degree of reconfiguration or extension. It offers panoramic views over the Strathearn countryside.



Country house of the month



Balquhatstone House, Slamannan, Falkirk

Selling Agent: Rettie & Co

Tel: 0131 624 9040

Guide price: Offers over £820,000

Balquhatstone House is a charming, 10-bedroom country house, with a traditional gate lodge and secluded private grounds. There are two paddocks to either side of the drive, which offer approximately six acres of grazing. The paddock to the west of the drive has been landscaped into a chip-and-putt golf hole with a green. A walled kitchen garden retains former fruit and vegetable beds, a range of plantings including apple, cherry and plum, a stone-built gardener's bothy and the Victorian glasshouses, which produce grapes and figs.



Coastal property of the month



Ganavan Sands, Oban

Selling Agent: Bell Ingram

Tel: 01631 566 122

Guide price: Offers over £875,000

Ganavan Sands is a unique opportunity to purchase a six-bedroom, architect-designed property with an unrivalled beachfront location. With panoramic views towards the islands of Mull and Lismore, it features accommodation over two floors. The double height ceiling of the hall is complimented by an intricate glass chandelier, while central to the property, a spacious, open plan living area takes advantage of the far-reaching ocean views, with full height windows flooding the area with natural light. The master suite extends to around 77m².



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Highlights

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- Extensive garden grounds including a paddock and mixed policy woodland
- Useful outbuildings and 'bothy' which could be utilised as a holiday let
- Redundant U-shaped steading with development potential
- Approximately 74.2 acres of land and part of Dunalastair Water, together with fishing rights thereon
- Area of land at Loch Rannoch together with fishing rights thereon
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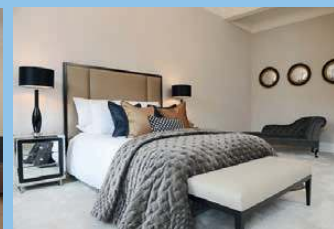
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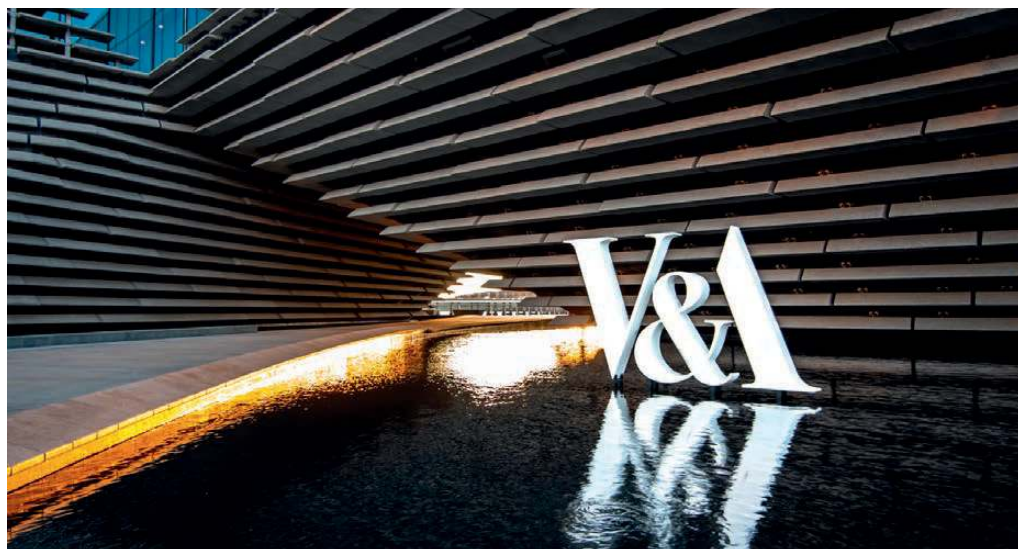
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UP FRONT

A round-up of what's going on across Scotland



V&A Dundee chases another major honour

V&A Dundee has been nominated for the European Museum of the Year Award 2020, one of the world's most prestigious cultural prizes. Scotland's first design museum opened in September 2018 and in its first 12 months welcomed over 830,000 visitors, far in excess of the 500,000 visitors that had been estimated. The museum also contributed to a £16 million boost in the value of Dundee tourism in 2018, which at £187 million already exceeds the city's target for 2020. The award winners will be revealed in May. www.vam.ac.uk/dundee

East, west, home's best!

Staycations are on the rise in Scotland, with coastal towns and urban destinations most popular with holidaymakers, according to the latest national visitor statistics. There were 5.5 million domestic overnight holiday trips from British visitors, including Scots, in Scotland between January and August this year, raising £1.5 billion for the Scottish economy. Figures from the Great Britain Tourism

Survey reveal that domestic tourism in Scotland has grown by 40% over the same period since 2016, driven by staycationing Scots. www.visitbritain.org



PABLO ROGAT / SHUTTERSTOCK

Clean and green

A survey of UK cities has found that Edinburgh is the second most environmentally friendly in the UK. The report by Compare the Market looked at which cities and towns are the greenest and most eco-conscious based on their percentage of recycled waste, searches for 'recycling centre' and 'electric cars', air quality and number of parks (per 10,000 people). Aberdeen came seventh and Glasgow eighth. The poll was topped by Bristol. London failed to make the top ten.

TITBITS



FILM STAR

An Argyll woman has been nominated in the second BAFTA Film awards, which honour the public for their exceptional contributions to their communities through film. Jane Mayo led the community to raise over £6m to save the Campbeltown Picture House.



STEAD FAST

There are less than six months left to save The Steading, a unique house in the Scottish Borders created by the late artist and sculptor Tim Stead, with donations still needed to boost the campaign. Find out more at www.timsteadtrust.org



BRONZED BEAUTIES

Nine figurines suspected to have been carved in the Bronze Age have been found on Orkney. A team from ORCA Archaeology discovered the half-metre tall, stone-carved objects during excavations connected with the development of an electrical substation at Finstown. Some of the objects look like stylised representations of the human form, while others look more like stones set upright into the floor of a Bronze Age building excavated at the Links of Noltland, Westray. On initial evidence, the stones possibly date to around the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age, roughly 2000BC.

Life's a beach

Growing numbers of people are caring for Scotland's coasts, with a record number of beach cleans taking place and more volunteers getting involved than ever before. The Marine Conservation Society say that in 2019, 146 beach cleans and litter surveys took place with



nearly 3,000 volunteers removing 7,669kg of litter. The most common items included plastic/polystyrene pieces, plastic/polystyrene string, glass items and wet wipes. Sadly, the amount of drinks containers found on average per 100m of Scottish beach has risen from 31 in 2018, to 37 in 2019.



Great Tapestry in 2021

It has been revealed that a new visitor attraction housing the globally acclaimed Great Tapestry of Scotland will open in spring 2021. Hosted in Scotland's premier textile region, the Scottish Borders, the £6.7 million purpose-built facility and interactive exhibition space will bring the best of the nation's world-renowned storytelling to life through the tapestry's wonderful textile artistry and a range of other significant visiting exhibits. The tapestry has been created by 1,000 women from across the country, and tells the story of the country's heritage.

#TRENDING

The five most popular stories from our website this month

1. WILLIAM MURDOCH - THE TITANIC'S SCOTTISH SCAPEGOAT

Posted on 2 August 2019

Our feature on the Scottish officer on the Titanic, portrayed as a bad 'un in James Cameron's 90s blockbuster film, was shared on the popular website Reddit, and more than 32,200 people enjoyed reading it. Our feature profiled the Dalbeattie-born sailor, who followed his family to sea.

2. CAIRNTY HOUSE IS A STUNNING HOME AND ESTATE

Posted on 7 October

One of our properties of the day, the Cairnty Estate, got you clicking, with its fabulous Georgian-style contemporary home with glorious views across the Spey Valley and set in several acres of beautiful gardens and grounds. It's located on the banks of the River Spey near Fochabers.

3. EDINBURGH GIN LAUNCHES FIRST TV ADVERT

Posted on 3 December

We told that Edinburgh Gin had launched its first ever television advertising campaign, which debuted on Channel 4, highlighting their various gins and gin liqueurs. The advert is set to the classic Frankie Valli song The Night.

4. THE MOST VALUABLE WHISKY COLLECTION IN THE WORLD

Posted on 22 November

Mr Viet Nguyen Dinh Tuan of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, was revealed as having the most valuable whisky collection in the world, with a hammer price of just under £11 million.

5. SHETLAND TO RETURN FOR TWO MORE SERIES ON BBC ONE

Posted on 2 December

Scottish Field readers were evidently delighted when we broke the news that the crime drama, starring Douglas Henshall, is to have two more runs on TV.

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Fuel economy and CO₂* results for the Maserati Levante V6 range in mpg (l/100km) combined: 20.6 (13.7) to 31.0 (9.1). *CO₂ emissions: 272 - 208 g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. *There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.



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TITBITS



THE SKIES HAVE IT

The Galloway Forest has been named among the best spots in the UK for stargazing. The Royal Observatory Greenwich has revealed the best places for a clear view of the heavens. The forest was named the fourth Dark Sky Park in the world in 2009.



BEAR WITH ME

Sculptor Andy Scott, famous for the Kelpies in Falkirk, has revealed his latest work. A five-metre high steel bear has been unveiled off the A1 at Dunbar, East Lothian. The sculpture celebrates the legacy of one of East Lothian's most famous sons, naturalist John Muir. Born in Dunbar in 1838, Muir played a key role in the development of America's national parks.



Pedal away with a world record holder

Endurance athlete Mark Beaumont is challenging cycling enthusiasts to join him on the trip of a lifetime around the North Coast 500. Mark, who holds the Guinness World Record for cycling around the world, will return to the iconic touring route for two exclusive, ultra-distance rides this summer, departing on 4 May and 31 August 2020, priced £2,500 per person, inclusive of all accommodation and meals. For more details visit www.wildernessscotland.com

IN TOP GEAR FOR AWARD

The Jim Clark Motorsport Museum in Duns has won its first award just months after opening. It was presented with a Royal Automobile Club Historic Award for linking the stories of former Formula 1 world champion Jim Clark and nearby towns by encouraging visitors to explore those links through a trail taking in his farm and grave. The museum was officially opened by another F1 legend, Sir Jackie Stewart (pictured right). Clark died in a crash in 1968.



12,100

The number of visitors since the museum opened in June

2

The number of F1 Championships won by Jim Clark, in 1963 and 1965

7

Wins out of 10 in the 1963 season – a record that wasn't broken until 1988



A napkin full of history

An historic napkin from 1906 illustrating a visit by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra to Marischal College has gone on public display at the Town House in Aberdeen. It was gifted to Aberdeen City Council by John Duffus – who found it in an antique shop in Montrose over 40 years ago – in memory of his parents, Dr G M Rae Duffus and Marjorie Duffus. It is shown (left) by Aberdeen Lord Provost Barney Crockett.



WHALE OF A TIME

Conservation charity the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust is celebrating after its newly launched tourist trail was a finalist in a major award in London. The Hebridean Whale Trail was a finalist in the New National Treasure (UK) category – alongside London's Alexandra Palace Theatre and eventual winners the National Maritime Museum – of the National Geographic Traveller Reader Awards 2019. The Hebridean Whale Trail is the first of its kind in the UK. It connects 33 top places across the Hebridean archipelago and Scotland's west coast that offer opportunities for land-based sightings of whales, dolphins and porpoises, or that showcase the region's whale heritage. www.hwdt.org



Do the light thing

Aberdeen's light art festival SPECTRA is returning in 2020. Taking its inspiration from Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, it will feature provoking, playful and just plain stunning light art works. From Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 February, SPECTRA will encourage audiences to experience interactive light sculptures, architectural projections and film. This year the works of art created in light will appear in Marischal College Quad, Broad Street, Upper Kirkgate, Schoolhill, St Nicholas Kirkyard, The Kirk of St Nicholas, and Aberdeen Art Gallery. www.spectrafestival.com

The fantastic five

Edinburgh Castle has won Best Heritage Attraction at the prestigious British Travel Awards for a fifth time. The award is decided by the public and was announced at the BTA Gala Awards Dinner in London. In 2018, more than two million people visited Edinburgh Castle, making it Scotland's number one paid-for visitor attraction. The British Travel Awards are an independent organisation and considered the benchmark for excellence when it comes to finding the best in the travel industry. www.edinburghcastle.scot



TITBITS



GAME FAIR CONFIRMED

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust has revealed the 2020 Scottish Game Fair will take place at Scone Palace Parklands in Perthshire from 3-5 July. There will be a plethora of country sports activities, coaching and competitions. www.scottishfair.com



WELL DONE

The Ayrshire committee of RSABI, the charity supporting people working in Scottish agriculture, is celebrating raising more than £100,000 during the ten years since it was established. This has included two tractor raffles, £20,000 in sponsorship for walking the Southern Upland Way, £24,000 for fund-raising lunches, and machinery club events. www.rsabi.org.uk



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A case for colour

The colourful transformation of a down-at-heel Ayrshire mining village has had such a positive effect on the community that it has architect **Edward Taylor** musing on how it could benefit others

Colour is fundamental to life and to humanity. It is nature's universal non-verbal language. Pigments are among mankind's earliest artefacts and they have been one of civilisation's most precious commodities. So what makes it so compelling yet at times controversial?

Karen Haller, author of *The Little Book of Colour* states that, 'Colour is arguably the simplest means we have at our disposal to enhance positive emotions and increase well-being, and it can do all this in an instant. It can help us to feel more connected to ourselves and to the people around us. When we feel connected, we feel happier about who we are. And when we feel happier about who we are we can begin to lead happier and more fulfilled lives.'

Colour can even affect us physiologically. A room painted blue requires a higher thermostat setting than the same room painted a warm colour, but the colour blue is also associated with clarity of thought. Red has the ability to raise blood pressure through its visceral impact. Green is restful and symbolic of wellbeing and the environment.

Below: Bellsbank – before its colourful transformation.



White is a reflection of light's full spectrum and whether in frost, snow or snowdrops, the additional brightness can be uplifting in winter, although it is never a pure 'Brilliant White'. The cheery yellows of spring flowers herald the return of full colour. Browns, greys and blacks on the other hand, where dominant, absorb precious light and can contribute to our seasonal glumness.

And so to a beautiful corner of Ayrshire. Looking out over the Doon Valley among the foothills of the Southern Uplands, marking the way to the enchanted Ness Glen, sits a village that has recently been cited in the Scottish Parliament as a model of community empowerment and the 'place principle'. Bellsbank is a rural, former mining community that has endured much but there is now a growing sense of hope for the future, which draws from its natural and latent assets.

After the Second World War colour in architecture came to be seen as an unnecessary frivolity and its intrinsic capacity to influence our emotions was forgotten. While Bellsbank benefits from varied topography and an attractive outlook, its houses were of a uniform and light-sapping cement grey. Some had become as black as bonded whisky warehouses.

0-5%

Bellsbank had consistently fallen into the category of one of the most deprived communities in Scotland

600

The village has around 600 homes, some had been bought or re-renovated before the scheme

211

The number of council owned homes refurbished under the new colour scheme

15%

The number of residents who chose colours outwith the proposed palette, generating an added sense of ownership



“Typically the replacement finish in a council refurbishment would be uniform

Typically the replacement finish in a council refurbishment would be similarly uniform in the name of cost and efficiency. As custodians at Bellsbank, East Ayrshire Council were already undertaking a programme of housing improvement when they decided to trial a more collaborative approach and came to embrace the transformative potential of colour across more than 200 houses, harnessing it as a means to engage with the community as individuals.

A palette of carefully selected colours and finishes was arrived at from scores of sample panels and through consultation, from the more muted to the richer hues. Every house and street was considered in terms of colour balance and appearance, combined with resident preferences. Where once colour was all but absent, it has now become an outward symbol of inner renewal and growing self-confidence among the community.

A number of grassroots initiatives have been established in the village and taken on new leases of life thanks to the drive of local residents and the support of the council. Bellsbank was declared the unanimous winner of the 2019 Scottish Civic Trust's My Place Awards, and described as, currently 'the most important village in Scotland'.

Communities of colourful buildings are celebrated and enjoyed around the world. Often they are not the most expensively built. These include Bo-Kaap in Cape Town, the island town of Burano near Venice, the 'painted ladies' of San Francisco and the chromatic houses of Louisville – described as one of America's great comeback stories. We might also learn from other countries of a northern clime, including the brightly painted wooden houses of Scandinavia.

Tobermory is probably Scotland's most celebrated colourful

town, thanks partly to it being chosen as the location for a popular children's television programme. And, while it now has an additional inland cousin, the context is different, and the bright, reflected light of the seaside can accommodate stronger hues whereas at Bellsbank the colours are softer.

With the advent of manufactured synthetic pigments, colour has been democratised. It is said that humans are capable of distinguishing 10 million or more colour variations. The colour choices available therefore can be bewildering. We instinctively find some combinations discordant without quite knowing why. Principles of colour, however, can be learned and indeed the primary school at Bellsbank led the way in asking their children to think about colour in relation to nature and to invent names for some of the subtle shades proposed for use.

While there is now a growing body of research on our emotional responses to colours and their transformative potential, the key lesson from Bellsbank perhaps has been the value of collaborative working to enable some of the inner qualities of a place and a community to shine through.

Above: Colours were chosen in consultation with residents.



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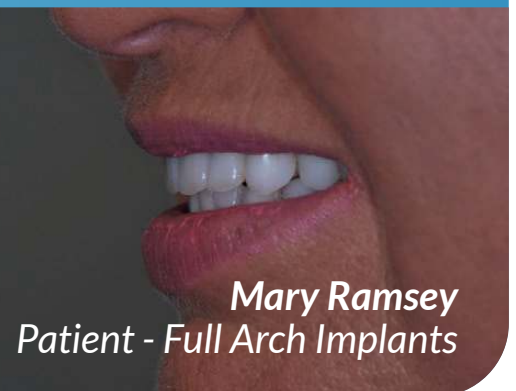


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Buyer's remorse is something we all feel from time to time. The incidence of this very particular form of guilt – or self-reproach, perhaps – spikes sharply at the beginning of the year. That is when salesmen prod your material appetites once more, these appetites having been shamelessly encouraged during December (although in this context the word December is a broad one, encompassing October and November, such is the effect of Christmas-creep). So prices are lowered, the word 'sale' is plastered everywhere, and the stage is set for an epidemic of buyer's regret. Wherever you go, you see it: drawn faces, downcast looks, furtive concealment of wrapping paper. Buyer's remorse.

But there is one purchase that very rarely triggers buyer's remorse – a book. The book is the one thing you should always buy if you have the slightest inclination to do so. More than that, if you feel a bout of retail therapy is what you need to lift your spirits, then do not go and buy a new outfit or a new bicycle – such purchases will only result in buyer's remorse – rather go and buy a book. Books are not expensive by comparison with other items, and their effect on the psyche is several times more beneficial than other things (let's say 4.2 times more powerful). Admittedly there are occasions when you regret having bought the wrong book, but you do not regret having bought a book.

You will always regret having seen a book you want and not having bought it. That regret can last a long time. In extreme cases, it can haunt you. So always, always give in to the urge to buy a book. I do not always practise what I preach – hypocrisy gets a bad press, but there are circumstances when hypocrisy is justified. As Max Scheler, the German philosopher, once reminded us: signposts do not walk in the direction in which they point. It is better, though, to admit one's failures. In my case, the omission to buy the book I should have bought occurred in Toronto, in a second-hand bookshop called Atticus Books, now closed, but up until a few years ago a place of pilgrimage for bibliophiles.

Browsing through the linguistics section, I came across an irresistible 600-page tome edited by Jean Umiker-Sebeok and Thomas A. Sebeok (yes, them), entitled *Monastic Sign Languages*. Sebeok was a leading semiotician known for questioning the theory that chimpanzees and other apes could be taught real sign language. All they might acquire from their trainers, he said, was a relatively unsophisticated signal system. This, he argued, was not language. Moreover, they could not pass this signal system to their offspring – an important criterion of a language.

Monks are a different matter, though: they clearly can be taught sign language, and this might be rather important in the case of monastic orders observing a rule of silence. I took *Monastic Sign Language* off the shelf and marvelled at it. In this book the Sebeoks had gathered some of the most important articles on the systems of sign language used in monastic orders. There was Clelia Hutt's paper on Trappist gestures; Paulus Volk's classic *De Silencio*, and Mario Martins' *Livros de Sinais dos*

Cistercienses Portugueses. But the major part of the volume was the magnificent *Cistercian Sign Language* by Robert A. Barakat.

Barakat tirelessly arranged photographs of hundreds of monastic hand signals across 250 pages devoted to his work. These photographs of real monks using the sign language show the full range of what can be communicated by a Cistercian. So, for example, a monk need not be at a loss of signs if he wishes to say: 'Where is my typewriter?'

This is how the sign is described: 'Hold hands in front of body with fingers loose, then move hands up and down as though typing.' That seems reasonable enough. But what is the sign for wax? That seems less intuitive: 'Place right forefinger sideways on mouth, then move the finger across the lips once more.'

I had to have that book. But when I looked at the price, I saw it was \$125. That is a lot to pay for a book that one would not be using every day. So I reluctantly put it back, only to experience buyer's remorse the moment I arrived back in Scotland. If only *Monastic Sign Language* were to be nestling amongst the shirts ready for the laundry. But sometimes buyer's remorse for a non-purchase can be remedied. The following year I found myself in Toronto once again. Arriving at Atticus Books I went straight to the desk. This was an opportunity to have some innocent fun and to brighten the day of the man sitting behind the cash register.

'You don't happen to have a book on monastic sign language?' I asked.

He looked at me in astonishment. 'As it happens,' he said, 'we do.'

He returned a few minutes later with the Sebeok's great treatise, and I bought it immediately. As I left, I imagined his picking up the phone and calling his boss. 'You'll never guess what happened. You know that book on monastic sign language we've had for 15 years? A customer has just been in, and you'll never believe what he said to me!'

If we can give others a moment of pleasure, even by means of an innocent ruse, why not? As for buyer's remorse, avoid it by buying fewer useless things and more books. There is no regret down that path: only enlightenment and consolation – for both of which terms, I can tell you, there is a monastic sign.

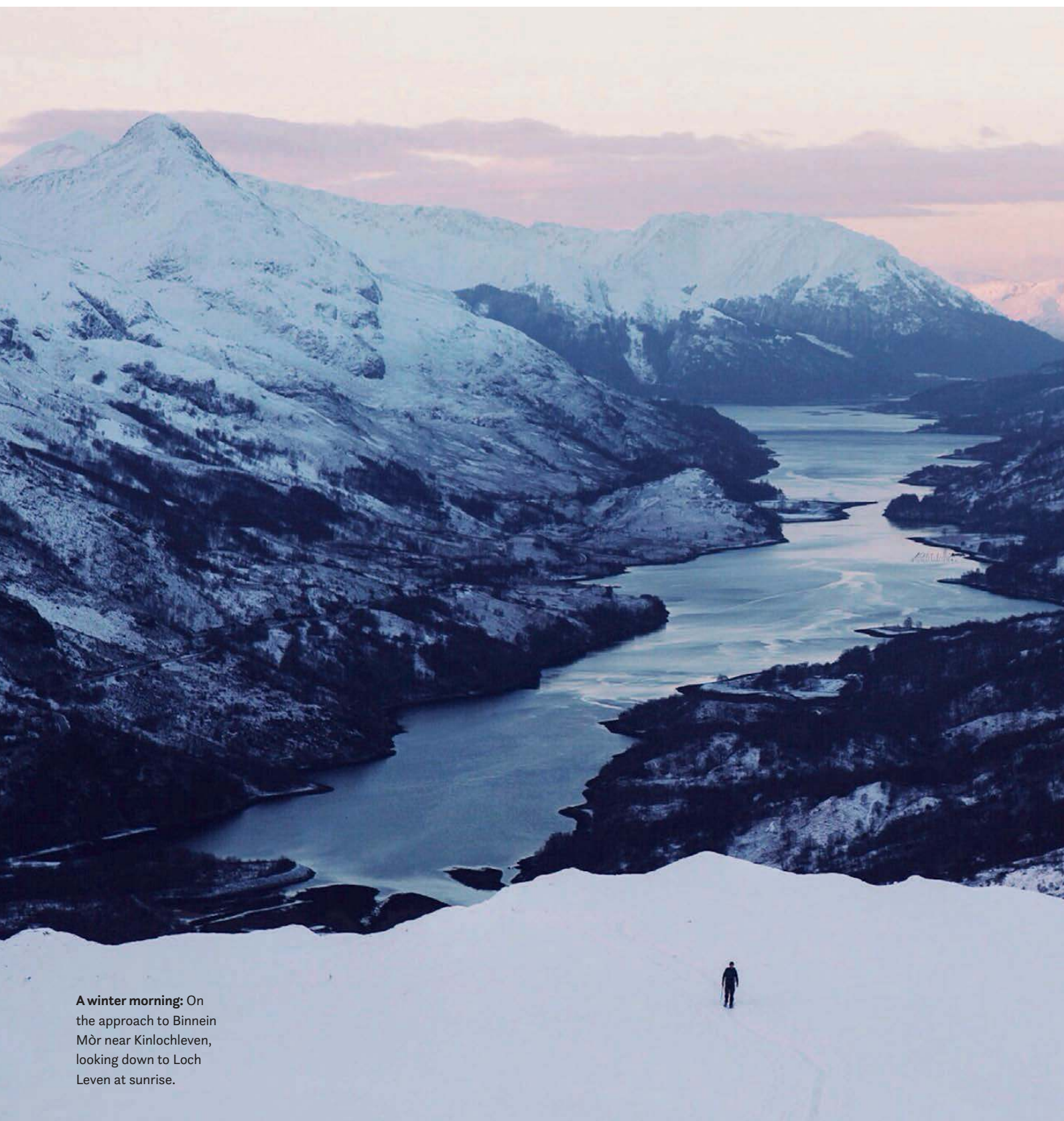
“There is one purchase that very rarely triggers buyer's remorse

Sign of the times

Though we're all guilty of buying useless material goods, **Alexander McCall Smith** believes one can never have too many books – and the barmier the better



A WINTER



A winter morning: On the approach to Binnein Mòr near Kinlochleven, looking down to Loch Leven at sunrise.

WILDERNESS



The magical bleakness of the Highlands in its midwinter glory is manna for those with an artistic eye, like **Richard Gaston**

While some people loathe the dark days, frosty mornings and exorbitant heating bills, others see winter as the ideal subject for photographing, writes *Stephanie Abbot*.

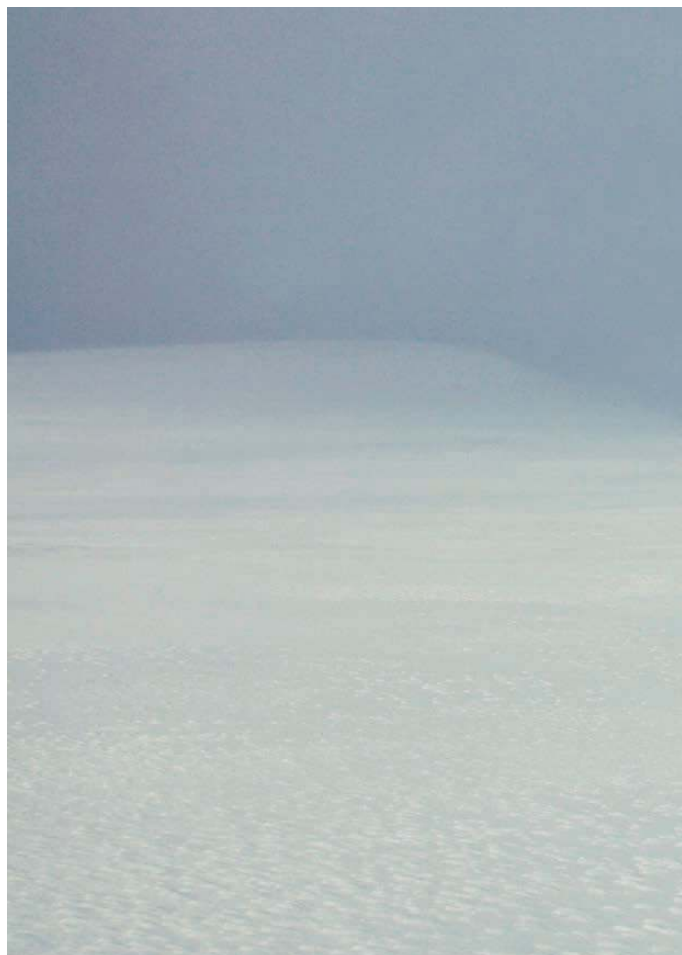
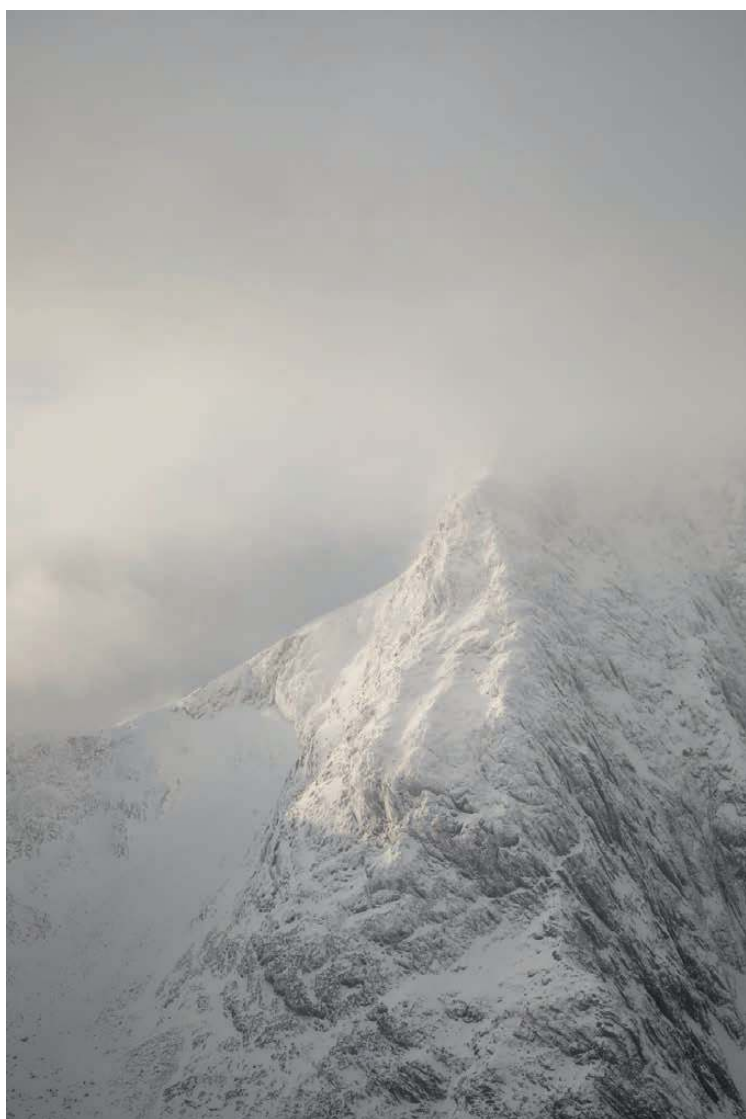
'It's atmospheric, it's extreme, the light is amazing and the snow creates perfect opportunities for photographers,' says self-taught snapper Richard Gaston from Glasgow. 'I'm always on the lookout for forecasted snow and often head north when I know that there's been snowfall.'

To capture these images, Gaston has to brave the elements of the harsh Scottish winter. 'Along with my time spent photographing in the Highlands, I have also developed skills in mountaineering which has given me the experience and equipment I need to get to extreme places,' he says. The challenges that come with this kind of landscape photography seem to only draw him in further. 'I think it's the unpredictability of nature and how moments can spring up at you at any second.'

Gaston turned his hobby into a career through 'years of fiddling with a camera and spending time in the outdoors', and this collection of pictures showcases the truly jaw-dropping drama our midwinter landscape offers.

'Years spent hiking and camping in Scotland have taken me to some stunning places and these are the moments that I deemed most beautiful at that time,' he says. 'I prefer to focus on the details of nature, not so much on the wide vistas. As you can see most of them are not too complicated, just a simple yet lovely moment.'

“It’s atmospheric,
it’s extreme and
the light is amazing



Clockwise from above: The North Face of Ben Nevis;
a window of visibility on Meall Buidhe; a stag pauses in front of a
snow-covered Suilven; a gannet flying around Boreray, St Kilda.

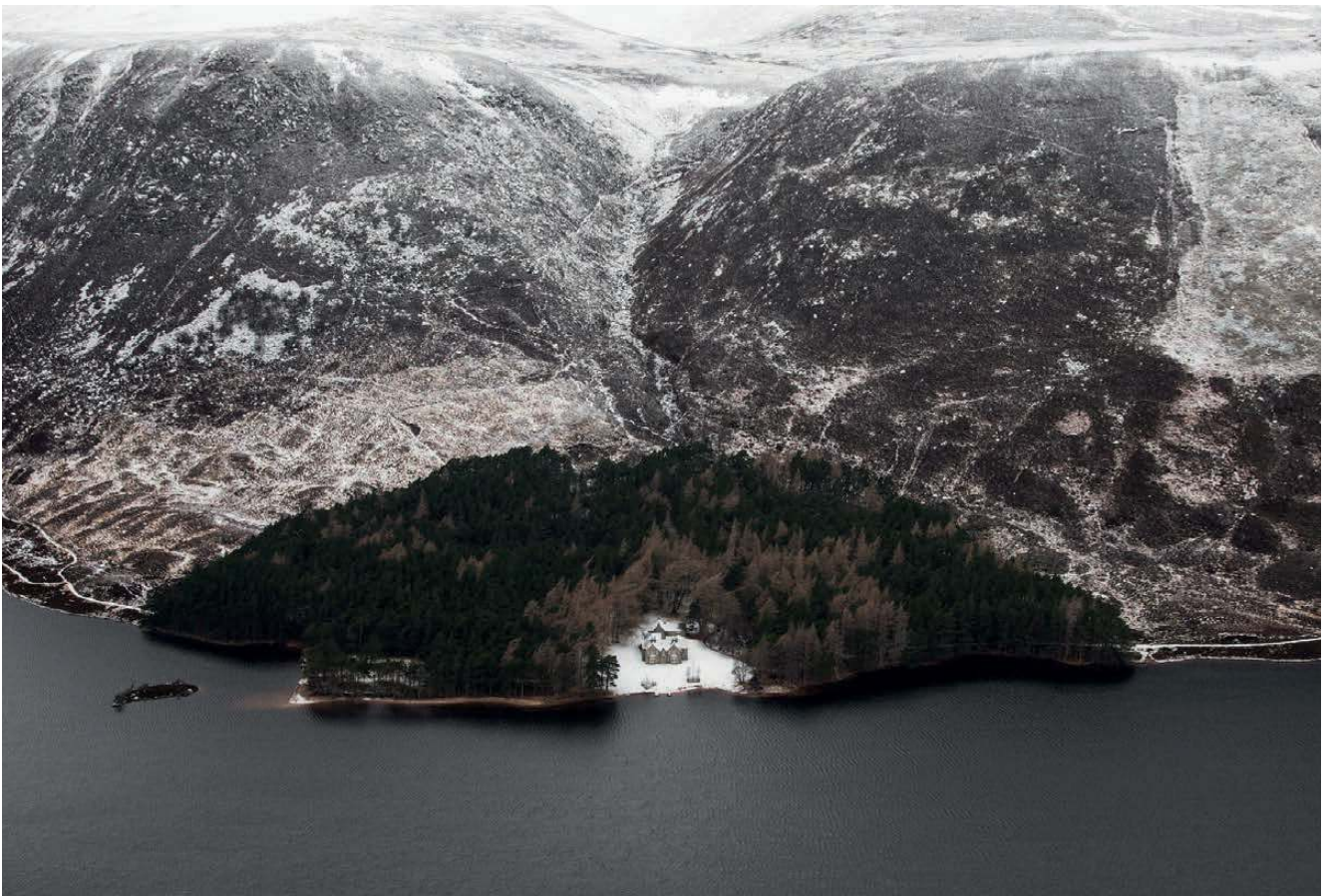




“It’s the unpredictability of nature – moments can spring up at you at any second



Opposite page: Sunrise moon over Ben Lui. **Left:** A stormy evening at Duncansby Head. **Below:** Glas-allt-Shiel Lodge, Loch Muick.



Below: Loch Tulla. **Right:** Sweeney's Bothy on the Isle of Eigg. **Bottom:** A glimmer of light on the summit of Stac Pollaidh.



FIELD FACTS

You can see more of Richard Gaston's work at richardgaston.com or on his instagram page [@richardgaston](https://www.instagram.com/richardgaston).

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Credo...

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One of Scotland's most popular comedians proves he's 'still game' for a laugh

I was originally going to be a doctor, so I started a medical degree, but I hated it so chucked it after four months. So I did a maths degree and got that. I started doing a PhD in maths, but it was making me too sexy, so I gave it up after four months. When you tell women you are doing a PhD in maths, it makes you irresistible... No, not really. I just wasn't clever enough.

I thought about becoming a maths teacher or an accountant with my degree, and I would probably have been quite good at it. If I had been a maths teacher, I'd probably be a head of department or a deputy head by now.

My life changed when I got a phone call from a friend of mine from university who was looking for a presenter for a new radio show. It wasn't a comedy show or anything like that – it was quite magazine-y, for the ethnic minorities in Glasgow. It got as many listeners as you would imagine – seven – but I found sitting in the studio was the most natural thing in the world.

I was writing a sketch show called Shredded Week. It was a listings show, where myself and my writing partner Donald McLeary would go through the week – if you wanted to see one play, read one book, watch one soap. We would do it in character. Donny does a great impression of Emperor Palpatine from Star Wars, so he would do a round-up of the soaps in character. We would look at the arts scene with a pair of neds, Al and Govindy Jeggy, which is where my Twitter handle comes from, and they would end up reviewing the toilets. Although I didn't realise it at the time, that was where my acting started.



Sanjeev Kohli

'I started doing a PhD in maths, but it was making me too sexy'

Still Game has been part of my life since 1997. I started working as a producer on Chewin' The Fat when it was on Radio Scotland, but all I was doing was looking at the stopwatch to time things. Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill knew it inside out. I became a writer on the radio show, and then on TV, before they cast me in the spin-off, Still Game. Greg liked the way I impersonated my dad, and I was asked to audition for Navid. They had played Jack and Victor in a stageplay, and I was joining them for TV and I was worried that I'd be the one that broke it!

I'm the voice of an app called Couch To 5K. You can train yourself to do a 5K in just five weeks. The other voices are Michael Johnson, former 200m world record holder, Jo Whaley, the Radio Two presenter, and Sarah

Millican. Weirdly, some people choose me, and I get tweets saying, 'thanks for getting me through the Couch To 5K'. I reply, 'don't you want to stab me in the face for giving you hot lungs and burning thighs?' People seem to like it, they feel you are on the journey with them when actually I was sitting in the studio with a jumbo almond croissant and a flat white. But I used the app recently – not with my own voice – and I completed it.

I'm often asked if I'm tired of being recognised as Navid, but why would I be? He's a universally loved character, in a beloved sitcom. He celebrates what people have in common. He's a Muslim, but that's not the first thing about him. He's Asian, but that's not the first thing about him. He's arrogant, he's sarcastic – he's a fully rounded human being. If I get buried dressed as Navid, I'll be happy. Actually, I probably will, because that way, more people will come...



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The outlandish queen

Diana Gabaldon has created a stir around Scotland that no one could ever have predicted and her genre-defying juggernaut of tartan shows no sign of slowing. **Rosie Morton** looks at the woman behind the Outlander Effect

From Brigadoon to Braveheart, some of the most passionate transatlantic love letters from North America to the Old World have been dispatched in Scotland's direction. Yet few of the stories created Stateside about the auld country have been more memorable than one of the great modern-day romantic tales – Outlander.

With their time-travelling, historical, romance fiction, the Outlander novels have created a whole new genre. Not only that but the success of their translation to the screen has put American author Diana Gabaldon's creation on a par with George RR Martin's fantasy epic Game of Thrones, JK Rowling's boy wizard Harry Potter and Scot Mark Millar's illustrated creations for Marvel and Hollywood. Like those three authors, Gabaldon has not so much created a series of novels as spawned one of the most popular publishing phenomena of modern times.

The numbers that underpin Outlander are incredible. Her breezblock-sized books – they average 300,000 words – have consistently reached number one in the New York Times bestseller list and have now sold over 35 million copies in 43 countries and 39 languages.

If the Outlander books sold extraordinarily well, the tale of romance, windswept time-travelling beauties and brooding kilted heartthrobs has transferred seamlessly to television. Since Gabaldon's debut novel was transformed into a hit TV series in 2014, each of the 55 episodes so far have been watched by over five million viewers. Nor is there any sign of the phenomenon running out of steam – the fifth series will hit our screens in February 2020, with a sixth currently being filmed.

Gabaldon has successfully tapped into the deep fascination with Scotland that exists in the USA and Canada, where over 500 Highland Games take place each year, the biggest being Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina, which attracts 300,000 tartan-swathed visitors every July.

I saw first-hand how this Scotophilia manifests itself: as a student living in lodgings in Montreal in 2014, my landlady would have her ladies over to watch Outlander every week, all of them dressing head-to-toe in tartan for the occasion.

Outlander has had a profound impact upon tourist numbers in Scotland, a country which she had never visited when she first wrote about the travails of Highland warrior





Left: A scene from *Outlander* starring Caitriona Balfe as Claire Randall and Sam Heughan as Jamie Fraser. **Right:** Diana Gabaldon leans on the railings above Victoria Street in Edinburgh's Old Town ahead of her appearance at the city's International Book Festival.

Jamie Fraser in 1743 during the time of the Jacobite rebellion against the Crown. Figures from the national tourist authority, VisitScotland, show that the *Outlander* phenomenon has led to a 67% increase in visitor numbers since 2013, with *Outlander* Bus Tours now a daily occurrence and some sites featured in the show so popular that they have had to restrict access.

The accuracy of those figures may be open to question, but it is beyond argument that Gabaldon has exponentially increased the numbers of people around the world who know about Scotland's history, who care about the country, and who are now visiting in prodigious numbers.

But who is the woman behind *Outlander*? Her beginnings were suitably unconventional. Born into a Roman Catholic family in 1952, Gabaldon is the fourth generation of her family to have come from the Arizona city of Flagstaff. Her mother Jacqueline Sykes was the mayor's daughter and descended from England, while her father Tony Gabaldon – an Arizona senator

and supervisor of Coconino County – could trace his ancestors as far back as the late-1500s in New Mexico.

However, the deeply conservative southern community in which she grew up looked on her parents' marriage – the union of a daughter from

“The *Outlander* phenomenon has led to a 67% increase in visitor numbers since 2013

one of Flagstaff's founding families with a man of Mexican heritage – with horror. A public petition was raised to stop the marriage, the family priest refused to conduct the nuptials and Gabaldon's mother's English teacher 'told her firmly that she couldn't possibly marry a Mexican; her children would be idiots'.

Gabaldon's mother was sent away to the University of Arizona in Tucson, only to sneak back six months later and marry her father in secret, Gabaldon arriving when the pair were 21. What Gabaldon characterises as the 'miscegenation' – a euphemism for racism – faced by her parents has clearly stayed with her, and there's a clear sense of the outsider in her writing.

The most obvious example of her sticking up for the underdog is the figure of Jacobite Jamie Fraser in *Outlander*. Her decision to write forewords to biographies of two celebrated anti-heroes who championed the everyman against oppression – Thomas Paine and Californian bandit Joaquin Murieta – also speak volumes.

But perhaps the most telling example is a spin-off series of four books she wrote about Lord John Grey. A minor character in the *Outlander* series, Gabaldon's creation is, she says, 'a gay man, in a time when to be homosexual was a capital offense and Lord John has more than most to lose by discovery'.

Growing up as the product of a marriage that scandalised her community is just one way in which the 'idiot' who took home the Romance Writers of America's RITA Award for Best Romance of 1991 for *Outlander* – which was dubbed 'the smartest historical sci-fi adventure-romance story ever written' – is not your run-of-the-mill author of romantic fiction.

Another sign of her willingness to veer from the conventional was her was an unabashedly geeky love of academia. By the time she had started a family with husband Doug Watkins, Gabaldon had collected an impressive array of degrees: a BSc in Zoology, MSc in Marine Biology, and PhD in Behavioural Ecology. In the 80s she was founding editor of *Science Software Quarterly* while working at the Center for Environmental Studies at Arizona State University; she wrote software reviews and technical articles for computer publications *Byte* and *Infoworld*; and even put together comics on a freelance basis for Walt Disney.

In fact Gabaldon only turned to writing fiction while busy at home in the early 90s with three children under the age of six. The unlikely trigger which got her creative juices flowing was an episode of *Doctor Who* which featured fictional Highlander Jamie McCrimmon, who had seen his clan defeated at the Battle of Culloden. Gabaldon was looking to write fiction and it proved the perfect starting point for her male muse, Jamie Fraser.

'That's where I began,' she recalls, 'knowing nothing about Scotland or the eighteenth century, with no plot, no outline, no characters – nothing but the rather vague images conjured up by a man in a kilt (which is, of course, a very powerful and compelling image). I thought that I'd write this whatever-it-was for practice, and then write a real book – perhaps a crime novel as that's what I mostly read at the time.'

Even then, she wrote for herself and only came to prominence when, inhabiting one of the internet forums which connected her to 'real life', she took exception to a misogynistic posting about pregnancy and responded with a passage from her unpublished *Outlander* novel, which detailed a more realistic version of the process. Much to her delight, her fellow forum users' overwhelmingly enthusiastic reaction gave her the courage to approach an agent. Although the gamble paid



off – she is reputed to be worth around \$100 million – she lives a relatively unremarkable life in Scottsdale, Arizona, with her husband, ‘two big, fat dachshunds, somewhere between two and three cats, and a lot of parakeets’.

In many ways it is unsurprising that she adopts such a scientific approach to her writing. Historic details are precise, locations are researched obsessively, and the chaos of the Highland Clearances and their aftermath meticulously presented. ‘I did *Outlander* entirely from library research,’ she says, though she has since visited Scotland many times. Still, the inner academic remains, and research books are never far away – whether out walking the dogs or on an exercise bike, she remains a prodigious reader.

Yet although Gabaldon has fired the imaginations of her millions of readers, she has also divided the critics. *Publishers Weekly* declared that ‘Gabaldon’s prose is crisply elegant, she brings an effusive joy to her fiction that proves infectious, even for readers unfamiliar with her work or the period.’ *The Independent* wrote of the television series that ‘yes, it’s a time-travelling, wish-fulfilment fantasy but it’s done with such flair and attention to detail that it’s impossible not to hop on board for the ride.’

There are, though, a significant number of dissenters from that view of both the books and television series, particularly on this side of the Atlantic. Our very own Siobhan Synnot wrote in *The Scotsman* that ‘there has not been such a proud display of tartanalia since the opening of the 2014 Commonwealth Games,’ her compatriot Alastair McKay called it ‘magical-

mystical heuchter-teuchter cobblers’ in the *Evening Standard*, Euan Ferguson dubbed it ‘gorgeous drivel’ in *The Observer* while *The Guardian*’s Thomas Batten opined: ‘If you love the scenery, shifting allegiances and palace intrigue of *Game of Thrones* but find yourself wishing the pace were a little slower and that the sex scenes were filmed in a more pretentious manner with lots of slow pans and softer lighting, here’s your show.’

But for every critic that knowingly references *Fifty Shades* when dismissing Gabaldon’s prose, there is another championing her. Eminent writer and critic Stuart Kelly, for instance, is impressed by her ingenious ploy of reverse engineering her novels, which means she can continue writing them indefinitely. ‘It is endlessly re-inventible,’ he notes. ‘Even if all the principle characters die, which isn’t unlikely, it’ll turn out there’s been a child, and the child has all the same magical powers.’

Kelly also pointed out that Gabaldon – who wrote a bestselling book called ‘I Give You My Body; How I Write Sex Scenes’ – also has a rare talent for describing the earthier side of romance, which the women who make up the bulk of her readership seem to find believable. Writer Graeme Virtue said she has a ‘rare acknowledgment of the female gaze’ in her treatment of sex scenes, and Kelly agrees.

‘Her books let her have her cake and eat it,’ he said. ‘The time travel means you can get somebody who can be a kind of feminist, but because it’s set in the eighteenth century it allows her to be swept off her feet as well; and a rugged machismo is allowed. It’s artful.’

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Left: Gabaldon's books have been translated into 39 languages and are sold in 43 countries.

But Gabaldon is more than just an author; like JK Rowling she is also an astute businesswoman who has overseen the growth in her franchise with additions like *The Outlander* comic book and the stage show *Outlander: The Musical*. She is tactful and diplomatic, careful not to isolate any of her readers through religion, and constructs her narrative to defy categorisation; something she calls 'the peculiarly indescribable nature of my books'.

The genres under which the *Outlander* series has been sold are endless: literature, fiction, historical fiction, historical non-fiction, fantasy, mystery, romance, gay and lesbian fiction, military history, and even horror. Gabaldon certainly takes advantage of this.

'She said that at events people would come up to ask her what *Outlander* was about, and she had a different angle for whoever it was,' says Jenni Steele, film and creative industries manager at VisitScotland. 'So, if it was a guy she would say, "It's about battles and history", and if it was a woman she'd say, "It's about romance and Scotland".'

The way Gabaldon presents herself is slick and composed; often seen in her trademark turquoise peacock dress, she has constructed a very definite authorial persona. 'She's a kind of living brand,' says Kelly. 'I think she has very carefully created a character called Diana Gabaldon that the fans would love. Authors have to be on stage, they have to be on TV, they have to be on radio. I think she clocked pretty damn quick there had to be a "Diana Gabaldon", and the dress is the giveaway. She is the sorceress behind the magic.'

Her highly considered approach to the media extends into her impressive public utterances. When under the spotlight, she responds to interview questions about her books with enormous composure and imaginative detail. But although she seems to be an interviewer's dream, her ostensibly candid ruminations are a well-rehearsed performance. 'Whenever I

see her, she tells the same story,' says Kelly. 'Almost word for word. About the inspiration for *Outlander*. She'll put her little fly innuendo in about how she was fascinated with the story of what was up the Scotsman's kilt.'

Behind the public face, Gabaldon is careful to provide as little insight as possible into her private life. Though she tantalises her 700,000 Facebook followers and 300,000 Twitter followers with the odd picture of a grandchild, no text or embellishment accompanies them. However, Gabaldon has been unable to resist the temptation of voicing her dismay at Donald Trump's presidency and Brexit. 'I don't talk politics,' she wrote, 'but as a student of history, my impression [is] that [the] world [is] led by idiots approx 85.7% of the time'. Shortly after President Trump's election, she also posted, 'I don't talk politics, but will note that ego does not equal psychological security'.

Her occasional liberal outbursts haven't negatively impacted either Gabaldon's popularity or Trump's presidency, but she has had a huge impact upon Scotland's economy, with Scottish tourism growing exponentially since her chiselled, blue-eyed Jamie Fraser first graced television screens across the globe.

'People who have watched the series want to come on holiday to Scotland, but are also interested in visiting locations,' says VisitScotland's Steele. 'They want to do things like learn about Jacobite history and clans, trace their own ancestry, and find out about the Gaelic culture and language. A lot of the fans are very well researched about Scotland and want to delve beneath the storyline.'

North American interest in Scotland has never been in short supply, but Gabaldon has certainly heightened the romantic notion of distant hills and glens. Though she admits she did

“Gabaldon has certainly heightened the romantic notion of distant hills and glens

not set out to help Scottish tourism, her so-called 'Outlander Effect' means themed tours take place on a daily basis, with film locations like Doune Castle (the fictional Castle Leoch) registering a colossal 226.5% increase

in footfall in the last five years, while Blackness Castle, Black Jack Randall's headquarters, saw visitor numbers rise by 181.7%. The impact of the books and television series has been so far-reaching that VisitScotland last year gave Gabaldon an award for her International Contribution to Scottish Tourism.

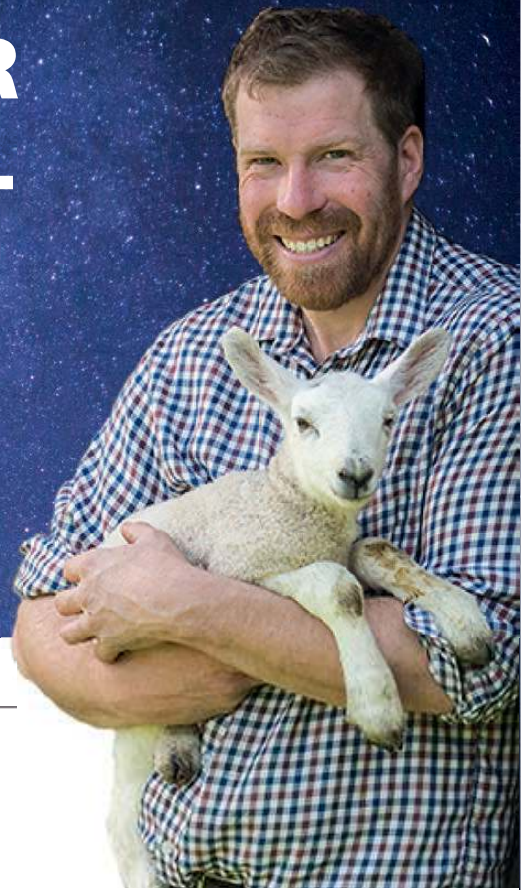
Gabaldon is due to release the ninth book in her *Outlander* series, *Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone*, this year and has already shared multiple excerpts from it on her website. 'I still keep the family house in Flagstaff, and escape there regularly to write,' she explains. 'To me, the ideal weather for writing involves a gleaming portcullis of icicles to keep out all intruders, soft white drifts on the pines and the sidewalks, and the muffled grind of cars in the distance, rushing cinders into the slippery packed snow.'

For the self-proclaimed 'Heughan Heughligans' out there, this winter might just provide enough glittering inspiration to see her over the finishing line.

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How to heat a cold house is a perennial problem, the more so if you let it get cold in the first place. Mind you, before I start I must insist that the house in which we live is not by any stretch of the imagination cold.

That view, however, is a strictly minority one because the other inhabitants – three people of a distinctly female persuasion – are forever complaining that they're freezing. And not just in the winter, either.

It's a moan that can be heard in these parts during almost every month of the year – except July, and that's because we're normally in France for much of it.

Still, I will accept that our mid-Victorian house can be a mite draughty but then that's what you get when you go for quality and character, is it not? Better a few breezes blowing round the house, surely, than the stuffy atmosphere so prevalent nowadays in those over-insulated dwellings in which many prefer to live. For one thing, it's much healthier – or at least that's what I tell the offspring – to stick on another layer if you're that cold.

And anyway living in the city now is surely preferable, at least to their way of thinking, than in the countryside where they spent much of their younger years. Then, they really did experience cold – lots of snow, especially around New Year, and too many 'minus' temperatures to remember in any detail. However, the strange thing is they never seemed to feel the cold. Or if they did, they never mentioned it. Or if they did, I ignored their moans.

Once, we were completely snowed in – for four or five days – and had to dig ourselves out on a number of occasions. We had great difficulty with an extremely large guest one New Year and I have a vague memory of getting everyone to the 'disco' on sledges... but surely I couldn't have got him out that way. Could I? But how else?

Still, I digress. The events I'm talking about here are all, sadly, in the past: what's required now is maintaining an even temperature at our Edinburgh

abode. 'And can we make that above 30 degrees Celsius,' I hear them cry. As I've never really got the hang of 'new' temperatures, I've no idea how warm that is, but I know it's bound to be too hot for me.

Most of the chimneys in our house have long since been blocked up and gas central heating is supposed to do what the many open fires presumably did in days gone by. But, according to my nearest and dearest it simply doesn't happen – thanks to radiators continually needing 'bled' and those in their bedrooms being too far removed from the boiler, they are thus never likely to get really hot.

The upshot throughout much of the house is an assortment of electric things – under-blankets, fan heaters and oil-filled radiators which gobble up, or so the makers claim, very little 'juice'. Our fuel bills regularly give the lie to that assertion.

Oh yes, there's a gas heater which used to keep the cottage warm. That is considered too ugly to be used too often in town. But I shall tell you what, it will be pressed into service if this winter stays cold, especially in that 'sit-oot-erie' where it's perpetually cold.

Best of all, I have recently rediscovered an incredibly reliable coal merchant who delivers in the old fashioned way, with men toting huge sacks of smokeless coal down the basement steps and tipping them into our bunker. His prices, too, are significantly less than the outrageous amounts charged by the local garage.

I daresay many of you are not in the slightest surprised by this fact but we townies are frequently taken for suckers. So much so that we're ever so proud when we find a better way of keeping warm. Well, warm-ish, at any rate.

“Our mid-Victorian house can be a mite draughty, but that's what you get when you go for character



Getting hot under the collar

The perpetual debate about heating the house is driving **Alan Cochrane** to distraction, and he's finding himself well and truly outnumbered by the ladies of the manor

THE GREAT WIZARD OF THE NORTH

Though Harry Houdini is lauded as the greatest magician of all time, he might not have seen such incredible success without Aberdeenshire illusionist John Henry Anderson, says **Rosie Morton**



Long before the days of Derren Brown's psychological illusions and David Blaine's elaborate endurance stunts, the great Harry Houdini had jaws dropping in theatres across the world. The master of illusion, the godfather of escapology, the greatest magician of all time – at his peak, Houdini's death-defying tricks and taste for the masochistic saw his name in shining lights.

But while he worked his way into the upper circles of the magical sphere, he attributed much of his success to one Professor John Henry Anderson of Aberdeenshire. A revolutionary 19th-century magician dubbed 'The Great Wizard of the North' by Sir Walter Scott, Anderson was one of Houdini's greatest inspirations. With his sleight of hand, relentless self-promotion and debunking of famous spiritualists, Anderson dominated the magical scene, giving a masterclass to the next generation on how to take the wonderful world of wizardry by storm.

'In his day, Anderson was a zillion times bigger than Houdini,' says Dave Goulding, vice president and secretary of the Aberdeen Magical Society, who is himself a dab hand at escapology and mentalism. 'You've heard of the rabbit out of the hat trick? Anderson was the first magician to do it, certainly in the western world. You've heard of the linking rings trick? He did that too.'

Born in the Deeside village of Kincardine O'Neil in 1814 and orphaned at the tender age of ten, Anderson's beginnings were incredibly humble, and his prospects slight. In 1830, a chance encounter with a travelling dramatic company set him on an



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upward trajectory through the magical ranks – a stroke of luck that was to turn his life on its head.

Performing for such names as Lord Panmure of Brechin Castle, the 11th Earl of Dalhousie, was enough endorsement for him to launch a solo tour in his early twenties, and by the time he settled in the Big Smoke, where he opened the New Strand Theatre, he had been credited for transforming magic – formerly a street performance gimmick – into a theatrical sensation. He even caught the eye of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who are said to have summoned Anderson to perform for them at Balmoral Castle.

Whether he was catching bullets fired from the audience, making people ‘float’ by blowing ether on them, or developing the ground-breaking ‘inexhaustible bottle’ trick – where he’d pour seemingly endless amounts of any drink from a kettle on demand – he dazzled audiences with tricks that had never before been seen, many of which are still replicated today.

‘The fees he would command for shows were insane,’ says Goulding.



Opposite: John Henry Anderson was dubbed The Great Wizard of the North by Sir Walter Scott.

Above: He was summoned to play at Balmoral Castle.

Left: Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are said to have enjoyed Anderson’s stage magic.

“He’d pour seemingly endless amounts of any drink from a kettle on demand

A SHILLING'S WORTH

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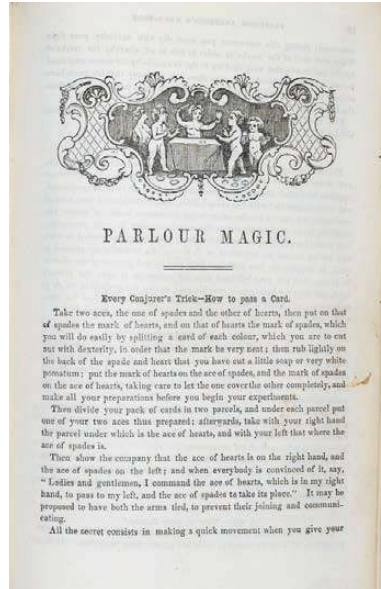
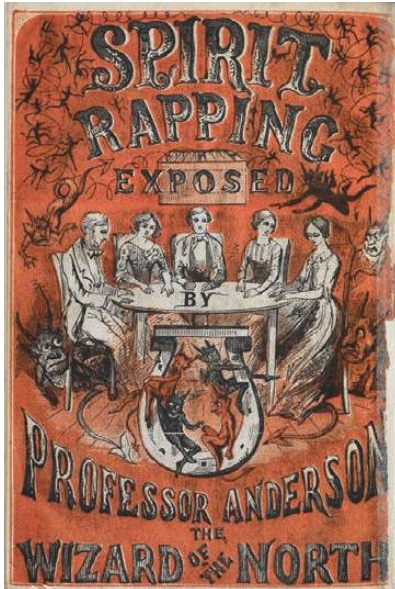
PROFESSOR



ANDERSON



GREAT WIZARD
OF THE
NORTH.



'People would sometimes only make a couple of quid out of putting on his show, but for the prestige of saying, "Anderson was at our theatre", it was worth it.' Though the Great Wizard lost his fortune three times over – twice when his theatres burned to the ground, and once when forced to flee from the southern states of America during the Civil War, finding the locals less than impressed with his 'Wizard of the North' status – his international fame saw him right every time.

So, how did a small-town lad set himself apart? As well as taking great pleasure in exposing the 'frauds' of spiritualism, like the Davenport brothers who claimed supernatural forces to be at the heart of their shows, self-promotion was his extraordinarily simple way of gaining support. Writing in his *Shilling's Worth of Magic* publication, Anderson said that 'the chief requisites for success in the performance of feats of legerdemain are manual dexterity and self-possession. The former can only be acquired by practice; the latter will be the natural result of a well-grounded confidence.'

He had confidence in abundance, while publicising his work

“Anderson took pleasure in exposing the 'frauds' of spiritualism

was his speciality. During his three world tours, for instance, during which he visited Europe, Australasia, Russia and North America, he'd visit all the local hotels in each city, gifting them handmade butter moulds.

'So, when people came down to breakfast, on their butter was written, "Professor John Henry Anderson, The Great Wizard of the North at the Alhambra Theatre, all week"', explains Goulding.

And his commercial savvy didn't end there. As well as printing handbills, posters and pamphlets galore, Anderson even convinced a travelling circus to walk down the high street with 'Professor John Henry Anderson' posters on their elephants' sides, just a few days before his show.

'If he hadn't done all that promotion,' says Goulding, 'Houdini wouldn't have dangled himself by his ankles outside newspaper offices in a strait jacket. That's the big influence that Anderson had on Houdini – the lesson of publicity and the debunking of spiritualists.'



Houdini was born in 1874 – the year of Anderson's death – but he publicly revered the Great Wizard. In 1909, shortly after launching himself manacled into the North Sea from a tugboat and freeing himself in 18 seconds, Houdini visited Anderson's grave in Aberdeen and was said to have been delighted at having photographic evidence of doing so. He claimed to have donated a significant sum to have the gravestone restored.

Risking his life on a daily basis in the name of entertainment certainly earned Houdini a place in the history books, but the Great Wizard of the North, who promised 'unparalleled sensations' and 'overflowing nightly ovations', most certainly had a considerable influence on the direction of Harry Houdini's career.

Opposite: Anderson's *A Shilling's Worth of Magic* publication. **Clockwise from top left:** Anderson reveals some tricks of the trade; Houdini took inspiration from Anderson, including the importance of self-promotion; Houdini paid for the restoration of Anderson's grave in St Nicholas cemetery, Aberdeen – the man beside Houdini is thought to be a relative of Anderson's.



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The Scottish Government endlessly bang on about their love of country, but when it comes to our coastline the gap between what they practice and what they preach is enormous. Under this administration an important part of our pristine wilderness is being allowed to go to wrack and ruin.

I find the disparity between the rhetoric and the reality profoundly depressing, especially as I was so impressed by the beautiful stand made last year in the Scottish parliament to block a bio technology firm's application to be allowed free access to dredge the kelp forests in our inshore. And further back I was really proud of the manner in which Richard Lochhead guided our Marine Protected Areas into existence whilst skilfully dealing with a truly spooky alliance of scallop dredging local bully boys and their cynical cohort of vote hunting Tory outriders.

But then Lochhead was replaced by Fergus Ewing, which is where the trouble began. Ewing may be a man of impeccable Nationalist pedigree, but I see no true love of country in a minister who is quite willing to consider allowing scallop dredging in our MPAs and has done absolutely nothing to stop the endless illegal incursions into the protected marine areas.

Ewing is allowing the fabric of our inshore to be turned to rubble and reduced to its barest levels of fecundity. Such is my mistrust of his motives that I find myself wondering exactly what his role in a plan to run a kelp dredging trial next year has been.

A vast number of local businesses on the West Coast, one of which was mine, and 14,000 individuals signed a petition against kelp dredging. Mark Ruskell, Green MSP, successfully amended the Scottish Crown Estate Bill and steered parliament towards a block on progress towards a kelp licence for dredging. Scotland's kelp forests were rightly protected as a priority marine feature. They are ecosystems in their own right, providing nursery grounds for many fish, and shelter for marine mammals, including otters and seals. There is also growing awareness of their importance as a store of blue carbon.

The kelp fringe also acts as a vital buffer against storms protecting coasts from erosion. In fact they're even planting plastic – yes, *plastic* – kelp-like structures off the coast of California to dissipate wave action now that they've ripped up all of their kelp. I think the real stuff is better!

We are blessed to have our shallows fringed by the pure wilderness of our kelp forest zone. I swim through kelp forests most days and their beauty and richness of biodiversity never fails to humble me. The kelp is also, generally, untouched by the dredging due to the fact that kelp needs rock to anchor itself and, as such, the scallopers can't always get their gear into the kelpy areas. So it's a pure wilderness zone in every sense of the word.

Yet here we are again, just one year later, fighting for the kelp. I'm not surprised as I understand that to fight for the environment is to accept the purgatory of an endless swim against the tide of man's greed. This time the profit motive belongs to a chemical company planning to use kelp to make antacid medication.

They're not giving up and have hired – sigh – a PR company to lobby parliament. So we're back in the unhappy position of having to beg our representatives to see past the short termism and truly understand that protecting our kelp forests is not to 'ignore' a potential resource. Far from it: by protecting our kelp wilderness we are ensuring that we have money in the bank forever; that a great natural asset belongs to Scotland and its people and is not simply given away to a private company.

The hypocrisy of it all is stunning – we're planting trees on land yet are looking seriously at ripping up forests underwater. And then I remembered that 2020, when the kelp dredging trial is due to start, is the 'Year of Coasts and Waters'. It's time for some Gaviscon.

“We are blessed to have our shallows fringed by pure wilderness



What price a love of country?

The proposed destruction of Scotland's precious kelp forests in the name of capitalism is once again keeping **Guy Grieve** awake at night

Famous five

New routes around the often overlooked areas of Ayrshire and Arran give **Stephanie Abbot** the chance to find some hidden gems and get a taste of what this part of Scotland has to offer

Believe it or not our bonnie wee country spans just over eight million hectares. Packed in to all that space is more history, stunning architecture, breathtaking landscapes and delicious food than you can shake a medieval sword at.

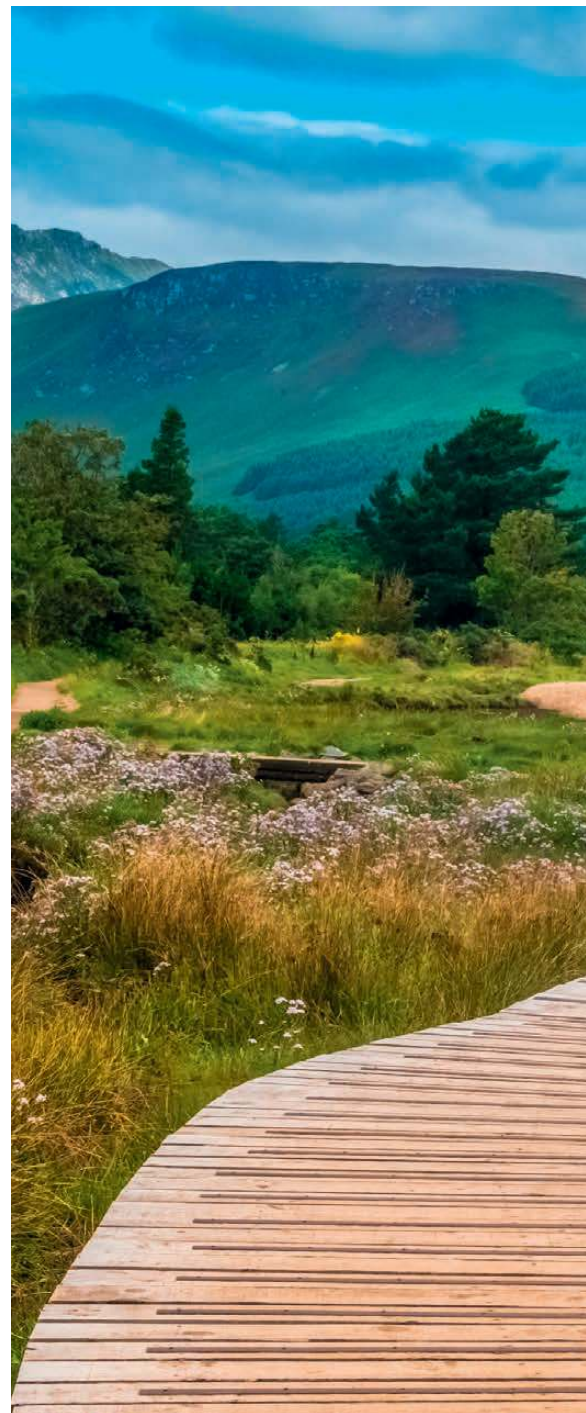
And while people tend to flock to our bustling capital, stage a Nessie search party or head to the Highlands, there's a wealth of hidden gems and adventures all over Scotland.

With The North Coast 500 having injected £22 million into the North Highland community over the last 12 months, it is Scotland's most successful route development since its launch in 2015 – and now there's a new kid on the block justifiably reaching for a piece of the growing Scottish tourism pie.

The Coig, meaning 'five' in Gaelic, is a tourism campaign made up of a series of five different tourist routes covering Ayrshire, Arran, Bute and Cumbrae. Each route has been specifically designed to showcase the area's natural beauty,

Right: View of Goatfell, the highest point on the Isle of Arran.

Below: Stephanie kicked off the journey at Blair Estate in Dalry.



history, and food and drink, as well as a wide range of outdoor and family activities on offer across the region.

'We wanted to bring something together; a reason for new people to come and visit and also for people who had visited part of the region before to explore other parts of it,' says Daniel Steel, operations director for The Coig. 'Perhaps people who have been to mainland Ayrshire, this would encourage them to also get out and see some of the Clyde islands and vice versa.'

With shorter individual routes, it means visitors can take on The Coig or at least parts of it, as a day trip or over a weekend. 'The routes can either be done



together or in bite-size chunks, so people will hopefully find a reason to come back,' says Steele. 'It's not just a driving route either, we want to see people cycle and walk.'

Three of the five routes require travel by ferry but for a lot of people (myself included) this simply adds to the adventure. To experience some of what The Coig has to offer when it comes to Ayrshire and Arran, I headed out with our photographer Angus for a road test.

We started off on the mainland with the 55-mile-long Shiel route, which incorporates the seaside towns and maritime heritage plus the landscape of Clyde Muirshiel Country Park, and our

“The Coig, meaning ‘five’ in Gaelic, is a tourist campaign



Right: Out on the water with Sea Clyde tours.



first stop was the impressive Blair Estate in Dalry where we stayed in the Garden Cottage. Set in 220 acres of woodland and private gardens, the estate is a cosy retreat which acted as a base for our day of exploring Ayrshire.

One of the main aims of The Coig is to promote local produce by integrating great food and drink, so we ventured to West Kilbride for our first Coig-inspired meal at The Waterside Hotel. We tucked into scallops, shin of beef and a medley of cheeses as

“One of the main aims is to promote local produce

we took in the stunning views across the Firth of Clyde.

The following day we were joined by local Ardrossan lad Matt Smith, who is the founder of luxury tour company Primal Adventures. He was on hand to inject some insider knowledge throughout our tour as he transported us in his Range Rover to sites such as Kilwinning Abbey, Saltcoats beach, the colourful Kelburn Castle and Largs Viewpoint, which offers stunning

views across the Firth of Clyde to to Arran, Bute and the Isles of Cumbrae.

Being so close to the water already, it felt only right that we take the opportunity to step off land and on to a boat. In the capable hands of sea tour company Sea Clyde we made our way out of Largs Yacht Haven and onto the water where, to my absolute delight, we met Kylie, the resident dolphin who calls this stretch of water home. We also spotted some common seals resting on the rocks just off Millport, the only town on Great Cumbrae. There are a number of tour options available which showcase the islands around the Firth of Clyde should you also feel the call of the waves.

To begin the 70-mile Arran route, we braved the water once again, only in a slightly larger vessel, a CalMac ferry. Once ashore, we checked into the



Left (clockwise from top left): Kelburn Castle; Largs resident dophin, Kylie; cyclists on the Isle of Arran; Kilwinning Abbey, North Ayrshire; One of Blair's grand reception rooms; Stuart Fraser and George Grassie of Isle of Arran Gin Company in their new beach hut distillery; the perfect sunset shot taken from Largs Viewpoint; a seal rests off the Ayrshire coast.



expansive but welcoming Auchrannie resort. Our evenings were spent by cosy fires in the house hotel, sinking in to the leather couches as we slowly sipped our favourite tipples. The resort has all the things you'd expect from a four-star establishment from their Scottish-style tapas restaurant 1869 to the private lodges and relaxing spa and leisure club.

On The Arran route we were pleased to encounter The Arran Gin Company, whose cosy beach house venue opens in March 2020. We got a sneak peak at this neat little spot on the shore which oozes a casual charm and where music pours out of the record player as you cuddle up with a t-rex adorned pillow by the woodburning stove, with a freshly made G&T in hand. Made using no less than six botanicals gathered on Arran itself, founder Stuart Fraser and director George Grassie are keen to welcome visitors in for talks, tastings and cocktail classes.

Dotted with so many fascinating places along the way and with lots to be discovered, The Coig's five routes could be revisited again and again. What was clear from my time spent with the people involved is that there's a real buzz of excitement and a hope that this will bring more visitors to this vibrant part of Scotland. They will not be disappointed.



Above: The five routes; 1. The Shire, 2. The Shiel, 3. The Arran, 4. The Bute, 5. The Cumbrae.

SOUTHERN STROLLS

From glorious coastline to gentle farmland that slides into rolling hills and craggy peaks, there is a wealth of wonderful wanderings and a healthy dose of history to be discovered in Ayrshire and Arran, says **Nick Draine**

Ayrshire and Arran are a brilliant mix of mountains, rolling hills, bucolic farmland, rugged coast and beach. Here, there is the chance to test your hiking strength and skill to the highest degree. Or, enjoy a gentle stroll which will energise the senses just as much – albeit with less strain on the legs and lungs.

Off the coast, with a jagged skyline which catches the eye from the mainland, is Arran; an island that has to be on everyone's list of must-see places in Scotland. The cliché says it is Scotland in miniature but it is not a substitute for the rest of the country, it is so good it could be said to be another hackneyed phrase; the jewel in the crown.

In the summer months this is a place of many tourists but it is great to visit at any time of the year. A resident red deer population on the island adds to the majesty of Goat Fell, the highest point which is most easily climbed from Brodick, where the ferry arrives from Ardrossan.

However, the whole of the island is wonderfully set up for walking with good waymarked routes and signposts. To the north is Lochranza and a lovely coastal stroll to Fairy Dell – yes, the winged creatures are said to live around here.

Further round the coast is a wonderful stretch of beach at Pirnmill and to the south is a popular spot for a historical walk. Blackwaterfoot has a good stretch of rugged coast to explore although the highlight for most is the King's Cave, said to have been where Robert the Bruce had his famous encounter with a spider.

On the other side of Arran is Lamlash where you can catch a ferry to the Holy Isle, now owned by the Samye Ling Buddhist Community, which is a superb place to wander and look for seabirds.

Back on the mainland, Largs has always been a popular spot for holiday makers and day trippers (remember to visit Nardinis ice cream parlour). In actual fact, it was the Vikings who really put the place on the map but nowadays there is some good walking which attracts folk, not least up Castle Hill and along Gogo Glen. Off Largs is the island of Great Cumbrae, not as dramatic as Arran but definitely packed with lots of wonderful, old world charm, especially at Millport where you can walk past Crocodile Rock (it is painted as such) to Farland Point.

It is hard to think of Ayrshire without contemplating Robert Burns. The Bard was born here and certainly left his mark in Alloway. The town oozes his writings and it is a good idea to follow a literary trail which takes in the Auld Kirk and Brig o' Doon.

The 44-mile River Ayr Way is one of many long distance routes which have sprung up in Scotland in recent years and can often be a good way to spend a short break. They can, of course, be done in sections and one good part of this path is at Sorn where the river enjoys a superb backdrop of rolling countryside and woodland. There is the chance as well to stop off at the brilliant Sorn Inn.

The 100-mile Ayrshire Coastal Path is also growing in popularity and a good section to try is between Lendalfoot and



THREE FAMILY WALKS IN AYRSHIRE & ARRAN



Castle Hill, Largs

There is not only a fantastic view to Bute and Arran, as well as the Isle of Cumbrae and Little Cumbrae in the foreground, but also a 5,000-year-old chambered cairn along the way. This is a great little hill to stretch the legs and earn an excuse to avail yourself of an ice cream or fish and chips at the famous Nardini's art deco café below.



Culzean Castle

The grounds of Culzean Castle are great to wander around at anytime of year, even when the great stately pile is closed to visitors. As you make your way along, views open out to Arran, the Mull of Kintyre and even Northern Ireland on a clear day. To the south is the huge granite lump of Ailsa Craig. Take your time and make your walk as long or short as you like.



Holy Isle, Arran

One for the warmer months when a wee ferry operates from Lamlash. The island is great for exploration and wildlife with the chance of seeing a wealth of seabirds, as well as Eriskay ponies, Soay sheep and Saanen goats. After a walk around the isle return by the ferry and refresh at the Drift Inn in Lamlash, which serves up great food.



Girvan, where the coast is a mix of rocks and beach, with the granite plug of Ailsa Craig off the coast.

Above Girvan is Byne Hill, which has an even better view of Ailsa Craig. You can also go out to the big lump of rock by boat and make a strenuous walk up to the top. It is probably best, however, to admire it from afar or to try a bit of curling as the rock provides the stones for this most Scottish of winter games.

Culzean Castle is a star attraction for visitors to Ayrshire and its sumptuous Robert Adam design makes it a picture postcard

spot. The surrounding country park is good to stroll through while taking in coastal views, meaning you can enjoy it year round, even when the building is closed to visitors.

“Arran is an island that has to be on everyone’s must-see list

Inland there is some wonderful countryside to explore. Loch Doon with its castle is a popular spot, as is the Burn Anne walk from Galston in the Irvine Valley. Darvel is another destination with a great walk along an old railway line and up Loudon Hill – the first climb of which is almost a rite of passage for locals. The village of Barr is the start for a fine walk into forest – the Changue Plantation – with a well-marked trail to follow.

If a wooded glen with beautiful waterfalls is your thing then Lady Hunter Blair’s walk in Straiton is for you. Lose yourself in a place that feels like it has been forgotten only for you to rediscover it. In many ways it sums up what Ayrshire is about – a place where extreme mindfulness could easily be enjoyed.



Above: Enjoying the views from the top of Goat Fell on the Isle of Arran.

Left: Crocodile Rock, Millport on the Isle of Cumbrae. **Below:** Brig o’ Doon in Alloway was made famous by Robert Burns in his poem Tam o’ Shanter.



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Destination Ayrshire & Arran



THE LAGG HOTEL

Isle of Arran

Tel: 01770 870255

lagghotel.com

The Isle of Arran is Scotland's most southerly island and Lagg is situated at the southern tip of the island. From the hotel a ten minute walk takes you down Lovers Lane beside the river, past an ancient cairn onto the beach where white sand stretches. A warm welcome awaits you at this traditional hotel.

CORRIE MAINS

Mauchline

Tel: 01290 550338

real-free-range-eggs.co.uk/

Corrie Mains hens live in traditional wooden houses, a stress free environment. Hens are allowed out to range and come into the safety of their house at night. Eggs are collected daily, graded, and coded to provide traceability, then packed on the farm. Delivery the following day to shops ensures eggs are fresh, natural and nutritious, laid by happy hens.



TRUMP TURNBERRY RESORT

Turnberry, Girvan

Tel: 01655 331000

trumphotels.com/turnberry

Immersed in over 110 years of history, and set against breath-taking views of Ayrshire's coastline, Turnberry provides the perfect backdrop for coastal breaks. The surrounding area offers much to explore - from castles to distilleries, and the birthplace of Robert Burns. All of this just one hour from Glasgow and two hours from Edinburgh.



THE COO SHED

Alloway

Tel: 01292 442392

www.thecooshed.co.uk

Set in the countryside, The Coo Shed is another addition to the busy South Corton dairy farm, offering customers a unique dining experience. With all things farm-related in its décor, it offers a fabulous selection of food, all made on the premises. And, you can buy fresh farm milk from a vending machine! Open 9.30am-4.30pm everyday, the Coo Shed has proven to be a very popular destination for many.

BANLICKEN

Isle of Arran

Tel: 01506 881688

arranfarmhouse.com

Banlicken is a beautifully renovated self-catering holiday house on the Isle of Arran. The location is exceptional with fabulous sea views across the Kilbrannan Sound and is truly relaxing, magical and private with direct access to the coast and hills. Perfect for couples or families and sleeps up to 12.



SHEILA KERR JEWELLERY

Irvine

Tel: 07858 257455

www.sheilakerrjewellery.com

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Best of the west

The unique Dougarie Estate offers sporting and non-sporting holidays on the wild and unspoilt west coast of the Isle of Arran.

What better way to escape it all than by stepping off the mainland and onto the beautiful Isle of Arran? Take some time out from the hustle and bustle of Scotland's cities and indulge yourself with a week's holiday on the Dougarie Estate. There's plenty of space to accommodate all of the traditional sporting activities such as stalking, shooting and fishing as well as many other activities ranging from golf to charcuterie courses.

Dougarie Lodge was built as the sporting summerhouse for the 11th Duke of Hamilton around 1865 and until the 1970s had antlers adorning the external walls. The Duke married Princess Marie of Baden and perhaps the strong influences from Bavaria and Hungary gave rise to many of the unique features such as deerskins on the passage walls, antler door handles and a window over the main fireplace. Both the Hamilton and Montrose families made Dougarie a core part of their summer holidays entertaining friends and family from across Europe each year.

Extensively modernised and refurbished to a high standard in 2019, groups of up to 14 can stay in the House of Machrie, a substantial Victorian country house set in beautiful surroundings with fabulous coastal views across the Kilbrannan Sound to the Mull of Kintyre. There is also the Towers which boasts an impressive roof terrace with stunning views of Arran's northern mountains. Smaller accommodation options are also available too, all of which are finished to a high standard and located

near to the main letting properties.

Whether it's your friends or family you wish to bring together, you won't be bored on Arran with numerous activities ranging from hill walking, distillery and nature tours as well as exploring the local sites of interest or sampling some of the great local restaurants and cafes. Driven shooting and walked up days can also be arranged to suit all levels of experience. The river Iorsa runs through the heart of the Estate and is a typical west-coast spate river, offering both salmon and sea-trout fishing. Sea fishing and lobster potting is a great summer activity especially for the younger members of your party along with beach barbeques and picnics.

Take a break from the everyday and escape to Dougarie Estate.

For bookings and enquiries email: office@dougarie.com or call **01770 840259**. Dougarie Estate, Isle of Arran, KA27 8EB





THE LAGG HOTEL

Isle of Arran

Tel: 01770 870255

lagghotel.com

The Lagg hotel is one of the oldest established hotels on the Isle of Arran, and has been serving the public since 1791. Open fires and wooded gardens set the scene for a peaceful stay. It has retained its traditional charm inside and out, remaining an authentic coaching inn.

For those looking for an adventurous trip, head out of the hotel to the beautiful surroundings of Arran. Take a distillery tour, try some thrilling outdoor adventure activities, or why not scale Goatfell, the largest mountain on Arran?

The Lagg Hotel is the perfect base for any trip, with well-cooked food and a fantastic range of drinks. Enjoy fine dining creations from Arran whisky salmon, stuffed quail, roast Scottish beef to mango and coconut rice pudding and raspberry parfait in front of an open fire in the lounge bar or restaurant. Full Scottish and continental breakfast is included in your room price and is served in the dining room overlooking wooded gardens.

Set amongst secluded gardens in the wooded hollow of Lagg in Kilmory, the excellent service, ensuite accommodation, restaurant, lounge bar and tranquil gardens make the Lagg Hotel the perfect holiday destination in the Scottish islands.



DUNLOP DAIRY

Near Dunlop

Tel: 01560 482494

dunlopdairy.co.uk

Dunlop dairy is a small traditional dairy farm set in the Ayrshire countryside near the village of Dunlop. A popular wee place to visit, the shop offers a selection of their own farmhouse cheeses including the famous Dunlop cheese, fresh farm milk, eggs and other local produce. You can relax in the tearoom and enjoy the most delicious homebaking, lunches and afternoon tea.



THE STRAWBERRY CUSHION

Troon

Tel: 01292 317093

facebook.com/thestrawberrycushion

Multi-award-winning family-run coffee shop offering freshly prepared breakfasts and lunches, served in a relaxed and cosy atmosphere. Delicious homemade scones and cakes are baked onsite daily, which perfectly complement the shop's traditional Italian roasted coffees. Their festive drinks are perfect after an autumn stroll along the beach.

THE DOUGARIE TOWERS

Isle of Arran

Tel: 01770 840259

dougariestate.co.uk

Full of history and romance, this fabulous 19th-century tower house has been transformed into a luxurious holiday home with spectacular roof terrace sleeping eight guests on the beautiful Isle of Arran. Originally built for the Duke of Hamilton, this impressive property has prime position by the River Iorsa, 250m from Dougarie Beach and in grassy parkland. For bookings and enquiries call or email office@dougariestate.co.uk



WORK-LIFE

When David Royce and Sally Keay upped sticks to open a B&B in Perthshire it took a while to find a place that could work as a home and a business, finds **Nichola Hunter**



BALANCE



Home from home: The drawing room with vintage Mdina glass and Persian rugs is a cosy spot to relax.

Turning their hobbies into their livelihood was a huge change but David Royce and Sally Keay are relishing the challenge.

The couple, who were formerly an accountant and teacher in London, opened Cuil-an-Duin, a three-bedroom bed and breakfast near Pitlochry in 2015. This dramatic change of lifestyle was prompted by a holiday in Wales several years earlier. 'We stayed in an old and very rural, ramshackle hall,' says Sally. 'It was incredibly eccentric, but it sparked the idea that we could do something like that; find a property that we could open to guests. I had been brought up on a farm in Scotland and although David is from Manchester, he spent the weekends visiting his grandparents in North Wales and had a liking for the country from that.'

“We wanted a property that would be our home

David laughs at this. 'People ask "have you always wanted to do this?" but it wasn't something we'd planned,' he says. 'However, once the seed was sown, it took a while to narrow down exactly what we wanted.'

After discounting several properties – too big, too small, too much of a business, not enough of a home – Cuil-an-Duin finally came to their attention in 2014. The B-listed, Edwardian country house was built by the 9th Duke of Atholl in 1924 as a private residence. Latterly used for war evacuees, the house was now being lived in by a family with the whole of the east wing used as a grandad annexe.

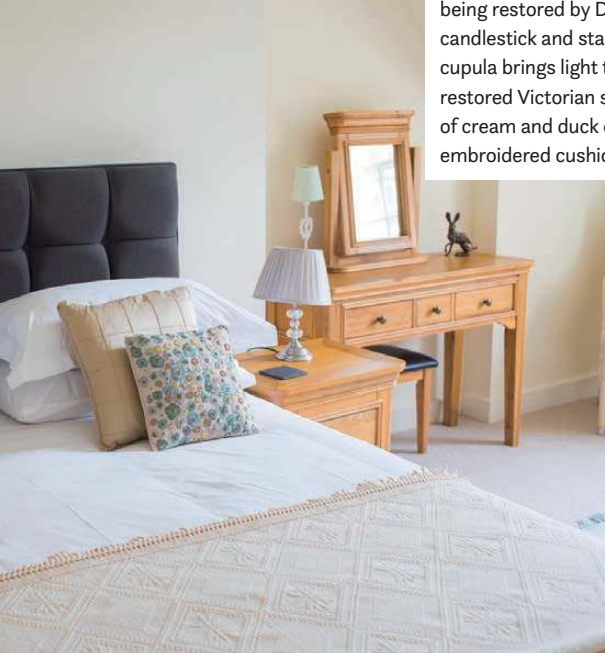
'The layout of the house was perfect for how we wanted to use it,' David explains. 'Primarily we wanted a property that would be our home, which this is. It's a large house and we have three rooms that we invite people to stay in. We've turned a hobby into our livelihood. Sally enjoys doing interior design which is an integral part of the business and I enjoy cooking. It works very well. We don't have staff; we do everything ourselves and we have our areas of responsibility. Sally does everything to do with the house and I do the cooking, gardening and outdoor maintenance, although I can't help interfering sometimes. Sally is constantly moving the cushions around.'

Before it came to moving cushions, there was however, a significant amount of work to be done. 'The house was structurally fine, but it needed a lot of TLC,' Sally remembers. 'The grandad annexe which we've now changed into two self-





Clockwise from top left: Yellow in the hall makes for a warm welcome; Chloe the cat enjoys the spring sunshine; original Arts & Crafts wooden staircase with Astragal feature window; the 40-year-old Triumph Stag being restored by David; gunmetal candlestick and starburst mirror; cupola brings light to the landing with restored Victorian sofa; restful shades of cream and duck egg blue with embroidered cushions in the bedroom.





Above: Mahogany antiques and contemporary French oak furniture in the dining room. **Bottom right:** Wooden paneling provides country styling.

WOEFUL WI-FI

How to get good WiFi in a traditional house

1. In many old houses – especially remote ones – a standard router doesn't cut it. You can combat poor internet speed by using a 4G router instead of a standard copper line, which can give 20 to 30 megabits a second.
2. There are several ways to do this but James Morrow, the leading Scottish company which specialises in installing WiFi systems in old houses, usually install a system of boosters or 'extenders' around the house.
3. As aesthetics are important, these boosters are usually concealed behind curtains or a chest of drawers, or in the attic. Depending on the size of house you may need five or six boosters to ensure fast internet speed throughout.

James Morrow - james-morrow.com
0131 229 8777 or 0141 552 6837

catering apartments was quite damp and full of furry creatures, but the main house was essentially tired and dated. The original features were still in evidence, but everything was painted magnolia.'

Along with a brilliant joiner and decorator, bathrooms were installed and reconfigured, the kitchen upgraded, and the colour scheme transformed. 'Our decorator was so precise, he worked on Stormont in Northern Ireland and it was he who persuaded me to use Farrow & Ball's Oval Room Blue in the drawing room which I love,' says Sally.

David adds: 'Sally could do Mastermind on Farrow & Ball! It took a while to sell our home down south, so she spent four years in the planning.'

Aside from her paint knowledge, Sally also has a passion for curtains, which the house needed plenty of. 'I've bought 22 curtain poles and fortunately I found a lovely local lady to make all the curtains, which is all she did for about nine months. As the windows are single glazed, I had all the curtains double interlined. I sourced the fabric from Laura Ashley, John Lewis and The Fabric

Mill at Halley Stevensons in Dundee. I'm not a fan of feature walls and wallpaper but I do like a feature curtain.'

To complement the wooden floors, which are made from pine from the Atholl estate, the couple brought a selection of rugs from their previous home. 'We bought them in a Harrods sale and they're such amazing quality and work so well here. Most of the furniture in the drawing room and





dining room are from our previous property and the rest from local suppliers.

'I think the house dictated a more traditional style and we were happy to embrace that. David has quite a few antiques from his grandfather which we've brought in and we found a brilliant interior shop near Aberfeldy called Spirit of Wood where we sourced a number of pieces too. We like original artwork and we have some pictures by local artists as we have plenty of wall space.'

'We had a loose budget when we moved in,' David explains. 'The decision we took was that we're only going to do it once, so we're going to do it well. We did what we wanted for the house and when it came to the grounds (the house sits in 20 acres) we decided if we're going to do it, we'll have the right tools. We invested in a ride-on mower, quad bike and wood chopper and that has made such a difference. My new hobby is now making planters and bird tables!'

'It's such a huge change from working in the city but we're both doing what we enjoy. I think we'll easily be here another ten years or so.'



Above: Sunny, warm oak kitchen featuring Flora the gorgeous Labrador. **Left:** Light blue bedroom with Aubusson rug with views westward over the valley towards Schiehallion. **Bottom left:** Breakfast time for hens Maisy, Molly, Daisy, Dolly, Bluebell, Violet, Gertrude and Florence.



FIELD FACTS

Cuil-an-Duin
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PH9 0NN.
Tel: 01796 482807
cuil-an-duin.com



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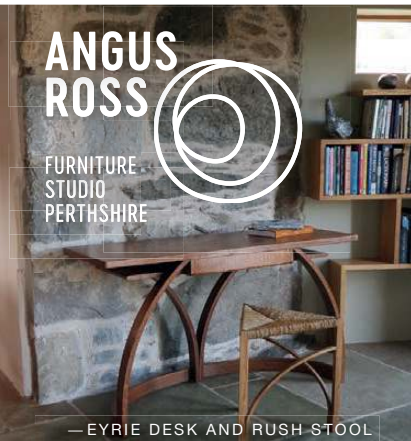
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Childhood favourite:
Lord Lothian fell for
Monteviot Gardens
as a young boy.



Pure imagination

After nurturing Monteviot Gardens back to life with a sprinkle of magic, Lord Lothian has created a vibrant world full of blossom and birdsong, says **Antoinette Galbraith**



‘It is never possible to define magic, but you know it when you feel it around you. It has a special form of its own, which lifts the heart and makes the mind sing.’ Thus does Lord Lothian speak about Monteviot, his family home overlooking the River Teviot north of Jedburgh. This is the garden he fell in love with as a child and has nurtured, passionately reinforcing its sense of magic and wonder, since he and his wife Jane moved here in 1985.

“It has a special form of its own that lifts the heart and makes the mind sing

The birdsong, blossom and carpets of daffodils stretching into banks of rhododendrons on either side of the drive set the scene. They give way to the croquet lawn backed with recently revitalised beds of pink and white Rhododendron Yakushimanum hybrids and Exochorda macrantha ‘The Bride’, planted by head gardener Ian Stephenson and his team.

Ian, to whom Michael Lothian freely credits a large portion of the success of this 30-acre garden, is excited about spring. The winter tidy up is progressing well, the river banks have been cleared, opening up the views along the river path and releasing carpets of bluebells into the light for the first time in ten years.

Just beyond the croquet lawn you come to the viewpoint above the River Garden. Designed by the renowned landscape gardener Percy Cane (1881–1976) for Lord Lothian’s parents in the mid-1960s, the space is enclosed at the top by a crescent wall inset with arches. A lawn, framed by beds where pink tinged acers are ready to burst into flower, sweeps down to a river landing. It’s the stuff of dreams. Everything is fresh and full of promise.

To the west your eye is drawn along the river bank where mown grass paths framed with daffodils lead to the woodlands, while to the left you look down on the box outline of the terraced rose garden, with purple Aubretia tumbling down the stone walls. Above is the pink harled house, parts of which date from the 17th century, fondly described by its owner as an ‘eccentrically incremental house which started as a small farmhouse and grew generation by generation to the tumbling village it is today’.

Top row (l-r): The River Garden; Pheasant Eye Narcissi. **Second row:** Grass paths lined with daffodils; Monteviot House. **Third row:** Laburnum arch into the woodland garden; Bluebells; Cherry Blossom. **Fourth row:** Fountain in the centre of the Dene garden; Primula; Daffodils in full bloom on the lawn in front of Monteviot House.



PERSISTENT IMAGINATION

How Lord Lothian keeps his 'secret garden' fresh and interesting



Above: Stone structures rise out of the beds around Monteviot House.

Keeping the gardens at Monteviot fresh and interesting remains at the heart of Lord Lothian's vision. In 2011 the idea of creating a new garden was born of his 'long-standing wish for some kind of secret garden' just below the apple orchard.

Ian was charged with a design 'to blend with the surrounding area'. This created the perfect opportunity for him to realise the multitude of ideas he had imagined for the past 20 years.

The space was divided with hornbeam to maximise potential. 'Hornbeam is reliably similar to beech but still entirely manageable, cut only once a year in September,' he explains.

This created district spaces for a Mediterranean stone pergola, stone sundial, raised stone viewing platform and a stone moon gate in a ruined wall. 'And, finally, a stone sitoutary, which all good Scottish gardens should have.'

Next came a Dali clock plant feature, small Rennie Mackintosh hornbeam squares and a 'mini version of the garden of contemplation Kyoto style gravel'.

The garden was planted with mid and late summer flowering shrubs such as hydrangea, deutzia and philadelphus. 'Colour culminates in the eucryphia wall in late August.'





At this point you fully understand why Michael wrote his recently published *The Magical Gardens of Monteviot*. 'I wanted to record the wonderfully scattered nature of the gardens, each with their own special features, but which can come together as one concept, one vision, one dream,' he says.

An early project involved the water garden, the ponds and islands inspired by the former Prime Minister, Sir Alec

Douglas-Home, who shortly before he died in 1995 'sat in his wheelchair on one of the arched bridges and worked out a rough plan on the back of an envelope'.

“I wanted to record the wonderfully scattered nature of the gardens

The sense of mystery and intrigue deepens as you wander past the

Guardian Stones to the Compass Garden – where a standing stone in a circle of light celebrates the marriage of Michael and Jane's daughter Claire to politician Nick Hurd.

Next comes the Arboretum, where the size of the majestic conifers suggest the original planting took place when seeds first reached Scotland. The later addition of deciduous varieties has resulted in a nationally recognised collection.

Above: Ponds in the water garden. **Left:** Skunk cabbage.

“The magical element of surprise comes from rare trees tucked into the planting



Above: The Garden of Persistent Imagination.

Below: Deep pink rhododendron.

Ignoring expert advice that such an ambitious project was doomed to failure, Lord Lothian and Ian laid out a series of stone-lined ponds in the Dene Garden. Here, the magical element of surprise comes from rare trees tucked into the planting: groups of Chinese windmill palms, *Trachycarpus fortunei* and the Tasmanian tree ferns, *Dicksonia Antarctica*, which combine with a 16th-century cannonball and a curious statue of Gregory the Gamekeeper.



In testimony to Ian's input and the trust placed in him nearly ten years ago he was given free rein to design a garden in the space below the Rose Garden. Here he produced a dramatic design rich in symbolism, drawing on allusions to the artist Salvador Dali.

An open lawn connects the Garden of Persistent Imagination to the Winter Garden. A last spring surprise is found in the Winter Garden. Here, a backdrop of silver birch and *Prunus serrula*, startling pink *Camellia × williamsii* 'Debbie' – the only ones that thrive here – make a dramatic backdrop for daffodils, bright blue grape hyacinths, *Muscari* and *Fritillaria meleagris*.

Ian's son Jamie, a RBGE student, recently joined the Monteviot team injecting a fresh sense of enthusiasm. 'In the autumn we planted another 10,000 bulbs including several types of allium and martagon lilies,' says Ian. 'Erythronium, anemone, pale silver blue *Puschkinia libanotica* and *P libanotica alba* are in the wild flower embankment on the front of the house.'



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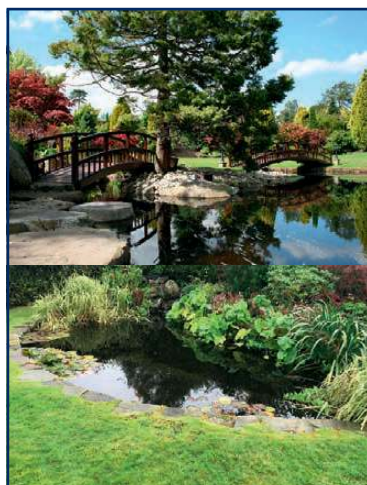


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ANTIQUES

Scottish Field's round-up of the salerooms, interesting lots and prices



Over the asking

One of the last remaining examples of the original Stroma Yoles, a legacy of the days when the Vikings ruled in the north of Scotland, has sold at auction. The Stroma Yole 'Bee', dating from 1904, sold for £12,500, having had an estimate of around £10,000. She was registered in Wick on 5 May 1912, and prior to the sale was moored in Eyemouth Harbour. She was sold at Sotheby's Art of Travel online auction. The proceeds of the sale went to the Berwickshire Maritime Trust.

TIME FOR A SALE

Rare clocks from an important private Scottish collection sold recently in Bonhams' sales in London and Hong Kong for a combined total of £1,668,532. Some 25 of the 31 clocks in the collection were made by the famous Parisian jewellers Cartier during the Art Deco period. The top performing clock in the London Jewels sale on 4 December was a 'Model A' Art Deco rock crystal, gold, agate, enamel and diamond-set 'mystery clock' by Cartier, made in 1919 that sold for £603,062.



FEBRUARY SALES DATES

NORTH

Frasers Auction Rooms, Dingwall: 7, 14, 21, 28: General.
John Milne, Aberdeen: 5, 12, 19, 26: General.
N Burns & C Burns, Perth: 7: General.

EDINBURGH

Lyon & Turnbull: 5: Five Centuries: Furniture, Paintings and Works of Art; 18: Paintings & Works on Paper; 19: Rare Books, Manuscripts, Maps & Photographs.
Ramsay Cornish: 1, 8, 15, 29: General interiors; 22, Antiques and decorators.

GLASGOW

McTears: 7, 21: The Antiques and Interiors Auction; 20: The Coins and Banknotes Auction; 23: The Jewellery Auction; 23: The Rolex Auction; 24: The Watches Auction.



The strange and wonderful

Michael Bennett-Levy (1946-2016) was a world renowned expert on early technology, its restoration and preservation. His collection is being sold as The Emporium, at Ramsay Cornish in Edinburgh on 25 January and embodies his eclectic taste, from automatons to the simple light bulb. The sale includes a 19th-century Austrian tinsplate shooting gallery of figures, a Victorian 'Test Your Love' fairground cabinet, scientific instruments, clocks and timepieces, gas lighters, autograph memorabilia including actors and opera singers as well as other wonderful items.



A CRACKING CREATION

The Silver Auction at McTear's in Glasgow on 30 January features a contemporary silver 'Surprise Easter Egg' by the late Australian artist and metalworker Stuart Devlin. Created in London in 1979, the shell opens to reveal a mouse running up a longcase clock next to a rocking chair, on a red enamel base, 7cm high. The egg has an estimated price of £200-300.

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FIELD CULTURE

A guide to Scotland's arts and entertainment

Tryst triumphant

Sir James MacMillan's festival, The Cumnock Tryst, has won a prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award in the Concert Series and Events category. The prize was presented at an awards ceremony at London's Battersea Arts Centre and recognised the Tryst's success in shining a light on local musicians as equals to its international visiting artists. Held each year in the East Ayrshire town, 2019 was the sixth festival and featured its most diverse line-up yet, with Barbara Dickson, Steven Osborne, The Farmers Choir and Mr McFall's Chamber.
www.thecumnocktryst.com



Take heart

The Scottish Ensemble is marking its 50th birthday with a special production, working with Valgeir Sigurðsson, Pamela Carter and Untitled Projects on a new theatrical project, *We Are In Time*. It follows the journey of a transplanted heart, told through the stories of the donor and receiver. Featuring a new score from Icelandic composer Valgeir Sigurðsson (above), it will be performed on 25 and 26 February at Perth Theatre, 28 and 29 February at the Tramway in Glasgow, 3 and 4 March at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh and on 6 March at Eden Court, Inverness. www.scottishensemble.co.uk



NIXON IN CHINA

The Scottish Opera premiere of John Adams' *Nixon in China* takes place on February 18 at Theatre Royal Glasgow. Adams' work, a collaboration with poet and librettist Alice Goodman and theatre director Peter Sellars, is inspired by Richard Nixon's much-publicised 1972 visit to China, the first time an American president had journeyed there. There are further Glasgow performances on 20 and 22 February, before it transfers to the Festival Theatre Edinburgh on 27 and 29 February. www.scottishopera.org.uk

A variety awaits

The National Theatre of Scotland has announced its 2020 season will include 10 productions, three large-scale community projects, a ball, a pop-up festival, as well as a two year-long programme of work. These will take place in 50 locations around Scotland and beyond. This season includes a number of new productions, including *Medea*, Liz Lochhead's Scots language adaptation of the Greek tragedy by Euripides, and *Ferry Tales*, a celebration of the waters surrounding Scotland's western isles which will be performed on some of Scotland's major ferry routes.

www.nationaltheatrescotland.com





Focus on film

The first events have been announced for Glasgow Film Festival 2020. The 16th annual festival takes place from 26 February to 8 March, showcasing the best new films from Scotland and around the world. The focus of three special strands for 2020 are Retrospective, looking at modern masterpieces and cult classics (including Logan's Run, above); Iceland, as the country's filmmaking talent steps into the spotlight; and Industry Focus, featuring speakers, unique network opportunities, topical panel discussions and diverse professional development, aimed at everyone from industry newcomers to seasoned professionals. www.glasgowfilm.org

LET'S FACE THE MUSICAL

Scottish Opera and Disney Musicals in Schools are collaborating to give five primary schools the chance to learn and produce their own Disney Kids musical including The Lion King Kids, Aladdin Kids and The Jungle Book Kids. The pupils will then perform two shows in their schools and at Theatre Royal Glasgow. The schools are Lawthorn Primary in Irvine, Todholm Primary in Paisley, East Plein Primary in Stirling, Langlee Primary in Galashiels and St Anthony's Primary in Johnstone.



New post

The National Tapestry of Scotland visitor attraction has appointed experienced director, entrepreneur and marketer Sandy Maxwell-Forbes, as centre director. The £6.7m project will open in spring 2021 in Galashiels in the Borders. The building works should be finished in September 2020. www.scotlandstapestry.com



FRANCIS IS IN THE FRAME FOR TITLE

Up and coming Scottish artist Francis Salvesen has been shortlisted for The Royal Arts Prize 2020, which showcases a selection of the world's best emerging artistic talent. Francis only recently held his first exhibition Great British Art, his interpretation of the UK's most historic and natural landmarks. The awards will take place from 20-29 February at La Galleria, London. www.royalartsprize.com

Picture perfect photography

A new exhibition celebrating the Victorian craze for Carte de Visite photography has opened at Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Cartomania: A Victorian Photographic Phenomenon focuses on the small pocket-sized cards which were the first form of affordable mass-produced photography. These images of families, friends, royalty and celebrities of the day were wildly popular during the Victorian era. The show will run until 11 April. www.aagm.co.uk



On a wild goat chase

Their huge horns and wizardly beards are nothing short of magical, but you might just need to employ a little alchemy if you want to spot a wild goat in Scotland, says **Cal Flyn**

In 1306, fresh from defeat at the Battle of Dalrigh, Robert the Bruce fled south along the banks of Loch Lomond, closely pursued by his enemies. Legend has it that he sheltered from advancing troops in a cave near Inversnaid, and shortly after a small group of feral goats lay down in front of the cave's entrance – thus concealing it, and allowing the fugitive king to escape.

Much has changed in Scotland during the intervening centuries, but the goats remain – in Inversnaid and in various other strongholds in remote spots around the country. Keen hikers may be familiar with the goats who roam wild as deer through the Highlands and Islands: they're a ragtag crowd with shaggy hair in black and dun, patched with white, or sun-bleached.

Males and females are crowned with the most remarkable horns – ridged and heavy, curved like scimitars – and a wizardly appearance, with long flowing

beards and piercing pale eyes which have square pupils.

The origins of Scotland's goats are somewhat mysterious, but they are thought to be the descendants of domesticated animals set loose (or escaped), probably during the time of the Highland Clearances – and perhaps long before. Long naturalised, the goats are now considered wild animals.

'Feral goats do not need shearing as sheep do, and they give birth independently without much need for human intervention,' says Tiffany Francis-Baker, author of *British Goats*, a fascinating compendium of knowledge published in July. 'They are also excellent climbers, and can live happily in hard-to-reach places that humans rarely visit.'

They certainly can. The last time I came across a herd of goats in the wild was while walking the Five Sisters of Kintail; a half-dozen, including a mother and kid, clambered out onto a vertiginous outcrop of rock, where they clung like gargoyles to watch our approach – apparently entirely without fear.

If you haven't been fortunate enough to view the goats roaming wild yet, this is the best time of year to spot them as they move from the high tops onto lower ground, to shelter from the worst of the winter weather and give birth to their young. Indeed, they have become so common around the roads of Kintail and Shiel Bridge – including the fast moving A87 – that the National Trust for Scotland has raised the possibility

Billy goat gruff:

A sure-footed wild goat is right at home on the craggy rocks of Islay.

“ Feral goats in the wild are extremely elusive and difficult to observe for long periods of time



of ‘managing’ their numbers by way of a cull or the use of contraceptive injections.

Such measures, always controversial, were used against the historic herd of Inversnaid back in 2013 when the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds decided that overgrazing was endangering rare flora at a site of special scientific interest at nearby Pollochro. The cull – intended to bring the population there from 60-plus down to 30 – attracted a great deal of critical attention from the public.

But despite their popularity – and their long tenure, which some suggest may stretch back to Neolithic times – the feral goats are officially classed as an invasive non-native species, and therefore legal to hunt on private land throughout the year. Somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 feral goats are thought to live in scattered populations around the whole of the UK, and several Scottish companies offer the chance to stalk and shoot goats in parts of the country where they are considered a pest – including on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula.

American hunter Larysa Switlyk made headlines in October 2018 following just such a hunt, when she posted a photo of herself posing with the body of a billy goat on Islay, boasting of having made a ‘perfect 200-yard shot’ and describing the hunt as ‘such fun’. The image, and the tone of her message, prompted social media outrage and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

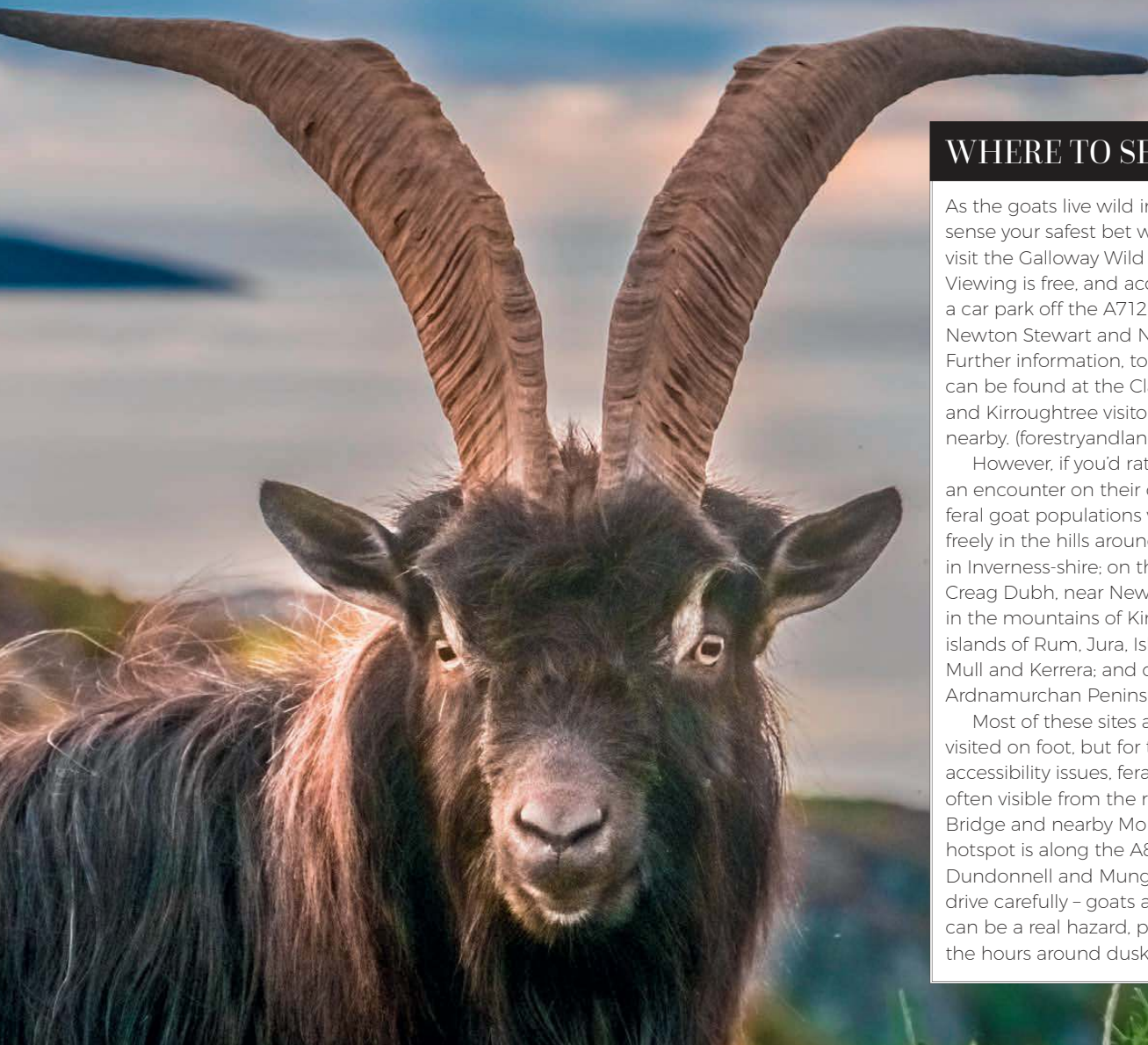
also expressed her concerns. The government later announced that while ‘culling of animals is a necessary part of sustainable land management’, the environment secretary would be making a review of the laws around hunting goats in response to the uproar.

Alternative methods of control are used in the southwest of the country, where the Galloway Wild Goat Park, run by Forestry and Land Scotland, offers visitors the chance to view feral goats at close quarters. A 50-hectare, two-metre-high enclosure was built in the Galloway Forest Park in the 1970s, and now serves as home to around 30 goats (several hundred more roam the surrounding hills). But though contained, ‘we have tried ear tagging in the past, but they are experts in shedding them’, a spokesperson for the agency explained. ‘Mature males tend to live in a group, and likewise the females and kids would live in their own groups. There would tend

Above left: Wild feral goats in Findhorn Valley.

Above right: What are you looking at?

Right: The Wild Goat Park in Galloway Forest Park is home to around 30 goats.



WHERE TO SEE THEM

As the goats live wild in a very pure sense your safest bet would be to visit the Galloway Wild Goat Park. Viewing is free, and accessed via a car park off the A712 between Newton Stewart and New Galloway. Further information, toilets and cafes can be found at the Clatteringshaws and Kirroughtree visitor centres nearby. (forestryandland.gov.scot)

However, if you'd rather engineer an encounter on their own terms, feral goat populations wander freely in the hills around Tomatin, in Inverness-shire; on the slopes of Creag Dubh, near Newtonmore; in the mountains of Kintail; on the islands of Rum, Jura, Islay, Colonsay, Mull and Kerrera; and on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula.

Most of these sites are best visited on foot, but for those with accessibility issues, feral goats are often visible from the road near Shiel Bridge and nearby Morvich. Another hotspot is along the A832, between Dundonnell and Mungasdale. But drive carefully – goats and red deer can be a real hazard, particularly in the hours around dusk and dawn.

to be a leader in each group, normally an older beast.

'Feral goats in the wild are extremely elusive and difficult to observe for long periods of time,' Francis-Baker adds. 'But most domesticated goat breeds are thought to live in herd hierarchies, with a "herd queen" who gets the first choice of food and sleeping space. Like most ungulate species, they show a high level of social organisation which allows better protection from predators.'

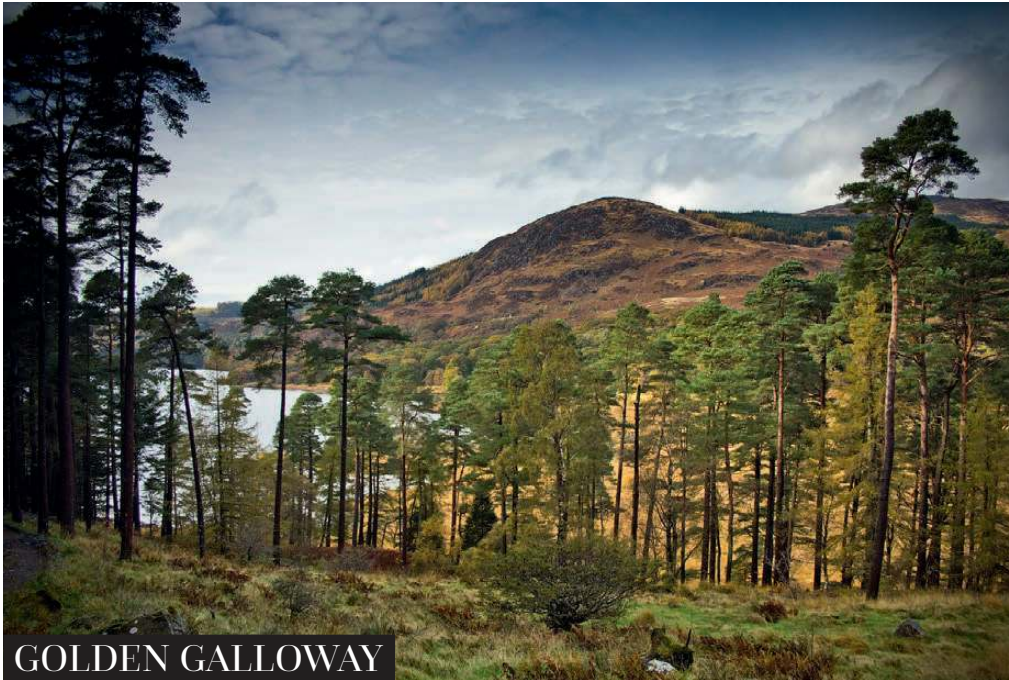
Their mysterious origins and unknown lineage means they have not generally been considered valuable by goat breeders, but that might be changing. 'There is now a Rare Breed Goats group calling to protect our feral goats, also known as British Primitives, as an important breed for conservation grazing and scrub clearance, as well as their deep ancestral connection with the British landscape.' For more information about their campaign, see rarebreedgoats.co.uk.

“ We have tried ear tagging in the past, but they are experts in shedding them



COUNTRY NEWS

A round-up of what's happening in Scotland's countryside



A natural wonder

Nature reserves owned by Scottish Natural Heritage generate £28m worth of climate, tourism, recreation and health benefits a year, according to recent research. This includes volunteers contributing 4,659 days of work (£421k); SNH land sequestering carbon (£2m) and air quality filtration benefits (£73k). www.nature.scot

Two Scottish charities have released a research report calling for the creation of a third national park. The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland and Scottish Campaign for National Parks believe a Galloway National Park would boost the economy of 'a fragile and peripheral community, currently suffering from limited and seasonal employment, as well as protecting the landscape'. The Potential Socio-economic Impacts of a New National Park for Galloway report argues that a National Park in southern Scotland would boost visitor numbers to Galloway and generate much needed jobs. www.aprs.scot

Rare beauties

The Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms project has won a UK National Parks Volunteer Award. The scheme is a partnership project (RSPB Scotland, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation and Scottish Natural Heritage) working to conserve six rare and poorly understood insect species in the Cairngorms. The six species are: Kentish glory, Dark-bordered beauty, Northern silver-stiletto fly, Pine hoverfly, Small scabious mining bee and Shining guest ant. The project oversees surveys to locate the species and enable them to thrive. www.rspb.org.uk



THE SEEDS OF A GOOD IDEA

Finding technological solutions to improve the yield from Scotland's existing seed stock has taken a step forward – according to Forestry and Land Scotland – with ideas put forward by five companies winning research and development funding. Maximising tree seed yield will boost tree planting in future years and strengthen Scotland's contribution to tackling the climate emergency. www.forestryandland.gov.scot





TIMBER TALES

Trail restrictions will be in place around Beinn Ghulean in Campbeltown from January – April 2020 when urgent tree felling begins to help slow the spread of a deadly tree disease. Forestry and Land Scotland is to carry out the work in a bid to slow the spread of Phytophthora Ramorum, a disease which primarily affects and kills larch trees. They will need to remove around 7,500 tonnes of timber from the forest, which should take between four to six months to complete. www.forestryandland.gov.scot



HELD IN TRUST

The John Muir Trust has signed a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust). The Galson Estate passed into community ownership on 12 January 2007. The parties will work on collaborative projects. The MoU will allow the John Muir Trust to support the Galson Estate Trust with its land management and conservation work, and in turn, Galton will help the environmental charity sharpen up its policy and management practices. www.johnmuirtrust.org

A WINTER LEGACY

Harsh winter weather is thought to be a factor in the short-term decline in woodland birds between 2017 and 2018. In figures just released The RSPB Breeding Bird Survey shows that while farmland and upland birds remained stable, woodland birds decreased by 12%. Wren, bullfinch and goldcrest were the most affected while robins and great spotted woodpeckers saw lesser declines. www.rspb.org.uk



12%

The increase in goldfinch and whitethroat

50%

The decline in birds such as the curlew and black grouse

58%

The rise in the number of woodland birds from 1994-2018

TRIED AND TESTED

WHAT IS IT? Ariat women's Coniston Waterproof Insulated Boots. RRP £280. www.ariat.com

I WANT IT BECAUSE: They're warm, waterproof, stylish and sturdy. And joy-of-joys they come all the way up to my knee, rather than halfway up my calf!

USEFUL FOR: I do everything in these boots, from mucking out to riding and after a quick hose down they're smart enough to wear around town.

HIGH POINT: The full-length zip at the back makes getting them on and off a breeze and the laces mean you can tighten them to fit.

LOW POINT: It makes me sad when I have to take them off!



WHAT IS IT? Keela's Hydron Softshell Ladies Jacket. RRP £149.95 www.keela.co.uk

I WANT IT BECAUSE: It's been a fairly wet and wild winter so it's high time I had a decent tech savvy outer layer to protect myself against the elements should I get caught out during hikes or city strolls.

USEFUL FOR: Lightweight enough for everyday use and the hood is helmet compatible so it's perfect for wearing out on the bike too.

HIGH POINT: Water resistant and windproof with excellent condensation control.

LOW POINT: Worth ordering a size up if you plan on popping a jumper on.





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100
EXTRAORDINARY YEARS

BENTLEY EDINBURGH

Laws to protect salmon started in Scotland in the eleventh century, in England in the thirteenth. There has never been a lack of protective effort. Human pressure on the silver bounty started early and has never relented.

All governments forming environmental policies now say they follow science. In the case of salmon this is usually privately funded. The latest project in Scotland is the Missing Salmon Alliance, led by the Atlantic Salmon Trust. Its aim is to discover why fewer migrating salmon are returning.

Spanning seven rivers between Spey Bay and the Brora, researchers tagged 850 salmon smolts going downriver in spring 2019. They fitted acoustic tags. Journeys are logged passing acoustic receivers, of which 358 were anchored to fixed locations. During the 2019 spring migration over 15 million pings were recorded, the smolts passing arrays of receivers as they swam seawards.

Rightly, the project organisers believe that releasing information findings, even when only partial, keeps news rolling. Half the smolts never made it to salt water. They disappeared in their home rivers. That was more than expected, although such figures, and higher, had been found on some individual rivers previously.

As smolts hit saltwater they fanned out in the Outer Moray Firth. And they can shift. One swam 125 miles in a fortnight. This is a fish only inches long. Disappearances at sea were lower than forecasted. Early indications show that 15% were lost in the inshore zone.

The Missing Salmon Alliance is holding its breath about the meaning of these first results. Is river mortality due to river conditions, is it 'part of life', or is it predation?

Talk to river people and they will cite predation as the main culprit. If so, that would be good news. Predation can be addressed, given government willpower. Clinging to inaction, always the preference, may be harder if predation is proven to be hammering a species which is sometimes the backbone of remote local economies. It will be hard to duck issuing enough licenses to significantly reduce predators.

This research is all based on the east coast. This is where salmon river populations may have dwindled

but are still in places robust, and things are less political. On the west coast there are too few wild smolts to tag and the inshore, packed with sea-lice from salmon farms, is likely to be their cemetery. The east coast is the right focus. The 2020 aim is to identify 'likely suspects' in freshwater predation.

Salmon recovery never lacks champions. A new theory has arisen about the usefulness of tree cover. If smolts are bigger and fitter they will dodge predation more successfully. Therefore river managers should enhance early life habitat to maximise smolt survival. Tree shade helps salmon in hotter summers and provides drop-down food for young fish. So planting upper catchments with trees to support fish is being mooted.

The theory sounds alright until you widen the frame. Iceland and northern Russia, the star contemporary salmon fishing locations, do not have forested catchments. Several of the world's best rivers flow off granite shields in tundra where there isn't a bush in sight, let alone a tree. On open land salmon are insect eaters, consumed as larvae, pupae and winged adults, of mosquitoes in the arctic to caddis and sedge in Scotland. Electro-fishing on northerly Scottish rivers shows bigger young salmon in open moorland, shrivelled ones in the shade.

The hot summer of 2018 revealed that young salmon have a method of coping with high temperatures in shrunk burns. Even water heating to 25°C does not necessarily kill them.

Conductivity study, analysing baseline rocks for invaluable elements like calcium, shows unexpected results. The worst-looking dribbling dirty streams, banks ploughed by cattle hooves, might have the best baseline rocks for prolific young salmon. Geology rules. Only recent research using electro-fishing has brought some of this to light. We may yawn at yet more science. I say, bring it on.

“The worst-looking dribbling dirty streams might have the best baseline rocks for prolific young salmon



Save our scales

Despite the government's disinclination to take action, salmon populations need support – and the scientific proof should not be sneezed at, says **Michael Wigan**



Bright sparks of the future

Electric technology is taking leaps and bounds on a daily basis, and **Neil Lyndon** believes these cars are an investment worth making

The electric car current is surging in Scotland. Every day seems to bring the announcement of a new electric or hybrid model from a major manufacturer along with a record being broken for range or the opening of a new extension in the electric charging network.

Late in 2019, BMW unveiled their new hybrid 3

Series at the same time as announcing plans for a high-performance i4 electric saloon with a range of almost 400 miles which will appear in 2021. Meanwhile, Volkswagen revealed plans to develop a new electric estate car concept under the name of ID Space Vizzion and Subaru introduced their new Forester E-Boxer. In autumn 2019, the Energy

Saving Trust completed a circuit of the North Coast 500 route using electric and hybrid cars, just to prove that exercise could now be achieved. A representative for the Trust said the journey would have been impossible only a year ago.

At the same time, IONITY – a joint venture to build a pan-European high-power charging network – launched the first of its fastest chargers in Scotland, at Gretna.

The BP Chargemaster rapid charging network is now claimed to be ‘powering up to 1.5 million electric miles a week’ in the UK and is reliably stated by

impartial users to be adequate for long journeys from one end of the British Isles to another.

Dotted around Scotland, Tesla now has more than 40 Superchargers which can deliver about 170 miles of range in 30 minutes; and they are rapidly expanding their network in anticipation of the arrival of their compact, lower-cost Model 3 next year.

This all adds up to a dramatically different picture from the scene in 2010 when my house became the first in Scotland to be fitted with a charging pod under the government’s scheme that made them effectively free. Pure electric cars were then a rarer sight than an osprey. People used to stop on the pavement to turn their heads in wonder as the Nissan Leaf, which I borrowed on extended loan that year, cruised by silently on the street. All the charging points which local authorities had installed in prime positions in civic car parks were permanently vacant and free to use; so you could count on unlimited free parking in the best spot in town.

Those days are over in every sense. While sales of new cars overall are in decline, electrics and hybrids are selling in ever-increasing numbers. In the year leading up to October 2019, according to the latest figures from the Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), the total in Scotland was 960, equivalent to 6.75% of the total market for cars in the country. That figure was up by a quarter over 2018 alone. According to research by What Car? a fully electric car would now make sense as a choice for almost one in five new car buyers, while more than 60% would benefit from choosing a plug-in (whereas petrol and diesel would be the best choice for only 12.5% and 4.8% respectively).

Meanwhile the free ride for pure electric cars and plug-in hybrids has also, decidedly, had its day. You will now pay around £1,000 for a charging pod. And, if you can find a vacant charging-point in a municipal car park, you will not only be lucky but you will have to pay both for the electricity and for the privilege of parking there.

Driven by government regulations designed to diminish emissions, and led in the first place by Nissan with their original Leaf (now replaced and vastly improved), every major manufacturer on earth

“A fully electric car would make sense as a choice for almost one in five new car buyers

Powering up: Tesla’s Supercharger can deliver 170 miles of range in 30 minutes.





now offers electric and/or hybrid models or has them in development. In less than a decade, unimaginable advances have been achieved in battery technology, providing startling increases in range. It is hard to remember now that my 2010 Leaf was barely capable of 80 miles before its battery was perilously close to flat; and, on a dark winter night, carrying four big men with the heater and the lights running, you couldn't safely count on completing a round trip of 50 miles.

(By the same token, the original Toyota Prius hybrid, first sold here in 2000, was barely capable of 40mpg. In 2019, Volkswagen introduced a hybrid version of their large and luxurious Passat estate which comfortably returns more than 60mpg).

Today, the latest electric SUVs from Kia and Hyundai – being sold as E-Niro and Kona respectively – can achieve over 250 miles in the real world, not merely in the overheated imaginations of their makers. Range anxiety is melting away. At an average starting price of around £29,500, those Korean electrics are still far more expensive than conventional equivalents but they are eligible for the government's Plug-in Car Grant of £3,500 and their running costs are tiny. A bog-standard electric Renault Zoe costs £25,000 and about 6p per mile to run whereas a conventionally-fuelled car might cost closer to 40p per mile. And with fewer moving parts and direct transmission the long-term maintenance costs of electric are minuscule compared with conventional cars.

For those reasons, long waiting lists are forming for models like the E-Niro and Kona. Supply cannot

match demand. Manufacturers introducing new electric cars can be certain that eager buyers await. And there is a case for waiting. As one experienced observer put it, 'electric cars are improving so fast that you can be certain a better one will be along tomorrow'.

There's even quite a strong case for considering second-hand electric cars. Battery life has turned out to be far longer than was expected and numerous Leafs and Zoes are now running around with up to 500,000 on the clock. At the end of my six-month loan of the Leaf in 2010, Nissan offered it to me for sale at £13,500 – less than half its original purchase price. Despite that vertiginous initial depreciation, however, the self-same car would be worth about £7,000 today and is actually appreciating in value.

Worth the wait:
Waiting lists for the Kia E-Niro are growing by the day.



Check out our motors section online
www.scottishfield.co.uk

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Parkers' best electric cars of the year

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Audi E-Tron | 11. Renault Zoe |
| 2. BMW i3 | 12. Tesla Model 3 |
| 3. Hyundai Ioniq | 13. Tesla Model S |
| 4. Hyundai Kona | 14. Tesla Model X |
| 5. Jaguar I-Pace | 15. Smart Fortwo EQ |
| 6. Kia E-Niro | 16. Smart Forfour EQ |
| 7. Kia Soul EV | 17. Volkswagen e-Up |
| 8. Mercedes-Benz EQC | 18. Volkswagen e-Golf |
| 9. Nissan Leaf | 19. Volkswagen ID.3 |
| 10. Peugeot iOn/Citroen C-Zero | |

For the love of food

All things Scottish! Take a look at some of our favourite produce from across the country



2



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3. THE SCRIB TREE

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5. GREAT GLEN CHARCUTERIE

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FOOD & DRINK

The latest happenings on Scotland's food and drink scene

CRUMBS



ART OF FOOD

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art has reopened the former Café Modern Two, now known as Paolozzi's Kitchen. The 72-cover restaurant's interiors and menu are inspired by one of Scotland's most acclaimed artists, Eduardo Paolozzi, to create a fusion between culture and food. The menu features a variety of Italian-influenced dishes and sharing plates created with locally sourced produce.



SOUR POWER

An Ayrshire brewery has begun pilot production of a new range of Arran Sour Beers. Being launched in early 2020 by Arran View Brewery in Dreghorn, they are tapping into the current trend for sour beers. Sour beer is made intentionally acidic, tart or sour. The best known types of sour beer are Belgian lambic, Gueuze and Flanders Red Ale.



JOIN OUR WHISKY CELEBRATIONS

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Scottish Field Whisky Challenge, we are opening our nominations process to the public for the Whisky Bar of the Year 2020 and the Distillery Visitor Experience of the Year 2020. We're asking whisky fans to nominate their favourite whisky bar or distillery visitor experience. Members of the public can nominate their top bar or distillery by emailing whisky@scottishfield.co.uk. The deadline to nominate is 31 January 2020. We also want reader judges to join the panel for the Readers Whisky Challenge 2020. Whisky fans can email whisky@scottishfield.co.uk explaining why they love whisky in a paragraph.

Ka Pao ready to make an impact

The company behind Ox and Finch is opening a second Glasgow restaurant in January. The new restaurant – Ka Pao – will open within the historic, Category A-listed Botanic Gardens Garage on Vinicombe Street. Accommodating 120 covers, it will offer a menu influenced by the cooking of South East Asia. Ka Pao's style has already been trialled in the city with a residency in the Acid Bar at SWG3 during 2018. Influences include Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand. kapaogla.com



Eat a Scottie Dog!

Award-winning artisan craft smoked hot dog maker Brigston & Co has created a limited-edition haggis infused hot dog for Burns' Night 2020. The Scottie Dog is available for purchase from 15 January until mid-February, with Scottish Farm Assured beef and pork at its core. If the Scottie Dog proves to be a success, Brigston and Co will consider making it a permanent part of their range. brigston.co.uk



GOOD MOOS FOR COWS

A three-year pilot by an organic dairy farm to test a radical new approach to dairy farming has concluded. Rainton Farm in south west Scotland, run by David and Wilma Finlay, has now committed to continuing with its cow with calf dairy farming system permanently after being satisfied of the long term financial and environmental viability of the approach. In conventional dairy farming calves are removed from their mothers, usually within 24 hours of birth, and reared separately. At Rainton Farm, whose products are marketed as The Ethical Dairy, the calves are reared until five to six months of age. www.theethicaldairy.co.uk

For goodness cake!

Tayside's first takeaway afternoon tea really takes the biscuit. For Cake's Sake have come up with the idea, meaning anyone can turn their office or home into the Ritz, with a selection of handmade sweet treats and savoury snacks that you'd expect to find in a grand hotel. The classic Afternoon Tea Box can include For Cake's Sake's strawberry milkshake cake, raspberry and white chocolate cruffins, filled shorties, handmade chocolate truffles, as well as a selection of savouries. They have even created a Waggy Tea, to share with dogs. For further details visit www.forcakessake.shop



Cheese, please!

Scotland will soon taste its own buffalo mozzarella, after a crowdfunding campaign reached its £800,000 target. Fife buffalo farmer Steve Mitchell wants to produce the country's first ever buffalo mozzarella, which started after a visit from Gordon Ramsay. Steve can now advance his plans to build a manufacturing facility, milking parlour and slurry store. They have been shortlisted for the Scottish Rural Awards 2020 in two categories, Best Farming Business and Rural Business Diversification Award. www.thebuffalfarm.co.uk

CRUMBS



BEEFING UP

A Borders restaurant is supporting its local beef farming industry by treating every child under the age of 12 to a free Sunday roast when accompanied by an adult. Provender, the Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant in Melrose, says it is also fighting against 'anti-beef propaganda' with its offer of free grass-fed roast Border beef. The offer will carry on into early 2020. provendermelrose.com



MASTERCHEF FINALIST GIN

MasterChef: The Professionals 2018 finalist and restaurant owner Dean Banks has launched a new Scottish gin. Influenced by Dean's travels to over 40 different countries and his knowledge of fusion cooking, Lunun Gin combines six botanicals – kaffir lime leaf, sea buckthorn, Sichuan pepper, kombu kelp, ginger and lemongrass. It is distilled in Dean's home town, Arbroath. lunungin.com





TERRIFIC TATTIES

Nothing says 'winter warmer' like the Great Scottish Spud, so whether it's a humble classic or a tasty alternative, we've got you covered for those cold, dark nights



Roast tarragon gnocchi, houmous and vegetables

Serves 4

For the gnocchi

- 4 large Rooster potatoes
- 125g plain flour
- 15g fresh tarragon, chopped
- 3 tsp salt

Peel potatoes, cut into chunks, and cover with cold water and 2 tsp of salt. Bring to the boil. Lower heat and simmer until tender, drain and air dry before mashing. Combine 375g of the mash with remaining salt and other ingredients to form a dough. Roll into cylinders and cut pieces (approx an inch long) to form pillow shapes. Bring a pot of water with 1 tsp of oil to the boil. Drop the gnocchi in, it's ready when it rises to the surface. Remove and place in ice water immediately. Keep to one side.

For the houmous

- 100g tinned chickpeas
 - 1 clove of garlic
 - 1 tablespoon of tahini
 - 10ml lemon juice, 50ml extra virgin olive oil, 2tsp salt
 - Pinch white pepper, pinch paprika
- Blend all ingredients to a rough paste.

For the vegetables

- 1 king oyster mushroom, cleaned and quartered
- 1 small corn cob – corn cut off in strips
- 2 marinated artichokes cut into quarters
- 6 cooked beetroot wedges

Heat non-stick pan with oil, add vegetables and caramelise. Remove from pan. Add more oil to pan, add the gnocchi, colour on both sides and add veg back into pan. Season with lemon, oil and salt. Heap a large spoon of houmous into the bottom of the bowl. Arrange gnocchi and veg on top.

Recipe from Gillian Matthews, exec. head chef of Bo & Birdy, Glasgow



Jansson's temptation

Serves 2

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 medium-sized potatoes, peeled (use Yetholm Gypsy, or alternatively Maris Piper or Rooster).
- 1 smoked sprat or 4 to 6 anchovies, roughly chopped
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp rapeseed oil
- 150ml double cream
- 1 clove garlic, smashed
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 tbsp breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp parsley, roughly chopped
- Good salt and pepper

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 190°C.

Heat the oil in a small pot and caramelise the onion with a little salt by cooking gently with the lid on, stirring occasionally. Add the cream, garlic, thyme and a little salt and pepper to a small pot and bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 5 minutes. Strain the creamy mix through a sieve and set to one side. Cut the potatoes into thin strips, then layer in an ovenproof dish with the onion and sprats (or anchovies if you prefer) until the dish is filled.

Add a little seasoning to taste as you go.

Then pour the creamy mix all over the potatoes, onions and fish and bake in the pre-heated oven for 30 to 40 minutes, or until it just starts to turn golden. Top with the breadcrumbs and bake in the oven for a further 5 minutes. Serve hot with a chopped parsley garnish.

Recipe from Neil Forbes, head chef of Cafe St Honoré, Edinburgh



Vegetarian shepherd's pie

Serves 6

Ingredients

80g of chestnut mushrooms, cooked and sliced
 80g of king oyster mushrooms, cooked and sliced
 440g chickpeas
 250g deep-fried aubergine
 250g piquillo red peppers, cut into 1cm strips
 30g coriander, chopped
 180g red quinoa, cooked
 4g table salt
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the topping

1kg Maris Piper potatoes
 100g unsalted butter
 25g cream
 Salt & white pepper

For the hot gravy

50g vegan gravy
 1g chopped parsley
 5g cooked red quinoa

Method

Place the sliced chestnut mushrooms, 1 slice of a king oyster mushroom stem and all the sliced king oyster mushroom hats into a large pan with oil and salt and cook down. Once cooked, drain the mushrooms in a colander. Dice 250g of aubergine into 2cm chunks and cook in the oven until golden brown at 180°C.

Place the aubergines into a bowl with the chickpeas, cooked mushrooms, red pepper strips and cooked red quinoa. Add the chopped coriander and mix well. This is now ready for building.

Preheat the oven to 180°C / gas mark 4.

Peel and cut the potatoes into even-sized pieces. Cook in boiling salted water for around 15 minutes until soft, then drain and return to the pan over a gentle heat to remove any excess moisture. Using an old-fashioned masher or a potato ricer, thoroughly mash the potatoes and mix them with the butter and cream and season to taste.

To assemble and serve, place the mushroom mixture into an ovenproof dish. Top with mashed potato (you can pipe this if you have the time), put into the oven and bake for around 30 minutes until a lovely golden colour. Once cooked garnish with the chopped parsley.

Finally, add the 5g of cooked red quinoa to the hot vegan gravy and use as you wish.

Recipe from Fraser Allan, head chef of The Ivy on the Square, Edinburgh

POTATO FACTS

- There are close to 4,000 varieties of potato worldwide.
- The world's largest potato weighed in at a hefty 4.98kg and was grown in the UK.
- Each Scot eats around 130kg of potato every year – whether boiled, baked, roasted, mashed or fried.
- The humble potato was the first vegetable to be grown in space.
- The world's largest potato producing country is China.



WINE TO DINE

Scottish Field wine columnist and drinks blogger Peter Ranscombe digs up five bottles to pair with potatoes...

FINEST SOUTH AFRICAN CINSULT, 2018
 Tesco
 £7.50
 Whether your shepherd's pie is veggie or lambie, this South African cinsault winter warmer is sure to be a winner.

THE BEST ALBARINO, 2017
 Morrisons
 £8.25
 An impressive Spanish white provides fish-friendly acidity to serve alongside Neil Forbes' sprats or anchovies swimming among the spuds.

LOUIS LATOUR DOMAINE DE VALMOISSINE PINOT NOIR, 2016
 Majestic Wine
 £10.99
 This Burgundy lookalike from the South of France pairs well with potatoes and overdelivers for the price.

INVIVO X SARAH JESSICA PARKER, 2019
 Sainsbury's
 £12.00
 A celebrity New Zealand sauvignon blanc tie-up with proper credentials and the right flavours to match with tarragon.

WAITROSE & PARTNERS BLANC DE NOIRS BRUT CHAMPAGNE
 Waitrose
 £23.99
 If you're deep frying your tatties to turn them into chips then sparklers like this Champagne are a sure bet.



For the full reviews, read Peter's drinks blog at scottishfield.co.uk/grapegrain

LONG LIVE LE POMPADOUR

The **Mystery Diner** goes back to an old haunt and finds it completely revamped and a go-to venue for the first time in many years

An old family friend who remembers Edinburgh back in the grey old days before and after the war, once told me a story about The Pompadour. She said that back in the day it was the place to go, but that as a young woman it was so expensive that if you accepted an invitation to dinner there you were accepting far more than just food.

For the record, as a bright young thing she never accepted any of the invitations to eat there, so when I took her along a decade ago it was her first visit. Now a well-travelled woman of some vintage, she looked at it with a rather sad eye; she wasn't, she said, sure that it had been worth waiting more than half a century for.

I had to agree. No matter how good the food or the stunning views of the castle, the fact that the wall panels are listed means it's difficult to change the place around, and unless fully full it has always resembled something of a gilded barn. And sadly, in my experience it has rarely been full.

In consequence, for special occasions instead of heading to The Pompadour I tended to end up at Number One at The Balmoral, or at one of the city's countless other upmarket watering holes.

But it is amazing what you can do with a little thought, and on my recent return the place was much changed, and for the better. There had been



countless subtle tweaks, but the most obvious difference was the addition of an eight-foot tall (fake, but surprisingly 'real') cherry tree in the middle of the room around which there were clustered four booths for diners. In one fell swoop the whole room had been transformed; diners no longer had to listen to what people at the other end of the room were saying, no longer felt they had to

whisper. It was now possible to concentrate on the food.

This, by the way, has undergone something of a metamorphosis. The Galvin Brothers, holders of countless Michelin stars for their London restaurants, are no longer in residence either in The Pompadour or downstairs in the Waldorf-Astoria's more casual dining space, and their place has been taken by the irrepressible Dan Ashmore. The head chef cut his teeth in London at La Trompette, The Square in Mayfair and Tom Aikens before joining The Pompadour in March 2017, when he worked under the Galvins. However, since March 2019 he has had total control and has put in place a whole series of changes which led to the hotel being named Fine Dining Restaurant Hotel of The Year at the 2019 Scottish Food Awards.

One of the most enjoyable is the introduction of a seven-course tasting menu which diners can opt to have as a surprise, a concept which appeals to me. So, too, did the food, a nicely varied balance of

FIELD FACTS

PRICE 7-course tasting menu £70; matching wines £55; 3-course a la carte £55

RATING

★★★★☆

The Pompadour, Waldorf Astoria Caledonian, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH1 2AB
Tel: 0131 222 8857 www.thepompadour.com

heavy dishes and lighter, finer options that left me sated but not feeling as if someone would have to take me downstairs in a wheelbarrow.

We started off with a beautifully creamy Lindisfarne oyster with horseradish and broccoli, which was followed by a gorgeous tartare of Gigha halibut with dill, preserved lemon and soy. Having recently been in Japan and seen at first hand a culinary culture that deifies uncooked fish, I can confirm this was superbly executed.

Next up was a personal favourite of mine, roast veal sweetbread. This was served with Swiss chard, shavings of wonderfully buttery and nutty Pecorino cheese, all topped with an unctuously rich sauce made from the juices of the sweetbreads augmented with Madeira wine. For someone who adores offal, this was condemned-man's-last-meal good.

Next up was a segue to the lighter side, with an immaculately presented slab of ever-so-slightly overcooked wild turbot, served with swede, turnip and, apparently, chicken butter sauce (nope, me neither, although it turns out it's a Tom Brown staple when cooking hake, with the more percussive poultry notes of Ashmore's version adding a nice depth of flavour to the white fish without overwhelming it). This one found much favour with Mrs MD, although I thought it was probably my least favourite dish of the seven, perhaps because it was subtle and I, sadly, am not.

Next up was local loin of venison with pumpkin, chestnut and braised shoulder croquettes, and here Ashmore was back on safe ground, displaying bold flavours and a joy of working with Scotland's game that has long been evident in his cooking.

By now we were entering the final straight, although we had a calorie overload to negotiate as we spied the two pudding courses. First up was 'The Pompadour Chocolate Bar', which was served with pistachio ice cream and hazelnut, a luscious combination which marked the first time my belt had to be moved out a notch. Then we rounded off with a prune and Armagnac soufflé with gingernut crumb and a stunning Earl Grey ice cream. Although I'm partial to both prunes and Armagnac, I'm not really a fan of soufflés, but this one was

“Ashmore must surely be in the reckoning for a Michelin star

flawlessly produced and again found favour with Mrs MD. Nor do I like Early Grey, but loved this in a sort of inverse coffee way – love the beverage, but hate the taste in cakes and Revels.

All in all, this was a profoundly enjoyable

experience, and although I sometimes found the paired wine choices a little too arcane (and woody) for my tastes, it was good for my palate to be challenged with some wines that I'd never usually think about ordering.

But mainly it was good to enjoy sumptuous food – displaying a new-found confidence, Ashmore must surely come into the reckoning for a star soon – in a refreshed and enhanced environment. I finally felt as if The Pompadour was reclaiming some of the lustre of its first fifty years, when it was a gastronomic goliath on the Edinburgh food scene.

New kid on the block — Noto

Edinburgh eaterie Noto is a stunning addition to the capital's buzzing restaurant scene

This gorgeous little restaurant is the brainchild of chef Stuart Ralston, who is already well known to Edinburgh foodies as the patron-chef of the southside's outstanding Aizle.

His second venture, Noto, is a city centre restaurant that is on Thistle Street, and while it has a slightly more conventional ambience than the Newington mothership, it is equally superb and worth exploring.

Where Aizle has no menu, just a list of ingredients, and dishes just arrive, at Noto there's a list of 12 small plates (effectively starters) and three mains, which we sideswerved.

The advice was to have five or six small plates, so we agreed, starting with an oyster each (£2). The highlights were the beautifully dressed crab (£8), an inventive partridge sausage roll (£8), and a plate of some of the best beef tartare I've ever eaten, although

it was brutally expensive (£14). The fried potato with egg yolk and bacon (£6), pork bao with teriyaki and spring onion (£12) were good, although the chicken skin with gem lettuce, parmesan and anchovy didn't push my buttons (£8.50).

We rounded off with an excellent fried apple pie with tatin ice cream (£10), and a memorably rich chocolate, miso and hazelnut concoction which disappeared with indecent haste.

The wine list is good but pricey, as indeed was the meal, which came to £125 including service and pudding, but no coffees. The decor is pared-back so it's noisy when all 68 covers are full, but all in all, this was a towering success and much recommended.

**Noto: 47a Thistle St, Edinburgh EH2 1DY.
www.notoedinburgh.co.uk; 0131 241 8518**



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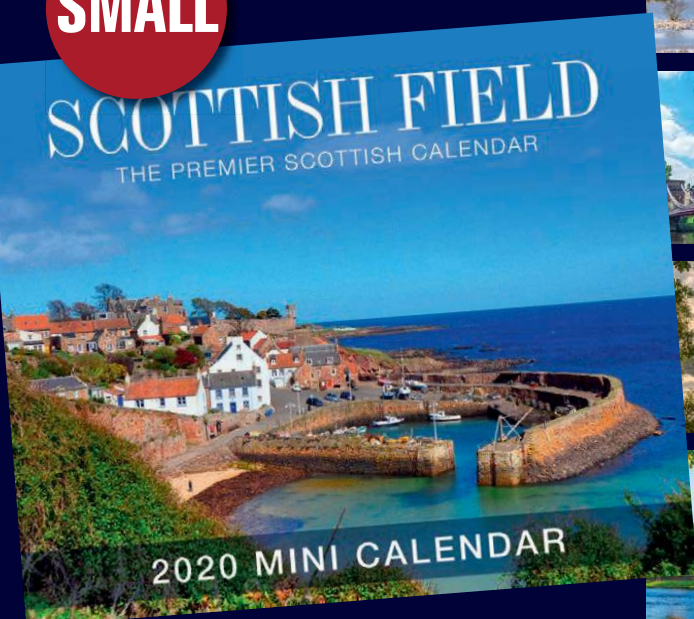
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Making the pilgrimage to far flung distilleries in the name of buying an exclusive bottling may seem a laborious task, but in the eyes of whisky enthusiasts it is one worth making. Those in search of a unique gift or an investment piece will travel many miles to secure a limited release.

However, getting your hands on one of these exclusive bottlings often requires sharpening up the elbows. In fact, in August 2018 when Macallan released a limited bottle to mark the opening of their new distillery, the hoards trying to snap up a bottle of Macallan Genesis were so immense that police were called in for crowd control. Around 300 bottles were available – and for a pretty penny – selling for £495 on a first come, first served basis. Queues mounted outside the distillery from 10pm the night before the release date, and by morning hundreds of cars were blocking the road entrance.

But not all those who scooped up one of the prized bottles went home to enjoy a dram; many bottles were ‘flipped’ – slapped with an even bigger price tag and sold on for profit. Just 12 days after its release, one bottle sold at auction for £4,650, seeing an incredible 800% increase in value. While flipping may not be a new phenomenon, it is proving increasingly difficult for brand owners to police.

Coughing up a few thousand for a rare dram isn’t always enough for the discerning whisky aficionado though. In recent years, a number of distilleries have ramped up the ‘exclusivity’ appeal by offering customers the chance to bottle their own whisky, label, sign and date it. Most of these bottles sell for a bare minimum of £100, depending on the age of the whisky and the estimated number of bottles that will be drawn from the cask, and for those handing over their hard earned cash for a personalised edition, it is a priceless addition to their drinks cabinet.

The ‘bottle your own’ craze has grown exponentially in popularity, particularly among those who have travelled from overseas to remote corners of Scotland. In visitor shops far and wide, limited casks can be seen raised up on platforms, designed with special taps and valve systems to draw in the punters.

The whole process of filling the bottle is startlingly simple, but enjoyable for those of us who like seeing the ins and outs of the whisky production process. Once you’ve been given an empty bottle, you turn a tap while holding the bottle underneath and the valve fills up, measuring out the perfect amount from

the cask. After putting the cork top on and sealing it with wax, the true test of putting the label on straight awaits. Depending on the space you’re given on the label, you can sign and name the whisky. The distillery staff will make sure you have all the legal requirements on the label – including the alcohol strength and duty stamps – and you’re left with your very own, unique bottle of liquid gold.

You might happen across distilleries that offer this ‘bottle your own’ experience through use of a ‘valinch’ (picture a large copper pipette) instead of the tap and valve. Without meaning to spoil the illusion, whiskies bottled from the tap and valve systems are usually taken from metal-lined casks, meaning it is prevented from further maturation in the wood. This ensures the distilleries have more control over the whisky’s state of maturation when they select it as the next ‘fill your own’ cask.

There are plenty of distilleries on Islay that now offer this experience, and among the most sought after are bottlings from Bowmore and Bruichladdich. Almost as soon as their casks have been announced as a ‘bottle your own’, hoards of visitors flock to the distilleries – and there are even rumours that islanders are commissioned to fill bottles for whisky connoisseurs across the globe.

Among the best ‘bottle your own’ whiskies I’ve had the pleasure of trying lately is Glen Garioch’s 1984 sherry cask (£495) which you hand-fill using a valinch, meaning the whisky continues evolving in the wood until the cask is totally empty. Another stand out is the Aberfeldy Cask #5029 40-year-old (£2,500), from which only 400 bottles were drawn. Aberfeldy have already bottled 199 of these, and they are available on their website.

As far as I’m concerned, filling your own whisky bottle is far from a gimmick – it’s a chance to try a unique single cask whisky. If you’re anything like me, you won’t need an excuse to stop off at a distillery, but with the promise of a memorable experience and a fantastic tasting dram, it would be foolish to pass up on the opportunity.

“Coughing up a few thousand for a rare dram isn’t always enough for whisky aficionados



Fill your boots

Blair Bowman takes stock of the surge in distilleries offering ‘bottle your own’ experiences and the whisky fanatics who are lining up to do it

Fortune tellers

You'd need some serious psychic powers to foresee what 2020 will hold for financial markets. **Bill Jamieson** brings us a round-up of predictions from all of the best crystal balls

If 2019 was not a sufficient humiliation for economic forecasters, what do they now divine from their steamed-up crystal balls in 2020?

The turn of the year and early January bring a rash of predictions from economists, investment banks and fund managers, though their forecasting appetite ought to have been curbed a little from the humbling experience of the past 12 months.

Interest rates did not rise as most expected but have either remained flat or in some stand-out cases such as the US, have been cut.

Britain did not succumb to recession as some feared. Germany did not see recovery but moved nearer to the brink of recession. As for the UK stock market, it did not succumb to a correction as falls at the turn of 2018-19 suggested, but by early December achieved a modest advance.

As for Brexit, the mist across the crystal balls proved impenetrably dense – and remains so given the deep division of opinion over whether the UK will enjoy a Brexit bounce or succumb to disillusion before spring has arrived.

Yet still, the predictions come thick and fast. The festive period and the onset of a new year has traditionally proved a popular time for savers to assess prospects and for stock market investors to check their nest eggs. Profits are taken, loss-making holdings sold and fresh choices made in the hope that 2020 will bring more rewarding returns.

This seasonal appetite for review will have been heightened by the spectacular crisis that has

befallen star fund manager Neil Woodford and the once-hugely popular funds he managed, with some 300,000 investors still trapped and unable to sell their holdings in the stricken Woodford Equity Income fund. Once valued at £10bn, the fund over the past year has dropped 27.7% and by 35.9% over three years. Woodford Patient Capital investment trust has also suffered from the fall-out. Few pundits foresaw the crisis.

Notably more predictable has been the stampede out of open-ended property funds as many conventional high street retailers fall to their knees. But it is not just investors in household name retailers who have suffered. Pension funds and insurance companies who are major owners of retail property have also fallen on hard times. In early December the giant M&G Property Fund, once valued at £2.5bn, imposed a block on sales in the wake of a near £1bn outflow in the past year. Concerns over the emptying of high street sites caused investors to pull out of the fund leaving managers unable to sell their property assets fast enough to give savers their money back. Now there are fears that other open-ended funds specialising in commercial property could suffer a similar fate.

Little wonder that 'portfolio review' will be a preoccupation of investors as the new year unfolds. But what do the futurologists in leading global institutions and investment banks now forecast for 2020?

Arguably the most bizarre set of predictions has come from Danish investment bank Saxo. It forecasts UK economic growth doubling to a nominal eight per cent (i.e. before allowing for inflation), the launch of an America First Tax and Asian nations banding together to take down the US dollar. While its outlier predictions do not constitute its official market forecasts for 2020, the bank have justified these predictions by stating that it is always a useful exercise to consider the full extent of what is possible – if not necessarily probable – in markets.

Steen Jakobsen, Saxo chief economist says, 'We see 2020 as a year where at nearly every turn, disruption of the status quo is an overriding theme. The year could represent one big pendulum swing to opposites in politics, monetary and fiscal policy and, not least, the environment.'

Pastures new:
The new year is traditionally a time for economic review and prediction.



ANDREY POPOV / SHUTTERSTOCK

'In politics, this would mean the sudden failure of populism, replaced by commitments to 'heal' instead of to divide. In policymaking, it could mean that central banks step aside and maybe even slightly normalise rates, while governments step into the breach with infrastructure and climate policy-linked spending.'

Among the other ten unlikely but underappreciated events are: the US central bank forced to finance massive spending initiatives launched by the Trump administration to stave off a recession. Rising inflation and yields in turn will force up the cost of capital, putting zombie companies out of business as weaker debtors scramble for funding. Globally, the US dollar suffers an intense devaluation; new European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde reverses monetary policy and hikes rates in January, followed by another a short time later; and Hungary leaves the EU, with Viktor Orban talking of Hungary as a 'blood brother' with renegade Turkey.

Rather more restrained are the forecasts from US investment bank Goldman Sachs – but perhaps no less fanciful given its wayward track record in prediction. Back in 2017 its boss Lloyd Blankfein was hinting that with the UK set for a Brexit slowdown, Frankfurt would become a key European base for the Wall Street giant. It has also been notably downbeat about the UK's economic performance over the past two years.

But the tone of its latest global assessment is more upbeat. It expects the global growth slowdown that began in early 2018 to end soon. And although annual average GDP growth is likely to rise only modestly from 3.1% in 2019 to 3.4% in 2020, it forecasts gradually rising growth to 3.6% in 2021.

It sees a growth improvement in the US with a more gradual pickup in Europe, 'where the fiscal boost is likely to remain (too) limited'. But the UK is set to

see a growth pick-up, 'helped by a sizeable fiscal boost', with the economy expanding at two per cent rate in 2021 after 1.1% in 2020.

But don't pop the bubbly too soon. Ratings agency Moody's has issued a debt downgrade warning to the entire world on fears that political turmoil from Westminster to Hong Kong poses a threat to the economy. It has cut its global sovereign outlook to 'negative' from 'stable' for 2020, cautioning that 'disruptive and unpredictable' politics was worsening the slowdown in growth.

After warning of a possible ratings downgrade on UK sovereign debt, it said populism and trade tensions globally raised the risk of bigger economic shocks and the ability of policymakers to counter them. The UK was among four countries singled out as 'countries being monitored closely'.

And the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) says in its latest quarterly report that global growth remains at the slowest pace since the financial crisis, and it doesn't expect any improvement next year.

It has lowered its forecast for global growth in 2020 to 2.9% from its September 2019 forecast of three per cent. 'What we are seeing is investment stalling, paving the way for growth to stay at this very low level,' says Laurence Boone, the OECD's chief economist.

There is also dismay at the lack of progress in the US-China trade talks. If the economic outlook in the US, UK and Europe deteriorates, central banks will become more accommodative. Although their tools may be becoming less effective, Boone believes they will still be impactful – especially for the stock market. So – as if rock bottom interest rates and monetary loosening has not created an asset bubble already, here is the flickering beacon of hope as the New Year opens. Mind how you go.

ASK THE EXPERTS

CAZENOVE CAPITAL'S PETER HILLIER JOINS US TO ANSWER A QUESTION ABOUT INVESTMENT



IT'S 20 YEARS SINCE THE 'DOTCOM' CRASH: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

ANSWER: This time 20 years ago fortunes were being lost and reputations ruined as world stock markets plunged. During the late-1990s, amid a frenzy of speculation, investors and day traders were lured into hot 'TMT' (technology, media and telecom) stocks – including numerous new businesses yet to turn a penny in profit. At the turn of the year 2000 this 'dotcom' bubble burst and shares crashed. In the UK, the episode dealt a heavy blow to the culture of individual share ownership.

In many cases, however, investors who held faith have been rewarded. The past two decades have shown that some of the insights of early internet investors were fundamentally correct, even if their timing was not. Many early internet companies were focused on building market-leading positions with the view that revenues and profits could wait. The approach was ridiculed after the dotcom crash, but has proved a winning strategy for some of today's internet titans.

Some early dotcom casualties had unrealistic expectations about the speed of internet adoption. Others simply didn't meet the expectations baked into their lofty share prices.

However, for companies that got it right, subsequent growth and earnings have been phenomenal. When Google floated in 2004, the entire company was worth \$23 billion. Today its profits in a single year exceed \$30 billion and it is valued at almost \$1 trillion.

We may yet be in the foothills of a long tech spending boom. Cloud computing is just one area that we believe still offers huge potential. The cloud allows businesses to take their IT 'out of the basement' and access services online, at lower cost and more efficiently. Only 20% of large global firms have made the switch so far, according to one recent study. This suggests that the leaders in cloud computing, such as Microsoft, still have years of growth ahead of them.

PETER HILLIER, PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR. CAZENOVE CAPITAL, TEL: 0131 270 3004, PETER.HILLIER@CAZENOVECAPITAL.COM, WWW.CAZENOVECAPITAL.COM

Stylishly Scottish

Searching for a couture outfit for your big day? Look no further than Joyce Young, a Glasgow designer that has been helping brides for 26 years

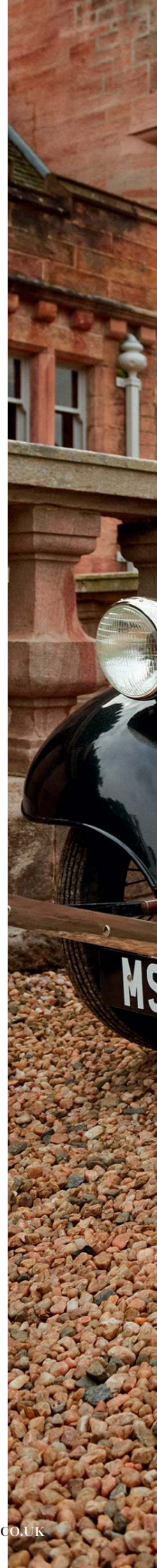


Joyce Young OBE is the award-winning designer behind By Storm Ltd now trading as Joyce Young Design Studios with stylish showrooms in London and Glasgow.

Twenty-six years since the launch of the business Joyce's designs have headlined at thousands of elegant weddings, all over the world. Known for quality and individuality her bespoke designs are all made in the company's own purpose built production unit adjacent to the Glasgow showroom where a team of experts bring your dream dress to life. As well as weddings the team make outfits for investitures and all special occasions and have recently launched Casual Chic – a new daywear collection of relaxed dresses which will take you from day to evening.

Joyce and her teams in Glasgow and London will make choosing your dress or outfit a truly enjoyable experience.

Left: Marty couture wedding dress in stretch satin, a glamorous halter neck with fishtail skirt. **Right:** Anastasia couture wedding dress, long sleeved laser cut appliqué lace with stunning train.









Opposite: Bespoke wedding dress. **Top left:** Two-piece trouser outfit from our new Casual Chic day wear collection in a choice of 18 colours. **Top right:** Mother – elegant coat and dress with guipure detail with bespoke hat; bride – Philippa Couture strapless satin wedding dress with separate long sleeved satin jacket and cathedral train. **Bottom left:** Beaded lace shift dress under swing coat with detachable faux fur collar and cuffs. **Bottom right:** Mother – two-piece silk dress with French lace beaded top; bride – Monaco wedding dress in georgette with separate beaded top.





Above: Silk drape front dress and hand beaded top with chiffon scarf and bespoke hat. **Top right:** Long bias cut beaded silk georgette dress and top. **Right:** Contemporary wool coat and short sheath dress. **Far right:** Silk organza jacquard coat over short silk dress.

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A KOHLER EXPERIENCE

Love in the Highlands: Mei Mei and Glen were married in the stunning surroundings of Glen Coe, the ideal backdrop for Caro Weiss' atmospheric shot.



WILD ROMANCE

Straying from the conventional, these three wedding photographers perfectly capture love, laughter and the breathtaking drama of Scotland's rural and urban landscape, discovers **Stephanie Abbot**

It can take years to plan the perfect wedding and even if it's not the planning specifically, many people dream about the big day long before it happens. But when that pivotal date on the calendar eventually comes around and the first bottle of morning bubbly is popped to get proceedings underway, it all seems to be over quicker than guests trying to locate the open bar.

With so much time and effort having gone into the celebrations and the idea that it's one of the best days of your life, being able to look back on this special milestone is essential.

In a seemingly endless parade of wedding photographers, there are definitely those who stand out from the '1,2,3 – and kiss' approach. We've chosen three photographers whose work shows creativity, a beautiful use of the surrounding Scottish landscape and an overall sense that each image is a natural and unscripted moment between loved ones.

Even when the finer details of the day have become fuzzy, one quick look at stunning wedding pictures such as these, and the amazing memories and feelings will come flooding back.

CLAIRE PATON

After initially attending Edinburgh Art College to study performance costume, Claire quickly realised that she much preferred being the one behind the camera taking pictures of the dresses and costumes.

'I started working with a family friend who was a wedding photographer and it was different to what I imagined wedding photography to be as he was a lot more theatrical in his approach,' she says.

It was during this time that Claire's eyes were opened to the creative possibilities of the job. 'It got me thinking about the ways in which you can set up shop in wedding photography and just be a little bit more cinematic and a little bit more dramatic. I think particularly in the Scottish Highlands, it's the perfect backdrop for drama and romance isn't it?'

Claire's approach to creating natural but romantic looking pictures is focused on keeping couples moving. 'I think the key for me is that I very rarely ever ask couples to hold a pose. I think that becomes quite awkward very quickly. I think movement in the way you direct is very important so I encourage couples to keep walking or I'll ask them to have a wee dance together. Rather than getting them to stand in freeze frame and pose. Movement is key.'

clairejulietpaton.co.uk



Above: Claire captured this perfectly natural shot of Molly and Cyle enjoying their wedding day by the water in glorious Glen Coe. **Below:** American couple Emily and Zach chose Claire to capture their reception at Tennent's Brewery in Glasgow.



“I think weddings have become a lot cooler, with couples trying to do things differently



Top: Katey and Franziska brave the cold with their four-legged friend at Seacliff beach near North Berwick for this snap by Marc. **Above:** Kameel and Claire at The Byre at Inchyra, taken by Marc.

MARC MILLAR

Having worked in the photography industry since he was 16, Marc also spent ten years in the USA with a photography company and shot weddings across North America from Mexico to Alaska. 'It wasn't until I came back to Scotland and set up my own business in 2008 that I was fully invested in photographing weddings,' he says. 'Since then I think weddings have become a lot cooler, with couples really trying to do things differently from all their friends. This means we have a pretty creative industry now.'

Marc's favourite wedding day moments to capture vary from couple to couple. 'Sometimes it's the couple shots away from all the guests where they can relax and be themselves and most even have a wee sneaky smile away from parents, which is funny. I also like the dancing shots when the dance floor is going off!'

As a wedding photographer travelling the length and breadth of the country to capture one of life's greatest moments in beautiful locations, he has experienced countless standout experiences.

'This happens a lot in the amazing Scottish landscape. I love frosty winter weddings paired with an amazing outdoor venue and couples who are not afraid to use the landscape.'

marcmillarphotography.com



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Above: Caro snapped Ragini and Owen who eloped to the Roulotte Retreat in the Borders. **Below:** Caro adds a touch of cinematic drama to this woodland shot of bride Heather.

CARO WEISS

For Caro Weiss, who studied photography, her career as a wedding photographer began when a friend and bride asked Caro to bring her camera along to the wedding where Caro was a guest. 'She asked me to take some little pictures of what was going on,' says Caro. 'I gave her the pictures afterwards and she really loved them and I really enjoyed the observation of the wedding and catching these little moments that were happening between people.'

To avoid those rigid looking photos, Caro keeps her advice to couples simple. 'My golden rule that I tell couples is: "Don't look at the camera, relax and enjoy the day." That makes the best pictures.'

As with any event taking place in Scotland, the weather is an unpredictable and temperamental creature and will turn from delightful to dreich in a heartbeat. However, Caro has come to consider this factor another part of Scotland's charm. 'A lot of people think it needs to be very sunny and bright for photographs, but then you have shadows and people squinting so you actually want it to be overcast – dramatic clouds are great, wind is also the photographer's friend. It looks amazing when the dress is blowing or the veil; it just looks great.'

caroweiss.com



“My golden rule that I tell couples is not to look at the camera”

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Top: Kelvin and Rachel eloped to Glen Etive where Claire braved torrential rain to capture their 'I do's'. **Above:** Caro's dramatic but beautiful shot of Toyah and Jason under Honeycomb Rock on the Isle of Skye. **Below:** A fairytale moment in the woods captured by Marc for Zoe and Ruth at Guardswell Farm in Perthshire.



NEW WEDDING VENUES

If you're on the hunt for the ideal place to host your special day then you might want to consider one of Scotland's newest and most desirable venues



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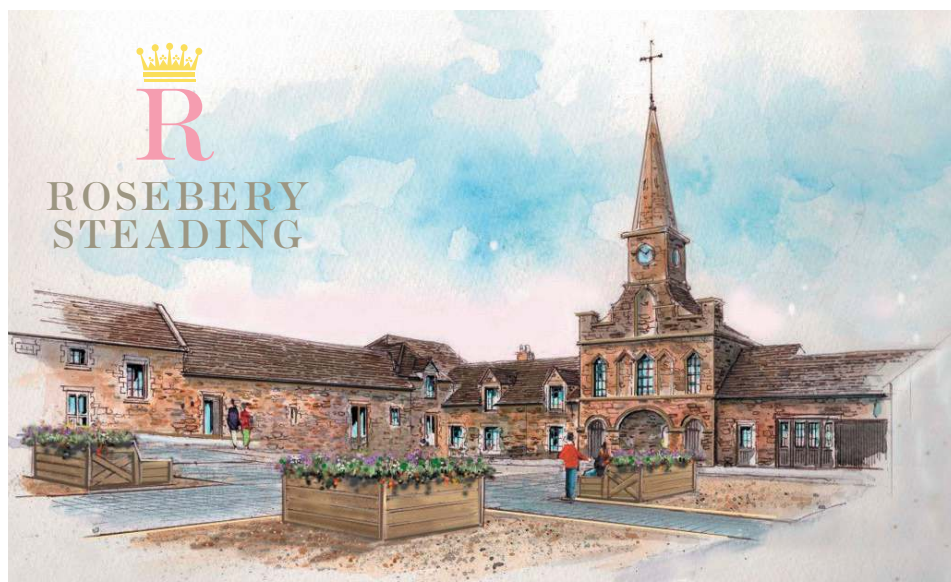
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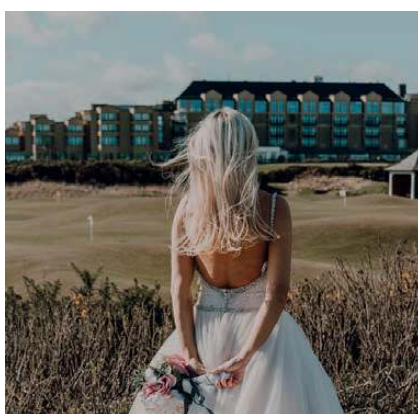
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Rosslyn Chapel



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Tel: 01339 741320, ski-glenshee.co.uk

Love is in the air

Here at SF we're feeling the love this February and our subscribers have enjoyed dedicating their latest breaks away to the one they love



Bonnie Badger

REVIEWED BY VERITY & MARK TUCKWOOD FROM THE BORDERS

Everyone can relate to juggling busy lives, work and family so what a treat it was for us to have a night away at The Bonnie Badger. Tom & Michaela Kitchin's stylish pub with rooms in East Lothian's coastal village of Gullane did not disappoint.

On arrival we were given a warm welcome and shown round the Scandi-inspired garden room, bar and restaurant. Upstairs, our individually designed bedroom had stunning views. The bathroom boasted a walk-in shower with luxurious towels and lovely Juniper & Lime Siabann toiletries. Crisp, white sheets on the very comfy bed continued the wow factor.

A glass of fizz in the bar got the evening off to a relaxing start before being shown to our table, in a cosy corner next to the open fire. As you'd expect given the Michelin Bib Gourmand award, the food was excellent. With the 'nature to plate' philosophy, every dish was carefully created using the best seasonal and local produce. Highlights were the scallop starter and the chocolate and whisky mousse dessert. The service was friendly and attentive with nothing being too much trouble.

Back in the restaurant we were served the most excellent breakfast. After all that it was only right to head to the beach for a bracing walk. Stunning views to Fife and as far as the Queensferry Crossing made for a lovely romantic walk on the beach. All in all, we cannot recommend The Bonnie Badger enough for a romantic break; credit to the Kitchins and their team for creating such a warm and welcoming establishment.



**MAIN STREET,
Gullane EH31 2AB**
**www.
bonniebadger.
com**
*Prices from £175
for a room.*



The Gypsy Palace

REVIEWED BY FREDA BROOKS & GREG DRUMM FROM MILNATHORT

We decided to head off a day early and spent a night in Melrose. We'd emailed the Palace owners who were very responsive and advised that we could get early access as there was no one in before us – very accommodating.

Kirk Yetholm is a tiny wee place, just north of the border. The Palace is very quaint and almost otherworldly, with a well laid out garden area and a summerhouse with views down the valley. It is a great place for a romantic break, the Palace is small and cosy. There's a galley type kitchen which is well equipped. It was spick and span, with a thoughtful welcome pack of Borders biscuits, Tweed honey and a bottle of red (not local!) There's plenty to do in the cottage without venturing out, there are books and DVDs, TV and games.

Upstairs there is a double room with a single room leading off it (there's a pull out bed under the single bed). The dining area is in the front porch with views out to the east, we carried the table and chairs through to the living area to enjoy the heat from the fire. If we were to go back during the summer we would spend meal times in the summerhouse.

The views from the Palace are stunning, looking east to the north sea and to the Cheviot hills to the west. The local pub, The Border Hotel, is only a 5-minute walk – it has a nice atmosphere and a big choice of bar suppers.

We would recommend The Palace to a couple for a romantic break, outdoor activities or simply for destressing.



**HIGH STREET,
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gypsyplace.
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Rink Hill

REVIEWED BY DEBI KIRK & SANDY MACLEAN FROM EDINBURGH

Calling all romantics, walkers, wanderers, design lovers and seekers of quiet spaces, Rink Hill awaits. Tucked into a hillside with uninterrupted panoramic views of the stunning Tweed Valley, this modern, luxury lodge for two is truly exceptional.

The owners, Mike and Fiona Bayne, whose family have farmed the land here for three generations, have created something very special in their vision for this romantic retreat. Blending effortlessly into the surrounding countryside they have used locally sourced natural materials and finished the lodge to an exceptionally high standard. On arrival we were warmly welcomed by Fiona and her three young sons who left us with a delicious hamper of local produce to enjoy during our stay.

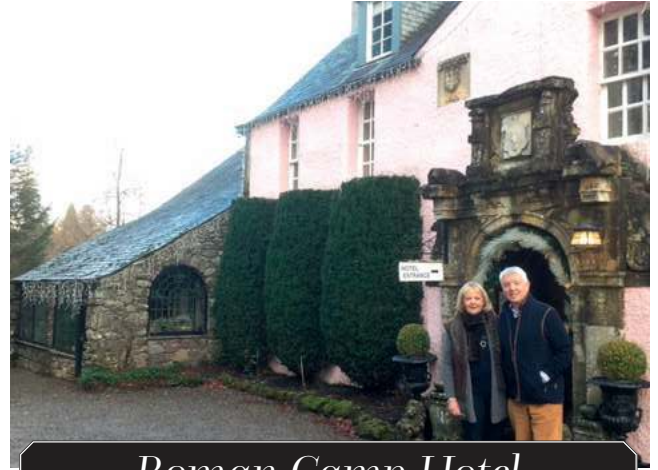
Mike and Fiona have a flair for style which is evident in the furnishings and interior. We were immediately struck by the natural light streaming through the floor to ceiling windows. In addition to this we were able to enjoy the breathtaking views from the comfort of the warm, open plan living area.

During our stay we wanted to make the most of this tranquil space. Curling up on the comfy sofa close to the log burner, listening to our music on the superb sound system and cooking delicious food we bought locally.

Although hard to drag ourselves away we enjoyed a couple of lovely walks, getting back to the lodge in time for a glorious sunset. Rink Hill oozes charm and encourages you to relax and find that feeling of connection with a place and partner.



GALASHIELS
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www.rinkhill.com
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Roman Camp Hotel

REVIEWED BY VERA & JOHN LOW FROM NEWTON

We found the entrance in a pink-washed frontage at the east end of Callander Main Street, but saw immediately within the grounds there is a sense of character, history and tranquility.

On a dreich, darkening afternoon the open fire in a stone-flagged hallway was welcoming - no flashy reception area, but more a feeling of being welcomed into someone's rather grand home. This feeling was enhanced as we were shown to our room - a suite on the ground floor. The spacious sitting room and bedroom, both with flat screen TV, were complemented by a large bathroom with shower, jacuzzi bath and, oh so nice, underfloor heating. Thoughtful additions included toiletries, bathrobes, an iron, tea, coffee and complimentary apples. The public areas in the hotel are full of character, with many period features and furnishings. Log fires and flickering candles make it warm and entrancing.

Roman Camp enjoys an excellent reputation for its fine dining and we were not disappointed by either the imaginative food or by the soft, classical ambience of the dining room. Our choice of the four-course dinner menu was preceded by canapes served in the bar and was refreshed by an amuse bouche. Standards were maintained at breakfast, served at table and all freshly prepared. We lingered over our departure and explored the beautiful 20 acre gardens. The peace and stillness enhanced the sense of relaxation other-worldliness and overall contentment. It could be more than a romantic getaway - it offers to be a perfectly magnificent wedding venue.



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- 2 The Gypsy Palace
Tel: 01289 305 735
- 3 Rinkhill
Email: info@rinkhill.com
- 4 Roman Camp Hotel
Tel: 01877 330 003



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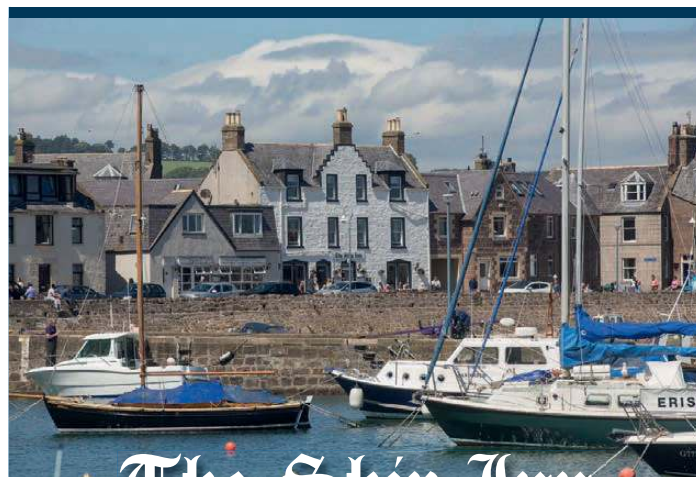
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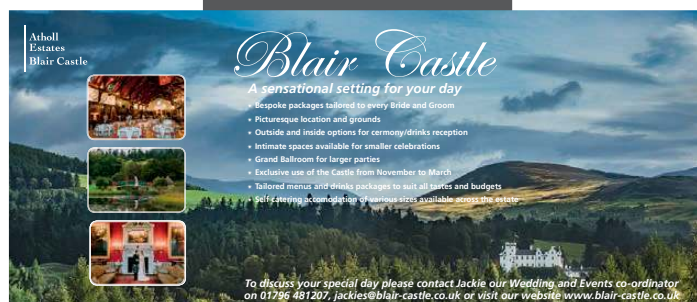
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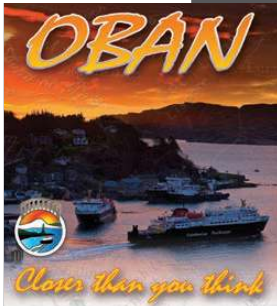
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January: The best month of the year?

Archie Hume of A Hume Country Clothing on his love of the marmite month

No doubt about it, January is a marmite month. Those who don't like it throw themselves with great fervour into the pastime of dissing each and every one of the 31 days. Expending great energy bemoaning the lack of light, the weather and the consequence of festive excess coming home to roost, mainly in the form of tighter waistbands and fatter credit card bills.

They are misery incarnate. And some of them make it worse for themselves by indulging in further acts of self-inflicted masochism, such as Dry January. Honestly, I've never met a bunch more in need of a drink. Though, to be fair, some of us in the love-January camp do the Dry January thing too. The difference is all in the approach.

Personally, I think January is a great month. It's the re-boot. You wake up. You've had your fun. You get out for a good long walk to blast the cobwebs right out into the cold, clear air. Use that fierce January chill to scour out the excess. Embrace the New Year and that empty diary, bereft of social engagements. Then use the time to reflect on the past year and think about your plans for the year ahead. It's time well spent.

The past year has been a time of celebration for A Hume. The company my grandfather, Arch, founded in 1929 turned 90. A ripe old age by any measure. Especially when those years have been passed during a time of massive change

and innovation in the retail sector. At risk of repeating myself, neither my grandfather nor my father would recognise the company now. They might if they walked through the doors of our shop in The Square, Kelso. Growth and an upgrade haven't rendered it unrecognisable as a place where country gents get toggled up. But they'd have a hard time getting their heads around the online side of things.

My dad might indulge in a 'told you so' moment when he saw Karen running the show upstairs. He saw a role for my wife in the business before I did and her success as E-commerce and Operations Director would come as no surprise to him. But other than that, there would be much tilting of caps and scratching of heads at the idea of people all over the world clutching palm-sized screens buying tweeds and twills they've neither touched nor tried on.

Now, as ever, stepping into 2020, I relish not just a new year but a new decade. I'm up for the challenges that lie ahead, keen to plan, braced to implement. If I choose to go with the Dry January brigade and sign myself up for Bootcamp, it's so I can be sharp and on my toes. Mindful and best placed to make the most of the year ahead.

Each January day gets a little bit longer, a little lighter, brighter and clearer. By the end of the month the year ahead will be in sharp focus and I look forward to living it.

TRAVELLER70 / SHUTTERSTOCK

A·HUME
EST.1929, KELSO

A close-up photograph of a student's hand holding a pink pen, poised to write on a worksheet. The student is wearing a maroon school uniform. In the background, another student is blurred, also working at a desk. The foreground shows a wooden desk with a worksheet that has some faint, illegible text and a ruler.

SCOTTISH FIELD Independent Schools



Could your ideal school be independent?

Most parents spend a great deal of time seeking out opportunities for their children. We want to introduce our sons and daughters to the subjects, interests and experiences that could shape who they will become, and what they choose to do with their life. Finding the right educational environment for your child obviously has a big part to play and Scotland's wide selection of independent schools can give you that freedom of choice.

Some are large, some are small, some are single sex, others are co-ed, some are set in acres of countryside, others look like Hogwarts in the city.

Regardless of geography or size, each one has its own distinct ethos and diverse community where children of all ages, abilities and needs thrive. The schools provide a comprehensive and consistent approach to a child's education.

The question is which one is right for your child?

A healthy and diverse mix of backgrounds

Around 30,000 children in Scotland attend an independent school, that's around four percent of pupils in Scotland. Almost a third of boarders come from overseas, and in 2019-2020 over 25% of pupils received some sort of financial assistance. This healthy mix of backgrounds, abilities and nationalities makes for a vibrant, modern student body that mirrors the real world and will serve your child well for the future.

Fee assistance

You may be surprised to learn how affordable an independent education can be. Schools are sensitive to the sacrifices many parents make in order to afford school fees and all schools offer some level of fee assistance which is usually awarded on the basis of financial need. In 2019-20, over 3,000 children received means-tested fee assistance, with 18% of those benefiting from a free place.



The independent school advantage

The schools' reputation for academic excellence is an obvious attraction for many parents. Pupil/teacher ratios and significant investment in modern, stimulating teaching facilities attract the highest calibre of teaching staff. Examination choice is often greater too, with subjects like Mandarin, Philosophy, Environmental Science and Drama on offer at Higher and A-level.

Independent schools appreciate that parents are investing heavily in their child's education and place great importance on developing a strong working partnership. You'll be given clear indicators of your child's progress goals through frequent parental consultations, good communication and obvious homework signposting. Staff have ready strategies to help every child excel, whether it's extra stimulation for someone showing clear ability, or a different approach to turn the light on when the topic is tricky.

Continuity of care

We know from talking to parents that it's a regular struggle balancing the demands of work, homework and after-school activities. Independent schools offer an exciting array of on-site clubs and experiences your child can wrap around their academic day to help them grow both physically, socially and in confidence. Your child will have the opportunity to try all sorts of endeavours from coding to musical theatre without you having to worry about how they're going to get there or who is going to pick them up.

After School Clubs are readily available and run in all but one school by permanent staff. Knowing there are qualified staff on hand to assist with homework, can be especially useful during busy times when there's a lot going on.

It's not a must your child plays rugby or a musical instrument either, with so much on offer you're as likely to find you have a future Olympic rower or budding tech entrepreneur on your hands.

Scotland's independent schools will support your child both inside and outside the classroom, with teachers to ignite a passion and stretch their minds, and after school activities to stretch their abilities and bring out their natural talents.

Safe environment

Providing a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn, and flourish is central to the ethos of all independent schools. As with state schools, every school has a trained Child Protection Co-ordinator, strict rules governing protection policies and procedures and is subject to the same exacting standards of safeguarding set by Education Scotland and the Care Commission.

See for yourself

All schools welcome visits from prospective families throughout the year. Look for details of open Days on the school's website, or alternatively ask for an appointment where staff will be delighted to show you round, give you a feel for life at the school and answer any questions you may have.

CONTACT

For more information, advice and guidance on choosing an independent school in Scotland visit the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) website at scis.org.uk

Belhaven Hill School

Belhaven Hill School offers an inspiring full boarding and day education for seven to 13-year-old boys and girls, from its parkland campus beside the sea in Dunbar.



The school is popular with local day children from East Lothian and the Borders, as well as full boarders from further afield.

Belhaven offers a creative academic curriculum, as well as comprehensive Support for Learning. In 2019, 45% of leavers won scholarships and awards to leading schools in Scotland and England.

Team sports and activities are played most days: the children surf, swim, ride, ski, and play tennis and golf, alongside art, music, reeling and piping! The school develops happy, well-rounded children.

You are warmly invited to the Belhaven Open Morning and Hockey Festival on Saturday 14 March 2020. Please RSVP.

CONTACT

For all enquiries please contact the registrar Olivia Reynolds, on +44 (0)1368 862785 or admissions@belhavenhill.com and, of course, visit www.belhavenhill.com




Choice | Diversity | Excellence

Thinking about an independent school?

Scotland's independent schools are as diverse as the children who attend and offer a wide range of opportunities in vibrant learning environments.

For information and advice on applying and meeting the cost, speak to
The Scottish Council of Independent Schools

 0131 556 2316
  info@scis.org.uk
 www.scis.org.uk

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An Exceptional, All-Round Education Beside the Seaside

- Full boarding & day education for 7-13 year olds
- Inspiring academics, art, music & sport
- Excellent support for learning
- Parkland campus where children can still be children
- Developing happy, well-rounded boys & girls

Be Adventurous Be Belhaven

Belhaven Hill School, Dunbar,
 East Lothian EH42 1NN
 +44 (0)1368 862785
belhavenhill.com



Belhaven Hill School

Belhaven Open Morning: Sat 14 March (9.30am - 12.00pm)
RSVP admissions@belhavenhill.com Or visit us any time!

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee No: SCO07118. Assistance with fees may be available.

Aysgarth School

Aysgarth School is near Bedale, North Yorkshire, and is one of the leading Prep schools in the country, where 'boys can be boys'. As the only all-boys boarding Prep school in the north, Aysgarth sends more boys to selective schools such as Eton and Harrow than any other school in the north, as well as to senior schools nearby. It is a northern school with a national focus; the school is full boarding focused, with around 90% of boys boarding. Its academic performance is excellent and this is matched by the success of the sporting, musical, dramatic and artistic departments. The activities programme is vast and the boys work hard and have a great deal of fun.

Boarding school teachers work with the children in and out of the classroom, dine with them and often live on site. There is much truth in the old adage that 'one wins the battle outside of the classroom'. Being able to congratulate a boy on his sporting performance or on his singing in the Chapel on Sunday, helps develop self-confidence and ensure that he is more focused in your lesson.



CONTACT

To arrange your visit, please call 01677 451 021, or email admissions@aysgarthschool.co.uk. aysgarthschool.com

Fettes College


Fettes College is uniquely situated in a 100-acre wooded campus in the heart of Edinburgh and enjoys a reputation as one of the UK's pre-eminent boarding schools for boys and girls aged seven-




18. Fettes has a full-boarding ethos with 70% of pupils boarding in the Senior School and over 20% boarding in the Prep School. Fettes is renowned for the quality of education it provides which naturally includes superb academic results across GCSE, A Level and the IB. A Fettes education means so much more than academic success and the skills and talents of each of our students are recognised and rewarded, whether that be in the classroom, on the sports field, in the concert hall, on the stage or in the gallery. Fettes College provides sector-leading pastoral care and nurtures the individual while fostering a happy, caring community with strong family values at its core. We are proudly Scottish, celebrating all that Scotland has to offer, whilst also developing a confident, global outlook.

CONTACT

Carrington Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH4 1QX, UK Contact: Harriet Marshall, Registrar. Tel: 0131 311 6744, Email: admissions@fettes.com, www.fettes.com



AYSGARTH SCHOOL




Best Prep School
Tatler 2019

Where boys can be boys


Aysgarth Prep School for boys aged 8 to 13 years

- The only all-boys boarding prep school in the North
- Unmatched in the North for sending boys to the top UK schools
- Day boys most welcome, bursaries available
- Co-ed Pre-prep 3-8 years
- Accompanied train service to Edinburgh and London at half term and exams

To register your interest or for further information please call 01677 451 021
admissions@aysgarthschool.co.uk ■ www.aysgarthschool.com






Fettes College



Full Boarding Ethos • 100-acre campus in Edinburgh
 Co-educational – 7–18 • Excellent IB, A Level & GCSE results
 'Sector leading' pastoral care • Strong sporting tradition
 Award winning careers partnership programme
 Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards available

A strong foundation for the future, a family for life

To arrange a visit, please call our Registrar on 0131 311 6744
admissions@fettes.com www.fettes.com

 FettesCollegeFettesPrep
  fettes.college
  @Fettes_College

St Mary's of Melrose

As St. Mary's co-educational day, flexi and weekly boarding prep school enters its 125th year, an eye has been cast over the last decade. The school has gone from strength to strength in challenging times for independent prep schools due to the close-knit community of staff, pupils and parents. Pupils come from the Borders, the Lothians and further afield, and the draw of this dynamic school has resulted over the last five years in the largest roll it has experienced in its history.

St. Mary's Prep School prides itself on the highest possible standards in all areas of the curriculum – in academics and through sport, expressive arts, outdoor learning and clubs. The flexi-weekly boarding on offer is immensely popular due to a non-compulsory element to the provision. Pupils board because they want to, not because they have to, and the mix of experience, energy and youthfulness among the boarding staff in state of the art boarding facilities is second-to-none.

The only prep school in the heart of the Borders has excellent links to Edinburgh on the Borders Railway and this has opened up all sorts of opportunities to working parents looking for first class wrap around care in the form of a quality education for young people from two-13 years of age.

Common Entrance in Year Eight is the culmination of Form eight pupils' time at the school, with a number also sitting scholarships to various senior schools both north and south of the Border. Irrespective of which senior school they go on to, St. Mary's school leavers depart as independent learners with the confidence and

knowledge to face the new challenges ahead with resilience and an enthusiastic curiosity.

St. Mary's are proud of their school and extremely excited about the campus and curriculum advancements on the horizon. The Borders community is hugely important to St. Mary's, and the school is an integral part of why this beautiful part of Scotland is so attractive to many relocating from all over the United Kingdom. Pay a visit next time you are passing.



CONTACT

Tel: 01896 822 517. www.stmarysmelrose.org.uk

ST. MARY'S
SCHOOL
MELROSE



Helping children discover their future.
Independent education for boys and girls aged 2-13.

Flexi-boarding available
from 7 years.



St. Mary's School,
Abbey Park, Melrose, TD6 9LN

Tel: 01896 822 517
www.stmarysmelrose.org.uk



Wellington School

Wellington School in Ayr is an independent day school which welcomes both girls and boys from age three to 18, at any stage in their educational journey. Consisting of three impressive turreted buildings overlooking the sea, Wellington offers children the best possible start in life through excellent teaching, high quality pastoral care and a rich choice of extra-curricular activities.

Academically, pupils at Wellington choose eight National 5 courses to study throughout S3 and S4, before going on to study five Higher courses in S5. They then have access to a full range of 17 Advanced Highers and almost all pupils go on to a university or college of their choice. The school is proud to maintain consistently excellent academic records at all levels.

A particular strength of the school is the smooth transition between the Junior and Senior stages. Special arrangements in Primary seven allow pupils to spend half their academic week with specialist Senior School teachers, extending learning at an earlier age and providing an easier integration into Senior School life.

The school holds International status, an accolade awarded by the British Council, which sees international education embedded in the curriculum at all stages. As a result, pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities to broaden their horizons and forge meaningful links with other countries. In October, a group of 20 seniors visited our partner school in Jaipur, India and Wellington is currently leading an Erasmus+ project based on astronomy that involves young people from six schools across Europe. Pupils grow



in confidence from these experiences and a number of recent former pupils have gone on to study or work overseas.

Wellington pupils throw themselves into school life and simply 'get involved.' Whether it be in the classroom, on the sports field or performing on stage, our pupils work hard, support one another and achieve more than they ever thought was possible.

A new adventure beckons and Wellington look forward to sharing that journey with you.

CONTACT

For admissions enquiries or to arrange a visit, please contact Marian Dunlop, Admissions Registrar on 01292 269321 or via email: admissions@wellingtonschool.org, wellingtonschool.org



Whether it be in the classroom, on the sports field or performing on stage, our pupils work hard, support one another and achieve more than they ever thought was possible.

JOIN THE WELLINGTON FAMILY
wellingtonschool.org

Mowden Hall School

Each boarding school is unique – yet all aim to provide the same service: superb education, pastoral support and experiences for the pupils and boarders. There is every reason to be extremely optimistic about Prep boarding as it has shown itself to instil resilience in abundance. It has an offer which is as attractive as it has ever been as a route to enabling young people to discover who they are and where they want to go, as well as guiding them on how to get there. Boarding increases a child's self-assurance, teaches them to relax, helps them make new friends and allows them to feel a valued member of the community. A focus on wellbeing and mental health in schools is key to effective learning and teaching. Mowden, in Northumberland demonstrates the importance of a broad range of skills and focuses

on kindness to others, something it believes should permeate every member of a school's community. As an independent day and boarding school, Mowden Hall provides opportunities for innovation and development.



CONTACT

Call 01661 842 147 or email info@mowdenhall.co.uk for more information or visit www.mowdenhall.co.uk

Ardvreck School

Ardvreck, in the heart of rural Perthshire is a hidden gem of a boarding and day preparatory school, offering a unique, educational experience to boys and girls from the age of three to 13.



Any school can provide excellent academic rigour, a strong pastoral ethos and a broad co-curricular programme, all of which they do very well. What sets this school apart is the people, who are, at Ardvreck, a rather rare and dedicated breed!

Pupils at Ardvreck are encouraged to cast their nets wide, to have big dreams and be ambitious. From age three, the children have access to acres of outdoor space for exciting forest learning, sport and play; these factors make the curriculum so creative and thrilling that young minds can't help but have a tenacious thirst for learning.

Well aware of the day to day juggling of family and working life, the school's aim is to be the supportive hand in your team. Ardvreck offer local transport options, flexible boarding packages and monthly fee plans which suit today's modern family.

CONTACT

Tel: 01764 653112, Clarinda.snowball@ardvreck.org.uk
ardvreckschool.co.uk

Mowden Hall School OPEN MORNING SATURDAY, 1st FEBRUARY 2020 10.00am - 12.30pm



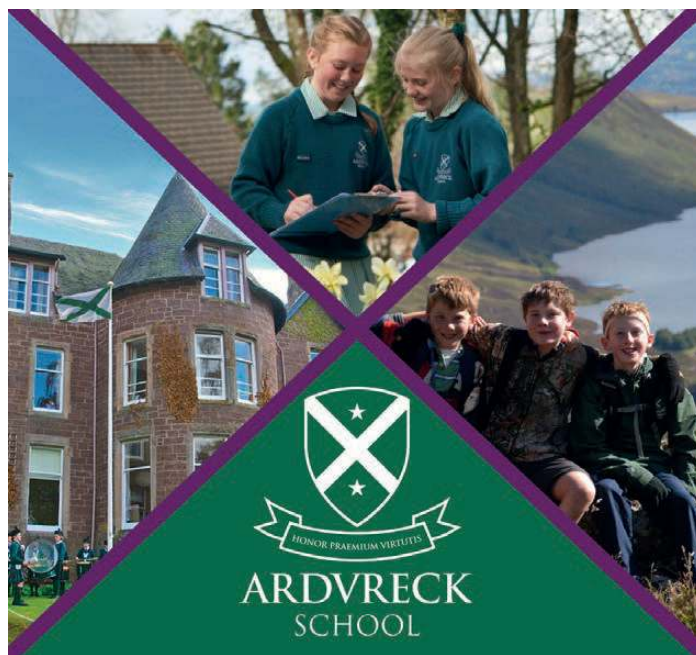
"You would struggle to find better
in the North."

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

Leading Co-Educational Prep School
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INSPIRING THE INDIVIDUAL IN EVERY CHILD

Independent boarding and day preparatory school, offering a unique, educational experience to boys and girls from the age of 3 to 13.

Discover how your child can benefit from an exceptional preparation for life.

01764 653 112

admissions@ardvreck.org.uk | ardvreckschool.co.uk

Ardvreck School, Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4EX

REGISTERED SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC009886

Fairview International School

Fairview International School, Bridge of Allan offers the very best of international education located in the heart of Scotland. Our curriculum is based on the well-respected International Baccalaureate programmes and draws heavily on the proven success of our sister schools in Malaysia, but with clear reference to our Scottish context.

Through our inquiry-based learning model, our children are faced with problems to solve instead of facts to remember. By exposing them to challenges within the school environment, they learn to channel their creativity to develop solutions which work and which are transferable to other situations. Applying the knowledge they gain to real-world problems makes the learning come alive and means our children excitedly look forward to coming to school.

Throughout their time at Fairview, our children are actively encouraged to reflect on their progress and to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, and how they are improving. This is very powerful

in helping them recognise the value and importance of their own education. Our children are engaged on a journey of discovery and development which gives them a skill set which will allow them to succeed in an ever-changing world.

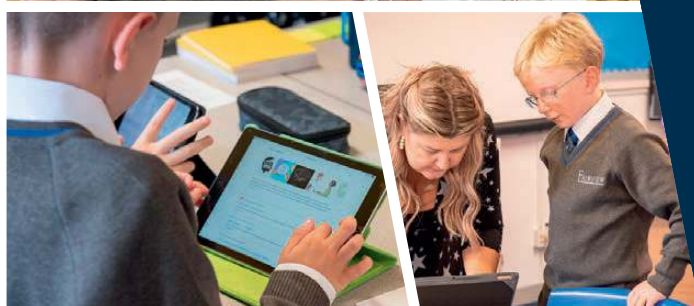
As we are an International School, and part of a larger international family of schools, our children have the opportunity to develop an authentic international mindset where they are able to work positively and constructively alongside people from any background. Our children understand that the differences between cultures, nationalities and languages are not barriers to cooperation but opportunities for creative collaboration. The modern world is connected in many ways, Fairview's international curriculum will build young people as digital citizens ready, willing and able to face those challenges and make a difference now and in the future.

Contact the Admissions Team at Fairview and come see what makes us different.



CONTACT

Please contact 01786 231 952 or
enquiries@fairviewinternational.co.uk.
www.fairviewinternational.uk



FAIRVIEW

- INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL -
BRIDGE OF ALLAN

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in the heart of Scotland

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SATURDAY 1ST
FEBRUARY 2020

01786 231 952

enquiries@fairviewinternational.uk

www.fairviewinternational.uk



Discover an Education **MADE FOR *YOU***



“A balanced curriculum, excellent pastoral care and a high A level pass rate make Merchiston one of the UK’s leading independent schools.”*

A Member of the World Leading Schools Association
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Open Morning - Saturday 29 February

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MERCHISTON.CO.UK

admissions@merchiston.co.uk 0131 312 2201   

Charity number SC016580 *ukboardingschools.com



A BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AGED 7-18



Merchiston School

Many schools can boast about their exceptional academic results, university success rates, extensive sporting and co-curricular programmes, welcoming atmospheres and stunning grounds and facilities. Indeed, we can do that as well.

What makes us different, however, is a combination of things: our size, a genuine focus on the needs of the individual, and the fact that we really understand boys and how to get the very best out of them.

It is a potent trio. It is what enables us to know our boys really well and to understand what makes them tick. It is why we can support them in a way that is material and motivating to them. It is the reason your son will strive for personal excellence and want to be the best version of himself. It is the secret of their, and our, success.

Our mission is to provide a caring community for every boy, which treats him as an individual, unearths and tends his talents, encourages him to pursue excellence in all he does, and enables him to truly flourish.

'The environment in which children learn is crucial to how they absorb and retain information. We're lucky at Merchiston to have a range of diverse indoor and outdoor spaces that are equipped to help students foster creativity and encourage a new way of thinking,' explains Niamh Waldron, Head of Merchiston Juniors.

Our community's wellbeing is central; without it no one will ever achieve their best. That is why wellbeing underpins everything we do. Our boys thrive because they are known, understood, valued, and supported in everything they do. They are encouraged to make the most of their talents, and to look after one another in a safe, caring environment, to ensure that the school years are a happy time for all.

'We have integrated, and regularly return to, the eight well-being indicators of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included to help establish a common language surrounding well-being. These are intrinsic across both the academic and social curriculum we offer pupils, with our long and successful sport offering supporting positive mental well-being as much as physical fitness levels. This healthy-body, healthy-mind approach extends to carefully selecting raw, natural ingredients for meals and placing high-importance on educating students about the importance of good nutrition.' Alan Johnston, Senior Deputy Head.

Merchiston is a remarkable school where boys make lifelong friends and community connections, whilst gaining a world-class, global, outward-looking education.

We would love to talk to you about your son and, more importantly, talk with him to work out what makes him tick, discuss where he wants to go next and make sure he has the toolkit to get there.

We know that choosing a school for your son is an important decision, which is why we treat every application individually. No two families are the same, so there is no typical process. We offer many opportunities for you and your son to visit us throughout the year so that you can decide what the best fit is for you as a family.

Our success proves that what we do works but don't just take our word for it:

'A balanced curriculum, excellent pastoral care and a high A level pass rate make Merchiston one of the UK's leading independent schools.' www.ukboardingschools.com

'An average of 141 UCAS points (AAA being 144) bears testimony to high teaching standards.' *Tatler Schools Guide, 2019*

Merchiston Juniors Winners of 'Great City Prep.' *The Week Magazine, 2019*

'In order to join WLSA, schools must pass exceptionally high requirements to become an associate. Such rigorous standards include obtaining remarkable academic results, demonstrating a holistic approach to student well-being, and championing respect and concern for different peoples and cultures. Based around Edinburgh, the historic and atmospheric capital city of Scotland, Merchiston is renowned for its success in guiding its pupils to try their hardest and to strive to achieve the highest levels possible in all areas – academic, cultural, sporting, leadership and simply living together as part of a community.' *World Leading Schools Association*

Merchiston Castle School welcomes admissions applications from all over Scotland, the UK and overseas – for boarders and day pupils. Boys can apply to enter the school at any age between seven and 16.

CONTACT

Director of Admissions, Mrs Kay Wilson Tel: +44 (0) 131 312 2201
Email: admissions@merchiston.co.uk, www.merchiston.co.uk



KILGRASTON
SCHOOL

JUNIOR YEARS · SENIOR · SIXTH FORM

**2020 Scholarship
applications now open.**
Apply via:
admissions@kilgraston.com



Uncover
your true
potential

**Open
Day**

**Saturday 1st February 2020
10am-12.30pm**

To register, please contact
01738 812 257 or
admissions@kilgraston.com

Kilgraston School, Bridge of Earn, Perth, PH2 9BQ - www.kilgraston.com



Kilgraston School

Set in the idyllic Perthshire countryside, Kilgraston School for girls is focused on guiding its students to become the forward thinkers and change makers of tomorrow. Located in Bridge of Earn, Kilgraston continues to demonstrate an impressive set of exam results, with 60% of students achieving A's at both Advanced Higher and Higher this year and 66% of students achieving A's at National 5 level. These are particularly commendable achievements, given the school is non-selective with admissions.

While a huge proportion of students have gone on to study STEM subjects as undergraduates, the development of business and enterprise projects has seen an increase in students choosing to study international business and law degrees. Headmistress Dorothy MacGinty told *Scottish Field*: 'We're always very strong in sciences – we generally have 60-66% of our girls go to STEM undergraduate courses. It is one of the great things about a girl's school, we don't have any of these gender biased subjects and this year with so many more girls doing law or business, I think around 50% will go on to study STEM subjects which is still really high. We're also seeing an increasing number of girls applying for computing sciences which is great because there's a real dearth of women in that field.'

Looking beyond individual career paths, Kilgraston is also championing several efforts to create a more environmentally friendly and sustainable place to learn. Having introduced a ban on single use plastics across the school, including catering, Kilgraston students and staff will continue to build on their efforts. 'There's sometimes this image of girl's schools; that we're all very complacent and cosy behind our gates and what we're doing is just

enough to get us into university but we're not like that at all here. I want the girls to be forward thinking, while considering the whole planet and their role as global citizens and the impact that every individual can have.'

The school's founding traditions as part of the Sacred Heart Network reinforces its values, as does its Scottish education heritage. Trust, respect, integrity and responsibility lie at the heart of Kilgraston's community and underpin the academic achievements of each of the school's students. Each girl is encouraged to grow, learn and mature in an atmosphere of freedom and opportunity.



CONTACT

Families are invited to attend Kilgraston's Open Day on Saturday 1 February. To register, please contact us either via admissions@kilgraston.com or call 01738 812257. kilgraston.com

St Leonards, St Andrews

Situated in the heart of St Andrews, St Leonards is a forward-thinking, co-educational boarding and day school, which offers an outstanding education from age five to 18.

St Leonards was named as Scotland's Independent School of the Year 2019 and, for three years running, was listed as the Top Independent School Sixth Form in Scotland for IB/A Level results.



In the Sixth Form, pupils follow the IB Diploma Programme, which has been praised by students, parents and university admissions officers for its focus on deepening learning, offering wider subject options, and enriching minds, whilst St Leonards Junior School is the first school in Scotland to be accredited to teach the inspiring International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

All three boarding houses have recently undergone an extensive £4 million redevelopment, creating smart, yet homely social spaces and modern study bedrooms. Work to transform the common rooms in St Rule was completed in summer 2019, creating a comfortable and stylish heart to the house, with a friendly 'prep school' atmosphere for younger boarders. Many bedrooms have sea views beyond the school playing fields, and full, flexi and weekly boarding is available from age ten.

Outside the classroom, the leading five-tier St Leonards Golf Programme continues to go from strength to strength, the Duke of Edinburgh Award is the fastest growing of all Scottish independent schools, and an exciting calendar of trips and activities ensures pupils leave St Leonards equipped with the skills, and interests, required to succeed in today's ever-changing world. Truly an education 'Ad Vitam'.

CONTACT

Any day is an open day at St Leonards. To arrange a visit, please call 01334 472126, or email registrar@stleonards-fife.org, stleonards-fife.org



St Leonards
St Andrews, Fife

**Scotland's Independent
School of the Year**

SUNDAY TIMES SCHOOLS GUIDE 2019

**Coeducational boarding
and day from age 5 - 18**

registrar@stleonards-fife.org | stleonards-fife.org

An HMC, IAPS and IB World School



Morrison's Academy

Small school; big opportunities leading to big futures

Morrison's Academy is a vibrant independent day school with a big personality, providing quality education from nursery to secondary. At every stage in a pupil's career, we challenge them while supporting their development. This could be through a nursery class visit to a local farm, a Lego™ challenge with our dedicated primary STEM teacher or by spending a week with a German exchange family honing language skills.

We nurture our pupils' aspirations and support their endeavours; to raise funds for and visit a primary school in Malawi or to be in the Pipe Band and Choir performing at the Solheim Cup. We encourage our pupils to broaden their horizons to all of life's possibilities.

We are proud of our pupils' achievements. Our 2019 pass rates pay testament to their dedication; 95% passed Highers, 91%

Advanced Highers and 94% at National 5. Combine this with our Learning for Life programme, focusing on the 'non-academic' life skills and we think we have a formula for success.

But don't take our word for it. The Good Schools Guide said 'This is a wee gem of a Scottish school...big enough to turn out some decent team sport and small enough for the Head to put a name to every face.'

CONTACT

To experience Morrison's Academy please contact Catriona Elliott, Admissions Registrar to arrange a visit, a taster day or come along to our next Open Morning on 11 February 2020. CElliott@morrisonacademy.org or 01764 653885. morrisonacademy.org



The Governors of Morrison's Academy, known as Morrison's Academy, is an independent school for boys and girls, founded in 1860. The School's Scottish Charity Number is: SC000458.

SMALL SCHOOL

BIG PERSONALITY

Big horizons. Big family. Big futures.

We're pushing boundaries every day. Our pupils are engaged global citizens because they're challenged and supported as individuals in everything they do. They've gone on to win Olympic medals, BAFTAs and OBEs, pioneer AIDS research and communicate with men on the moon. Want to find out more about our big opportunities? Come and see for yourselves . . .

Nursery, Primary and Secondary Open Morning
Tuesday 11 February 2020, 09.30
Register online at bit.ly/MAOpenMorning

01764 653885
morrisonacademy.org
Morrison's Academy, Crieff, PH7 3AN



MORRISON'S ACADEMY



Lomond School

Applications open for 2020 scholarships

Following the success of the scholarship programme launched on the back of the school's recent 40th Anniversary Celebrations, Lomond School is pleased to announce they are welcoming scholarship applications for January and August 2020 entry.

The scholarship programme is open to applications for both day and boarding places from Junior 5 to Senior 6 with scholarships awarded for Academic Excellence, Music, the Creative Arts and Sport as well as the David Arthur All-Rounder Scholarship.

Like all young people attending Lomond School, in Helensburgh, Argyll, Lomond Scholars will benefit from the excellent systems in place which help pupils to achieve their very best. Academic achievement is supported by small class sizes, dedicated teaching staff, superb facilities and a significant emphasis on pupil happiness, health and wellbeing.

The continuous support, encouragement and guidance provided by the school ensures that every pupil receives a tailored education and the personal support and guidance needed to help them achieve their full potential.

Beyond the classroom, Lomond School provides many opportunities for young people to further explore their interests with pupils enjoying a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs and sports. They also have access to life changing experiences such as the recent trip to Tanzania where pupils worked with Moving Mountains Trust.



Principal, Johanna Urquhart commented: 'Beyond the help and support our teachers and staff provide, the school itself has a very welcoming environment where young people support each other and celebrate each other's achievements. In many ways this is the backbone of much of our pupils' success, at a time in their lives when peer acceptance and acknowledgement is so important. We are looking forward to providing more opportunities for young people to benefit from everything we have to offer through our Scholarships Programme for 2020.'

NEW SERVICE! To support families living in Argyll and the surrounding area, Lomond School has recently introduced a weekly boarding option with travel services, allowing pupils to attend Lomond School during the week and return home for the weekend.

CONTACT

Contact the Registrar to find out more. Tel: 01436 672 476, email: admissions@lomondschool.com, lomondschool.com/scholarships



2020 Scholarships

Lomond School is now accepting scholarship applications from talented 9 – 18 year olds for August 2020 entry.

Join our unique family environment, with boarding and day scholarships available for young people who excel in academia, music, creative arts or sport.

For more information, please contact our Registrar:
T: 01436 672476
E: admissions@lomondschool.com
W: lomondschool.com/scholarships

Enquire about transport services available for weekly boarders from Argyll and the surrounding area.

Learning brought to life

10 Stafford Street, Helensburgh G84 9JX | lomondschool.com



Strathallan School

Strathallan School's mission is to provide an outstanding education that gives opportunities for all to excel. Each individual, no matter their passion or interest, is supported and inspired to shine during their time at school. Pupils excel academically, compete in sports at national and international levels, succeed in scholastic championships and play as part of nationwide orchestras and ensembles. Last year, 60 pupils played as part of a national or international team across a range of sports. In 2019, Strathallan students achieved their best A-Level results in a decade, with a quarter of all A-Level students awarded straight A* or A grades.

In 2019 The Care Inspectorate rated Strathallan a Grade 6 (Sector Leading) Excellent for the quality of care and support. They make the most of an outstanding environment every day, but at their core, are a truly international community with alumni around the globe. Every child is known for who they are, their individual abilities and potential. Young people leave Strathallan with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen career, and the confidence to make their mark on the world. This is perfectly described by a former pupil:

'I look back at my time at Strathallan with fondness. The quality of education in the classroom, in the creative arts and on the sports field was of the highest possible level. With Strathallan on my CV there are no doors that are not open to me.'



CONTACT

For admissions enquiries please contact 01738 812546 or admissions@strathallan.co.uk www.strathallan.co.uk



Where natural talent becomes international achievement
and every pupil has the opportunity to excel.

Open Morning: Saturday 7th March 2020

Register online:
www.strathallan.co.uk/open-days

Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perthshire, PH2 9EG | +44 (0) 1738 812 546 | admissions@strathallan.co.uk

Gordonstoun School – Active Revision

For many young people, GCSE and A-level exams are now on the horizon. The latest scientific research on brain function is revealing interesting insights into how we learn and, more importantly for this group of students, how we can retain more information.

Specialists at Gordonstoun, which educated three generations of the royal family, say regular periods of exercise can help you achieve success. Each year the independent boarding school runs a unique one week 'Active Revision Course' which focuses on both body and mind in order to boost performance.

'We know from neuroscience that exercise speeds up brain functioning,' says course leader Kate Gibson. 'If you've been out for a run, your reading speed and comprehension goes up by 20%. So you have to attack revision from all angles and make sure that your whole body contributes. A healthy body and mind which is well rested, well fed and fit can support your brain through the tough times ahead much better than one which is exhausted and lacking in nutrients.'

Kate and her team have applied this new understanding of the effects of physical activity into the Active Revision course, which now incorporates yoga, a climbing wall, hillwalking and even bushcraft. Sixty percent of students who take the course achieve two grades higher than their mock exams, with the remainder achieving one grade higher. Parents also comment on an improvement in the general wellbeing of their children. The course covers English, Maths and Science and is open to anyone.



CONTACT

Gordonstoun's Active Revision course runs from 4-10 April.
activerevision.org.uk

BOOST YOUR BRAIN, BODY & GRADES THIS SPRING...

4-10 APRIL 2020

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GCSE, NAT5, HIGHER & A LEVEL



study...



bushcraft...



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 & DAILY MAIL!

For more information contact
gibsonk@gordonstoun.org.uk

activerevision.org.uk

Craigclowan School

Craigclowan provides a warm and nurturing environment for boys and girls aged three – 13. Set in stunning grounds with magnificent views over Perthshire, the school has a distinguished history, a reputation for the highest standards and expectations and a passion for childhood.

The school's learning environment delivers a modern and distinctive education within a framework of proven traditional values, effectively balancing the best of old and new in education. Grant funding is available for nursery pupils and particular attention is paid to the transition period as nursery children begin their primary education. Every pupil is encouraged to achieve their all-round potential, in the classroom, on the sports field, on the stage, in the music department and in more than 50 extra-curricular activities on offer.

School is a hive of activity with an outdoor classroom, all-weather training ground, sports fields, Forest School and trim trail in daily use. Craigclowan aims to make the most of the world outside the classroom through a wide range of outdoor activities that build confidence and resilience, encourage creativity and problem solving and ensure rosy cheeks and muddy boots. Welly boots are a must! With a friendly, caring and supportive ethos, staff are able to get to know the children closely and treat them as individuals in all they do. When it comes to moving on to senior school, students attend a wide variety of top UK schools, both north and south of the border, many with scholarships. The values that are instilled in pupils during their journey through Craigclowan,

are the qualities that allow them to thrive after they leave.

The school minibus fleet collects children from across the region and, to assist working parents, our Breakfast Club is open from 0730 and free after-school care is available for all children until 1800 daily. A number of holiday activity camps operate throughout the year including multi-activity camps and hockey, cricket and tennis coaching.

Craigclowan School would be delighted to see you at their open morning to show you what a Craigclowan education has to offer to your family. However, every day is an open day so if you would like to visit at another time, please contact Jennifer Trueland on 01738 626310. You will be assured of a very warm welcome and will find a school in a stunning location with tremendous spirit.



CONTACT

Tel: 01738 626310, craigclowan-school.co.uk



Have you ever wondered what an excellent education looks like? If so, come and see us here at Craigclowan, a thriving, academically ambitious, independent prep school and nursery for boys and girls aged 3 - 13 on the outskirts of Perth:

- small class sizes
- a caring and supportive ethos where pupils are treated as individuals in all they do
- huge selection of extra-curricular activities including fencing, judo, climbing, coding, mountain biking, art clubs, sewing and skiing
- morning buses to school from across the region
- breakfast club and free after school care until 6 pm plus five weeks of school holiday camps
- local authority grant funding available for nursery places



Craigclowan Prep School & Nursery

Edinburgh Road, Perth, PH2 8PS

t: 01738 626 310

w: www.craigclowan-school.co.uk

Registered Scottish Charity SC010817

open morning

Thursday 6th February, 0900 - 1200

All welcome. No appointment necessary

Glenalmond College

Glenalmond College offers a unique school experience in the unrivalled setting of 300 acres of grounds in Perthshire, one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Our aim is for every pupil at Glenalmond to realise his or her full potential, whether that be in the classroom, on the sports field or in activities such as art, music and drama.

Strong friendships are kindled in our bustling school community and children develop ambition and confidence for future life, along with humility and respect for others.

Glenalmond welcomes girls and boys as day and boarding pupils and offers the opportunity to study GCSEs, Highers and A-Levels. A significant factor in the continued high academic performance of pupils at Glenalmond is our pioneering 'Learning Project' which ensures a highly-structured programme of monitoring our pupils' performance, to ensure areas where additional support may be required are quickly identified and acted on.

We continue to invest in our excellent sporting facilities, including an international-standard water-based AstroTurf pitch for hockey with a hospitality lodge for spectators. We have also invested in a second all-weather multi-sports pitch, a new first team rugby and lacrosse pitch with a 100-seat spectator stand as well as upgrading our cardio-vascular fitness suite and dance and aerobics studio.

Glenalmond has its own nine-hole golf course and our new



indoor golf hub features two full simulation screens programmed with a range of challenging course scenarios.

We look forward to showing you at first hand what makes Glenalmond such a special place – a very warm welcome is guaranteed!

CONTACT

For more information visit www.glenalmondcollege.co.uk or to arrange a visit email registrar@glenalmondcollege.co.uk or call us on 01738 842000.



Open Day - March 14, 2020

Glenalmond offers an outstanding opportunity for pupils to excel academically and achieve their full potential as individuals.



A warm welcome awaits at Glenalmond.
To arrange a visit, or for more information, please email: registrar@glenalmondcollege.co.uk or call: 01738 842000
www.glenalmondcollege.co.uk
Charity Number: SC006123

OFFERS & competitions

To enter, send entries with your name, address, telephone number and email address to **Scottish Field Competitions, Fettes Park, 496 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, EH5 2DL** or enter at www.scottishfield.co.uk. Closing date, unless otherwise stated, is 29 February 2020. **Winners drawn from all competitions also enter a prize draw to win a bottle of Whitetail Gin.**

WIN

WIN A VOYAGE OF LUXURY FOR TWO ON SCOTLAND'S ONLY FLOATING HOTEL – FINGAL



Celebrate the romance of this historic ship, where every contour and curve, every angle and tilt of Fingal is treasured to offer a totally unique experience, removed from your everyday world.

Fingal started life as a lighthouse tender, helping maintain lighthouses and transporting their keepers, equipment and supplies to some of the most treacherous locations in Scotland. Now she has been transformed into an exquisite 23-cabin boutique hotel and exclusive use venue berthed in Leith, Edinburgh by the award-winning team at The Royal Yacht Britannia. A hotel with all the glamour and style of a superyacht but with an old-world elegance that is completely unique.

PRIZE – A VOYAGE OF LUXURY

It all begins the moment you and your guest step on board along the red carpeted gangway. Once you are settled into your cabin, make your way to The Lighthouse Bar and choose from either afternoon tea or supper and enjoy one of Fingal's signature cocktails – why not try our crew's favourite, the Captain's Negroni.

Then, descend the spiral staircase back to your cabin and let the sense of escapism stay with you. A space full of softness with elegant curves and contours to admire. Circular windows and fabrics for the senses and lamps to cast a warm glow. And, don't forget your wonderfully soft and snug Johnstons of Elgin cashmere socks! Wake up relaxed and enjoy Fingal's full Scottish breakfast before you disembark.

**For your chance to win, simply answer the question below.
How many cabins does Fingal have?**

An overnight stay for two people sharing a Classic Cabin on the Voyage of Luxury Package. Includes afternoon tea or supper for two people. Includes one cocktail per person. Subject to availability and valid Sunday to Thursday until 30 June 2020.

Entrants must be 18 or over. Employees of Scottish Field, the competition promoters, and their direct families are ineligible to enter. No purchase necessary. The winner will be first correct entry drawn after closing date. No cash alternative is available. The winner will be informed by telephone. Usual Scottish Field rules apply. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition – your name, address, telephone number and email address. If you wish to receive news and offers from the third party running the competition, then please mark the words "OPT IN" on your postcard entry. If you enter various competitions on one card, you will be opting in for every competition running. Unless you opt in to receive further marketing information we will only contact you if you win a prize in the competition. Scottish Field (Wyvex Media) will retain your information for a maximum of 3 months after the competition closes and then it will be deleted. If you have opted in to receive third party information, the data you have supplied will be passed to the third party company running the competition. This may be used for the purposes of the third party contacting you regarding new products and services for a period of 3 months, unless you agree to an extension with the third party company at a later date.



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SOCIALscene



KEEPERS OF THE QUAICH

BLAIR CASTLE, PERTHSHIRE

01 Annette MacKenzie, Dr Bill Lumsden **02** Keir Sword, Michael Urquhart, Merlin Hay, The Earl of Erroll, Ronnie Cox
03 The Hon Alex Bruce, Vikki Bruce, Sam Heughan, Judith Hamilton, Gordon Hamilton **04** Jamie Troughton, Sarah Troughton **05** Grand Master Peter Prentice, Samantha Prentice, Torquhil Campbell, The Duke of Argyll **06** Katie Watson, Keepers' director Annabel Meikle, Tracy Wason **07** Roddy Martine, Vikki Bruce **08** The Lord Bruce, Dame Katherine Grainger, Ian Smith **09** Carol McIntosh, Alastair McIntosh

IMAGES SHANNON TOFTS PHOTOGRAPHY



To buy images and see more online go to www.scottishfield.co.uk





01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08



09



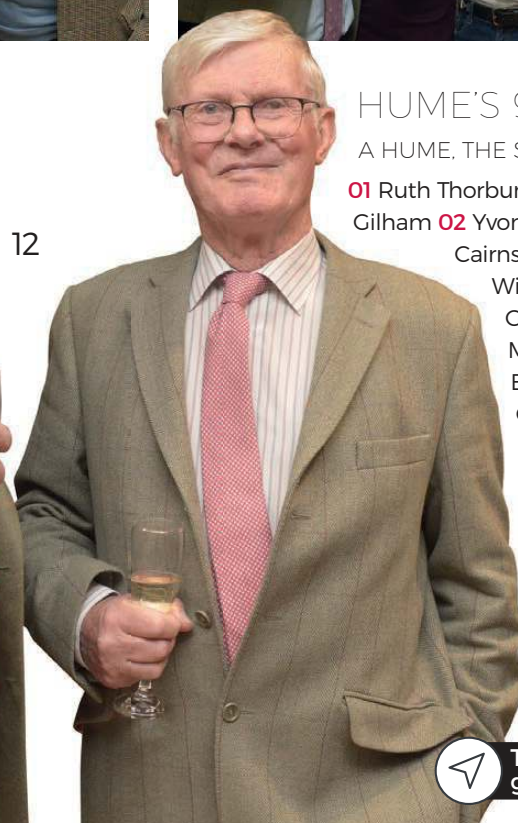
10



11



12



HUME'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

A HUME, THE SQUARE, KELSO

01 Ruth Thorburn, Lesley McCrindle, Anna Thomson, Emilie Gilham **02** Yvonne Gillies, Paul Donovan **03** Celia Dagg, Jane Cairns **04** Fiona Dalgleish, Ewan Johnstone, Jeanette Wilson **05** Ruth Thorburn, Lesley McCrindle, Emilie Gilham, Archie Hume, Karen Hume, Alanna Mulhern, Fiona Dalgleish, Anna Thomson, Rob Bacon **06** Kirsty Veitch, Sarah Halliday, Grace Cessford, Mark Halliday, Sarah Barbour **07** Tom Clark, Keith Redpath, Jane Clark, Chick Robertson **08** Jeanie Rutherford, Dawn Platt, Alistair Platt, John Rutherford, Judy Bell **09** Tim Esson, Robin Bell **10** Archie Hume, Kirsty Veitch, Gordon Heatlie **11** Gael Nuttall, Woody Morris, Rachel Thomson, Fraser Thomson **12** Andrew Barr, Jim Flemming

IMAGES ANGUS BLACKBURN



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01



02



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11



LAUDERDALE HUNT BALL

CARFRAEMILL HOTEL, SCOTTISH BORDERS

- 01** Kath Pennells, Aphra Robinson-Balchin, Alison Lambie, Abby Robertson, Kirsty Hedderwick, Laura Runciman
- 02** Douglas Runciman, Ewan Runciman, Heather Runciman, Laura Runciman, Angus Runciman
- 03** Alice McKerron, Ruth Hamilton, Alison Lambie
- 04** Angus Glennie, Patricia Glennie **05** Julia Tait, Jill Murdoch, Kim McCutcheon, Louisa Wilson
- 06** Jamie Stewart, Clare Stewart **07** Jack Holliday, Abby Robertson **08** Simon Clark, Stuart Hood, Jeremy Billinge **09** Charlie Swanson, Amanda Swanson, Jeff Swanson, Alex Swanson
- 10** Phemie Girdwood, Adam Girdwood
- 11** Jessica Lee, Georgie Harding-Newman

IMAGES ANGUS BLACKBURN



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EDINBURGH ROYAL WARRANT HOLDERS' ANNUAL DINNER

THE SHERATON, EDINBURGH

01 Russell Tanguay, Alison Wheeler, Adrian Cox **02** Charlie Hust, Brian Breslin, Ernie Miller, Pamela Cameron, Andrea McSherry, Mike McColl, Joe Paton, Scott Grieve **03** Colin Campbell, Doris Campbell, William Sleigh, David Mackie **04** Eoghan Mackie, Francesca Contini Mackie, Mary Contini **05** Tod Luke Bradbury, Graham Clark, Robert Gordon, May Clark, Alasdair Lawson-Dick **06** Deirdre Kinloch Anderson, Jason Landon **07** Katherine Boyle, Derek Blair, Karen Blair **08** Olya Oulton, David Pratt **09** Iain Halliday, Gemma Hay, Joakim Leijon **10** Ian Dagley, Derek Richardson **11** Tony Wheeler, Alison Wheeler, Katherine Miller, Mark Miller **12** Duncan McNab, Maggie McNab, Rob McNab **13** Natalie Lees, Linda Lough

IMAGES ROY SUMMERS



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WIN A HAMPER FROM INVERAWE SMOKEHOUSES

Welcome to our Scottish Field crossword, which will really test your brain power and general knowledge. So set pen to paper, fill in the blanks and be in with a chance of winning a fabulous 'Taste of the Smokery' to the value of

£50 for 1st prize,
£30 for 2nd prize and
£20 for 3rd prize

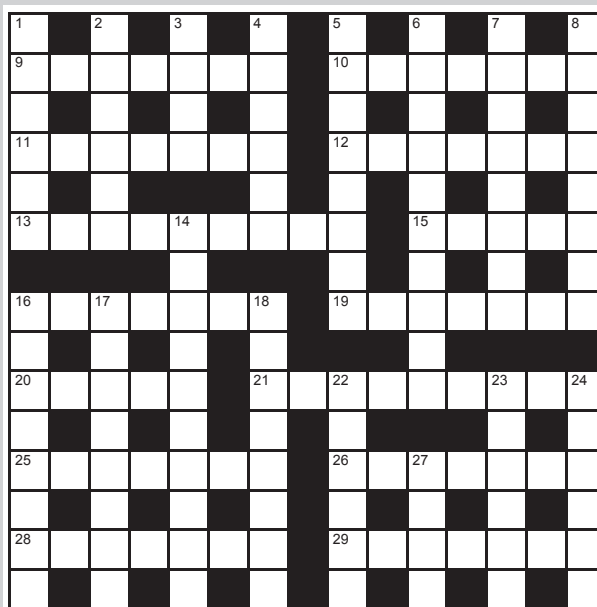


ACROSS

- 9 One way to think (3,4)
- 10 Charge uneven number to oxidise (7)
- 11 One who froths at the mouth! (7)
- 12 Toasted unusual part (7)
- 13 Gifted lad speculate (3,6)
- 15 Spanish river, yes! Is a drink for the table (5)
- 16 Enlivened stretchy end before dessert record returned (5,2)
- 19 Barbed irritable (7)
- 20 Shining inferior silver first (5)
- 21 Climate change size it get (9)
- 25 Southern as ultra adjustment (7)
- 26 Time seven weeks after egg eating (7)
- 28 Saver heard or damaged (7)
- 29 About transport to be used again (7)

DOWN

- 1 Spun home (6)
- 2 Barred journey in say, Australian capital out (6)
- 3 Blacken seal (4)
- 4 Put on a pedestal reconstructions are odd (6)
- 5 Sign of sorrow in predator advancing (8)
- 6 Cooking if rings try out (4,6)
- 7 Stopper of rays (8)
- 8 Carvings, as at yurt dismantled (8)
- 14 Intending to be quaint odd wee roll up (4,6)
- 16 Top each shifts pain (8)
- 17 Guiding light standard lead (8)
- 18 Difficulties for workers out (8)
- 22 Entering confidential (6)
- 23 Animal in cult (6)
- 24 Coin thrasher (6)
- 27 Irritation of craving (4)



CROSSWORD NO 2

Mr/Mrs/Miss _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel _____

To enter: Send your completed crossword to Scottish Field, Crossword No 2, Fettes Park, 496 Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH5 2DL, to reach us no later than **26th February 2020.**

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER CROSSWORD (NO 12)

Across: 1 Rate of exchange, 10 Befog, 11 Tall order, 12 Taloned, 13 Moneyed, 14 React, 16 Endosperm, 19 Elevenses, 20 Dodge, 22 Causers, 25 Gallant, 27 Potpourri, 28 Awoke, 29 Shaggy dog story.
Down: 2 Affiliate, 3 Egg on, 4 Fetidness, 5 Xylem, 6 Hook-nosed, 7 Noddy, 8 Earldom, 9 Obiter, 15 Theme song, 17 Designing, 18 Endeavour, 19 Escapes, 21 Either, 23 Ultra, 24 Shred, 26 Least.

DECEMBER CROSSWORD WINNERS

1ST: MRS ELSPETH BYARS, ARGYLL **2ND** MRS SANDRA COLLINGS, RENFREWSHIRE **3RD:** MR JOHN TURNER, FIFE

Spot the difference

THERE ARE FIVE DIFFERENCES TO BE FOUND IN THESE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF BAGPIPE PLAYERS - CAN YOU SPOT THEM ALL?



Put your feet up, grab a cup of coffee and pit your wits against our puzzles and quizzes

What year is it?

USE THE CLUES AND PICTURES TO HELP GUESS THE YEAR.

1. Gleneagles Hotel is opened by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway.
2. Duncansby Head lighthouse is established.
3. Ramsay MacDonald becomes the first Labour Prime Minister of the UK.
4. Eric Liddell wins gold for the 400m at the Olympics.
5. The Flying Scotsman is officially named by the London and North Eastern Railway.



ANSWER: 1924

SUDOKU DIFFICULTY: HARD

ENTER DIGITS FROM 1 TO 9 INTO THE BLANK SPACES. EVERY ROW MUST CONTAIN ONE OF EACH DIGIT. SO MUST EVERY COLUMN, AS MUST EVERY 3X3 SQUARE. JANUARY'S SOLUTION IS SHOWN RIGHT.

7	6	2	3	4	9	1	5	8
4	9	5	8	1	2	3	6	7
1	8	3	7	5	6	9	2	4
2	3	6	4	8	7	5	9	1
8	5	7	2	9	1	6	4	3
9	4	1	5	6	3	7	8	2
3	2	4	6	7	5	8	1	9
5	7	6	1	2	8	4	3	6
6	1	1	8	9	3	4	2	7

					3	9		
7				9	2		8	
				5	7	1		4
	7						5	9
6		2		7		8		3
3	9						1	
8		1	7	2				
	6		5	8				1
		7	1					

We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition – your name, address and telephone number. Should you be selected as the winner, Scottish Field will contact you by post and your personal data will be passed to the crossword sponsor (Inverawe Smokehouses) for the purposes of verification. Scottish Field (Wyx Media) will retain your information for a maximum of 3 months after the crossword competition closes and then it will be deleted.

General knowledge

1. Who was Scotland's first First Minister?
2. Which Scottish golf course has the longest and shortest holes in Open Championship golf?
3. When was Scotland's oldest university St Andrews founded?
4. Which ABBA song mentions Glasgow in the lyrics?
5. Where was Mary, Queen of Scots born?
6. Which type of seabird famously occupies the Bass Rock?
7. What is the name of the detective in Ian Rankin's famous novel series?
8. How many times has Andy Murray won Wimbledon?
9. Annie Lennox achieved major success as a solo artist and lead singer of Eurythmics, but in which band did she start her career?
10. Which declaration proclaimed Scotland's status as an independent sovereign state?

ANSWERS 1. Donald Dewar 2. Troon 3. 1413 4. Super Trouper 5. Lintilghow 6. Gannet 7. Rebus 8. Twice 9. The Tourists 10. Declaration of Arbroath

WORD SEARCH: FIRST-FOOTING

How many English words can you make from the word above? We can find 207. Try to find as many as possible. Words must be at least three letters long.

100-140 WORDS: **GOOD**, 140-180 WORDS: **EXCELLENT**, 180 WORDS OR MORE: **YOU ARE A GENIUS**

Where are we?

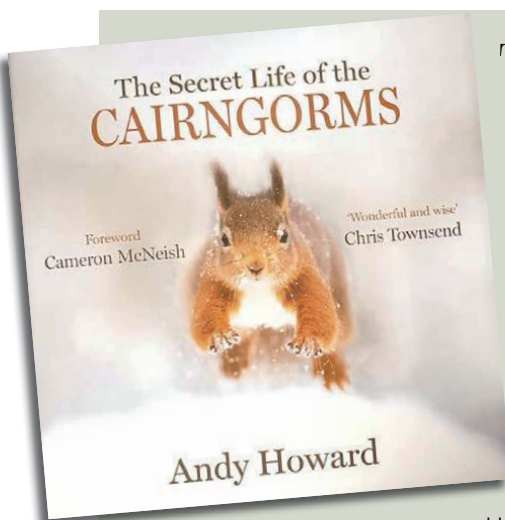
This town is Scotland's 'book town' and is home to the largest local nature reserve in Britain. The surrounding area is rich in prehistoric remains and the nearby Torhousekie Standing Stones are one of the best-preserved stone circles in Scotland. It is also the site of the Martyrs' Stake, where two women covenanters were drowned in 1685.



VISITSCOTLAND / KENNY LAM

Cover to cover

A look at the latest Scottish books by **Bethany Ferguson**



The Secret Life of the Cairngorms

BY ANDY HOWARD
SANDSTONE PRESS
£24.99

★★★★☆

I defy anyone to look at the front cover of this beautiful book and not have a wee smile on their face. Illustrated with a stunning selection of Andy

Howard's photographs, The Secret

Life of the Cairngorms celebrates the wildlife and landscape of the Cairngorms National Park in all its glory.

Anyone who has visited the Cairngorms is perhaps most struck by the expansiveness of the panoramic horizons, which gives the viewer a sense of the area's seemingly limitless space. But the exquisite images in this book remind us of what we miss if we don't

“The exquisite images in this book remind us what we miss if we don't stop to appreciate the tiny but vibrant life at our feet

stop to appreciate the tiny but vibrant life at our feet. Split into sections such as 'Lochs and Rivers' and 'Woodlands and Forest', the book illustrates the infinite amount of patience required to capture such rare and fleeting moments of drama and fun in nature.

The collection of images of the agile, nimble and cheeky red squirrel are among some of the most charming in the book.

Howard manages to capture their individual characters perfectly, while the images of the majestic red deer stag staring directly down the camera lens are powerful and surprisingly moving in their stillness and beauty.

The insightful Field Notes which are dotted throughout the book tell the technical story of how Howard managed to capture such precious snapshots of life in the Cairngorms. Even the most incompetent photographer (I'm a point, clicking and hope for the best gal) will enjoy the detail of how Howard set up his shots.

However, the text is not overwhelmed by high-tech, photography terms, and instead is balanced by Howard recalling humorous anecdotes while reflecting on some particularly distinctive memories from his career. From narrowly avoiding attack by an angry capercaillie to being followed by police at half past one in the morning while on a black grouse shoot, Howard has truly seen it all.

It is, however, Howard's remarkable photography skills which remain the star of this book.



Edinburgh
BY ALLAN
WRIGHT
AND GERDA
STEVENSON
ALLAN WRIGHT
£15.00

★★★★☆

Edinburgh means different things to many people, and in this book, the product of a collaboration between photographer Allan Wright and poet Gerda Stevenson, the interaction of their dual perspectives on the capital makes for a different take on the traditional Edinburgh coffee table book.

Eighty-seven photographs are accompanied by 22 new poems, some in Scots, which present the capital in all her guises – ancient and modern, local and international, privileged and disenfranchised. A particularly poignant image of a homeless man on the Royal Mile ensures that the city's darker underbelly of poverty and homelessness is not glossed over in favour of the its more famous views.

Some of the poetry did not grab my attention as much as I hoped it would, but the book's content nevertheless makes important points about Edinburgh's identity as Scotland's capital city in these turbulent times.

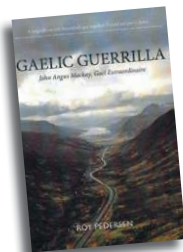


The Coorie Home: Beautiful Scottish Living

BY BETH PEARSON
BLACK AND WHITE
£14.99

★★★★★

Following the publication of The Art of Coorie, the Scottish concept emerged as the standout lifestyle trend of 2018. A 'coorie home' is defined as 'the place where one lives in contentment and conviviality; most especially a pleasant haven from the wild Scottish elements'. In this book, Beth Pearson explores the art of creating an irresistibly cosy sanctuary from the outside world in a specifically Scottish context. Starting with entranceways, Pearson examines interiors, communal living, hospitality, gardens and everything in between. From recipes for 'carrot cake porridge' to no-sew draft excluders, all I want to do is curl up in a blanket and read this informative and fresh take on all that home means.



Gaelic Guerrilla
BY ROY PEDERSON
LUATH PRESS

£14.99

★★★★☆

Roy Pederson tells the story of language activist John Angus

Mackay who became known as 'the Gaelic Guerrilla' as a result of his tireless efforts to successfully save the Gaelic tongue from extinction in Scotland. As someone who is not a particularly ardent enthusiast for books on language history, I struggled to make my way through the text. However, someone with greater interest in the subject would find this inspirational and an important exploration of how one man managed to turn Gaelic's fortunes around.



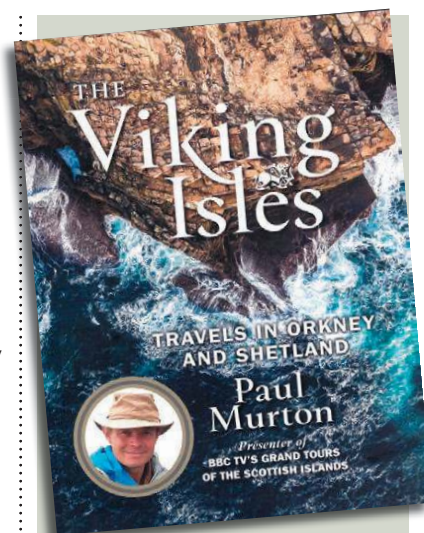
The Hidden World of the Fox
BY ADELE BRAND
WILLIAM COLLINS

£12.99

★★★★☆

Each time I have seen a fox, both

rural and urban, I have been struck by their oddly captivating quality. Their resourcefulness, intelligence and tenacity are just some of the qualities which are celebrated in ecologist Adele Brand's thought-provoking exploration of one of Britain's most familiar, enigmatic and misunderstood creatures. Charmingly written, this book will educate, delight and amuse, while reminding the reader about the importance of living peaceably with nature in a changing environment.



The Viking Isles

BY PAUL MURTON

BIRLINN

£17.99

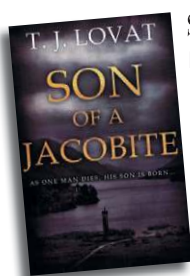
★★★★☆

For Paul Murton, the mythical call of the Orkney and Shetland isles has been strong since his childhood. Thanks to his father's Norwegian background, Paul spent a lot of his childhood travelling extensively among the islands of Norway's fjord-riven west coast or tramping through the snowfields of Hardangervidda.

But Scotland's own northern isles remained a mystery. After visiting Orkney for the first time in his thirties while filming, the big skies and wide horizons of the island which reminded him of Norway were enough to begin a long love affair with Scotland's Viking north.

This beautiful book, full of colour photographs mostly taken by the author himself, is the result of explorations around Orkney and Shetland.

The writing is often a little dense and full of historical detail, but when the text moves on to Murton's insightful observations, which describe the islands as they stand today, or the humorous anecdotes of his encounters with those who live or visit there, the oft-forgotten links between the islands and their Viking past is vividly brought to life.



Son of a Jacobite
BY T. J. LOVAT
TROUBADOR

£12.00

★★★★☆

I'm normally a fan of historical novels so Son of a Jacobite sounded right up my

street. Beginning at Culloden in 1746, Thomas Lovat enters the world on the same day that his father is killed in action. Inspired by the author's family heritage to the Clan Fraser of Lovat, the novel takes its protagonist to the Americas in the prelude to the War of Independence. Sadly, despite the promising premise, the style of writing is somewhat clichéd, with trite dialogue and characters lacking any real depth.



The World According to Doddie

BY DODDIE WEIR

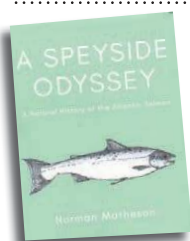
BLACK AND WHITE

£12.99

★★★★☆

They say you shouldn't laugh at

your own jokes, but when you're Doddie Weir this doesn't apply. There was barely a page which went by where I didn't chuckle to myself. A rugby legend and determined MND campaigner, Doddie has a wealth of life lessons to share. Uplifting, sad, motivational, funny, and life-affirming, the book is an A-Z of one-liners, tales, mantras and mottos all showcasing Doddie's trademark positive perspective on life and how to live it.



A Speyside Odyssey: A Natural History of the Atlantic Salmon

BY NORMAN MATHESON

TROUBADOUR

£14.99

★★★★☆

With a foreword by HRH Prince Charles, Norman Matheson examines the remarkable life-cycle of the Atlantic Salmon as it undertakes one of the most underappreciated but deadly journeys in nature. From small tributaries in the River Spey, on to the food sources of the North Atlantic, the salmon's odyssey is told in Matheson's lively and engaging style. His infectious passion can be felt in every word.



The British Lighthouse Trail: A Regional Guide

BY SARAH KERR

WHITTLES PUBLISHING

£18.99

★★★★☆

If, like Sarah Kerr, you

are an avid pharologist (the technical term for lighthouse enthusiasts) then this guide, the only one of its kind to provide a comprehensive listing of more than 600 lighthouses in Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands, is the perfect purchase for you. The practical guide is complete with helpful maps highlighting the location of each lighthouse, with colour photography and useful advice on how to reach each one.

The chief and I are overnighing in Edinburgh. We are having a nice, quiet drink in a Princes Street hotel when we run into an old friend. It is a bit of a surprise to see him there, for the Scottish capital is not his regular haunt.

Then comes the realisation that this normally sober individual seems to be somewhat the worse for wear. As the rather resigned waitress, Polly, says in *Fawlty Towers*: 'He has potted the shrimps and soused the herrings. He has smashed the eggs in his cups – under the table...'

The man can still talk, though. And he informs us that the reason for the jollity is that he has been

given a 'pink ticket' for the night.

Now, I believe this saying may have something to do with the Royal Navy. If you know more, please let me know. Basically, this is a voucher that allows a man time off for good behaviour.

It means the day, or the evening, is his to do with as he wishes. Which suggests, paradoxically, that he can, for a short while, behave as badly as he likes. I consult the urban dictionary. It tells me a pink ticket is permission from a wife or girlfriend to 'indulge in activities that may be banned when she is around'.

It continues. 'These activities include pretty much everything that is fun and does not revolve around her.'



This precious time could be spent pubbing or clubbing with mates. But only for a set period, you understand. After the agreed number of hours have passed, the male in question must return to the safekeeping of his loved one.

Actually, what the urban dictionary says is, the man must return to the 'custody' of his other half. But I have modified that. For obvious reasons.

But why a pink ticket? Why not a blue one? Or, if we are talking outrageous behaviour here, why not a red one? For pink is not a wild colour. It is a delicate shade. And it is one that suggests romance and girly-ness. Pink makes you think of fairies and flowers. If you are in the pink, you are in good health. Being tickled pink means you are as happy as can be. Those rose or pink-tinted glasses allow you to view the world in an optimistic light. Whatever the reason for pink, for the MacGregor this whole ticket business is a tantalising thought.

'Why do I never get one?' he complains as our merry friend says farewell and weaves his way on to the next watering hole. At this stage, dear reader, I have to remind my husband that his life is one long pink ticket. And that he is a very lucky man.

Back at home, meanwhile, the MacNaughties are also enjoying being let off the leash for a night. Whilst we are away, they have been staying at the stables. They board there, along with the horses, the pigs and poultry.

It is a right old animal fest. And although our dogs do not chase the ducks and are careful to give the ponies a wide berth, they are curious about the pigs. I believe one is a Berkshire and I am told that the naughty Norfolk spends his time trying to creep up to get a closer look. Then the animal snorts loudly and Rummie scarpers.

He, like our friend in Edinburgh, has a pink ticket. He is living dangerously. As the old Cole Porter song goes.

'We're all alone, no chaperone... let's misbehave! That's so contagious, let's be outrageous. Let's misbehave!'

Men behaving badly

With the chief already living the life of Riley on a daily basis, one night of total freedom is just plain greedy, says **Fiona Armstrong**

Illustration **Bob Dewar**.



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