



**Newcastle Family History Society Inc**  
**Newsletter of the Scottish Special Interest Group**  
**No 9 Lamas 2025**

---

**Faillte !**

**Welcome to this Lamas newsletter!**



Glasgow City Chambers

Image by Michael D Beckwith on Wikipedia - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=58647836>

See page 10 for information



*Crest: A savage head couped Proper*

**Motto:** Durum Patientia frango  
(I overcome difficulty by patience)

**Regions:** Lowlands, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Border, Isles of Orkney, Highlands

Article by Kerren Robards

### Clan Tartan:

The Muir tartan is registered as the 'Muir/Moore tartan'. It has the traditional blue - black - green base, but with an unusual motif of three narrow red stripes appearing twice on the green square. A similar device is seen in the Cochrane tartan.

The **Scottish surname Muir** supposedly originated as denoting someone who lived beside a moor. The name is derived from the Scots form of the Middle English *more*, meaning 'moor' or 'fen' which is a peat-accumulating wetland.





Clan Muir does not have any septs, though common variations of the name Muir or Moore are associated with the clan. Muir/More/Moore/Mure are most prevalent in Ayrshire and areas in the southwest lowlands, though branches had spread to Eastern Scotland as early as the 15th century.

The first Mor/de Mor/de la Mor/Mure/Muir with solid documentation to Ayr, Scotland, is David de More. 'The most ancient of the name on record are the Mores of Polkelly, near Kilmarnock; one of whom, David de More, appears as witness to a charter of Alexander II', between 1214 and 1249.

The Mures of Rowallan in Ayrshire were the Chiefly House, but their lands were seized by the Comyns during the reign of Alexander III. After the Battle of Largs in 1263, however, they were restored. Gilchrist Mure was not only knighted for his valour, but married a Comyn daughter.

Archibald, their eldest son was killed at the Siege of Berwick. However, his son, William, was knighted by David II and, in 1346, Sir William's granddaughter, Elizabeth Mure, married Robert II by Papal Dispensation to legitimise their previously born children.



Mediaeval ruins of Polkelly Castle,  
East Ayrshire  
<https://brucemore.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PolkellyCastle2.pdf>

In the 15th century, the Mures fought for James IV at the Battle of Flodden, and supported Mary Queen of Scots during her minority. As reformed Protestants, however, they soon found themselves in opposition to her party and, in the century that followed, were persecuted for being Covenanters. For allowing meetings to be held at Rowallan, William Mure of Rowallan was imprisoned at Stirling, then Edinburgh. From this, it appears, the Chiefly line did not recover and, with the Rowallan estates subsequently passing to the Campbell earls of Loudon, large numbers of the family emigrated to the USA, Canada and Australia.

Our Scottish SIG has three members that have Muir connections. Two of these families are from Ayrshire, and the other family is from the Fife and Dundee region.

Reference:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan\\_Muir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_Muir)

## Random Scottish Facts

Scotland has more than 790 islands with the largest being Lewis and Harris, and the most popular being Skye. The national animal is the unicorn, symbolising purity, innocence, and power. The thistle is the national flower. It boasts a rich culture including bagpipes, kilts, and traditions like the Edinburgh Festival. Scotland is also famous for inventions such as the raincoat (invented by Charles Macintosh, a Glaswegian) and the origin of golf with Musselburgh Links, established in 1672 recognised as the world's oldest golf course. Edinburgh was the first city in the world to have its own fire brigade founded in 1824. The first edition of Encyclopedia Britannica was published in Edinburgh in 1768. Scotland has the highest proportion of people with red hair in the world, with nearly 13% of the population having red hair.

## Rob Roy MacGregor

Article and photos by Ken Shilling

Rob Roy lies today in a simple grave in the grounds of a ruined church, surrounded by the peace and quiet of the Scottish countryside. But this peacefulness was not always the case while he lived.



Map showing the location of Rob Roy's grave. It is reached along a peaceful drive after leaving the A84.

Image from Google maps

While he lived, Daniel Defoe wrote his story in the book *Highland Rogue*, in 1723. Later, Sir Walter Scott wrote *Rob Roy* in 1818. In modern times, two films have been produced. Richard Todd was the star of *The Highland Rogue* released in 1954, while Liam Neeson was the lead in *Rob Roy* in 1995.

Rob Roy MacGregor was born in February 1671, the third son of the fifth chief of his clan, Donald Glas MacGregor. His mother was Mary Campbell.

He grew to be very strong and was a feared opponent with the broadsword. He was given the Gaelic nickname *ruadh*, meaning 'red-headed', which has been anglicised to 'Roy'. He dealt in black cattle and became quite prosperous, buying the lands of Craigroyston and becoming laird of Inversnaid on Loch Lomond.

Rob Roy's fortunes changed in 1712 when he raised £1,000 from the Duke of Montrose and others for a cattle deal, but was cheated by his chief drover forcing him into bankruptcy. The Duke took out a warrant for his arrest and he was outlawed. Rob Roy MacGregor became a bandit and an implacable enemy of the Duke of Montrose.

The Jacobite cause was taken up by Rob Roy and he joined their army in 1715. As a result, he was attainted for high treason but remained free to be active during the abortive 1719 Rising.

He remained on the run but the Duke of Argyll let him build a retreat on Campbell land near Inveraray. Some saw him as a highwayman and gangster but to many he was a latter-day Robin Hood, robbing



the rich to give to the poor. King George was captivated by Defoe's *Highland Rogue* and in 1726 gave Rob Roy a royal pardon.

Rob Roy MacGregor died 28 December 1734 and was buried near his home in Balquidder.

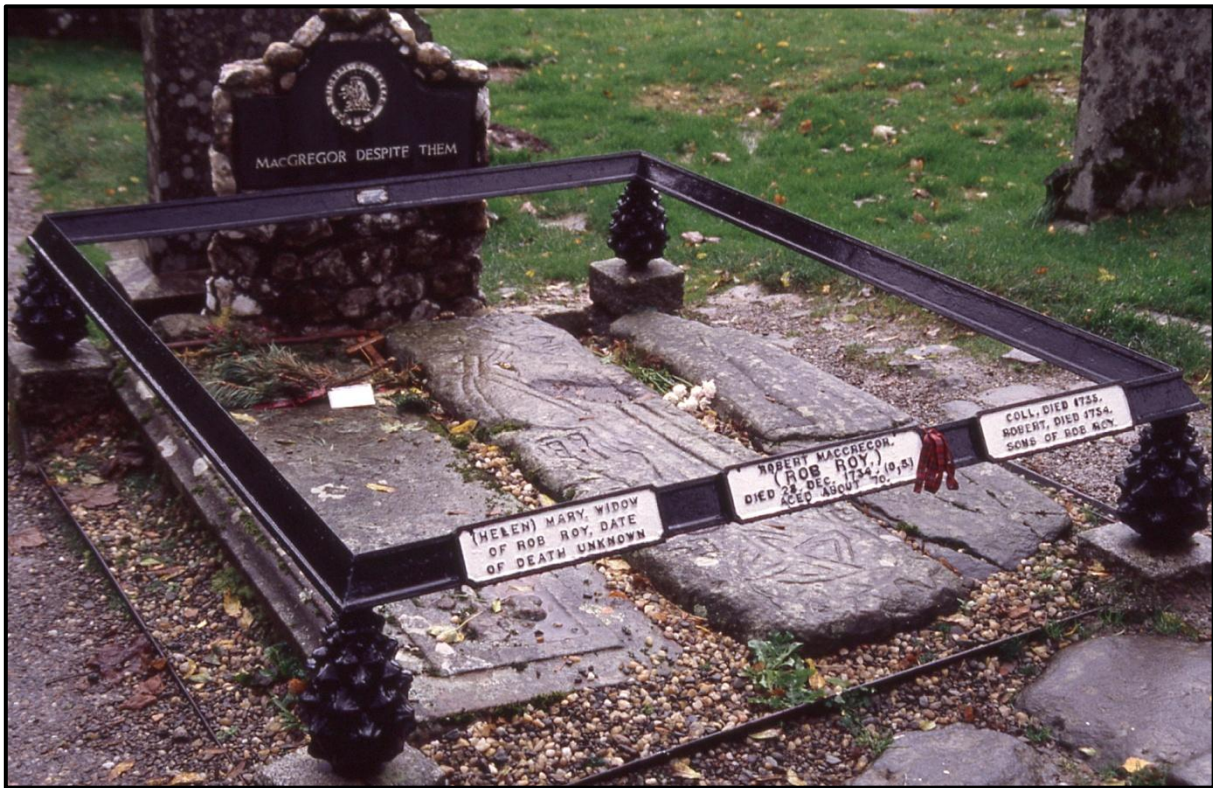
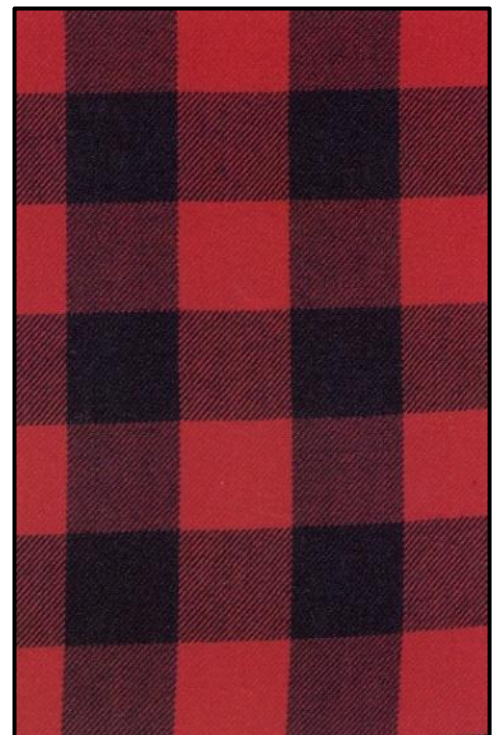


Photo of Rob Roy MacGregor's grave. The original stone slabs are now protected by a metal barrier, while the headstone carries the MacGregor motto, *MacGregor despite them*. To his left lies his wife, Mary, while on his right are his sons Coll and Robert. Image by Ken Shilling.

The inscription on the grave says 'about 70' but he was really 63. As Magnus Magnussen says; 'But that is the way of legend'.

Information for this story has been sourced from: *Scotland: The Story of a Nation* by Magnus Magnusson, Harper Collins, 2000.

The tartan Rob Roy MacGregor would have worn. A ribbon of this tartan has been tied to the grave's railing.  
Image from *Scotland and Her Tartans* by Alexander Fulton.



## Digestive Biscuits

Article written by Mel Woodford

The digestive biscuit originated in Scotland in 1839 when two Scottish doctors developed the biscuit to aid people's digestion.

The recipe contained bicarb soda and malt, both considered to help with digestion. Although dry, digestives were often dunked in tea and eaten quickly.

Digestives are now popular as a biscuit to have with cheese. Chocolate digestives are also now available.



Digestives were originally made by Scottish biscuit maker McVitie's which was established in Edinburgh in 1830.

## Scottish Websites

Information from the Facebook page of Lochaber and North Argyll Family History Group published on 19 May 2025

The Lochaber and North Argyll Family History Group published the following information from the HES (Historic Environment Scotland).

### Canmore, Scran and ScotlandsPlaces

Following the launch of trove.scot (<https://trove.scot/>) in February 2025, HES is retiring some of their web services. Due to the age of these sites, they can no longer support them.

trove.scot is a new platform bringing together their diverse collections in one convenient place. It combines information from the Historic Environment Portal, Canmore and the Property in Care Collections, as well as Scran which holds images and media from galleries, museums, libraries and archives across the country.

As of 24 June 2025 Canmore, Scran and ScotlandsPlaces will be switched off.

Later in the year HES is aiming to retire HLA (Scotland's Historic Land Use) and Property in Care Collections.

Longer term HES will also be looking at the Historic Environment Portal, PastMap, Dictionary of Scottish Architects and the Buildings at Risk Register.

For more information click [here](#).

## Dr James Mitchell - his Fife Background

Article by Ken Shilling – originally appeared in the NFHS *Bulletin No 161* of March 2003

If only residence in an area can qualify a person to be later known as a 'pioneer', then Dr James Mitchell was not a pioneer of Newcastle and the Hunter. If, however, the criteria are that the person may have large land holdings and business interests, Dr James Mitchell becomes a pioneer of Newcastle and the Hunter. If you then consider that his children lived on his local estates and contributed to the development and prosperity of the region, his right to pioneer status must be confirmed.

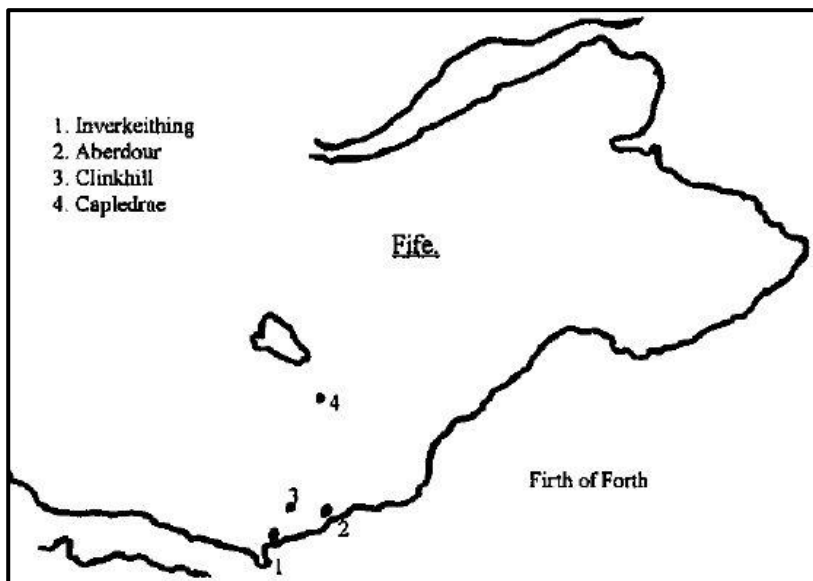
There is an excellent book on Dr Mitchell's life and work in Australia, written in 1966 by C.E. Smith and available from the Newcastle Region Library. An early statement in this monograph is that '(n)ot a great deal is known about the early life of James Mitchell. He was born in Fifeshire (sic), Scotland, in 1792, the fourth son of David Mitchell, farmer, and Margaret Mitchell née Low.' We learn that he joined the medical section of the British army at age 18, qualified as a surgeon from Edinburgh in 1813, then served for nine years in various parts of the world before finally settling in Australia in 1822.

The aim of this article is to add to the sketchy outline above, and record some of Dr Mitchell's rich Scots background. To achieve this, the writer is indebted to Mr Iain Somerville of Burntisland, Fife, who has provided the necessary research. Iain is the g-g-g-nephew of James Mitchell, so consequently has a deep interest in the subject.

Fife is located between the Firth of Tay to the north, the Firth of Forth to the south, and the North Sea on the east. With water on three sides, it is no surprise to find strings of fishing villages along its shores, although the fleets may not be as large now as once was the case. Farming is still an important industry, but the coalmines exist only in memory, sharing with Newcastle a common landscape feature. The busy town of Dunfermline was, for many years, the country's capital, while St Andrew's,

facing the North Sea, is still a mecca for the world's golfers.

James Mitchell's father, David, was born in 1755 in the Parish of Inverkeithing, Fife. His family had recently moved from Aberdour, a few miles east on the coast. In 1779 David married Margaret Low, who may have been the daughter of a minor laird, Low of Wallsgreen, in the Parish of Auchterderran. In the early 1780s he became the tenant of a small farm, Clinkhill, (now Clinthill) on the Fordell Estate in Dalgety, still only a short distance



Locations of the farms associated with the Mitchells.  
Map by the author.



away from his birthplace. Their children were all probably born on this farm. James certainly spent his first seven years at Clinkhill, a lovely spot overlooking the Firth of Forth.

On Martinmas, 1799 (28 November) David Mitchell became the tenant of the farm of Capledrae in the Parish of Auchterderran, some few miles north of Clinkhill. It can be assumed that his younger children, including James, continued their education at the Auchterderran School. This farm was leased from Sir Thomas Moncreiffe, who reserved the mineral rights to himself. The initial lease was for 19 years and the annual rent was £160. David had to undertake to introduce crop rotation over a seven-year period, so that land use for each part would be in one year, turnips and potatoes, and for subsequent years barley and grass, grass, grass, grass, oats and barley.



The Capledrae farm in 1999. Image from [www.burntislandnet.plus.com/family-history/dr-james-mitchell.htm](http://www.burntislandnet.plus.com/family-history/dr-james-mitchell.htm)

As the farm buildings were in ‘a decayed and ruinous condition’, David Mitchell was granted the sum of £200 to build a new house and repair the other structures.

The Mitchells had nine children. The first was Rachel, who was born in 1780 and married Andrew Aitken in 1806. She had a daughter, Jane, who looked after her grandfather David, and her Uncle William and Aunt Jean at Capledrae as they got older.

The eldest son, John, was born in 1784 and became a farmer at Redwells in the Parish of Kinglassie. He seems to have prospered, as his family was able to donate the Mitchell Hall to the village in 1896.

The third child was David, (1786-1867) Iain’s g-g-grandfather. He returned to Clinkhill where he married a miner’s daughter and raised a family; one son, named James, became an agricultural labourer and forester. David returned to Capledrae in later years, perhaps when his wife died.

Jean never married and probably lived at Capledrae for most of her life.

The next child, William, (1790-1872) also remained unmarried and became the tenant of Capledrae after the death of his father, remaining so for the rest of his life.



James came next. His baptism is recorded in the parish registers for Dalgety – ‘James, lawful son to David Mitchell and Margaret Low his spouse in Clinkhill was born January 24<sup>th</sup> and baptised 27<sup>th</sup> before these witnesses James Cousins John Roxbrugh and others.’ Iain says the register is a ‘bit mixed up in places’ and it is hard to say whether the entry is for 1792, 1793 or 1794. He first of all satisfied himself that baptisms took place on Sundays, then checked to see in which of these years the 27<sup>th</sup> January fell on a Sunday. This only happened in 1793. Iain has therefore concluded that James Mitchell was born at Clinkhill on Thursday 24 January 1793 and baptised on Sunday 27 January 1793 in St Bridget’s Kirk. It is not surprising that James may have believed his year of birth to be 1792, as there was no civil registration at the time and therefore no documentary proof.

The next born was Ebenezer, who entered the family in 1794. No further information has yet been found about him.

The last son was Thomas (1795-1875) who was educated, like brother James, at Edinburgh University. He became a minister of the Church of Scotland at Oldhamstocks, east Lothian, was married and had three daughters.

The last child, Agnes, married James Clark, a farmer at Stenhouse, near Burntisland. She had at least six children, the eldest, Jessie, dying in 1828, aged six. Her grave is in Burntisland Parish Churchyard.

David Mitchell senior died 23 November 1829 and his wife, Margaret Low, followed him in 1838. They, and three of their children, David, Jean and William, were buried in Auchterderran Churchyard. That David had prospered is evidenced by the value of the estate he left, the household furniture alone being appraised at £54:18:6, a considerable sum for the time. And, even though Dr James was so far away in Australia, he received the same attention in his father’s will as did the other children.



The late John Merewether, a relation of the Mitchells, at Clinkhill in 2002.  
Image [www.burntislandnet.plus.com/family-history/dr-james-mitchell.htm](http://www.burntislandnet.plus.com/family-history/dr-james-mitchell.htm)

To conclude this article, it may be appropriate to note a coincidence. At the time Dr James Mitchell’s son was founding the Mitchell Library in Sydney, his cousin, once removed, was busily involved in the construction of the library in Burntisland. He was also a James.

## Interesting Facts about Glasgow

Article written by Lea Harris. Information from the BunnikTours website

The **Glasgow City Chambers** (see photo page 1) **contains more marble than Vatican City**. Overlooking George Square, Glasgow City Chambers is one of the most beautiful buildings Scotland has to offer. In fact, the interior of the City Chambers has been used as a stand-in for the Vatican in films! Officially opening in 1888, the city chambers have so much history to offer, not to mention the stunning opulent staircases.

**Tree stumps are older than the dinosaurs in Glasgow.** Eleven fossil tree stumps can be found in Glasgow's Fossil Grove, which is believed to be around 330 million years old (making them older than the dinosaurs!) These fossilised tree stumps were uncovered in 1887, and a museum began managing them in 1889 for preservation. The Fossil Grove now acts as a popular tourist attraction in Scotland.



Image from <https://fossilgroveglasgow.org/>



Image from  
<https://glasgowbotanicgardens.com/the-gardens/visit/tours/>

**Glasgow's reputation as the 'dear green place'** is pretty fitting considering the city has over 90 parks and gardens with rolling hills and lush woodland walks. Some of the top gardens and parks in Glasgow include Glasgow Botanic Gardens, The Hidden Park, Scottish Poetry Rose Garden, Kelvingrove Park and the Maxwell Park Pollokshields.

The **Royal Exchange Building** was originally a townhouse for a rich tobacco lord. This iconic building located in Royal Exchange Square, from Queen Street, was constructed in 1778 and was home to Tobacco lord William Cunninhome. Later in 1817, the Royal Bank of Scotland acquired the building where architect David Hamilton added various features, including the double portico facade, a newsroom and a cupola. The Royal Exchange building now houses the Gallery of Modern Art.

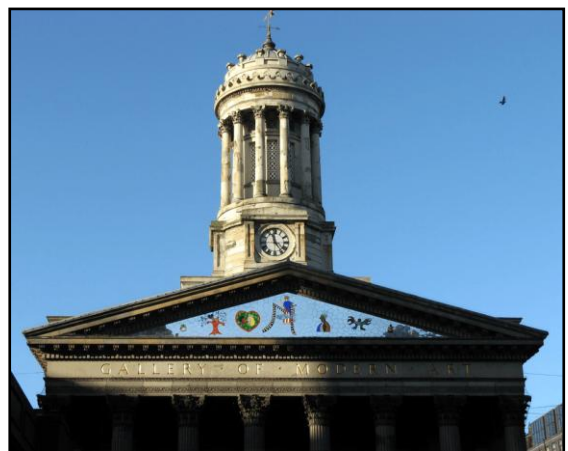
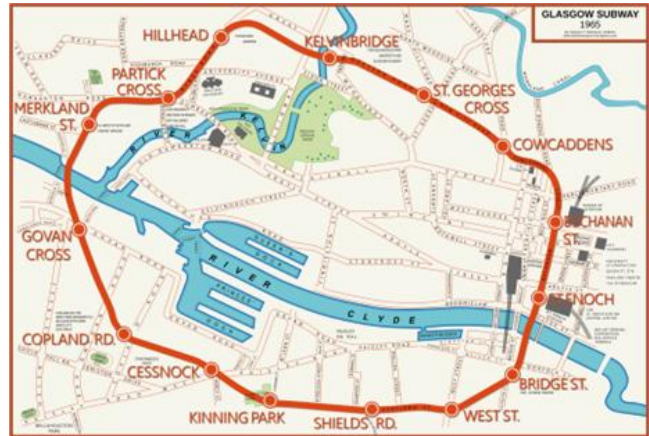


Image on [BunnikTours](#) website by Gordon McLean, Flickr



**Glasgow's underground railway system** is the third oldest in the world. Known as the 'clockwork orange' by locals, it's also the only underground metro in the whole country. Opening in 1896, the Glasgow railway system is one of the oldest transits in the world that runs a 10.5-kilometre loop around the city. This is also one of the only metro systems in the world that hasn't expanded beyond its original route.



Glasgow subway before the Beeching Cuts - image by Stephan Steinbach on [Wikipedia](#)



**Glasgow Cathedral** is the only cathedral on the Scottish mainland to survive the Protestant Reformation of 1560. Built in the 1100s, this medieval cathedral is located on the tomb site of St Mungo and was luckily saved almost intact because the Protestants repurposed it for their own worship.

Image on [BunnikTours](#) website by Rachel Footner

**Glasgow is the birthplace of the world's first ultrasound machine.** This medical miracle was invented in 1956 by Professor Ian Donald, Dr John McVicar and Tom Brown. You can even see the original ultrasound machine that transformed medicine at the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow.

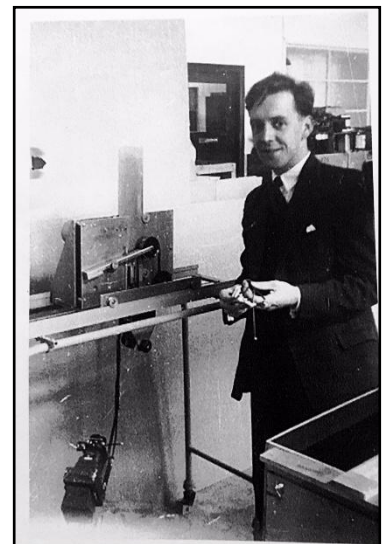


The bones of Saint Valentine. Image from [UK Yahoo! News](#)

**The bones of Saint Valentine reside in Glasgow.** The 3rd century Roman saint, known as St. Valentine was believed to be executed on 14 February 269 AD. His bones can be found at the Church of Blessed St John Duns Scotus in a small

wooden box, which is decorated with flowers each

Valentine's Day. The exact identity of Saint Valentine is a mystery, and as such you can find purported relics of his body all over the world – with parts to spare!



Tom Brown standing beside the bed table scanning gantry. Image courtesy of the Brown family. Photo from the National Museums Scotland webpage

**The first ever match of international football was held in Glasgow.** Scotland played England at the West of Scotland cricket ground on 30 November 1872 and drew 0-0. With an entry fee of one shilling, the match had over 4,000 people watching. This match was officially recognised as the first full international game by FIFA.



Image from [Wikipedia](#)



Image on [BunnikTours](#) website by Leslie Barrie

**The Tall Ship Glenlee** is one of only five Clydebuilt sailing ships still floating. In fact, Glenlee is the only ship of this type left in the UK! After sailing the seas since 1896, she has been restored to her former glory and is moored beside the Riverside Museum, where you can explore the ship.

## Do you know the answer?

See last page to find out if you're right



Where do the smoked haddock known as 'smokies' come from?

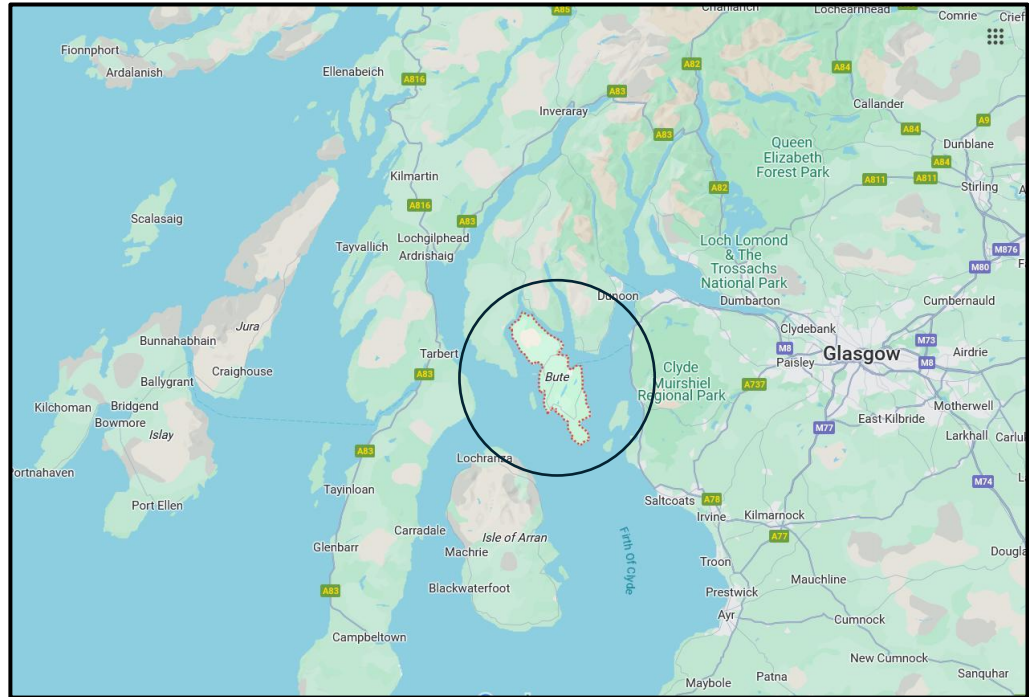
- ☐ Aberdeen
- ☐ Oban
- ☐ Arbroath
- ☐ Peterhead



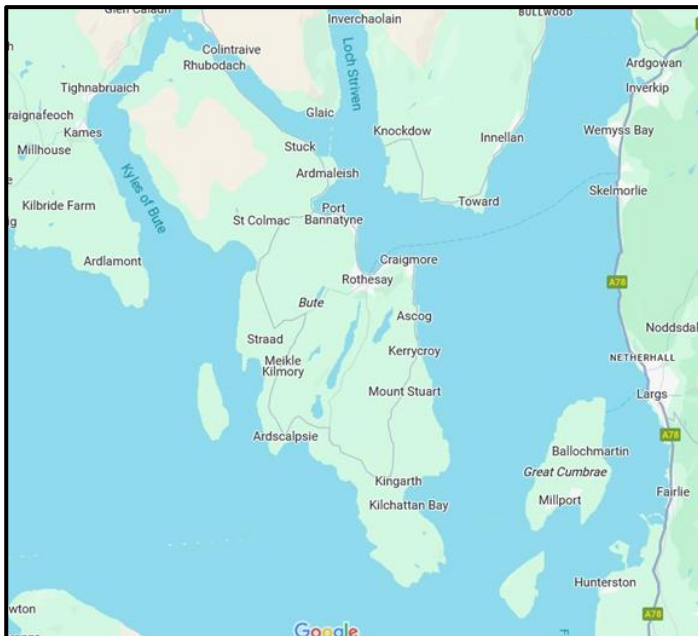
## Isle of Bute

Article by Kirstie Carrick

The island of Bute is situated in the Firth of Clyde and forms part of the council area of Argyll and Bute. Its resident population in 2011 was 6,498. Area is about 122.2 sq km (or 12,200 hectares). The highest point is Windy Hill at 278 m or 912 feet. Bute is a long (24 km) thin island, aligned roughly north-west to south-east and with the two Cambrae Islands, significantly narrows the river.



Bute location map



The island is bisected by the Highland Boundary Fault, so has features of both highland and lowland Scotland. The south is lower with better agricultural land, while the north of the island is more rugged.

(<https://www.bute-gateway.org/background.html#laterhistory>)

A closer look at the Isle of Bute

History: There is evidence of neolithic (3800 to 2500 BC) occupation on the island, with some cairns at the north end of the island. The Bute Museum holds some neolithic pots, many excavated at Glenvoidean in the north. Traces of a settlement at Townhead (in the middle of the island) have also been found. The remains of a stone circle in Blackpark or Kingarth in the south, is estimated to date from 3,000 years ago ([www.Bute Museum.org.uk](http://www.ButeMuseum.org.uk)).



Blackpark Stone Circle



The 'Queen of Inch'

The 'Queen of Inch' necklace, made of jet, was found in a cist grave on the island and dates from about 2000 BC. The jet beads have been re-strung, and close examination shows that the original necklace was probably made up of beads from several different necklaces. A facial reconstruction of the woman with whom the necklace was found is also on display at the Bute Museum (<https://www.butemuseum.org.uk/the-queen-of-the-inch/>).

The island was part of Dal Riata then subsequently fell under Norse control and became part of the Kingdom of the Isles. With the successes of Somerled against the

Norse, Bute changed hands again and along with the Isle of Arran formed part of Somerled's Lordship of the Isles. During strife among Somerled's descendants, the island appears to have come under the control of the family of the Steward of Scotland. During the 13th century Bute was targeted in two Norse attempts to regain control, Rothesay Castle fell to them in 1230 and again in 1263.



Rothesay Castle

In 1266 Alexander III of Scotland bought back the islands taken by the Norwegians. The islands of Bute and Arran were handed over to Alexander Stewart of Dundonald, Commander of the victorious Scottish forces at the Battle of Largs (1263). About a 100 years later, the island reverted to the Crown, because the heir to the island became King Robert II (via his mother, Marjorie de Brus) in 1371. He and his son Robert III frequently visited Rothesay, it was one of their favourite castles. It was Robert



III who designated his eldest son the Duke of Rothesay and this has remained a traditional title for the heir-apparent, so Prince William is Duke of Rothesay as well as Duke of Carrick and Prince of Wales. Rothesay became a Royal Burgh in 1401 and the Royal Charter granting this is the first time the term 'royal burgh' was used in a Scottish document. The castle was partially destroyed by Cromwell's troops in 1659 and burned and sacked by the Duke of Argyll in 1685. In the late 19th century, tourist activity involving visitors by ferry from Glasgow revived the town.

Rothesay Castle still exists in ruins, in the town of Rothesay. It is considered important, as a castle, for its early date (1200s) and circular plan and curtain wall. It is also interesting for its moat and ruinous state, although some conservation work has been carried out.



Rothesay Castle

The first Marquess



The Stuart family has held the majority of the island since the 13th century and held titles of initially, Baronet Stuart of Bute, then in 1703 the 3rd Baronet was created the first Earl of Bute, and also 1st Viscount Kingarth and 1st Lord Mountstuart, Cumra and Inchmarnoc. The 4th Earl became the 1st Marquess of the County of Bute in 1798. He seems to have held a lot of other titles, including 1st Baron Cardiff of Cardiff Castle (created in 1776) because of his numerous properties in South Wales. He was also created 1st Viscount Mountjoy of the Isle of Wight in 1796 (commemorating his first wife's parentage). (<https://www.thepeerage.com/p11243.htm#i112426>)

I visited the Isle of Bute as a day trip from Glasgow in 2022, driven across by a cousin and her partner. We arrived via the ferry from Wemyss Bay, which departs from next to the train station so one can visit conveniently by public transport. There is another ferry at the north of the island, connecting to Colintrave on the mainland, across only about 300 metres of water.



Wemyss Bay Station semi-circular hall



Mount Stuart front entrance

The main attraction that we were taken to see on the island was Mount Stuart, the seat of the Marquesses of Bute. This is a huge country house in the south-east of the island, on extensive (300 acres) grounds, including gardens, woods and meadows. The Mount Stuart Trust owns 28,000 acres (or 11,000 hectares) of the island (that is, all but a thousand hectares of the total area).

The house was first built 1719 to replace Rothesay Castle after it was sacked by the Duke of Argyll. The house was severely damaged in a fire in 1877. The two outer wings survived and were incorporated into the rebuild of the central section. Most of the moveable contents of the central section survived, including portraits and other treasures. The 3rd Marquess of Bute had the central section rebuilt in the late 19th century, and no expense was spared. However, he died in 1900, with the house still not finished, and his son was only 19 years old, becoming the 4th Marquess. The Marquesses were extremely wealthy, owning warehouses and wharfs in Cardiff. It took quite a long time to finish the rebuild, interrupted by WWI. The result is a huge neo-Gothic mansion, in red sandstone. The first house in Scotland to be wired for electricity, it had a lift, a heated indoor swimming pool and a central heating system ([www.mountstuart.com](http://www.mountstuart.com))



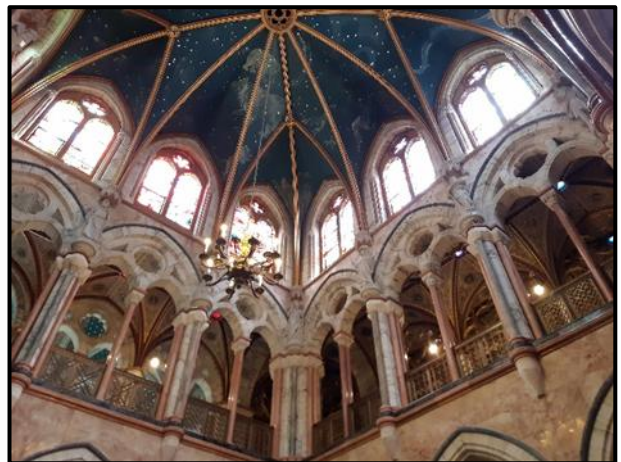
Spire of the chapel from the garden

As an aside, we are now up to the 8th Marquess, John Bryson Crichton-Stuart, born in 1989 and gaining the title in 2021.



The Marble Hall

The mansion interiors are opulent, incredibly detailed and somewhat 'over the top' but beautiful, making extravagant use of marble. The central Marble Hall features 20 different types of marble, marble columns, an 80-foot-high ceiling inset with crystals to represent the night sky, with clerestory windows in stained glass representing the signs of the zodiac and intricately worked tapestries on two walls (the other sides being an ante hall to the chapel and the marble staircase).



In the hall, looking up





The Chapel

The Chapel has coloured glass in the upper windows, which give a red glow to the area above the nave. It is available for weddings.

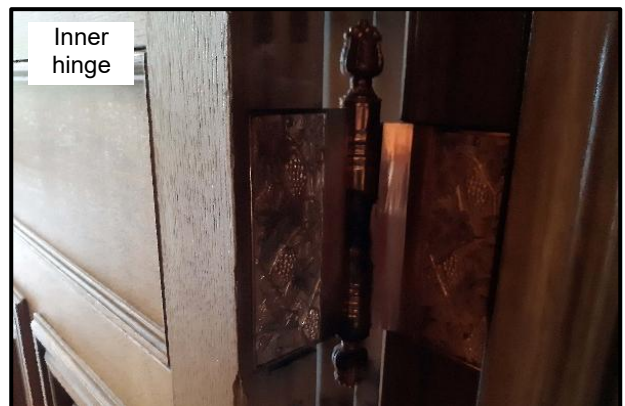


The dome of the Chapel below the spire

As we went into the dining room, our guide pointed out the detail that went into the doors: the door handles and plates were all different, and even the inside of the hinges were decorated. The dining room had an oaken theme.



Door handle



Inner hinge

Stained glass windows in the stairwell and the ceiling in the drawing room feature family heraldry. The dining room has portraits of earlier Earls of Bute, their wives, and a portrait of George III, who was a



Dining room



Detail of the carving



family friend. There is also a taxidermied dog sitting under the sideboard. Intricate oak-themed carving graced the dados.

The drawing room has more examples of carved marble column heads, detailed work on door handles and hinges, and a truly ugly mirror over the fireplace. Beyond the drawing room, the Purple Library is well provided with books and interesting curios.



The Drawing Room



The Library



Marble stairs

We headed up the marble staircase, with a nymph or goddess on a pedestal at the bottom, a pot plant half-way up and a Juliet balcony near the top. The vaulted roof was scattered with stars. Like most grand staircases, there were portraits hung on the side walls. Three arched, stained-glass windows, with a heraldic theme, lit the stairs from the half-landing. The stairs led us to a gallery that overlooks the hall below and allows



Windows on the half-landing



The master bed

access to the rooms on this floor.

Upstairs we saw the main bedroom suite, with ensuite (which would have been very modern for the time), and again opulent. The middle room was the master bed, with more heraldry in the bed curtains and scenes from the life of Saint Margaret (an 11th century Queen) in a frieze near the ceiling. There were his and her ensuite on each side, and beyond each had their own dressing-room, and the Marquess also had an observatory (now called conservatory) off his 'Horoscope room' reached through an arched and columned doorway. There is some



beautiful inlay-work beside the door. The observatory has an open fire and once housed telescopes. Now it has pot-plants. All the windows in the suite look out over a long lawn, a hedge and the river.

This was the only suite that we saw, but there were other rooms off the gallery on the first floor (for children of the family perhaps). One of the guides told us that there are higher floors with rooms for married guests, and above that for single male guests on one side and single female guests on the other. Presently, the rooms can be used for accommodation as part of wedding packages.



Looking into the conservatory

Downstairs again, we had some lunch in the cafe in the basement near the original kitchens. Replete, we moved on to explore the gardens. There were beautiful woodland walks, shrubberies and rockeries. The extensive walled kitchen garden had a pavilion in the middle with a fishpond full of koi amid a mini forest.



A rockery and pond



Part of the walled garden

We finished our day on the island with a drive north along the coast road to Colintraive, where a different ferry shuttles to and from the mainland over a narrow channel. We returned to Rothesay for the ferry back to Wemyss Bay. A unique sight in Rothesay is the 'Victorian Toilets' a late 19th century facility for visitors to the island, which we made sure to visit while we waited for the ferry.



Sculpture in the woodlands



The historic Victorian toilets

It was a wonderful day out that concluded with fish and chips at the Gourock Yacht Club!

## Caledonia

The following article has been copied from the Hunter Valley Scots Club Inc April/May 2025 Newsletter, Issue 293, *Naidheachdan*. It was written by Toni Mclean. Thanks to Toni for giving our group permission to publish it here.

Caledonia was the Latin name used by the Roman Empire to refer to the forested region in the central and western Highlands of Scotland, particularly stretching through parts of what are now Lochaber, Badenoch, Strathspey, and possibly as far south as Rannoch Moor, known as Coed (*Celyddon* to the native Britons). Today, it is used as a romantic or poetic name for all of Scotland and during the Roman Empire's occupation of Britain, the area they called Caledonia was physically separated from the rest of the island by the Antonine Wall. It remained outside the administration of Roman Britain. *Celyddon* means 'The Forested Region'. It is derived from the Welsh word '*celydd*' meaning 'a sheltered place, a retreat, a woody shelter'. Latin historians, referred to the territory north of the River Forth as 'Caledonia', and described it as inhabited by the Maeatae and the Caledonians (*Caledonii*).



The Romans first invaded the district under Agricola about 80AD and later won a decisive battle at Mons Graupius. They established a legionary fortress at Inchtuthil, near Dunkeld, in Perth and Kinross district Tayside region, as well as several auxiliary forts in strategic highland passes. But they were forced to evacuate Inchtuthil and all the sites north of the Earn River about 90AD and all of Scotland during the rule of Trajan (98–117AD). Although the frontier between Roman territory and Caledonia was fixed south of the Cheviot Hills by the emperor Hadrian, the Romans subsequently pushed the frontier northward again to the Firth of Forth, building the Antonine Wall by about 144AD to guard the new border. They retreated a decade later but reoccupied the wall temporarily later in the 2nd century and made temporary military occupations of regions farther to the north in 209 and 296. Excavations of the area have revealed native lake dwellings and weems, the original underground stone houses containing Roman objects of trade.

The song **Caledonia** is a modern Scottish folk ballad written by Dougie MacLean in 1977. The chorus of the song features the lyric 'Caledonia, you're calling me, and now I'm going home'. The song has been covered by various artists, including Jimmy Barnes, and is often dubbed Scotland's 'unofficial national anthem'.

In 2012, I had the pleasure of meeting Dougie MacLean at the 100th Anniversary gathering at Duart Castle on the Isle of Mull to commemorate the Castle being returned to the MacLean Clan after hundreds of years.



It's ironic that two of the places I am about to visit from the end of July are Budapest, where you would find a Scottish Pub called 'The Caledonia' and Inverness which is significantly connected to Caledonia, primarily through the Caledonian Canal and its historical association with the region.



## **Scotland - New National Airline Unveils the Blowing 737**

The following is from the Facebook page of Scottish Ayr posted on 26 June 2025

In a bold step for Scottish aviation and an even bolder one for bagpipe enthusiasts, Scotland has launched its first ever bagpipe shaped aircraft, The Blowing 737.

Shaped like a full set of bagpipes, the revolutionary plane lifts off to the unholy squawk of strained reeds, cruising through emotional turbulence and echoes of drunken ballads played off key.

Cabin pressure is regulated by retired pipers wheezing into the overhead vents. Whilst, the final approach is largely improvised based on local weather, whisky levels, the piper's lung capacity, and the sound of the co-pilot shouting "HAUD 'ER STEADY" from the cockpit, just violently enough to make the passengers exhale in fear, boosting the air balance levels of the flight.

In-flight entertainment consists of Braveheart played on loop at full volume through the cabin's chanter system. Subtitles unavailable. Emotions mandatory. No one will forget their first time on the Blowing 737, especially considering the risk to their hearing and whether their ears can survive the journey.



## Miscellaneous

Between now and the next issue of the *Caledonian*, the meetings of the Newcastle Family History Society Scottish SIG will be held at 1.00 pm in the Society's rooms on:

No meeting in September

Tuesday 14 October 2025

Tuesday 11 November 2025

Newcomers are always welcome.

If you would like to submit an article or pictures for a future issue of the *Caledonian*, please send them to [nfhspresident@gmail.com](mailto:nfhspresident@gmail.com)

Our next *Caledonian* will  
be the Martinmas issue on  
28 November 2025

Where do the smoked haddock known as 'smokies' come from?

### Answer

The correct answer is Arbroath

An Arbroath Smokie is a haddock smoked over a beech wood fire and is unique to Arbroath in Angus.