

Scotland's



ONLY LAST month, in *iScot* 62, I quoted the eminent Scottish historian, the late Professor Geoffrey Barrow, because something he originally said in relation to thirteenth century Scotland succinctly defines many of the issues that still cause us problems today:

To make a nation conscious of its identity you must first give it a history

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It's a seemingly simple statement, but what lies behind it is exceptionally complex and deep-rooted. Everybody knows the old cliché, that history is written by the victors, and it's only in very recent times that people have started to challenge the 'accepted' history of Scotland and not only try to discover the truth about 'facts' that were generally 'known' but also to discover and highlight aspects which had been, up until now, hidden in full view. Because, of course, few if any of us were taught these things at school – it is well documented that this was a deliberate and concentrated act over hundreds of years by the British

story?



by Gordon
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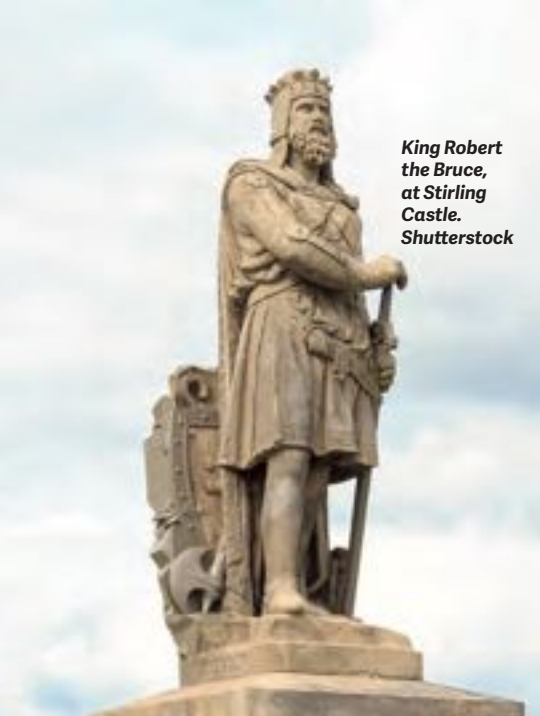
Glenfinnan, scene of the 1745 Raising of the Jacobite Standard. Shutterstock

establishment to forcibly anglicise us all. We've written about many of these misrepresentations already, and will continue to do so, but here's our brief contribution to the zeitgeist, the mood of the moment, in terms of the topical debate around statues and monuments, because they are very much part of our story.

As is *iScot's* wont, we'll not focus here on the statues that should never have been erected in the first place, like the despot Dundas in Edinburgh or *The Mannie* in Sutherland. No, because that's the history that has been

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given to us, or imposed upon us, by a colonial and imperial establishment in order to repress our national identity. We'd rather concentrate on those that promote the best of Scotland and the Scottish people – it's only a quick snapshot and is in no way intended to be exhaustive, but hopefully it will help all of us 'o independent mind' in seeing our history through an untainted lens...



King Robert the Bruce, at Stirling Castle. Shutterstock



Culloden Moor, scene of atrocities carried out by the British state. Shutterstock



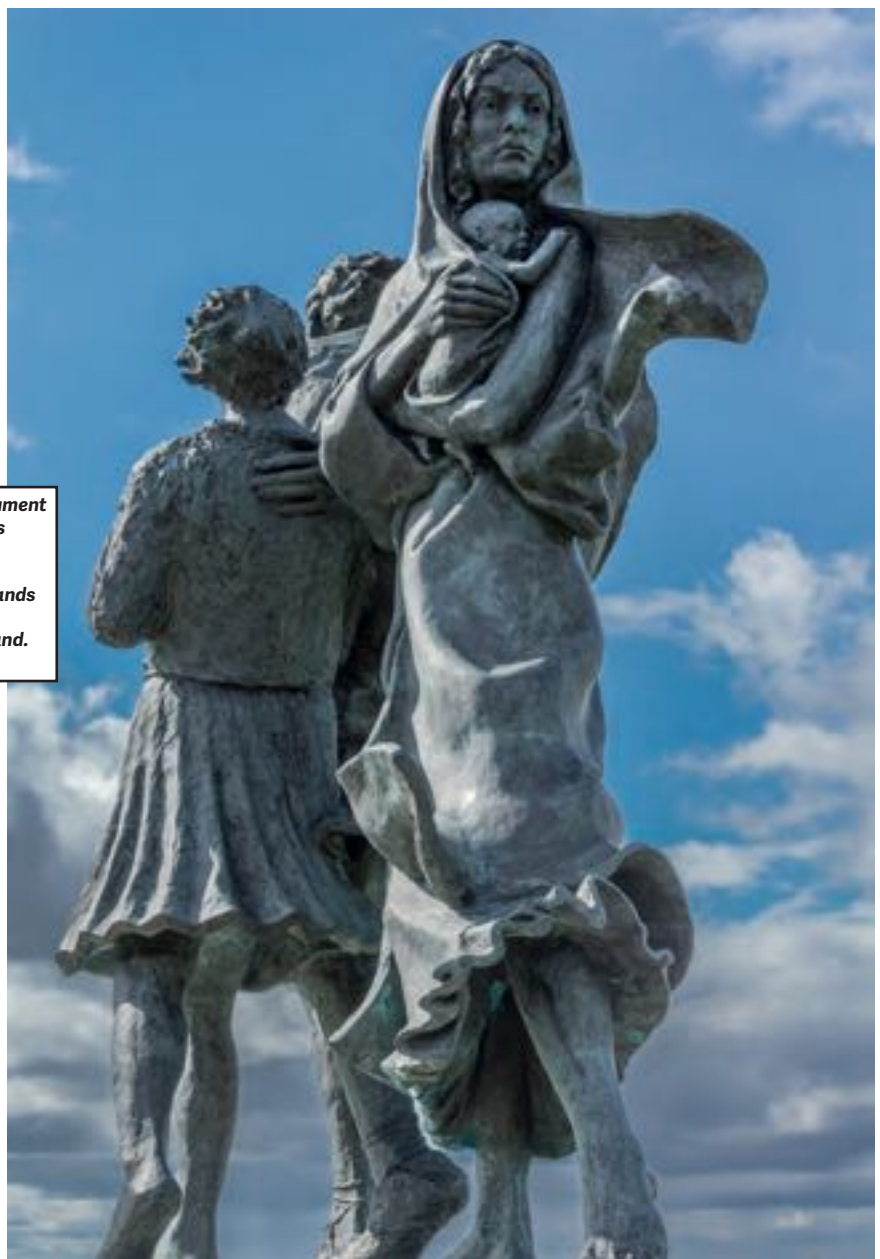
William Wallace, in Aberdeen. Shutterstock

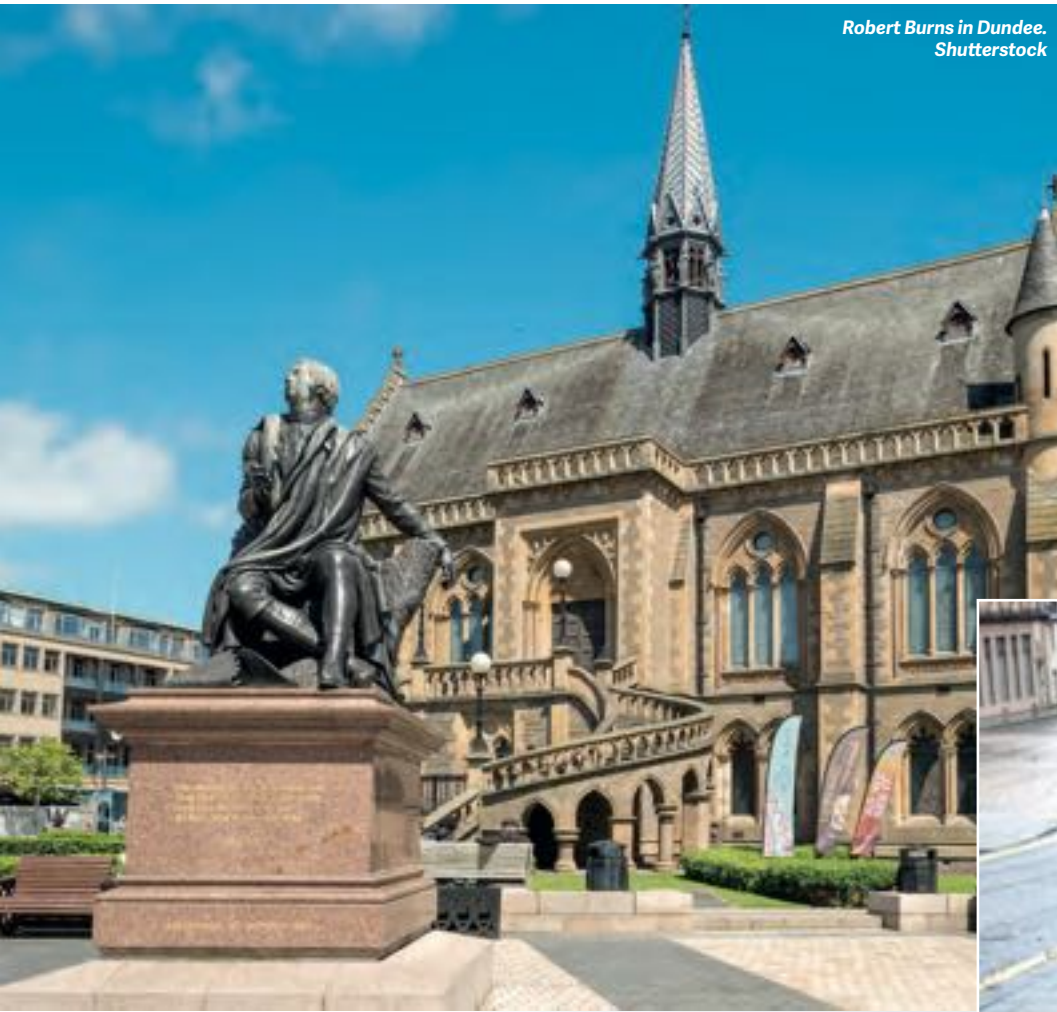


One of the many gravestones on Culloden Battlefield. Shutterstock



Helmsdale monument to The Emigrants – those families forcibly cleared from their own lands by the infamous Duke of Sutherland. Shutterstock





Robert Burns in Dundee. Shutterstock



*In 1797, 12 citizens of Tranent were murdered by a British Militia for protesting conscription
Photo © Kim Traynor (CC BY-SA 3.0)*

The Political Martyrs Monument on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. Shutterstock



*Radical War Memorial in Greenock, commemorating the 18 protestors killed or injured in 1820
Thomas Nugent © (CC BY-SA 2.0)*

And, not all of our statues and monuments are commemorating heroic deeds or bad stuff – here's tae us, wha's like us!

Scotland's national animal proudly displayed in Inverness. Shutterstock



Oor Wullie, Your Wullie, A'body's Wullie! Shutterstock



Desperate Dan with Minnie the Minx and Dawg in Dundee. Shutterstock



Bon Scott, lead singer of AC-DC in his hometown of Kirriemuir. Shutterstock

Andy Scott's Kelpies in Falkirk. Shutterstock



We can almost see and feel our collective confidence and belief in ourselves growing

And finally... it's not 'Scottish exceptionalism' to celebrate our history, our ingenuity, our inventiveness or our sense of humour, but it is certainly a manifestation of 'the cringe' to deny all of these things. As we move ever closer towards regaining our independence we can almost see and feel our collective confidence and belief in ourselves growing, reflecting that of a normal country. It's that self-belief that will allow us to rationally examine where statues, monuments, street names and everything else that has been imposed upon us over the centuries fit with who we are, and who we want to be, as a nation. It's our story, our history, and our identity.