

HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

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NEXT GATHERING

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

Our next gathering is **Sunday, January 23rd**, at 2:00 p.m. An e-mailed link will be sent to everyone who has computer access a few days in advance of this date. You can also 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 also participate 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

The January gathering will feature a **Celebration of Robert Burns**. Since holding an in-person Burns Dinner is still out of the question from new variations of the coronavirus, the Celebration will be at our regular January gathering on Zoom, **but on the fourth Sunday**, which is close to Robert Burns' birthday, instead of our usual second Sunday of the month gathering. Christian Skoorsmith,

Tom Lamb, and Bill McFadden are planning the celebration.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Plan ahead to join us each month for gatherings on Zoom. We will have a variety of local, national, and international talent for the program.

SUNSHINE REPORT

Bonnie Munro reports that she sent cards on behalf of the Caledonians to Gene McPhail, who is hospitalized after a stroke; Victoria Johnson, who has been hospitalized, but is now home; Phillip Junkins who is recovering at home from foot surgery; and Christine Skoorsmith, who had minor eye surgery.

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

Reminder - It's time to Renew Your Annual Membership for 2022

Membership dues are what allow the Caledonians to book the fabulous fiddlers, singers, harpists, and bagpipers who have entertained us so well during 2021 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 few concerts 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 2022.

Dues are \$45 for individuals and \$55 for couples/families. Checks should be made out to the **Caledonian & St. Andrew's Society of Seattle** and marked for 2022 Membership.

We want to keep our membership directory updated, so **please include your address, phone number(s), and e-mail address(es)** when you send your check.

We have been pleased to have three new members join in 2021. New members who paid their membership fee in the last six months are "good to go" for 2022. All others, 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 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.

New Member Drive

In order to be successful, an organization needs a steady flow of new members. Without it, the organization will die. New members provide long-term stability and growth. They help develop new ideas and establish new programs. Larger membership provides larger income, which allows for more and better programs and entertainment. It also provides better community relationships through sharing.

The Board is encouraging existing members to recruit new members. As an incentive, existing members who bring two new members in 2022 will pay no dues for a year.

Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

JANUARY

1 Jamie Laval's Celtic Christmas, 11:00, 4:00, 7:00.
Zoom. \$25 www.jamielaval.com/store

14 Celtic Arts Foundation Annual General Membership Meeting. Held on Zoom. Register at celticarts.org/celtic-events/agm2022/

23 Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering, 2:00 pm. Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjJkxQT09>

Recap of the December Caledonian Gathering



The Caledonians enjoyed a performance by Dale, Judith, and Elinor Cummings, long favorites of members. They performed from their home studio using Zoom.

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.

Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

Information based on articles in *The Scottish Banner*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *The Scotsman newspaper*, and *Wikipedia*..

A Burns' Tour in Scotland

Many in the world honor Robert Burns, the bard of Scotland. When travel to Scotland opens up again, a tour of sites special to this world famous poet will be in great demand. While there were many places associated with Burns, including a few salacious drinking establishments, for family entertainment a visit to the houses where Burns lived with his birth family and later with his wife Jean and their children will be a marvelous experience.

The beginning of the Burns story is the Burns Birth Cottage in Alloway. This simple building was built



of clay and thatch by Burns' father in 1757. Now-famous, this inauspicious cottage started as a tiny two-

room farmhouse surrounded by a seven-acre farm. Later a byre was added to one end to house the farm's livestock under the same thatched roof.

Burns was born and lived in this small cottage until he was seven years old, when his father sold the house and took up the tenancy of a 70-acre farm southeast of Alloway. Besides being a farmhouse, the cottage had a number alternate uses in subsequent years, including as a pub. The cottage has been lovingly restored and is part of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.



The road to the nearby Museum is lined with statues depicting several Burns' poems, such as this representation of "Tam O'Shanter."

Alloway also features the bridge over the River Doon



made famous as "Brig O'Doone" in more than one of Burns' poems.

Nearby is a Burns Monument



located in Memorial Gardens on a sloping site on the north bank of the River Doon. Built 1820-23 and designed by Thomas Hamilton, Jr., it was constructed in the Greek Revival form. People



thought circular buildings in the format of classical temples were associated with poetry.

Burns lived for a time in Edinburgh. Although his lodgings in Baxter's Close have since been demolished, it is known that they were next door to the Beehive Inn in Edinburgh's Grassmarket area, which he was also known to frequent.



In 1788 Burns resolved to "lead a retired, domestic life" and returned to Ayrshire. He resumed his relationship with Jean Armour, whom he married,



and took a lease on Ellisland Farm beside the river Nith in Dumfriesshire. Burns was not cut out to be a farmer by health and inclination and the farm did not

prosper. He did not live here very long. However, the farm at Ellisland is amazingly well preserved as a museum and the house in particular is well worth a visit. It has an astonishing kitchen that is used to provide "tea" for visitors. Well trained docents highlight rooms in the house with stories of Burns' family's life on the farm. The cobblestoned farmyard and paths along the river Nith are well maintained and pleasant.



Failing at farming, Burns left Ellisland Farm and moved with his wife Jean and their children to the



town of Dumfries where he bought a comfortable brick home. He had trained to become an exciseman and traveled in his new job exten-

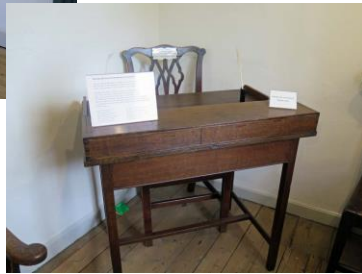
sively, while still writing poetry when he was at home.



The house in Dumfries is also a museum, with the interior kept closely to how it looked

when Burns lived there. The little desk where he composed his poems is lovingly maintained in the small room where he wrote them.

(Most photos taken by Ruth McFadden from trips to Scotland in 2017 and 2019.)



The Flower of Scotland

The story behind why the thistle became the symbolic flower for Scotland is well known. The weed with sharp edges to its leaves has become an emblem of Scotland. However, there are many varieties of thistles, and there is some discussion about which thistle's prickly leaves alerted the sleeping Scots army to a group of Norse fighters sneaking up on them in 1263.

Thistles were quite common in the countries of Europe, but not every variety grew in every area.



Cotton Thistle

The image most often used as the Scottish emblem is that of the cotton thistle, but that variety had not yet spread from Europe to Scotland in the medieval period, so it could not have created the bed of thistles that so

pained the invaders.

Instead, it is more likely that the Norse fighters trod on the spear thistle, which has grown in Scotland for over 700 years and is still widely found there.

The thistle has been used in political contexts since the 15th century, when it became the



Spear Thistle

Royal plant badge for James III. James VI of Scotland incorporated the thistle with a Tudor rose into a royal badge when he ascended the English throne. He created and used the Order of the Thistle to reward Scottish peers who supported the king's political and religious aims. The order has its own chapel in St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh.

A thistle first appeared on a Scottish coin in 1471, although the best preserved example was minted in 1602 during the reign of James VI, son of Mary Queen of Scots.



A more modern example is on the reverse of a

commemorative £1 coin that was issued in the Royal Diadem series. Notice that the coin from 1602 uses the Spear Thistle, while the more recent one illustrates the Cotton Thistle.



The thistle is considered a symbol of strength and shows up in names and mascots of a variety of sports teams. It was the mascot for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. It forms the basis for the logo of the Scottish National Party and Police Scotland. The Scots Guards have the thistle on their regimental badge. It appears on the badge of the Yeomen of the Guard, a bodyguard for the monarch. It is the emblem for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which originated in Edinburgh.

Worldwide, the Scottish thistle is in the coat of arms of Nova Scotia and the flags of Montreal, Canada and Annapolis in Maryland, USA. It is in the crest of Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania.



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