

President's Message

Dear Members,

Well, what a turn out at our first meeting. It was good to hear and see some pictures of the Homeland. Thanks to Hal for keeping me right on the "swearing in" part, I hate to have an illegal operation. I am looking forward to a great year, the people we have on the Board are a dedicated bunch (a wee bit crazy, but that helps). They are all ready to give their best.



Denise and her subcommittee are putting the final touches to our St Andrews' Dance Night, and laying out the program for the Burns night.

Details of the St Andrews Night are included in this newsletter. Please make a special effort to come along and bring a friend. We are trying something new this year and would like to get your feedback. As mentioned last month, the night will be Scottish country dancing, professional entertainment with a hefty dose of audience participation. We are planning a good selection of slow waltz's and a few faster versions... Don't be shy now! Git yer pumps oot the cupbird an have 'em dustit aff for the big night.

Aw-ra-best, Keith

** Remember The Halloween Party on Monday October 30th (see over).*

*owerby: across at or to a place.
taigle: tangle, confuse, muddle.
tammie: a kind of beret.
whirl: trun around.
yaird: as in "back yard".*

Back in the early days...

Standing stones are found throughout Scotland, and many believe these megaliths are related to early "studies" of the heavenly bodies. Some even suggest that the sun would have shone along the axes of these structures on particular days, such as Midsummer morning....

However, this reasoning appears flawed since, as any native will tell you, catching sight of the sun is a variable experience in Scotland - having it appear on a particular day at a predictive time is a risky assumption, at best.

Some Orkadians believe the stones were former giants. Others think they may have been early tourists who "froze" in-place waiting for the sun...

inside...

Events Program

Scotch - the amber bead.

Caledonia Corner

Toasts & Things

Other really good stuff!

Events Program. Come along and enjoy...

We started the Society year with a super turnout for the initial meeting. Hearing about the student visit to Scotland, and catching up with the news, and all those Scottish goodies.....

The next event is one of the fun highlights of the year, and a great chance to let your hair down - without being recognized!

It's the annual Halloween party... **Monday, October 30th, 7pm:**
At Spoede School on Spoede Road.

Dookin for apples, treacle somethings....

Be sure to dress up in your best costume..... Prizes for kids of all ages!

Denise Duffy, and her various helpers, are working very hard to create another enjoyable year for all. More help is welcome! Call Denise: 532 7587

Saturday, November 11th: St Andrews' Country Dance Night.
See attached flier and ticket reservation form.

Monday, December 18th, 7pm: Christmas Party.
At Mary Institute/Country Day.

Saturday, January 20th: Burns Night. By popular demand "Alex Beaton" will be back to entertain us, plus the expected high standard Scottish extras. Venue will be the Adams Mark hotel

February: no meeting arranged. If anyone wants to arrange something, just call.

March: To be arranged.

Saturday, April 27th: Annual Ceilidh. Venue to be arranged.

May: no meeting arranged. If anyone wants to arrange something, just call.

Sunday, June 30th: Another Scottish BBQ & games. Venue to be arranged.

The Invera'an Pipe Band will be performing in their usual excellent style at the following Kirkin' o' the Tartans:

Nov. 19th, 10:30am: St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ladue & Warson.

Nov. 26th, 10:30am: Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood.

Affton High School theatre group has been selected as one of only 12 from the U.S., to participate in the Fringe at Edinburgh Festival. The group, headed by Judy Rethwisch, will hold a fund-raiser on November 3rd at Royal Oceans Banquet Center. For info and tickets, call 638-6330.

Basically there are three types of sporting activity in Scotland. 1. Lairdly pursuits which involve the mass slaughter of birds and animals. 2. Golf which involves beating the out of a small white ball. 3. Fitba' (soccer) which is a religion and involves beating anything in the immediate vicinity!

Scotch - the amber bead.

Scotland is known the world over for that drink of drinks, locally known as whisky and universally termed "Scotch". Is it the ingredients, or is it some secret process that makes the drink so well accepted far and wide? The basic contents are well known: water, barley and peat. Of course, these ingredients must be from the native land.

Ask a seasoned distillery manager what factors or conditions are most important, and he will often tell you it's the water. Scotland is blessed with copious amounts of it, and the water supply and quality frequently determined the distillery location. Distilleries draw on unpolluted sources unique to each distillery. The vegetation and rocks all influence the water that passes through and over them. Granite, limestone, shale, slate, sandstone and peat are just a few of the hosts to Scotland's water. Many Speyside distilleries use soft water with a low calcium carbonate content that runs through peat and off granite. Cragganmore Distillery, in Speyside's heartland, has a particularly pure source that runs over greenstone rock and contributes to the whisky's smoothness and clarity. The water for Glenkinchie is relatively hard, flowing over chalky Lowland rock for a fairly dry whisky. Dalwhinnie's source is the highest in Scotland: a burn of cold, pure snow-melt, running off granite and through peat mosses. Talisker and Lagavulin's sources are peatier still, the water tinged yellow-brown from the vegetation's contact.

Barley is widely grown in Scotland, and the local farmers know how to make it just right for malting. Single malt whiskies are made from 100% barley, each kernel containing the starches, and enzymes necessary for making the king of spirits. Different varieties are used by the distilleries, and the best distilling barley in Scotland, reputedly, is grown in three regions: the Laigh o'Moray, East Lothian and Ross-shire's Black Isle. Highland barley makes for a heavier, fruitier whisky. Cragganmore sits by the Laigh, and Glenkinchie is surrounded by the golden barley fields of East Lothian.

Peat is acidic, decayed vegetation made up of bog plants such as sphagnum moss, heather, sedges and grasses, depending on the bog's location. Scotland's peat bogs can reach depths of 30 feet, and may be 5,000-10,000 years old. For peat to develop, there needs to be high rainfall, a cold atmosphere and poor soil drainage or aeration. The waterlogged soil cannot break down the vegetation and a thickening layer of peat, 94% moisture, forms. Traditionally, Highland distilleries dried the barley over a peat fire to stop the germination, endowing the grain with a characteristic smoky aroma and flavor. It is the peat smoke or "reek" that is actually the ingredient, and today's single malts are exposed to it for many hours or not at all, depending mainly on the regional style of the whisky. Peaty distillery water, to a much lesser extent, will also impart its properties to a single malt.

Well that's the basic ingredients! What's the secret process? See next month....

*...it's just water,
barley and peat...
... from Scotland.*

CALEDONIA CORNER

October 31st, The Eve of All Hallows. A mystical night if there ever was one! Hallowe'en appears on the Christian calendar as the "Feast of All Saints". However, many hundreds of years, the Celts had considered this night as the time of year when the past, present and future became one. It was the powerful pagan festival of "Samhuinn". The winter sosti-ce (samhuinn) was a time of thanksgiving for the safe return of cattle from the hills, and a ritual to ensure continuing crops for the next year. In addition, the Celtic Samhuinn was also a festival of the dead. Thus, Hallowe'en became a mystical time when both good and evil were present. Sir Walter Scott captured the sentiment:

*And first gaed by the black, black steed, And then gaed by the brown,
But fast she gript the milk-white steed, And pu'd the rider down.*

**..the turnip lantern
is carved with
ghostly faces...**

Superstition abounded. Black horses were considered bad omens while white represented the good. Of course, there were witches and fairies, and rituals to be followed to protect innocent mortals. Bonfires were common - to light the night and inhibit the witches from landing as they rode the skies on black steeds.

Many of the original rituals can still be recognized today. A main theme is "guising", or dressing up in a costume, which is related to the masked men of Druidic times who disguised themselves to "hide" from the spirits which roamed during this particular night.

Wha wad ken?

First to answer all three wins a Society flag pin.

1. Who was John Knox?
2. What's the longest river in Scotland?
3. What happened in 1707 that changed Scotland forever?

All replies to Jim McLaren:

Phone: (314) 532 5986

Fast e-mail: JamesM66@aol.com

Snail mail: 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Court,
Chesterfield, MO 63017.

Congratulations to Jim Duffy for being the first with the correct answers:

1. Ramsay McDonald, born 1886 in Lossiemouth: 1st Labour Prime Minister.
2. Movie: "Rob Roy" or "Braveheart".
3. Members paid by 1st meeting: 15%.

Looking forward to hearing from you: answers or interesting questions welcome.

In Scotland, the turnip lantern (substitute pumpkin here) is carved with ghostly faces which arises from the ritual of placing skulls around the bonfire to keep evil demons away.

"Dookin" for apples is also a common practice. Some say this comes from the Celtic "Ordeal by Water" (the apples being in a tub of water) signifying the passage of the soul. Others say the Romans added this to the festival to honor the goddess of fruit, Ponomia, who was symbolized by the apple.

In the U.S., October 31st was originally a harvest festival celebration. In the 1800's, the large number of immigrants from Scotland and Ireland brought with them the customs of Halloween. Until the turn of the century, Halloween was known as "Mischief Night" in many parts of America.

It's a remarkable sight to watch the children today, as they enjoy the event and collect candy for coming winter food-supply. Do you think they know the rituals are over 2000 years old?

Trick or Treat....

CALEDONIA CORNER

Just for the kids. Well, we won't check your age! So, go ahead try it....

E Y W L F N Q C H I E F J Y R
 G L W S E P I P G A B K A E T
 J E A B L A L Z R E D R O B T
 Y D S D N M V I U D B I B U W
 H R H K E P E Q B D K K X J P
 O M D G D L O Y N E D C E P B
 F W I D T A K A I L R I Z C T
 D Q L S S N L I D R I T Z M N
 W L I F W T X E E F A L O K X
 E H E J O R R I R M L E S N M
 T A C C E T V E M E P C I A M
 Z J S B I E R W W O H C O L B
 C N A T R A T W A S N F D C Y
 G C F S T Q Q X F D Q C K G Q

FIND:

Alba
 Bagpipes
 Border
 Caber
 Ceilidh
 Cetic
 Chief
 Clan
 Edinburgh
 Laird
 Liberton
 Loch
 Meikledale
 Reiver
 Scotland
 Tartan

*...how many of
 the words can
 you find in the
 matrix...*

The juvenile division of the World Pipe Band Championship held its finals in Glasgow last August. Six Scottish, one Canadian and one American band participated. The winners? The 28 members of the St. Thomas Episcopal Bagpipe and Drum Band, from Houston, Texas. Well done!

Porridge (cooked oatmeal) should be thick and wholesome, not thin like gruel! In the proper state it has remarkable abilities to combat hunger. Today, porridge is usually eaten for breakfast, with milk added. Traditionally, crofters in the Highland would make a large pot at the beginning of the week. Once it had cooled, it could be cut into slices. Each day, the crofter would then place a slice in his pocket for lunch! Not recommended for "brown-bags"!

Knock knock! Who's there? Alba...

Alba who? Alba seeing you (in Scotland)!

Knock knock! Who's there? Thistle...

Thistle who? Thistle be my last knock knock joke!

TOASTS & THINGS

Hot Toddy!

Place a teaspoon-full of sugar and a teaspoon-full of scottish heather honey in a warm glass. Add a measure (preferably large) of scotch whisky and top up with boiling water. Stir - traditionally with a silver spoon. A "hot toddy" is the widely accepted cure for the common cold. Cough, cough....

**... good news: we're back!
and the other news:
The dues are due....**

Ever wonder why there's a Scottish beer called Indian Pale Ale (IPA)? The original recipe was created to make a beer which could withstand shipment around the old "British Empire"!

Brewing companies have come and gone over the years, and today there are two major International conglomerates in Scotland:

Scottish & Newcastle Group

Tennent Caledonian Group

The smaller "special beer" breweries include:

Belhaven Brewery, Dunbar

Caledonian Brewery, Edinburgh

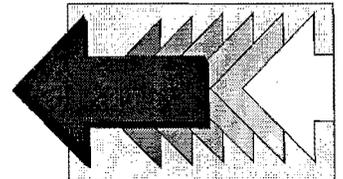
Rose Street Brewery, Edinburgh

Firkin Brewery, Edinburgh

Membership is important to sustain our Society, and allow a quality program each year.

It's time to pay your dues.

(For those not yet paid)



Please try to find someone who may enjoy becoming a member, and encourage them to join, or come along and find out what we have to offer. Enquiries to: Peter Geery, (314) 227 2785.

Thank you for your participation and help...

Hope you all enjoyed reading our newsletter, the Thistle Times.

**You all made
a difference...**

Comments, and new material to the Editor:

*Jim McLaren, 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Court, Chesterfield, MO 63017
or call (314) 532-5986, or e-mail: JamesM66@aol.com.*

Many thanks to those who contributed some excellent material, it all helps!

Any volunteers to write? A page or less!