

# HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

[www.caledonians.com](http://www.caledonians.com)

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## NEXT GATHERING

Our next gathering is **Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**, at 2:00 p.m. We will meet at Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125. For those taking the freeway north, use the exit at NE 130<sup>th</sup> St in Seattle, turn left across the freeway, and turn right at the first light (1<sup>st</sup> Ave. NE.) The church is one block north, on the left.

The gathering will be hybrid: in-person and on Zoom. The link for those who attend on Zoom is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjlxQT09>

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## APRIL PROGRAM

The official western Washington Tartan Day event in Olympia has been scheduled a week later than usual and will coincide with our Caledonian gathering day, making it difficult for people to attend both. President Tom Lamb will instead provide a program celebrating Tartan Day. He will discuss and provide examples of Scottish music and folk songs as well.

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## SCOTTISH MOVIE NIGHT

Our April Scottish Movie Night will be on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. Again, it will start at 6:00 p.m. We will enjoy "The Swordsman", a 1948 American swashbuckler film of two young people from feuding Scottish clans falling in love. True to its name, there will be a sword fight. Being a movie produced by Columbia Pictures, the accents aren't

particularly Scottish, making it a bit easier for those of us not born in Scotland to understand.

These movie nights have been very popular, and we urge more Caledonians to join us. The Zoom link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjlxQT09>

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## SUNSHINE REPORT

If you know of a Caledonian who would be cheered by a card, let Bonnie Munro know. She can be reached by phone at 425-806-3734.

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## Recap of the March Caledonian Gathering



Ten people in person and eight on line enjoyed a program of Irish music put on by Land of Erin. Aki Namioka played two different kinds of flute and Dominic Acetulli played viola in charming duets.

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## Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

### APRIL

**14 Tartan Day Washington**, Sunday, 11:00am, North steps of the Capitol Bldg, Lunch afterward at Tugboat Annie's Restaurant. More info: Debbie Ross, 253-293-2137

**14 Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering**, 2:00pm, Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. NE., Seattle, WA <https://caledonians.org> 206-714-2601

**14 Dick Hensold & Patsy O'Brian Concert – Northumbrian piping and Guitar. 3pm.** Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon. \$30. 360-416-4934 <https://www.celticarts.org>

**21 Breabach Concert.** 7:30pm, \$24-\$39. Lincoln Theatre, 712 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Mount Vernon, WA. <https://www.celticarts.org/event/breabach-concert>

**27 Kalos Concert.** 7:30pm, \$30. Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon. 360-416-4934 <https://www.celticarts.org>

**28 Caledonian Scottish Movie Night** 6pm on Zoom



Although Tartan Day (ironically) is not a big deal in Scotland itself, Tartan Day has gained momentum in Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand, as an opportunity for those with Scottish ancestry to show pride in their heritage.

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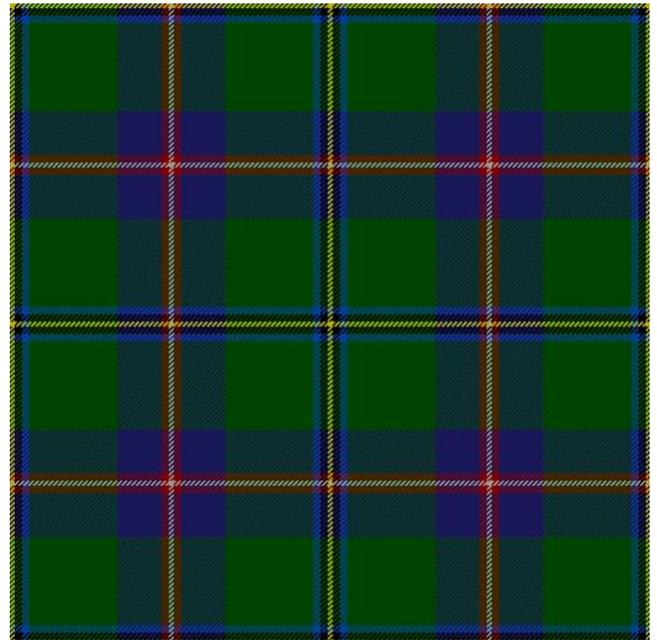
### TARTAN DAY WASHINGTON 2024

The celebration of Tartan Day will be a week plus a day later this year on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00am on the north steps of the Capitol Building (where it is always held) in Olympia. Debbie Ross of Clan Ross is taking the lead again. She said they had to change the date due to difficulties with scheduling the participants. For more information, contact Debbie at 253-293-2137.

### WHAT IS TARTAN DAY?

Tartan Day is an annual celebration of Scottish culture that (usually) takes place on April 6, the date on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320. Regarded as Scotland's most iconic document, this declaration was a letter sent to the Pope by Scottish barons asking that he recognize Scotland's independence and right to defend itself when unjustly attacked. Clan chiefs "signed" the letter by fixing their clan seals in wax to the letter.

### WASHINGTON STATE TARTAN



The Washington state tartan was designed by Margaret McLeod van Nus and Frank Cannonito in 1988 to commemorate the Washington centennial celebration. It consists of a green background with blue,

white, yellow, red, and black stripes. The green symbolizes rich forests; blue the lakes, rivers, and ocean; white the snow-capped mountains; red the apple and cherry crops; yellow the wheat and grain crops; and black the eruption of Mount St. Helens.

The tartan was registered with the Scottish Tartans Society after its adoption by the state legislature in 1991.

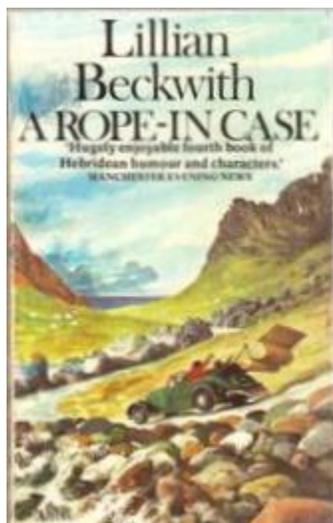
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## Author and Book Recommendation from Diana Smith

I am reading (and re-reading) some lovely little books by Lillian Beckwith that I think anyone interested in Scottish culture would enjoy. I first discovered this author in the gift shop of St. Andrews' Wardlaw Museum, when I was attracted by the cover and picked up a book of hers out of curiosity. Lillian Beckwith was an English writer who lived on the Isle of Skye, and later ran her own croft on Soay. She wrote short stories and vignettes about the people and the culture there in the 1960s and 1970s. Her writing is very good and she captures the minute details of the lives of the crofters and fishermen and women who made a living off the land during those years. The characters in the books are well described, and the reader can imagine them as real, and because she incorporates the rhythm of their speech and the occasional word in Gaelic, you get an intimate feel for these strong and resourceful people. There are some real laugh-out-loud moments, too! I recently found four of her books at our local library's sidewalk sale and grabbed them up before anyone else had a chance at them. I enjoy her

writing so much that I am now settling down in the evenings and immersing myself in the society of Skye.

The books are a little hard to find, but I did a search and EBay has quite a few of them, as do ThriftBooks and Alibris. Amazon does not. I've just finished *Beautiful, Just!* (which I recommend). *A Rope--In Case* and *The Hills*



*Is Lonely* are two others I've quite enjoyed. I'm looking forward now to reading the others I bought at the sale. So, if you're looking for a fun read that provides a good glimpse of this little Scottish society, I recommend Lillian Beckwith's books.

## Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

Information based on articles in *The Scottish Banner*, *The Scotsman newspaper* & using *Wikipedia* and various other websites pertaining to the topics for supplemental information.

### Historic Baby Names in Scotland

In a new analysis by National Records of Scotland, statisticians looked back through all the names for babies used since 1935 and charted the top 100 names in each year.

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NRS Statistician Maria Kaye-Bardgett said “Over time we see an increase in the variety of names being used, with stars from the silver screen having an impact. For example, Marilyn rose to popularity in 1946 and peaked in 1953 when Marilyn Monroe starred in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *How to Marry a Millionaire*. The name Audrey appeared to get a boost from Audrey Hepburn’s career, rising to reach a peak of 36<sup>th</sup> in 1963 before dropping out of the top hundred in 1976. This shows pop culture was already influential 70 years ago and continues to have an impact on what parents decide to name their children today.”

Another key finding from this report is the relative stability among boy’s names. A dozen names have stayed in the top 100 for babies born in Scotland over the last 88 years and all of them are for boys. The names Adam, Alexander, Daniel, David, James, Joseph, Matthew, Michael, Robert, Samuel, Thomas, and William are long-term favourites that have stood the test of time. The only girl’s name that came close to this sustained popularity was Elizabeth, which was in the top 100 every year except 2018 and 2021. This perhaps reflected the long reign of Elizabeth II.

Many parents seem to choose comeback names, names that were popular in decades gone by. Names like Louis, Finlay and Emily are all

popular again, having fallen out of the top 100 in previous decades.

One name that has bounced back recently is Flora, which returned to the top 100 after a 78-year absence. It was previously in the top 100 from 1935 to 1943. Its return could be a result of the renewed interest in the Jacobite era with the hugely successful *Outlander* TV series.

The latest statistics also included names that were one-offs—names that made the top 100 for one year only. For instance, this category included the name Jan for boys in 1946. The vast majority of baby boys called Jan had a father who was in the Polish military. Up to 200,000 Polish soldiers, sailors and airmen trained in Scotland between 1940 and 1947. Many Polish people were interned, imprisoned, or conscripted during the war, but thousands escaped and were sent to Scotland to train. Another one-off was Kylie in 1988, when there were 104 baby girls given the name in the year Kyle Minogue left *Neighbors* to launch her music career.

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## Vatersay Island



Vatersay Island is the southernmost and westernmost inhabited island in the Outer Hebrides with a population of around 90 permanent residents. It is located south of

Barra, its nearest inhabited island neighbor, and is best known for its white-sand beaches. Only 3 miles long and 3.5 miles wide in the larger northern part, the island is made up of two rocky islands connected by a sandy isthmus, called the *Meallaich*, that was formed 7,000 years ago when sea levels were lower. When the first people arrived in the Outer Hebrides before that, they would have seen two islands, not one. Both east and west sides of the isthmus are covered in a half-mile length of white sand beaches. Some



estimates of climate change suggest that by the end of the century seas will rise again and Vatersay will once more be split by the sea.

Vatersay Island is connected to Barra Island by a causeway that allows car passengers and lorries with goods to easily come and go. Until the causeway was completed in 1991, the only way to get to the island was a small passenger ferry boat through dangerous seas.

Despite its remote location, Vatersay has a lot to recommend itself to visitors. The island has



several brochs and dùns, Iron Age stone towers and stone-walled enclosures, respectively. There is also a Bronze Age

cemetery and a cairn built about 1000 BC. Wildlife includes Eurasian otters, seals, Atlantic puffins, and grey herons. Bonnie Prince Charlie's Flower (a species of beach bindweed or beach morning glory) reputedly originating from French seeds dropped by Bonnie Prince Charlie, is only found in Scotland on the islands of Eriskay and Vatersay.

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## Lost Monastery Found on Isle of Lismore

The site of a lost monastery founded by St. Moulap, who did much to promote Christianity among the Picts, has been located on the Isle of Lismore near Oban. The newly found site is now believed to have been alive with religion, jewellery making, and crafts more than 1,000 years ago. The finds include a stone building that carbon dating places between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Century and a workshop where precious metals were used. Nearby, other workers were



creating fine carvings in stone, wood, bone, and antler.

Structures revealed by geophysics included

the foundations and floor paving of an oval building around 9 metres in diameter. An area next to the oval building yielded the fragments of around 120 crucibles. Analysis by experts at the National Museum of Scotland helped determine that these were used for melting copper alloys, silver, and gold. Also recovered were broken ceramic moulds for making penannular brooches (large clothes fasteners formed as an incomplete ring).

The site is believed to have been part of an extensive trading route providing precious metals for expensive jewellery made for wealthy people, and was just as important as Iona.

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## Scotland Invented X-Rated Rap Battles

What words or behavior offends people changes over time. Today's re-runs of 20<sup>th</sup> century television classics such as "Steptoe and Son" are regularly preceded by warnings that viewers may find some of the attitudes and language used outdated and offensive. However, in fact, those classics did not use swearing or what we call foul language.

"Strong language" is a part of Scotland's culture. The F word has a long history. It once was heard in the most exalted of circles, at the royal court of



James IV himself. Truly tall, dark, and handsome, his court attracted poets, thinkers, and scientists.

One of the most talented men at James's court was the poet

William Dunbar. A graduate of St Andrews University in 1477, William may well have travelled in Europe. By 1500 he was the king's man, producing verses of courtly love, flattering poems, and bawdy verse. He wasn't shy about describing some at court as "fenyouris, flechouris, and flatteraris", or "liars, hypocrites and flatters."

James liked his court bustling and busy. His patronage included many poets, one of whom was the aristocratic Walter Kennedy. He was highly educated with a degree from Glasgow. He could very well have written and spoken Gaelic, a

language he would have shared with James IV, the last king of Scotland to speak Gaelic.

Poetry then was far more dynamic. As much of it was written to be performed, Dunbar and Kennedy often did verbal battle in a Flyting, an act of poetic bravado. The rules for the Flyte were simple. A moderator was appointed, one poet fired off a short opening challenge, the other hammered back, and then they took turns insulting each other. The audience got to choose who won. Today's youth would call this a rap battle. The Scots got there first.

The two poets showed off their learning and dazzle with the command of ancient legends and biblical allusions. They used alliteration, such as "trumpou, traitour, tyran intemperate". They wielded their skills in verse, like fencers, and most importantly, they were unbelievably offensive about each other. The F word showed up spelled with two letter k's, but it was flung out repeatedly. This all happened before a delighted court, who saw no offense in any of these words.

This is a nearly forgotten, but peculiarly Scottish, artform. It reminds us that the goalposts can change for what people think is offensive language. Even kings swore once.



A fellowship founded in Seattle in 1902 to foster a love of Scotland, her people, and her heritage.

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