



Volume 119 Issue 1 January 2021

NEXT GATHERING

Members of Caledonian & St. Andrew's Society will continue to gather using the electronic app Zoom for the next several months, due to the current health crisis and prohibitions on large gatherings of people.

Our next gathering is Sunday, January 10th, at 2:00pm. An e-mailed link will be sent to everyone who has computer access a few days in advance of this date. For those of you getting this notice by e-mail you can join by clicking on this link or copying and pasting this address into your browser:

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

You can listen by phone by calling 1-253-215-8782 and entering the meeting ID: 713 418 301 and then the passcode: 004905. For those without a camera on your computer, you can do both, letting you see everyone on the computer and connecting with people on your phone.

JANUARY PROGRAM

Entertainment for the January 10th gathering will be Rich Hill, a Gaelic teacher. He will provide a program of poetry and songs by Robert Burns for our regular Sunday afternoon Caledonian gathering. Rich has 25 years of experience teaching Gaelic. There will be an opportunity to sing a few songs along with him.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Plan ahead to join us each month for gatherings on Zoom.

January 24: Virtual Robert Burns Supper

While gathering for an actual Robert Burns Dinner to enjoy platefuls of haggis, neaps, and tatties, is not possible at this time, Caledonians will be able to gather on Zoom with others in the Seattle area to pipe in the haggis and enjoy the poetry and songs of the bard at this special event. The usual toasts and a video of Burns celebrations around the world will bring fond memories. The Zoom link for this event is

<https://zoom.us/j/97020240516?pwd=amRsWUVINVdQMUVLWlJ0UXdxS2NoQT09>

February 14: Picts, Scots, and Vikings

Tom Lamb will give an illustrated talk about the various ethnic groups that lived in historic Scotland.

FACEBOOK

The Caledonians have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/seattlecaledonians/?ref=bookmarks>

Diana Smith frequently posts interesting articles and notices, so check back often.

SUNSHINE REPORT

Bonnie reminds people that she does not have e-mail, so please call her when you have information about Caledonians who are ill or passed away. Her phone is 425-806-3734.

Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

At this time, we do not know of any Scottish events scheduled for our area, except our own online ones. Many groups and Scottish Highland Games that cancelled in 2020 are hopeful for 2021.

Recap of the December Caledonian Gathering



Playing from his home in front of a fireplace decorated for Christmas, long-time favorite Ryan McKasson was joined by his wife, Isla, and daughters Brooke and Bronwyn, for the Caledonian gathering on Sunday, December 13th on Zoom. His variously talented family played cello, guitar, tambourine, and violin. After the concert, they showed us around their music room where instead of pictures, they have pegs on the walls for all the instruments to be stored and displayed, readily to hand for playing.

Reminder – It's time to Renew Your Annual Membership for 2021

Membership dues are what allow the Caledonians to book the fabulous fiddlers, singers, harpists, and bagpipers who have entertained us so well during 2020 while we couldn't meet in person and instead gathered using the Zoom app. The coronavirus pandemic has devastated music performers all over the world. Many who depended on venues at Scottish highland games and Celtic festivals for their living have found their concerts canceled and no future bookings possible. They have been amazingly receptive to our pleas for entertainment using Zoom. Please help us continue enjoying Scottish and Celtic performers from all around the USA and Scotland in 2021.

Dues are \$35 for individuals and \$45 for couples/families. Checks should be made out to the **Caledonian & St. Andrew's Society of Seattle** and marked for **2021 Membership**.

We are creating a membership directory again after a number of years without one, so **please include your address, phone number(s), and e-mail address(es)** when you send your check.

A number of members have already sent in their renewals, but if you have not done so yet, please send new and renewal memberships to:

Membership
Caledonian & St. Andrew's Society of Seattle
P.O. Box 27278
Seattle, WA 98165-1778

Membership includes receiving monthly newsletters and a copy of the new membership directory. Information about upcoming Scottish activities and concerts (when they are able to resume) and reminders about gatherings are sent to members by e-mail as well.

Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

Information based on articles in *The Scottish Banner*.

About Robert Burns

In 1786, Robert Burns was experiencing a difficult period in his life. He was still a young man and he had not yet proven himself as a writer. Because of his penurious state, he was not able to marry his sweetheart, Jean Armour. He was actively planning to immigrate to Jamaica to seek his fortune there.

Burns scrawled the following lines on the back of a Bank of Scotland guinea note. The "cursed leaf," of course, was money, the lack of which was causing him considerable grief.

*Wae worth thy pow'r, thou cursed leaf!
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief!
For lake o' thee I've lost my lass!
For lake o' thee I scrimp my glass!
I see the children of Affliction
Unaided, thro' thy curst restriction:
I've seen the Oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil;
And for thy potency vainly wish'd,
To crush the Villain in the dust:*

*For lake o' thee I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never perhaps, to greet old Scotland more!*

Fortunately, the successful publication of his first poetry collection, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, changed everything. Within a few months he was welcomed by the literati in the capital, Edinburgh, and on his way to being famous.

The banknote with the verse scrawled by his own hand is now in the collection at the National Trust of Scotland's Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway.

Red Red Rose Tartan



The Red Red Rose tartan was designed by Lochcarron of Scotland and registered in October 2019. It celebrates Chinese New Year and Burns Night, both occurring on 25 January 2021.

The Burns Check, named after Robert Burns, is woven in a new red colourway, a symbolic colour for the Chinese culture, where it represents joy and happiness.

The next time Robert Burns' birthday and Chinese New Year are conjoined will be on 25 January 2096.

Inspiring Creative Minds for Centuries

The legacy of Robert Burns is that his work is still inspiring people in ways he never could have imagined. His emotionally charged verses centered on the natural world. As a pioneer of the "Romantic movement", he inspired poets and writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Sir Walter Scott. In the modern era, Bob Dylan

keenly felt the impact of Burns' poetry and added much of it in his own artistic works.

Beyond poetry, Burns was also politically minded. His strong views on equality for everyone were enshrined in *Is There for Honest Poverty*. His words were a great source of inspiration for Frederick Douglass, the slavery abolitionist, and for Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was known to recite entire Burns poems from memory and Douglass frequently quoted Burns during his campaigns to abolish slavery.

The current generation of Scots is finding new ways to bring Robert Burns' words to life. One such Scot, Craig Black, a designer, lettering artist, and typographer, also is a muralist whose works have been displayed around the world. He was asked to create a mural celebrating Burns' cultural legacy to be displayed in Ayrshire. This mural proudly proclaiming "Cheers to the Bard" is the result of his considerable creative skills:



The Isle of Arran Distillers, namesake of the island where they are located, is an independently owned and operated company. The distillery produces the world's only officially endorsed Robert Burns Malt Whisky.

The distillery is a patron of the Robert Burns World Federation. This literary organization was founded in 1885, and it has the mission of bringing the life and works of Burns to as many people as possible.

The Isle of Arran has a history of illicit whisky stills in the time when Robert Burns worked as a customs officer in the region, and he likely was

familiar with that situation. As a representative from Arran Distillers said: “We like to think he would have enjoyed seeing our company bring legal whisky production to his region.”

The Theft of an Icon

In 1834, grave robbing was a scandal. It was the talk, and the scourge, of Scotland. The efforts of Burke and Hare to benefit medical institutions was still hot news. However, phrenology, a discredited but still followed theory, was still popular. This theory held that the bumps of the skull revealed the character of a person.

Advocates of this pseudo-science did all they could to get access to the skulls of interesting and important figures in Scotland’s history. Burns was a prime target.



When Jean Armour, wife of Robert Burns, died nearly 40 years after her husband, the ornate mausoleum at the historic St. Michael’s Kirkyard in Dumfries was to be opened so she could be laid to rest next to him. A local surgeon, Archibald Blacklock, and five co-conspirators came to the service with the intent of removing Burns’ head so that a plaster cast could be made of it. They lamented that they had not been able to do this in 1815 when Burns’ body was moved from his

burial place in a corner of the church yard under a simple slab, to the ornate Burns Mausoleum.

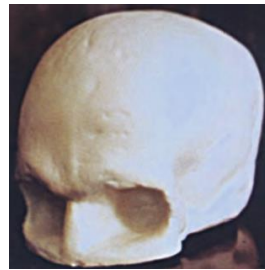
Supposedly, permission was given by Jean’s brother, Robert Armour, to access Burn’s skull for research. Archaeologist Douglas Speirs commented that “it is more likely that what took place was essentially unconsented grave-robbing tidied up in the local newspaper with a bit of fake news.”

The gang had been given the keys to the mausoleum’s gate the day before at the burial of Jean Armour. Archibald Blacklock, the surgeon ringleader, “man of science”, and phrenologist, assisted in removing the skull and the gang took it to the workshop of a local plasterer. They were joined there by senior figures from the town council and other local dignitaries, including the newspaper publisher.

At the workshop, the skull was cleaned and a mold was formed around it to make an imprint. From this mold, a plaster cast was made. Archibald Blacklock recorded that Burns’ skull was then returned and replaced in the coffin casket “precisely where we found it” in the Mausoleum.

The skull-cast was sent to the famous Edinburgh phrenologist, George Coombe. After studying the cast, Coombe published his findings, saying in part:

“No phrenologist can look upon this head, and consider the circumstances in which Burns was placed, without vivid feelings of regret. Burns must have walked the earth with a consciousness of great superiority over his associates in the station in which he was placed—of powers calculated for a far higher sphere than that which he was able to reach—”



Probably because the grave-robbing had received some sort of permission and because of the involvement and secret backing of important people, the participants in the grave robbery were never arrested

or charged.

Copies of the skull-cast were made and are still studied today.

Effects of Climate Changes in Scotland

Changes in climate are impacting Scotland's heritage. Climate scientists with Historic Environment Scotland point out how gradual changes are affecting several historic areas.

Eilean Glas Lighthouse



This lighthouse, located on the island of Scalpay in the Outer Hebrides, was first lit on 10 October 1789. It is still operated today. Coastal sites are more vulnerable to coastal erosion, more extreme weather events, and decay in the fabric of their buildings.

Pennan



Historic coastal settlements were built to be resilient in turbulent weather. Pennan in Aberdeenshire is a fishing village with a pattern of dwellings being built with their gable-end to the sea. The gable end is considered to be the strongest face of a building, making it the part of the house most resilient against incoming wind and rain. While this clever placement of buildings worked well in the past, there is

concern that it is not helpful for changes in weather extremes. Rises in sea levels threaten these historic houses built close to the coast where their owners' livelihood depended.

Culzean Castle Walled Garden



A beautifully designed and curated historic landscape, the walled garden at Culzean Castle was once one of the most innovative gardens in Scotland. Tree and plant species were carefully selected and intentionally laid out for artistic effect.

The concern now is that these carefully selected species may no longer be suitable for the area as climate changes affect the landscape and weather. When garden varieties can no longer survive due to changes in rainfall and temperatures, invasive species of plants take hold far too easily.

Easdale

Once the centre of the slate industry in Scotland, the small island of Easdale is much changed by rising coastal waters. The old quarries can clearly be seen to have now filled with water.



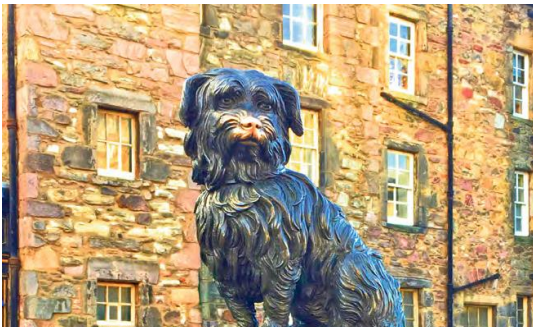
Many coastal communities were built where people could live near the industries where they found work. Despite being originally constructed to withstand harsh weather, these historic sites are vulnerable to unforeseen impacts from sea-level rise and flooding.

Links of Noltland



Archaeology sites along the coasts are highly threatened by changes wrought as the climate changes. An example is Links of Noltland, an extensive Neolithic farming settlement on Orkney. The dune system that protected this Bronze Age site for thousands of years is breaking down, exposing vulnerable archaeological discoveries. With changes to the sand dunes, processes leading to site damage are exacerbated, which speeds up loss of unique insight into how prehistoric people lived.

Did You Know?



January 14th is Greyfriars Bobby Day,

The Greyfriars Courtyard where the famous Skye Terrier watched over the grave of his owner for 14 years until his own death is a popular tourist destination. Unfortunately, visitors seem to think that it is good luck to rub the statue's

nose. As a result, his nose is the only part of the statue that is still brightly colored bronze. Due to the unfortunate persistence of people seeking luck from this unlikely source, not only is Bobby's nose shiny, but rubbing is gradually wearing away his nose. To keep his nose intact, HES encourages visitors to keep their hands off and seek luck in other venues!



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

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