**Introduction**

Chapter I: Scotland as an original country

* 1. Some words about General information
  2. Tragic history of Scotland
  3. Symbol of Scotland

Chapter II: Scotland pride

2.1. The main Scotland cities

2.2. World history is full of Scottish names

Chapter III: The Scots

3.1. Peculiarities of Scottish character

3.2. Clans and tartans

3.3. Customs and traditions

Chapter IV: The Practical part

4.1. The research on Scottish and Russian traditions

Conclusion

Literature

Appendix

You know that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consist of four parts, of four countries. There are four different nations: the English, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. Every nation has its own unique culture, history, literature and even languages. These people have different customs and traditions and even food changes from region to region.

Having studied makes English-speaking countries rather deeply we became interested in culture of not so large country but also very rich of its traditions is Scotland. The knowledge about it is not full enough among Russian pupils. That’s why the theme of this research is the following: “Scotland. Its customs and traditions”

The object: The research of Scottish customs and traditions, their way of life.

The subject: The discovery of influence of knowledge about customs and traditions of one of the countries on the formation of respect to other nations.

The aim: To search and to systematize the material about Scottish character and traditions of this country.

Coming from the aim, object and subject we put forward the hypothesis:

If the knowledge about culture, history, customs and traditions of the country are systematized we can achieve:

* The formation of deep understanding of the nation’s character
* The improvement of mutual understanding between different nations
* The increasing of the cultural level

Our aim can be achieved and the hypothesis can be checked up by using the following methods of research:

* Analysis of information from different sources
* Abstraction
* Compilation the charts

Practical significance:

* The collected materials make it possible to increase the interest of studying English at school, to broaden the outlook, to understand the peculiarities of Scottish character

**Chapter I: Scotland as an original country**

* 1. **Some words about General information**

He who has not seen Scotland

does not really know Great Britain

Scotland is a land of paradox. A small nation, its presence is felt all over the world. It is a country of preachers and poets, warriors and dreamers, inventors and explorers. This is the land of tartans and fine whisky, of romantic castles and the melodies of bagpipes. Scotland also has a rich cultural heritage. The appeals of Scotland are undoubtedly unique and the hospitality of the Scottish people will make your visit one to be remembered. Scotland is a country in the United Kingdom to the north of England. Its symbol is a thistle, its patron saint is St. Andrew. The country is consisting of the Highland – a northern area with a harsh climate and the Lowlands – an industrial region with about three quarters of population.

* 1. **Tragic history of Scotland**

The unification of England and Scotland showed that religious differences were now more important than old national ones. England and Scotland remained separate during the seventeenth century, except for a period under Oliver Cromwell. In 1707, both countries agreed on a single parliament for Great Britain. Scotland retained its own system of law and the church.

Some facts from Scottish History.

1651

Scotland was united with England and Welsh although it kept its own parliament.

1707

England and Scotland were joined by an Act of Union

1715 and 1745

Rebellions by “Jacobites” who wanted a Catholic King. In 1745 the Jacobite hope was Prince Charles Edward Stuart “Bonny Prince Charlie”

My Bonny

A folk song

1. My Bonny is over the ocean,

my Bonny is over the sea.

My Bonny is over the ocean.

Oh, bring back my Bonny to me.

Chorus: Bring back, bring back,

Bring back my Bonny to me, to me.

2. Oh, blow ye winds over the ocean,

Oh, blow ye winds over the sea,

Oh, blow ye winds over the ocean,

Oh, bring back my Bonny to me.

3. Last night as I lay on my pillow,

Last night as I lay in my bed.

Last night as I lay on my pillow,

I dreamed that my Bonny was dead.

4. The winds have blown over the ocean,

The winds have blown over the sea,

The winds have blown over the ocean,

And brought back my Bonny to me.

1746

Prince Charles was finally defeated and the people of the Highlands were forced to emigrate.

* 1. **Symbol of Scotland**

The thistle has nothing pleasant in it, especially if you carelessly touch its thorns. But it has an important meaning for the people of Scotland. It is the Scottish national emblem. Scotland, as you may know, is now part of Great Britain. Why did the Scottish people choose this thorny plant as the national emblem of their country? The answer is interesting, and it can be found in the history of Scotland. The people of that country chose the thistle as their national emblem because it saved their land from foreign invaders many years ago.

A wonderful way to sample the spirit of Scotland is so to follow the Malt Whisky Trail which takes you through the Grampian Highlands. The magical combination of pure snow-melt water from the Highlands and carefully matted barley has produced the unique, essentially Scottish taste which no other country can match.

The most important musical instrument of Scots is a unique bagpipe. It appeared in the Highland in the XVI-XIX centuries. The bagpipe is a loud instrument. Its sounds spread fairways to two miles around. For making the instrument serve a leather skin, a blander (bull or horse) and reed (or any other hollow tubes) are needed. In Scotland people say, that sounds of bagpipes must contain sound of man and sound of animal.

**Chapter II: Scotland pride**

**2.1. The main Scotland cities**

Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, is associated with science, law and administration. It is internationally famous too as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe and is popularly known as “the Athens of the North”. In the old town houses with narrow windows are climbing up by narrow streets towards the ancient Edinburgh Castle in the middle of the city. This famous fortress overlooking the town from the 150 meters high Castle Rock is one thousand years old. As Scots say, St. Petersburg and Edinburgh are the only cities in the world with such a splendid layout.

Manchester is the second biggest city. Manchester was the first city in England to build its own airport in 1919. The city is an important cultural centre, famous for publishing books and magazines. It is also noted for its excellent libraries, magnificent museums and arts.

Glasgow is its largest and busiest town. Glasgow is the heart of industry. It is a centre of business and trade. It is a very busy, prosperous, dirty in some part and smart in others, it is beautiful and ugly with its large port and busy streets.

**2.2. World history is full of Scottish names**

In Scotland were born many people, became famous in the future.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) – writer and poet, one of the greatest historical novelists, whose favorite subject was his native Scotland.

Robert Burns (1759-1796) – Burn’s poetry falls into two main groups: English and Scottish. His English poems are, for the most part, interior specimens of conventional eighteenth century verse. But in Scottish poetry he achieved triumphs of a quite extraordinary kind.

My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart is not here,

My heart’s in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,

A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe –

My heart’s in the Highlands, wherever I go!

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,

The birthplace of valour, the country of worth!

Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,

The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high cover’d with snow,

Farewell to the straths and green valleys below,

Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,

Farewell to the torrents and long-pouring floods!

There are many Scottish names it can tell:

David Livingstone (1813-1873) – famous Scottish explorer.

Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) – inventor of the telephone.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) – famous Scottish writer.

**Chapter III: The Scots**

**3.1. Peculiarities of Scottish character**

The Scots, particularly the “Highlanders” from the mountainous north, try to maintain their separate identity. They object to being called “English”. Their earliest known ancestors were the Celts and the Gaelic language, still spoken in remote parts, comes from the ancient language of the Celtic tribes. The Scots have a reputation for being inventive, hardworking, serious minded and cautious with money. In the past they were pioneer settlers and empire builders in places like America, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. They have also provided the British Army with some of its most famous regiments. Over the centuries, enemy troops have often been terrified at the sight and sound of Highlanders in Kilts marching into battle accompanied by the blood-curdling music of the bagpipes. Some even nicknamed the Scottish soldiers “devils in skirts” and also “ladies from hell”.

**3.2. Clans and tartans**

The Scottish Highlander considers himself the “true” Scot and he wears his national dress, the “kilt”, with pride. Kilts, the pleated skirts made of the material with a squared, colored design called a tartan, probably derive from the costume of the Roman conquerors. Each Scottish clan (a Gaelic word for “tribe” or “family”) has its own tartan with specific colors and design and only members of that clan are entitled to wear it. Clans, the traditional keystone of Scottish society, are no longer powerful. Originally, the clan, a grouping of an entire family with one head, or laird, was also important as a fighting unit. The solidarity associated with clan membership has been expanded into a strong national pride. The Black Watch tartan and the Royal Stewart tartan are the most popular tartans. They are more popular with tourists than with the Scots. If your name is Mac-something you probably descend from clansmen. “Mac” is part of a great many Scottish surnames, and its meaning is “son”. It is sometimes spelt “M” or “Mc”, but it is pronounced just the same as “Mac”. In some places “son” is used instead of “Mac”: MacDonald, Donaldson. The clan MacDonald is one of the oldest, it dates back to the 13th century.

**3.3. Customs and traditions**

They say, Scots are stingy and unfriendly people. It is true, but we can understand them, after all during all their history, they had numerous wars for liberty. Like other peoples, Scots severely stick to their traditions. The important part of their house is a fire-place, which gives comfort and quietness to house. As a necessary attribution in each home must be a checked fabric, maybe a table-cloth, or a plaid on a sofa, or blinds on the wall.

Almost in every house on the wall there is a knife, which has on the hilt the engraving of a thistle and set a topaz. Scots had the older tradition – wearing a knife over the right stocking. If a man put a knife out on inner side of leg that it means he declared the war. Peaceful people used to wear a knife on the right outside.

Scots very like plants. There are many plants in their rooms. Behind house there is a small garden. Owners carefully look after all plants, that’s why Scots have good and splendid gardens. In good weather people like spending a lot of time in fresh air, in their gardens.

Before the XVII century Scottish national dress was as follow a white linen shirt and a 8 meter long plaid, which was fringed over one’s shoulder, a fastened brooch, and clasped it around the waist. In the fighting days to poron helped to soldiers – it’s a big fur bag. The bag was decorated with head of animal – fox or badger – and long fringe.

Really, only people, who lived beside hills, wore a kilt. Inhabitants of plain preferred trousers. Highlanders wore a kilt and gaiters. Mainly because, it was a comfortable.

Earlier Scots were divided into: cattle – breeders and land people. The most of bright pagan celebrations for grain farmers was a Midsummer’s Day (June 21st). On that day there is a fire going, around that there are rituals. Sheep-breeders celebrated their holiday in June – they celebrated the end of washing, shearing and branded sheep.

That day the hostess makes a special pie from barley or oat flour and shares it with children, who must raise and care for sheep.

**Chapter IV: The Practical part**

**4.1. The research on Scottish and Russian traditions**

As a practical part I chose a comparison Russia and Scotland. This comparison with not many aspects, can give us a chance to understand the difference between countries. To my mind these countries were united due to thing only one – the origin of ancient traditions. But even in such a conservative country as Scotland, some traditions are forgotten or lost their meanings. For example we can take into consideration the present Scottish religion.

You can see that nowadays Scotland has many religions, that’s why instead of old traditions, new different sects have appeared. So to know the present situation of Scotland, you must open all secrets of history of Scotland and then, may be you will see that their customs are distinctive.

**Conclusion**

Today Scotland is very popular. Tourists can see and do so much: high hills to walk on, old castles to visit, mysterious lakes to cross by boat and… legendary monsters to look out for! Scotland is famous for people from all over the world come there to admire it.

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