

SCOTTISH ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS

President's Message

Dear Members,

We had about 530 attend our big night on the 20th and it was a great Burns Night, a spectacular celebration of our Bard, Rabbie Burns. Bill Nicoll did us all proud with his Immortal Memory speech. It was clear that Bill had spent a few hours preparing for the big Night. Thanks for your kind support, Bill. The Big Chieftan o' the puddin' race was elevated to its rightful place in the proceedings thanks to the good work of Lawrence Murray. His serious treatment of the honor



really helped to get the evening going, all be it "withoot the bl'dy Beast.." Well, what of that haggis story? I'm sure Rabbie turned in his grave in wonderment!

The toast to the Lassies by Pete Gowran was amusingly dry and the reply from Anna Swaim set a new high for next years performance. The pipe band performance was, as always, at top form and the dancers were at their normal high standard. Thanks to Dee Huebel for her professional help and sorting out the sound requirements with the Adams Mark.

Alex Beaton was outstanding. I can't believe how he kept with the audience throughout his performance. Clearly a gifted musician and a master entertainer. So many people to thank for keeping us all entertained, especially our resident celebrity, Alex Sutherland.

Thanks again to Denise Duffy and helpers for all their hard work - great job! Finally, I would like to sincerely thank you all for supporting the event, despite the cold and snowy conditions.

The Ceilidh's coming up in April, so better start prak-ti-sing!

Aw-ra-best, Keith

Back in the early days...

In 1297, Scotland was governed by an English churchman called Hugh de Cressingham. He was behind many a murderous deed, and a large number of people joined the Scots resistance out of hatred of his actions. It was this "rabble" (and Wallace) that de Cressingham led the English army against, in what is now known as the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

The Scots had small shields, scant armour, dirks and some Lochaber axes. The English were armed to the hilt, and well organized in their ranks. Yet the Scots prevailed, and the body of de Cressingham was cut up into hundreds of pieces, and sent to friends and relatives all over Scotland.

inside...

Events Program

Eilean Donan castle

Caledonia Corner

Toasts & Things

Other really good stuff!

Events Program. Come along and enjoy...

The Burns Dinner at the Adams Mark Hotel was a smashing success - what a grand night despite the fact that the haggis ran away! We had about 520 attendees, not counting the crowd who gathered outside to have a "look". We'd like to have your feedback on the night: see attached survey.

NEXT



EVENT

February 26th, 7:00pm: Country Day Mary Institute. (Warson Road)

Alex Sutherland with his highly entertaining Scottish Music night.

March 25th, 7:00pm: Country Day Mary Insitute.

Featuring Diane McCullough in a grand night of Scottish song and verse.

It was a busy night at the Adams Mark, and you may have missed your chance to buy this magnificent calendar depicting scenes from Burns' work.

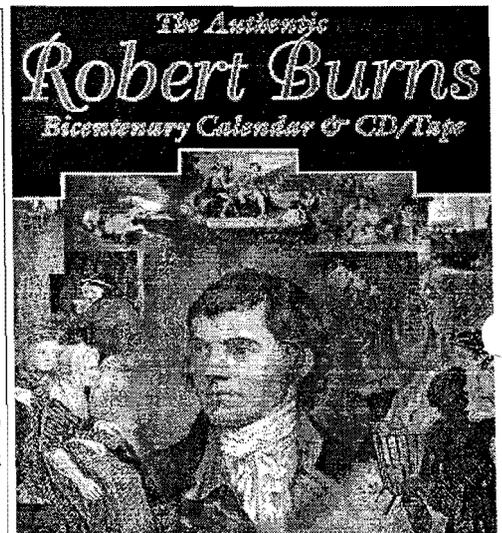
Denise Duffy, and her various helpers, are working very hard to create another enjoyable year for all. More help is welcome! Call Denise: 532 7587

The calendar has 18 stunning pictorial scenes, reproduced from original watercolors... *Tam O' Shanter, The Jolly Beggars, Coming thro the Rye, Auld Lang Syne*.....

Included in this bargain is a digital recording of 18 of the Bard's most popular songs, recorded by well-known Scottish artists.

You choose: CD or tape.

Don't miss your opportunity to acquire this set of unique works commemorating Robert Burns.



It's a bargain! Send \$25 plus postage (\$3 for 1st class, \$2.31 for other) per set, with your name and address, to Anne McLaren, 2214 Stoneridge Terr Ct, Chesterfield MO 63017. Make checks out to St Andrew Society. Or you can call to order and collect at our next meeting. Tel: 314-532-5986. Remeber to choose CD or tape.

Out and about....

April 19th: Natalie MacMaster & Brian MacNeil (world class fiddlers), at the COCA, Trinity Ave., U. City. Tickets from Webster Records, or Music Folk, in Webster Groves for \$13.50, or \$16 at the door. Starts 8:00pm.

April 27th: St Andrew Soc. Annual Ceilidh. Mark your calendars. Details later.
Every Wednesday night: Country Dance at the Focal Point. Starts 7:30pm.

A big welcome to all our new members, who signed-up during the Burns Dinner. We don't eat quite so well at every function, but we do have fun. and look forward to your participation. Ideas for events, or stories for the newlett are always welcome. It's great to have you in the Society.

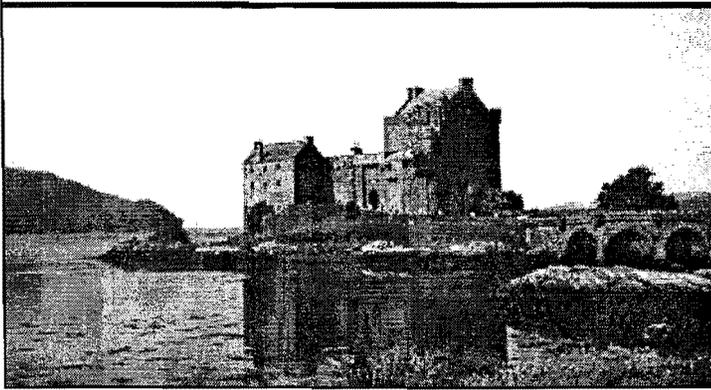
Eilean Donan Castle

Eilean Donan Castle is perhaps the most photographed castle in the world, with the exception of Edinburgh Castle. It's the romantic setting combined with a dream-like atmosphere that creates a particular, almost hypnotic, quality. Standing sentinel on its rocky promontory at the meeting point of the sea-lochs, Loch Long, Loch Duich, and Loch Alsh, the castle was a formidable defensive fortress. Excavations have shown that, even before recorded history, there was a Pictish fort on this site. St. Donan (AD 618) lived on this tiny island (the name means the island of Donan) as a religious hermit. A fortified stronghold was known to exist on the site in the early 1200's, and legend has it that Robert the Bruce was given refuge here in the 14th century.

The MacRaes, who formed the bodyguard of the Chief of Kintail, first became Constables of the Castle in 1509.

Eilean Donan Castle.

From an original by Jane and Ralph Reid.



The clan controlled the surrounding area and was involved in many skirmishes. As one might expect, from having such a fortress, they became masters of surviving sieges. One such episode is reported to have taken place in 1539: Donald Gorm, Lord of the Isles, led 400 warriors in an attack on the MacRaes. However, using the fortress's position to advantage, Duncan MacRae withstood the assault, and successfully defended the

castle. It is said that it was with his last arrow, fired from the top of the solid walls, that Duncan fatally wounded Donald Gorm. Today, the Clan MacRae remain the Constables of the magnificent Eilean Donan Castle.

There is a reputedly very interesting book entitled "*A Dance Called America*" (by James Hunter, Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh. ISBN 1-85158-639-3), which describes the lives of Scots who were forced to leave their homeland and emigrated to the US or Canada. It's a story of endurance, of courage, and of vision - from Cape Breton to the Rockies, from the swamps of the Carolinas to the great windswept plains of Canada. Apparently, Hunter has captured the emotional atmosphere as these pioneer farmers and craftsmen tried, in vain, to recreate the homeland they remembered so well. He describes the painful adjustments which had to be made to adapt to the sheer magnitude of North America, and the vast extremes of climate and environments. Yet, as the stories develop then so does a great feeling of pride in the success of these hardy people. They were the bloodline of the modern Scottish-Americans, and from those humble beginnings.... fabulous inventions, great corporations, new technology, the foundation for a great society. It's a story worthy of Hollywood, a la "Braveheart". *A Dance Called America was originally a dance about the Highland Clearances.* (PS. I don't have my own copy yet, so can't lend it out!).

CALEDONIA CORNER

Tam O' Shanter is the #1 poem in Scotland, according to a recent poll (the one Bill Nicoll mentioned during his super Immortal Memory Address). Burns was clearly hailed as Scotland's favourite poet, even although he's been dead for 200 years. The SoS survey results were:

1. Tam O' Shanter
2. The Little White Rose (by Hugh MacDiarmid)
3. A Man's a Man for A' That
4. Ae Fond Kiss
5. Bonnie Broukit Bairn (by Hugh MacDiarmid)
6. To a Mouse
7. Holy Willie's Prayer
8. Scots Wha Hae
9. Hallaig (by Sorley Maclean)
10. To a Mountain Daisy

**..Colin the conifer
took a wee
holiday...**

You'll never believe it, but it's true!

The entrance to the upmarket registry office in Park Circus, Glasgow, is adorned by two equally upmarket conifers in matching tubs. Sandy Martin, of Branching Out, the firm

which supplies and maintains the plants for the wedding suites, received a call in December to say that one of the tubs had gone missing and could he order a replacement. But, just after Christmas and before the replacement tree was delivered, the original conifer was returned with a covering letter.

"From all of us who have had the pleasure of Colin the Conifer's company over this Yuletide period, we would like to thank you for allowing him to stay with us," wrote the conifer thief.

"During the short time that we have known him he has given us great pleasure and we have grown to love him as our own."

But now that Christmas is over we have noticed that Colin is pining for his family and friends and the job he clearly loves of standing outside the marriage suites. We hereby return Colin the conifer to his rightful place. Please look after him!"

It can only happen in Scotland!

Speed bonnie boat like a bird on the wing,

Over the sea to Skye.

There's a cloud coming down and I've things on the line,

How will they ever get dry.....

Traditional

Wha wad ken?

First to answer all three wins a Society flag pin.

1. What's Drambuie?
2. What's the legend of the Saltire?
3. How many underground stations are there in Glasgow? (closest # counts).

All replies to Jim McLaren:

Phone: (314) 532 5986

Fast e-mail: JamesM66@aol.com

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

Congratulations to Winnie Shirreff who had all three correct, and at great speed.

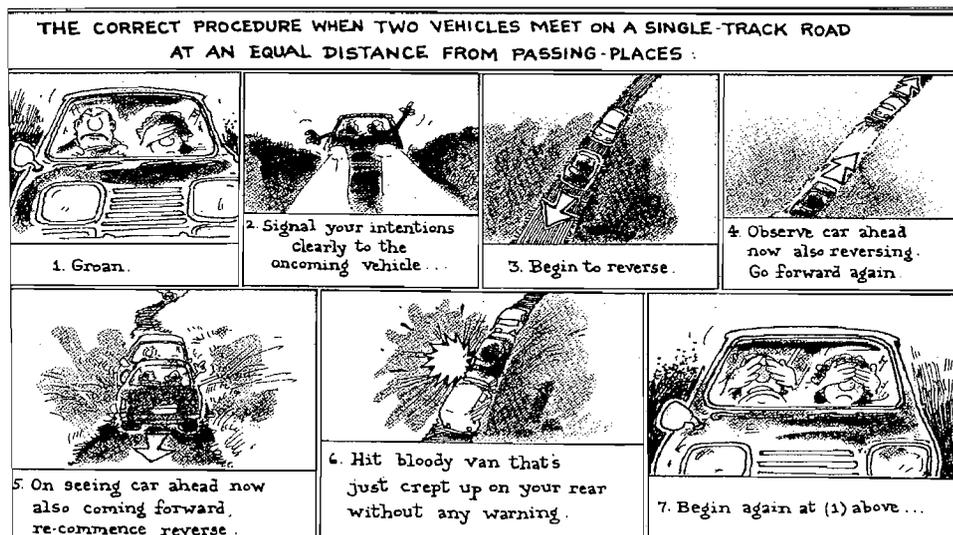
1. Flora McDonald saved Bonnie Prince Charlie by hiding him on Skye.
2. Half an a half: a beer and a whisky.
3. Famous ships were built in Clydeside.

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

CALEDONIA CORNER

Aberdeen and the North-East Grampian region doesn't feature a lot in the Thistle Times. There really aren't many stories nor much news that travels beyond the confines of that unique region. Yet anyone who has visited the area will agree that the combination of sea-side and mountains, agriculture and moorland, quiet country towns with world renowned products (e.g. Speyside whisky, Aberdeen Angus beef), is remarkable. The following article is excerpted from a tourist promotional piece, and captures the picture..... Cocooned for centuries beyond the Grampian Mountains, this part of North-East Scotland developed its own unique personality and culture. Here are coastlines for connoisseurs, with rugged cliffs and beaches only the locals know, prosperous farmland famous for quality cattle, and more than a hint of wildness on the upland moors. Lonely hill-passes thread through the Grampian Highlands, the haunt of red deer and the delight of hardy hillwalkers. And in river valleys, notably the Spey, below the hills and amongst the woodlands and pasture, malt whisky distilleries lie naturally in the rich landscape. Scots are keen gardeners and nowhere is this pleasure in flowers seen to better effect than in Aberdeen, with beautiful displays that belie the

city's northerly latitude. Amongst the city's many historic buildings is Britain's most northerly university, (founded in 1494), and the Brig O' Balgownie (built in 1320) which is still open for foot traffic. Aberdeen is also the gateway to Royal Deeside, the lovely valley of the River Dee with the royal holiday residence of Balmoral Castle.



Elgin is the second-largest town in the North-East, with a beautiful, though ruined, Cathedral, and museum, which tells the local story of the oldest dinosaurs in Britain. Fochabers to the east has an exceptional range of antique shops, while nearby Buckie displays its fishing heritage. Around Aberdeen, there are many picturesque coastal towns and villages, including the fishing ports of Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The farming heritage of the rolling coastal plain can be discovered in that narrow strip between the North Sea and the Grampians.

There are also many attractions to the north of the River Dee, and west into the mountains. The Cockbridge to Tomintoul road traverses the wild heathery hills of the Grampians before dropping to the valley of the River Spey in Moray. Tomintoul is a part of the area's unique malt whisky trail: a scenic and well-signposted (people tend to get lost by the end of the trail!) route round some of the most delectable flavours of Scotland. The area has a wonderful lyrical dialect as in ... *Phit like min? Phar ye goin?*

TOASTS & THINGS

On October 16th, 1939, after searching the North Sea for a week, the Luftwaffe found the battlecruiser *Hood*, and the cruisers, *Edinburgh* and *Southampton*, racing up the Forth towards the safety of Rosyth. A squadron of Junkers 88s, with their 1000 pound bombs, screamed down on the warships. *Edinburgh* had but one three-inch anti-aircraft gun and a few Lewis machine-guns on top of Portobello Power Station. The Junkers saw some flak, but hardly enough to deter them from the bombing runs. The *Edinburgh* was hit but not seriously enough to prevent defensive action supported by the guns from the *Hood* and other ships in the Forth. Then, up over the Forth Bridge came the City of Edinburgh Squadron 603, joined by City of Glasgow Squadron 602. The Luftwaffe had made a critical mistake in believing that these Scottish squadrons consisted of old Gloster Gladiators, which would have been too slow for the Junkers 88s. Squadron 603 had just taken command of new Spitfires, and these lived up to the motto "Gin ye Daur!" That battle over the Forth was the first action for Spitfires in Scotland, but soon there were some names to remember: Stevens, Johnstone, Denholm...as the Luftwaffe gained a new respect for the Scottish defenses.

"An that's whit we use fur wringin in the New Year!"

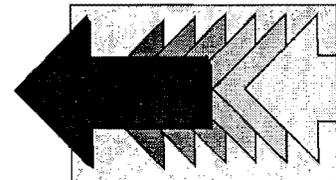
"My definition of an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger!"

Billy Connolly



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 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: JamesM66@aol.com.

Many thanks to those who contributed all the excellent material, it does help!