

SCOTTISH ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS



PRESIDENT'S EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

Our St. Andrew's Day celebration was fantastic night, of informal dancing, feet thumping music, Dance Caledonia, and the occasional "auld" song to enhance the patriotic atmosphere. We had 70 adults and 11 kids participating, and as Alex Sutherland led the assembled attendees in "Flower of Scotland" and "Auld Lang Syne" to end the evening, there wisna' a sole that didna' ken they'd had a grand evening. We even had a couple of visitors from Scotland, sporting their Scottish Claymores shirts (recall the Thistle Times mentioned this Scottish American Football team), and they told me that they had a great time — just like a "guid night" in Scotland, and beyond all expectations of what might go on in St. Louis.

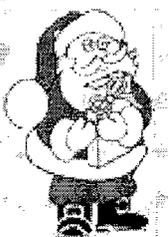


Well, as I said at the meeting, we go for quality rather than quantity, and everyone who came had a quality time. The issue we face as a Society is that we planned and catered for a larger participation — we needed another 35 people just to break even on renting a hall, and providing snacks, etc. Is that bad planning or poor participation? Well, that's a long debate and I'll be happy to take that up with anyone who wants to help out. What I do know is that the people who give their time to organize these events work very hard to make sure that it's enjoyable for those who do attend.

Our next event will be the Christmas Party, which is focused on family activities. In January, we have our largest event in the "Burns Dinner". Denise Duffy and I have just met with the complete new management at the Adams Mark, and been assured that they want our night to go as well as we do. It's the best show in the Mid-West, so plan on bringing some friends also: y'all enjoy it.

Aw ra' best, Jim McLaren

Happy Holidays



Merry Christmas



an' a Guid New Year.

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Event

December 16th, 6:30pm: Christmas Party (details below)

At Country Day/MI School, Old Warson Rd.

We will have the Madrigal Singers, and have received confirmation that Santa will be able to attend along with his sack full of goodies!

Note the time is 6:30pm. **Please call Kathleen Parle [314 537 9463] with kids names, gender and ages so that we can make the appropriate communications with the important person in red, regarding the presents.**

Soft drinks and a main dish will be provided. We ask that you bring along a dish (for 8 people) according to your last name:

A to G... Vegetables

H to N... Desserts

O to Z... Salads



the program for the rest of the year is shaping up:

January 25th: Burns Dinner, Adams Mark Hotel

We will be sending a reservation form with a special edition of the Thistle Times in early January: but please mark your schedules now, and invite some friends. This will be a grand “not-to-be-missed” evening — among the best entertainment events in the Mid-West.

February: Historical and contemporary clothing. Country Day/Mary Institute School.

March: Open. We welcome any ideas and suggestions.

April: Annual Ceilidh (details to be announced)

May: Picnic & Scottish BBQ

June: Pool Party & Games

**We welcome
Ideas, Volunteers
Contact
Marilyn Geery
Tel: 314 227 2785**



here's always a lot going on at this time of year. However, you might want to relax with a stroll round the Christmas trees under the Arch. Several countries decorate their own trees in a collection which is called “Christmas around the World”. The DBE and the St Andrew Society will be decorating trees to represent Great Britain.

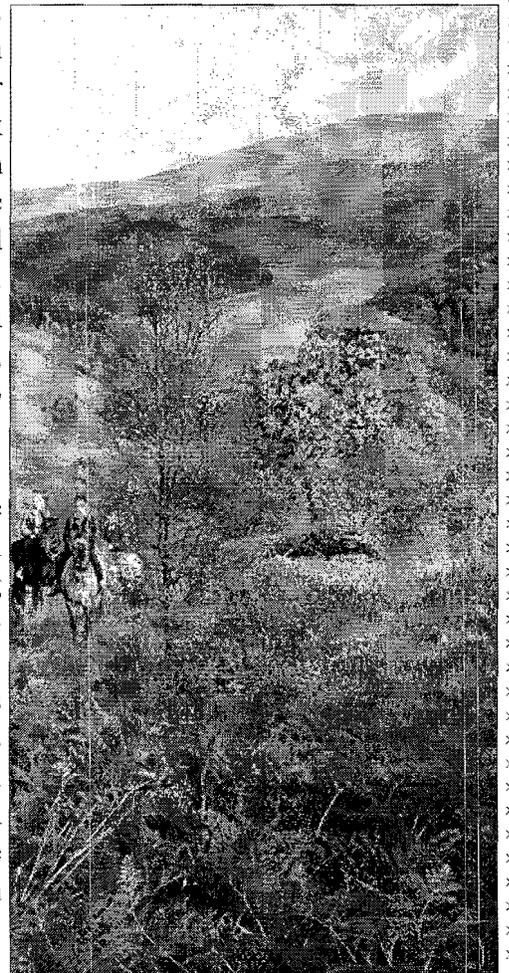
O' Rowan Tree...

A beautiful member of the Rosaceae, *Sorbus aucuparia*, is probably better known to you as the Rowan tree. Rowan comes from the Gaelic, red one. In England and the U.S. it is often known as the Mountain Ash. Close relatives are known as Whitebeam trees, and more distant relatives include the apple tree and Cotoneaster. A common feature is the mass of scented, creamy-white flowers and abundant orange-red berries. The Rowan is seldom a large tree and often grows as an elegant small tree or woody shrub among pines, birches, and hazels. It can be found in gardens, along the sides of burns, in valleys, out on the moors, and clinging tenaciously to rocky crags up in the Scottish mountains.

The Rowan tree grows throughout Scotland from the Shetlands to the southern border, and pollen records indicate that it has been on the Hebrides for over 8000 years. Little wonder then, that the Rowan has played a significant role in Celtic folklore. Perhaps because Rowan timber was not abundant, or due to the dark heart-wood with lighter outer wood (the trunk typically has a small section of fine-grained wood), it has been endowed with various magical properties. Homesteads would have a Rowan tree near them to ward off witches, and the wood was used in household objects to bring good luck and guard against evil. Rowan twigs were also used to protect sheep and cattle from ill-health. During the ancient Celtic festival of Beltane (May 1st), Rowan was used to decorate the house, and in several rituals to ensure a prosperous summer.

The Rowan tree grows easily from seed, which is spread by birds. The berries are very attractive and nutritious, and are a major source of sustenance for the migrating flocks which come to Scotland from Scandinavia. Members of the thrush family (Fieldfares, Ring Ouzels, Redwings) are especially fond of Rowan berries, and cuckoos can be found perching in Rowan trees.

Although the Rowan can be poisonous for some children, it has been used throughout history as a herbal medicine for various disorders (contains malic acid, sorbitol, and Vitamin C), and as an antidote for adder bites. The berries can be used to make Rowan jelly which goes well with traditional Scottish game. Just like the bonnie purple heather, or the famous thistle, the Rowan is an essential part of Scotland's scenery and heritage.



*By yon bonnie banks
an' by yon bonnie braes*

Rowan, bracken, heather, hazel,
birch, pine — it's all there, around
the beautiful Loch Lomond.

The monastery had a Fish and Chip Fund Raiser, and one attendee was so impressed with the haddock that he wanted to congratulate the chef.

Going up to a large man in a brown robe he asked,

"Are you the fish friar?"

"No, sir. I'm the chip monk!"

Our St Andrew's Day

A few of the fun activities at our recent St Andrew's Day celebration dance:



There was Dance Caledonia



There was dancing for all



Dancing on the floor



Getting ready for the "wave"
in the bleachers.



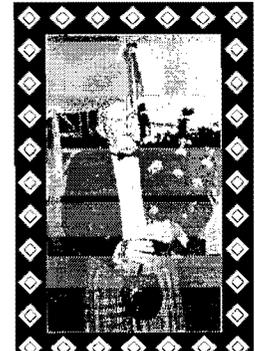
Dancing in the corner



Songs of hame from
our resident star



A dramatic callin' o' clans, in St Louis



And the skirl o' the pipes,
from our resident master

Caledonia Corner

It's the Holiday Season and for many of us Christmas is part of that celebration. We grew up with it and just assume that it will happen every year. Recently, I had an e-mail from someone who asked if we had Santa Claus in Scotland. Strange question? Well maybe not because the world is full of different variations on cultural themes. So what is Christmas?

The Romans celebrated Christmas around the 4th century, and it was assumed that December 25th corresponded to the birth of Jesus. Interestingly, the pagan winter solstice was around the same day, as was the celebration of the birth of the "Saviour" in the Eastern cult of Mithra. It is not clear if the early Celts had a celebration at this time since it falls between the Celtic New Year (Samhain, Nov., 1st) and the Spring festival of Imbolc (Feb., 1st). The Vikings, who visited Scotland more than a few times, brought the custom of the Yule Feast, which began around Dec. 25th. By the 16th century, the celebration combined religious and secular activities and was strongly associated with the birth of Jesus Christ, and the acknowledgement of the Wise Men.

However, even in Roman times, there were disputes about excessive indulgence in what should be a religious thanksgiving. The Reformation in Scotland, led by John Knox, re-kindled these disputes and led to the separation of Christmas as a religious holiday, while Hogmanay (New Year's Day) became the wilder secular celebration, and remains so in Scotland today.

Wha wad ken?

First to answer all three wins a Society flag pin.

1. When was the St Louis St Andrew Society started?
2. What's "Hogmanay"?
3. How many active distilleries are in Scotland (nearest answer accepted)

All replies to Jim McLaren:

Phone: (314) 532 5986

Fast e-mail: mclaren@inverizon.com

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

Answers to the previous quiz:

1. Logie Baird invented TV in 1926
2. Harry Lauder sang Roamin' in the Gloamin
3. Lammas: Celtic festival of autumn

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

The giving of presents to children was originally related to another religious holiday on December 6th: St Nicholas Day (the patron saint of children). Contrary to popular belief, this was once celebrated by both Catholic and Protestant groups. Although St Nicholas is still observed in countries, such as Holland, Scotland never accepted this part of the Calvinistic culture. However, the custom was too good to disappear and evolved into our modern day Santa Claus. (Parents beware! We've had the opportunity to live in a Flemish town, and it takes the kids about a wink of an eye to figure out that St Nick comes in early December and Santa comes in late December: wow! two lots of presents!)

As for decorating the house, apparently Queen Victoria helped to bring this custom — via her husband Prince Albert who believed that German Protestant traditions should be more widely observed. And then we get to "Boxing Day" which is observed in the U.K. and Canada.

Well, that's another long story.....and we've already been through Romans, Celts, Vikings, Saxons, among others. No wonder that Christmas is such a wonderful time of year, irrespective of your religious persuasion.

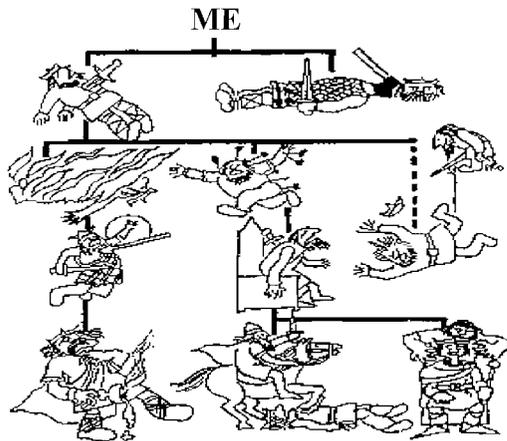
And, of course, we Scots celebrate that other grand day, so, a guid Noo' Year tae Yin an Aw.

70 ASYS & THINGS

I say it's nae wonder that we canna git hame rule! After some 700 years of political ransom, the U.K Parliament decided that it was unlikely that Scotland would crown it's own rightful King again, and decided to return the "Stone of Scone" to the people it was stolen from. The problem is that those people erupted into a raging debate about where it should be returned to! (O' bring back Wallace and The Bruce!)

Here's the players who made a pitch: Scone Palace (*Ok, it was stolen from here*), Edinburgh Castle (*stongest fortification in case someone invades and tries to steal it again*), St Giles Cathedral (*religious/spiritual center*), St. Margaret's Chapel (*consecrated ground, well that's in the Castle anyway*), Stirling Castle (*whit!*), Arbroath Abbey (*Declaration of Independence fame, need something more recent for the tourists!*), leave it where it is (*nae chance o' that, but apparently we agreed for temporary return just in case there is ever another Coronation*), Museum of Scotland (*who ever goes there, ye have tae pay real money*), Dunfermline Abbey (*na, ye already got body pairts, this is a stane*), the Arlington Pub (*that's no even a Scottish name fir a place*). Well, as you probably know, Edinburgh Castle is the new home: it can be viewed free on one day in April and on St Andrew's Day.

Ma' mither wis really ticked-off — she wanted tae have it fir her rockery next tae the white heather!



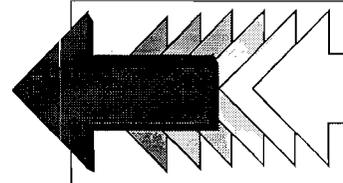
OK. I sent of for one of those "we'll tell you where you came from" type family tree sort of deals! You know, the ones that are always advertised in the Scottish magazines, and have artificial intelligence systems that can trace back through time, even before there was any written records!

Know anyone who'd like to join

Know anyone interested in joining, send us their number.

DUES & Leads To: Peter Geery, (314) 227 2785.

831 Westrun Dr., Ballwin, MO 63011



Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year....

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

Comments, and new material to the Editor:

Jim McLaren, 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Court, Chesterfield, MO 63017

or call (314) 532-5986, or e-mail: mclaren@inverizon.com.

Website address is <http://www.inverizon.com/scotlink>