

Fact and Opinion

by Stephan MacLEOD

FACT: There are now about 25,000,000 million people of Scottish lineage living abroad, compared with only 5,000,000 in Scotland itself.

OPINION: It doesn't matter where they live, the Scottish sure can toss a mean caber.

FACT: The largest ship ever built in Scotland is the Q.E.2. John Brown Shipyard of Clydebank built it and was launched by Queen Elizabeth on September 20th, 1967.

OPINION: It was named after the hospital in Charlottetown.

FACT: Haggis is traditionally made from minced sheep's intestines, beef suet, oatmeal, onion, cayenne pepper and nutmeg, stuffed into a sheep's stomach and boiled for three hours. Fortunately, haggis can now be bought in the supermarket.

OPINION: What kind of sick deranged culture could eat nutmeg?

FACT: The common American usage of the word plaid to mean a tartan pattern seems to have developed from a misunderstanding - in Gaelic plaid simply means blanket.

OPINION: And bagpipe actually means bagged instrument with pipe things sticking out of it.

FACT: The oldest known recorded sighting of the Loch Ness Monster was made by the 7th century monk Adamnan in his biography of the Christian missionary St Columba. Adamnan wrote that Columba subdued the beast when it attacked his followers.

OPINION: How the fuck does a Christian missionary subdue the Loch Ness Monster? There's no examples of Jesus taming any dinosaurs in the bible.

FACT: In 1941 an Italian newspaper reported that the wartime bombing of Scotland had succeeded in killing the Loch Ness Monster.

OPINION: The only way to get the public's sympathy when a bunch of Scottish people are killed is to report on the condition of their imaginary monster.

FACT: Traditionally porridge is served in one bowl, with cold milk in another. Each spoonful of porridge is dipped into the milk before it is eaten - but on no account should any sugar be added.

OPINION: The Scots do NOT like any sort of flavour in their meals unless it comes from a disemboweled animal. Yum.

FACT: The buttons on the sleeves of traditional Highland dress have their origins in the British army - they were introduced to stop soldiers wiping their noses on their sleeves.

OPINION: I wish Kleenex would come with buttons on the tissues so people would stop wiping their nose with it. That's so disgusting.

FACT: It is considered lucky in Scotland if your first visitor on New Year's Day is a tall, dark man bearing a gift of shortbread, a black bun - or a lump of coal.

OPINION: If any short visitors arrive on your doorstep, shoot them immediately. They have evil, short powers.

FACT: According to recent surveys most British people consider the Scottish accent to be the most trustworthy, and Sean Connery's voice to be the most trustworthy of all.

OPINION: The least trustworthy voice is Billy Joel's.

FACT: One of the more unusual theories on the origin of the term 'Scot' is that it is derived from the name of Scota, an Egyptian princess who brought the Stone of Destiny across to Scotland.

OPINION: If the Scots were named after an Egyptian princess it totally makes sense that they all wear dresses.

FACT: An alternative claim states that the word Scot originates from the Latin word for pirates.

OPINION: If the Scots were named after pirates, it totally makes sense that they wear eye patches, have pet parrots, and are cheap greedy little fucks.

FACT: Scotland has produced some remarkable inventors, including John Logie Baird, Alexander Graham Bell, James Watt and Charles Macintosh.

OPINION: Just wait, man. Some Scottish guy is totally going to invent a robot that can breakdance. It'll happen.

FACT: Scotland also produced "the world's worst poet"—William McGonagall (c.1830-1902). McGonagall's poems are now celebrated throughout the world for their poor rhyming schemes, weak metaphors and outright banality.

OPINION: He once wrote a poem comparing a girl's hair to the colour of oatmeal.

FACT: The first King of a united Scotland is widely held to have been Kenneth MacAlpin, who united the Scots and Picts to become King of Scotland (as we know it) in 843 AD.

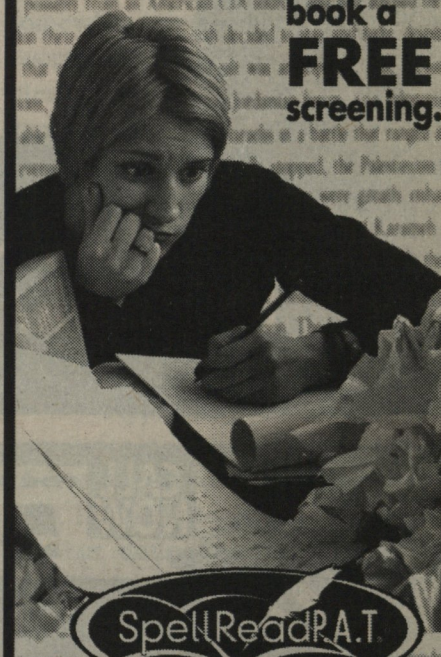
OPINION: MacAlpin was also the first king to unite a Scotsman with a sheep. It was a beautiful wedding ceremony.

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