

News story: UK Government leads Burns Night celebrations around the world

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan will host tonight's reception, where guests will be welcomed by bagpipes, enjoy a whisky tasting, and listen to Scottish folk singer Katy Thompson, who will perform 'My Heart is in the Highlands' and 'My Love is Like a Red Red Rose'. In addition, Ryan Hunter, 2nd year BA Acting student from at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, will recite Burns' poem 'A Mans A Man for A' That'.

Address to a Haggis

The video shows UK Government staff and Scottish service personnel including Major Jonny Rourke, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Mackenzie, Bombardier Steven Cunningham and Chief Petty Officer John Boyle reciting Burns' most famous work, the 'Address to a Haggis'.

Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell said:

This week the whole country will celebrate the life and work of Robert Burns, one of Scotland's greatest cultural icons. His works are justly famous right across the globe. From Ayrshire to Atlanta, and from Cumbernauld to Canberra, on Wednesday Burns' work will be celebrated in homes and Burns societies all over the world.

Burns' legacy remains relevant around the world, and as someone from Dumfries, Burns has always played an important part in my life. On Burns Night, I will be promoting Scotland's fine produce at a reception with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. And, of course, toasting the Bard with a wee dram of "guid auld Scotch."

Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan said:

The clue is in the name – my father and many Duncans before us were born and brought up in Wick, Caithness, so I'll be in my Duncan tartan tonight.

Burns' enduring global influence demonstrates the impact of Scottish culture around the world and I know that Burns night will be celebrated all over – not just by British troops, embassies, aid workers and expats, but by people from many countries throughout the world. It shows us that Burns' appeal is as strong as ever.

Scottish prisons admit they don't test for legal highs

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Scottish jails haven't introduced equipment to test prisoners suspected of taking legal highs, even though technology is being rolled out across other parts of the UK.

In England, hundreds of sniffer dogs have been trained to detect new psychoactive substances along with testing in jails.

And in a white paper, the UK Government said testing was being carried out in "all prisons".

But in a parliamentary answer to the Scottish Conservatives, chief executive of the Scottish Prison Service Colin McConnell said no such progress had been made north of the border.

He said: "The SPS does not test for New Psychoactive Substances. There are significant challenges around the detection and identification of NPS compounds and the availability of up-to-date testing kits due to the variants of such substances constantly changing."

He added the organisation had "adopted a therapeutic approach" to the issue.

So-called legal highs are becoming increasingly prevalent across the country, with deaths and hospital admissions increasing each year.

It also emerged earlier this month that the number of prisoners caught with illegal substances had hit a seven-year high.

Shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross, who asked the Parliamentary Question, said the chances of inmates being properly rehabilitated would be hampered unless the number of new psychoactive substances finding their way into prison was dealt with.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

"New psychoactive substances are a major problem in prison, and society as a whole.

"It's therefore quite remarkable to learn there is no testing in place for these in Scottish prisons.

"This is despite the fact jails south of the border are moving ahead with this.

"People expect prisons to be absolutely secure, and are understandably angry that so many illegal items – as well as legal high substances – find their way in with such ease.

"The Scottish Government should be following England's lead and making sure we can force these dangerous substances out of prisons altogether."

Below is the parliamentary response from the Scottish Government:

24 January 2017 (Holding Reply Issued 24 January 2017)

Index Heading: Learning and Justice

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government which new psychoactive substances the Scottish Prison Service tests for when prisoners are subject to a drugs test. S5W-05991

Michael Matheson:

I have asked Colin McConnell, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service, to respond. His response is as follows:

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) does not test for New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). There are significant challenges around the detection and identification of NPS compounds and the availability of up-to-date testing kits due to the variants of such substances constantly changing. SPS has adopted a therapeutic approach, alongside professional case management and the utilisation of existing drug testing powers to manage this evolving issue.

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However, only yesterday, UK justice secretary Elizabeth Truss said in answer to a question at Westminster:

"My hon. Friend is absolutely right that psychoactive substances have had a serious effect in our prisons: the prisons and probation ombudsman described them as a "game changer", which is why we have now rolled out testing to deal with those substances. We have extra sniffer dogs to deal with them as well, and we are making progress."

Source:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-24/debates/EB38F55E-717E-46D3-A0F4-B0D9B484F234/OralAnswersToQuestions>

And in a UK Government White Paper published in November on prison safety and reform, it was confirmed that hundreds of drug detection dogs had been trained to sniff-out legal highs, adding: "In September, following a successful pilot in 34 prisons over the summer, we introduced nationwide mandatory testing for specified psychoactive substances in all prisons."

Source:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-_web_.pdf

The Scottish Conservatives revealed the number of prisoners caught with illegal substances hit a seven-year high in 2016:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/01/drug-use-in-jail-hits-7-year-high/>

News story: Italy vs Wales rugby match in Rome: consular advice

From:

First published:

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Part of:

The Italy and Welsh Rugby teams will meet in Rome for their RBS 6 Nations Rugby Tournament on 5 February 2017 at 3pm.

The Consular Services of the British Embassy Rome have advice for Welsh supporters travelling to see the match.

Travelling rugby fans normally prepare well for their trips, don't get into fights, don't overindulge, don't lose their passports and don't normally come to our attention. Keep it up!

However, to avoid getting into trouble, here's a bit of advice:

- check that your passport is valid for your whole trip to Italy;
- make sure that you bring your [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) – this proves your entitlement to free/reduced cost health care if you need medical attention;
- the EHIC does not replace comprehensive [travel insurance](#) though, so make sure you're insured. Insurance could cover the entire cost of hospitalisation, and repatriation should that become necessary;
- keep an eye on your possessions at all times: pickpockets operate in large crowds and on most public transport.

The emergency numbers in Italy are:

- 112: Carabinieri
- 113: police
- 118: emergency ambulance

- 115: fire brigades

Practical information:

- the venue for this match will be the Olympic Stadium in Rome. Kick-off time is at 3pm, Italian time. The Stadium opens at 1pm. You should try to arrive early as access to the stadium might take some time and certainly before 2pm;
- a fan zone at Parco del Foro Italico (next to the Stadium) is open from 10am on Sunday;
- there is no parking at the Stadium so don't arrive by car;
- disabled car parking spaces are located outside the Carraia Nord, in [Largo Ferraris IV](#), where you will be directed to the Tribuna Tevere to access the Stadium;
- Italian police and stewards will conduct ticket checks and security screening. You might be required to show an original identity document. Any items that could be used as a weapon, like glass or plastic bottles, are not permitted inside the stadium;
- note also that musical instruments, large umbrellas and items of luggage are not permitted inside the Stadium;

How to get to the Olympic Stadium:

- take Metro Line A to Flaminio/Piazza del Popolo and walk to the Stadium (4.5 Kms) for about 30 minutes, or you can take tram no. 2 from Flaminio which drops you close to the Stadium. Alternatively take bus 910 from Roma Termini, get off at Piazza Antonio Mancini, then walk through the park, over the Bridge Duca D'Aosta and you'll see the Stadio Olimpico;
- combined Metro and bus/tram tickets can be purchased from most tobacconists, bars, or vending machines at metro stations and major bus stops and cost €1.50 each. Please note that bus and tram tickets must be stamped in the small yellow ticket machine found on buses and trams as soon as you start your journey. Failure to do so will result in a fine, if checked by an inspector.

If things go wrong and you need consular assistance, call us on +39 06 4220 0001.

Check out our [Italy travel advice](#) before you go.

Typhoons from 6 Squadron take part in Red Flag

6 Squadron Typhoons, from RAF Lossiemouth, are taking part in the world's largest and most complex air combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in the United States.



Red Flag is a three-week exercise that pits friendly 'Blue' forces – including the 6 Squadron Typhoons – against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors in live and synthetic training environments, simulating air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, and space and cyber warfare.



The training mirrors the threats and complex air defences posed by real-life adversaries, helps participating nations better understand each other's capabilities and ensures that RAF personnel maintain the highest levels of readiness for potential future military operations.

The live element takes place over the US Air Force's premier military training area in Nevada; over 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land – an impossible scale to achieve in Europe.



The exercise also sees the Typhoons fly alongside US Air Force F-22 Raptors and F-35A Lightnings. This continues the evolving integration of RAF operations with 5th Generation aircraft ahead of the introduction of the F-35B into the RAF's combat air inventory in 2018.

Wing Commander Billy Cooper, Officer Commanding 6 Squadron, said: "We've brought eight Typhoons with us from RAF Lossiemouth to take part in Red Flag alongside the United States Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force.



"While our day job at Lossiemouth is protecting UK airspace through Quick Reaction Alert, here in Nevada the majority of what we're doing is air-to-air fighting and some strike missions. This means we'll be flying two waves of six aircraft every day.

"One of the benefits of this exercise is the threat replication; we can simulate fighting our way into a target area through a high-threat environment, dropping precision munitions on specific targets and then fighting our way back out again. It's a privilege to deploy here with 6 Squadron and to represent the Royal Air Force, the UK and Scotland in

particular.”

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WAAF who stared into Hitler's eyes dies

Former WAAF Patricia Clark, a Battle of Britain filter room plotter, who became a bestselling novelist, has died aged 95.



Born Patricia Robins on February 1, 1921, she was the second of three daughter of novelist Denise Robins, known as 'the Queen of Romance'. After going to school in Switzerland, where she learned French and how to ski, Patricia wanted to learn German and was sent, aged 16, in 1937 to study near Munich. She once found herself in a traffic jam a few feet away from Hitler who was in an open topped car. Nearly 80 years later she vividly remembered 'meeting Hitler's cold blue eyes.'

Returning to England she found a job on *Women's Illustrated* magazine as a junior editor. As war loomed, she joined the RAF and after basic training was assigned to special duties, in the Filter Centre at 10 (Fighter) Group. Her job as a filterer was important, skilled work. The Filter Centre was a high pressure environment that demanded a great degree of skill and dexterity and close team cooperation.

Patricia proved to be a highly capable operator who was commissioned and made a Filterer. The Filterer's job was to analyse the huge amount of conflicting information to decide on the most accurate position, vector, height and strength of detected aircraft in a very short time. She was further promoted to Filter Officer, acting as deputy to the Filter Centre Controller and with overall responsibility for all the filtered information which produced the recognised air picture.



In 1944 Britain was the first nation ever attacked by ballistic missiles and Patricia took part in the pioneering work designed to locate the firing positions of V2 rockets so they could be attacked from the air. Her work was highly classified and she was sworn to secrecy about it for 30 years after the war ended. During breaks for bad weather in this top-secret war work, Patricia started writing romance stories for magazines, using the extra income she made from them as petrol money to get to NAAFI dances.

In 1947, she met and married former RAF pilot Donald Clark. They divorced in 1976. Her writing career began in earnest after the war and, like her mother; Patricia became a prolific author of light romantic fiction. In the 1970s she started to write blockbuster historical romances using the pen name Claire Lorrimer. In later years she moved to new genres, including murder mysteries. In March last year, under her pen name, she was presented with an Outstanding Achievement Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association, after completing her 80th novel.

She is survived by her three children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

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