

HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

www.caledonians.com

Volume 116 Issue 3 March 2018

NEXT GATHERING

Our March gathering will be on Sunday, March 11th, at **2:00 pm at Haller Lake United Methodist Church**, 13055 1st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA. 98125.

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

Sunshine Chairperson Bonnie Monro reports this information about members, former members, and those in the Scottish community:

Victoria Johnson has undergone surgery on both her feet and is at Swedish Orthopedic Institute for a while longer. Her address there is room SOI-520, 601 Broadway, Seattle, 98122. Phone is 206-386-6000.

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

March 2018

11 Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering, 2:00 pm. Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA. 98125.

13 Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas Concert, Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon, WA 98273. 7:30pm. \$30. <https://celticarts.org/celtic-events/fraser-haas-18/>

13 SSHGA Meeting 7:30 pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 111 NE 80th Street, Seattle WA Info: (206) 522-2541

16 St. Patrick's Day Ceilidh-bration, Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon, WA 98273 5:30-8:30pm. \$35. <https://celticarts.org/celtic-events/stpats-18/>

24 Clan Gordon Pipe Band Annual Tartan Ball, Washington State Fairgrounds Pavilion, 2nd Floor. \$25 <http://www.cgpb.org/home/tartan-ball>

31 Jocelyn Pettit Band Concert, Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon, WA 98273 7:00pm. \$25. <https://celticarts.org/celtic-events/jocelyn-pettit/>

April

6 National Tartan Day. Meet at the Capitol steps in Olympia at noon.

8 Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering, 2:00 pm. Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA. 98125.

10 SSHGA Meeting 7:30 pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 111 NE 80th Street, Seattle WA Info: (206) 522-2541

14 Gaelic Language & Song Workshop, Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon, WA 98273. 10:00am-3:00pm. Workshop \$20, Lunch \$10 <https://celticarts.org/celtic-events/spring-gaelic-18/>

21 Blackthorn Band Concert, Littlefield Celtic Center, 1124 Cleveland Ave., Mount Vernon, WA 98273 7:00pm. \$25. <https://celticarts.org/celtic-events/blackthorn-band-concert/>

Gung Haggis Fat Choy 12

Nearly 300 people braved sleet storms north of Seattle and heavy traffic to the south to attend the 2018 Gung Haggis Fat Choy on Sunday, February 25th. This unusual combination of Robert Burns Dinner and Chinese New Year (Year of the Dog) celebration created by Todd Wong and brought to Seattle by Bill McFadden has become a favorite event for the Greater Seattle community since its inception in 2007.



Tacoma Scots Pipe Band



Christian Skoorsmith delivering Burns' Address to the Haggis in rap style.



John Bolton, Bill McFadden, and Charles Liu, Director, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office at the head table

Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

A selection of objects important in the history of Scotland will be highlighted in this and future Heatherbells. This information comes from an ebook titled "The History of Scotland in 25 Objects" and available at visitscotland.com.

Orkney Venus

The Orkney Venus, also known as the Westray Wifie, is the earliest known representation of the human form in Scotland, and one of only three Neolithic depictions of a person in the UK. The figurine was carved out of sandstone, possibly with a bone tool, around 3,000 BC. It was unearthed at the Links of Noltland, on the Orkney island of Westray, in 2009, and is now on display at the Westray Heritage Centre.

It is 41mm tall, 31mm wide and 12mm thick, and its round head features two eye holes, M-shaped scrapings to form a brow line and markings that suggest a nose and mouth. The lozenge-shaped torso resembles the exaggerated, wide-hipped form of a woman, which is what led archaeologists to believe the small circles on the chest could be breasts, though it's also possible that they represent clothing fastenings.

Nobody is 100% certain what it was for. It doesn't stand upright so probably wasn't designed to be a statue, and it might have been created as a pendant or toy, but there is no evidence of wear and tear. Its pristine condition gives weight to one theory that it had a symbolic purpose, especially as it was unearthed from the ruins of a late Stone Age building that had begun to fill with midden and rubble. There is a suggestion that it was placed among these ruins to indicate a sense of closure after the building was no longer serving its original purpose.

It tells us is that these Neolithic people had enough leisure time to devote to creating artefacts, which means they were developed enough to establish farming communities rather than leading nomadic lifestyles.

Are there any other archaeological treasures in the Orkney islands? Oh, yes! Scotland's northern and western islands in particular are rich with evidence

of vibrant Neolithic communities, and the stone circles here are half a millennium older than those in southern England. The extraordinary chambered tomb of Maeshowe is astronomically aligned so that the mid-winter sun shines through the entrance to hit the back wall of the tomb, and even has evidence of runes etched by the Vikings – a sort of Viking graffiti! And at nearby Skara Brae you can see 8 well preserved Neolithic dwellings. In the Outer Hebrides, there's the mystical Calanais on the Isle of Lewis – you can walk amongst the stones and speculate why and how they were erected.

From The Scotsman Newspaper

“Haunted” Scottish castle put up for sale

By Angus Howarth

A historic castle which is claimed to be one of the most haunted places in the UK has been put up for sale after the company which owned it went into administration.



Birkwood Castle, near Lesmahagow in South Lanarkshire, was due to be redeveloped as a luxury hotel as part of an £80 million development which included holiday

chalets and new homes built on the surrounding estate.

The substantial mansion, which sits on 86 acres of grounds, was originally built in the 1860's for the McKirdy family, but was donated to the local council in 1923 and converted into a psychiatric hospital. It remained as a health facility until 2005 and has lain derelict since.

The castle was threatened with demolition until south Lanarkshire Council approved in 2016 an extension and gave the green light to the early sale of 50 houses at the site in order to pay for the £1.4 million of repairs needed to the building. The castle's owners, Birkwood Estates, received planning permission for the site before administrators were appointed.

Part of its walls collapsed in 2015 with such force that some people in the area reported hearing an

explosion. Local paranormal experts blamed the collapse on high ghostly activity at the site.

Former owners, residents and staff say the Gothic castle is stalked by ghosts including a cigar-smoking spook and the spirit of a man stabbed through the throat. In 2013, ghosthunters Glasgow Paranormal Investigations filmed an episode of their series Haunted Planet TV there with the crew saying it was one of the most active locations in which they had filmed.

WSU Professor fights to save historic Scottish estate

By Tom Peterkin

A prominent Scots/American academic is campaigning to halt the sale of a historic Scottish estate once owned by a key figure in the foundation of the USA. The distinguished scientist Norman Lewis is urging the authorities to step in to suspend the sale of Auchincruive estate in Ayrshire by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). The 117-acre estate is up for sale for more than £3 million and is being marketed as an excellent opportunity for commercial or residential development.

But Lewis, a plant scientist and professor at **Washington State University**, believes the estate



should be restored to its former glory for the people of Scotland and America. Lewis, who was born in Ayrshire, believes restoration would be an appropriate way to remember an 18th-century owner of the estate who played an important role in bringing the American War of Independence to an end.

Richard Oswald of Auchincruive was the chief British negotiator in the Treaty of Paris talks of 1783 which brought an end to the war and led to the UK's special relationship with the USA. Oswald, who is buried near the estate, worked with Benjamin Franklin and others to bring about peace.

Lewis has written to South Ayrshire Council with his demand and is also asking whether the Scottish

Government can intervene to halt the sale. Since the 1920s the land has been the base for the West of Scotland Agricultural College, later subsumed into SRUC.

The land and buildings were gifted to the college by potato farmer and crop pioneer John Hanna, who, a couple of years earlier, had bought the property from the Oswald family. The purpose of the deeds was to support the West of Scotland Agricultural College in perpetuity.

“From these deeds, it is very unclear to me – as a prospective buyer of this property – that the land herein can actually be freely sold on the open market as it was gifted to the nation for agricultural research and education for the West of Scotland.”

Security squad will protect Queensferry castle from ‘Outlander fans’

By Diane King

An Outlander castle has drafted in security squads to deal with rampaging fans of the hit TV show. Staff have had to cope with vandalism, anti-social behavior and even people defecating at Midhope Castle, in South Queensferry, the ancestral home of character Jamie Fraser, played by Sam Heughan in the hit American programme. The castle lies on the same estate as Hopetoun House, which also



features, making it a top destination for hordes of so-called “set-jettlers” desperate to see the real-life locations of

their favourite fictional dramas.

Known on screen as Lallybrough, Midhope is derelict inside, but the exterior is used as a backdrop in series 1 and 2. Since it was chosen as a filming location in 2013, it has become a staple of many Outlander-themed tours, prompting estate managers to bring in security guards to protect the 15th Century castle and nearby farm, as well as the property of tenants who use buildings on the estate.

They have also had to charge visitors for parking at the site - £10 for cars, £40 for minibuses - to offset

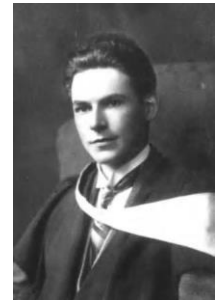
their security costs, which has upset some Outlander fans.

A spokeswoman from Hopetoun Estate said: “Over recent months we have had to deal with inconsiderate parking, dangerous driving, and damage to property and incidents of lewd behavior. Hopetoun Estate welcomes visitors. However, Midhope Castle is not an attraction such as Hopetoun House and therefore doesn’t have the infrastructure in place to support the numbers of fans descending upon what is essentially a working farm, timber yard, and tenanted properties.”

William Soutar: The poetic genius written out of Scottish history

By Ajay Close

Soutar was born in 1898, son of a master joiner. Young Willie was a mischievous scamp who grew into a handsome, athletic teenager. He wrote some terrible poetry, as teenagers will. When he left school, he served in the Royal Navy and witnessed the surrender of the German fleet at the end of World War I. In 1918 he was invalided out with pains in his legs. He didn’t know it then, but the vigorous, irreverent youth was on his way to a new identity. Within a few years he was poor Willie, too unwell to hold down a job after graduating from Edinburgh University, bedridden by 32, dead by 45 of tuberculosis, after spinal arthritis turned him into a living statue.



While his friends were out in the world, building their careers, marrying and starting families, Soutar was staring at the same four walls, day after day, entirely dependent on his parents. (Few poets write so feelingly about time.) The temptation to sink into depression was there, and sometimes he went under, but when he resurfaced he set about turning his desperate situation to advantage. Much as we love the romantic idea of innate genius, the truth is most writers are not born but made – which is to say, self-made. Soutar used all that dead time to turn himself into a poet. He wrote continually: diaries, dream diaries, riddles, epigrams, whigmaleeries, bairn rhymes, and short lyrics in both English and Scots.

Not everything he wrote has stood the test of time, but the best is still powerful. Take the poem,

Autobiography, which summarized his life – and anticipated his own death – in nine beautifully restrained lines.

*Out of the darkness of the womb
Into a bed, into a room:
Out of a garden into a town,
And to a country, and up and down
The earth; the touch of women and men
And back into a garden again:
Into a garden; into a room;
Into a bed and into a tomb;
And the darkness of the world's womb.*

In some ways, he was a timeless writer, drawing inspiration from nature, as poets always have. At the risk of making him sound like a Sixties hippy, some of his poems conjure a tranced, hyperaware state at once microscopic and cosmic. He could do lyrical, musical, poignant, folksy, humorous. The macabre comedy in some of his whigmaleeries is almost medieval.

But he was always engaged with the world around him. He wrote *The Children* about the bombing of Guernica in 1937, and was a passionate promoter of the Scots language – an intensely political issue then as now. *Seeds in the Wind*, his collection of bairn rhymes, was dedicated to his adopted sister Evie but published with a larger purpose in mind. If the Doric is to come back alive, he wrote, it will come first on a cock-horse.

A close friend was Hugh MacDiarmid, the movement's megalomaniacal genius. At first he is a mentor, publishing the younger poet in his anthology *Northern Numbers*. But as Soutar's work wins admiring reviews, a new edge enters the friendship. There are noisy, whisky-fuelled arguments late into the night. For Soutar, these are amicable disagreements.

MacDiarmid's feelings are more complicated. He is forever one step away from destitution, taking on more than he can manage to keep the wolf from the door, while Soutar lies abed, waited on hand and foot, with all the time in the world to polish his glittering lyrics. Of course MacDiarmid envies him – but what sort of heel envies an invalid, confined in a single room?

After Soutar's death, none of this should matter. But in an unlucky twist of fate, when Jack Soutar is looking for a literary man to edit a posthumous collection of his son's work and secure his reputation for all time, he asks Hugh MacDiarmid.

MacDiarmid needs the money – he always needs the money – but that newspaper review calling Soutar the greatest living Scottish poet still rankles... He writes what must be the least-generous introduction to a collection of poems ever. As an act of score-settling by a monstrously insecure ego, it would almost be funny, if the damage to Soutar's reputation hadn't proved so enduring.

When Perth decided to honour its greatest poet by renaming the library theatre, the man tasked with the job assumed there was a spelling mistake in his brief. Being a helpful sort of chap, he corrected this, so that the large gold letters on the side of the building read *The Souter Theatre*.

Everybody in Perth has heard of Stagecoach boss, Brian Souter. The 20th century poet William Soutar, friend of Hugh MacDiarmid, creator of some of the most hauntingly beautiful lines ever written in Scots, is less famous in his home city. Further afield, except in university literature departments, he is hardly known at all – and yet, 80 years ago, he was acclaimed as “probably the greatest living Scottish poet”.

From BBC News

Chapelcross nuclear site

A virtual reality tour is being offered behind the scenes at Scotland's first nuclear power station.



Visitors to the Devil's Porridge Museum in Eastriggs can don a headset to look around the old Chapelcross site. It will allow them to see into high-security areas including the reactor control room and tritium plant.

Museum chairman Richard Brodie said that although there was a village called Springfield nearby it was hopefully “nothing like” the Simpsons.

The Chapelcross site, near Annan, is currently being decommissioned after its landmark cooling towers were demolished more than 10 years ago. However, its heyday is being brought back to life by the new exhibition. The virtual reality (VR) tour allows a glimpse inside the power station where vital elements were also produced for atomic bombs.

Museum chairman Richard Brodie said: "We have been given exclusive access into the nuclear reactor rooms so we have taken 3D photographs and we now have a virtual reality tour of the reactors to see where the actual nuclear fuel was made and processed into plutonium and tritium. You can put on the work coat, you can don the virtual reality glasses and you are actually inside the reactor buildings."

From ebooks.visitscotland.com

Famous Scots

Explorers

There are many great Scots who have put their mark on the world – some of them literally. For Scotland has given the world some of its greatest explorers. Intrepid pioneers who braved the elements to discover new worlds and seek to change what was wrong with the old.

Arthur Anderson

1792 - 1868

Anderson was born in Shetland and began his sailing career in the Navy. He served mainly as a captain's clerk but left aged 23 and headed for London in the hope of gainful employment. There he met Brodie McGhie Wilcox, who offered him the clerk's position on shipping enterprise to Spain and Portugal. After seven years, Anderson was made partner and helped the company grow from strength to strength. It soon became the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, known today as P&O Ferries. During this time Anderson was still involved in Shetland affairs and began to suggest a trip from Shetland to the Faroes and Iceland - the first ever cruise.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie

1764 - 1820

Alexander Mackenzie was born on the Isle of Lewis and emigrated with his family to the 'New World' at the age of 10. They became caught up in the American Revolution, but managed to escape to Montreal. The main industry then was then the fur trade, which Mackenzie saw as an opportunity to travel and

explore. He became the first European to reach the Pacific Ocean overland, a distance of some 5,000 miles. While on this expedition he discovered and charted the longest river in Canada, now known as the Mackenzie River. He published a book of his legendary adventures across the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, *Voyages*, in 1801 - demand for the volume was so high publishers could not keep up.

Alexander Selkirk

1676 - 1721

Alexander Selkirk was a real life Robinson Crusoe and the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's book by the same name. Born in Largo in Fife, he was a seaman and took part in several privateering expeditions. On his last trip, he had a dispute with the incompetent captain and, fearing the ship would sink, demanded to be put ashore. Selkirk was proved correct: the ship later sank off the coast of Peru, leaving Selkirk a castaway on an uninhabited island - known today as Robinson Crusoe Island - to survive only his wits until his rescue four years and four days later.



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

Mailing Address:

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

www.caledonians.com

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HEATHER BELL EDITOR:

Ruth McFadden 206-364-6025
ruthmcfadden@mindspring.com