

# 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, February 11<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.

There is no requirement that people attending be vaccinated and/or boosted. The mask requirement has been changed and it is okay to either wear, or not wear, a mask while present in the church. Air purifiers will be running.

The gathering will be hybrid: in-person and on Zoom for those who truly cannot attend in person. The link for those who attend on Zoom is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjIxQT09>

## FEBRUARY PROGRAM -

The February program will be a look at historic heroes of Scotland.

## SCOTTISH MOVIE NIGHT

Our February Scottish Movie Night will be on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. Again, it will start at 6:00 p.m. We will enjoy "Gregory's Girl." 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=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjIxQT09>

## 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.

## Recap of the January Caledonian Gathering

Twenty-four Caledonians in person and on Zoom celebrated Robert Burns in the month of his birth. Those in person also enjoyed hearing and singing songs by Robert Burns. Christian Skoorsmith recited the "Address to a Haggis" and sang several songs. Tom Lamb brought music for everyone to sing along with.



The annual January Burns Celebration is always more involved than the usual monthly gatherings. Special thanks go to Rosemary Blakemore for organizing the potluck tea and, with Fay Griffin, managing the buffet table. Thanks to Dennis Smith, Phillip Junkins, and Porter Patten setting up tables and chairs, and everyone who brought delicious food. At the end, everyone gathered in a circle to sing Auld Lang Syne.

## Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

### FEBRUARY

**3 Tacoma Scots Pipe Band presents their “A Nicht Wi’ Robbie Burns”** Tacoma Sportsman Club, 16409 Canyon Rd. E., Puyallup, WA. 5pm-10pm. \$60.

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/6187913>

Questions: [sheepgirl@msn.com](mailto:sheepgirl@msn.com) or call 206-312-4567.

**3 Lodge Alba Celebration of Robert Burns**, 4736 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98116, 6pm. @25 per person, \$40 per couple. Contact Tom Lamb for tickets. 425-742-2348 (H) or 425-387-4339 (C)

**9 Masters of Scottish Arts Concert.** Edmonds Center for the Arts, 410 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Edmonds, WA. 7:30 p.m. \$47 (members \$37) Info:

[www.celticarts.org/event/masters-of-scottish-arts-concert](http://www.celticarts.org/event/masters-of-scottish-arts-concert)

Ticket office phone: 425-275-9595 or online at

[www.edmondscenterforthearts.org/events/detail/669/master-of-scottish-arts-concert/4471](http://www.edmondscenterforthearts.org/events/detail/669/master-of-scottish-arts-concert/4471)

**11 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

**25 Caledonian Scottish Movie Night.** 6pm on Zoom

### MARCH

**10 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

**23 Clan Gordon Tartan Ball**, Western Washginton Fairground Pavilion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Puyallup, WA. \$30. 6pm-1am. Info: [james-naismith@hotmail.com](mailto:james-naismith@hotmail.com)

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

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## Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

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

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### Scottish Leap Year Traditions

In Scotland, the custom developed on a leap year where women could ask a man for his hand in marriage. The woman was supposed to wear a red coat on the day of the proposal. The custom may have had its beginnings when St. Brigid of Ireland asked St. Patrick to allow women to be able to

propose to men, as some women felt they had to wait too long for a marriage request.

Back in Scottish history, it was actually illegal for a woman to propose marriage to a man, except every four years on the leap year day.

To forestall a man turning down a woman who proposed to him on February 29<sup>th</sup>, a law was enacted by Queen Margaret of Scotland in 1288, saying that a man who refused a Leap Day proposal should be fined. Fines ranged from £1 (a great deal of money in those days) to a silk gown.

However, Scots traditionally avoided getting married on that date as it was thought bad luck would come to the marriage and often divorce.

Except for women who proposed to their sweethearts on that day, February 29<sup>th</sup> was considered unlucky. Children born on that day, called “leaplings,” were thought to be more difficult to raise or would be unwell. Astrologers beg to differ, though, as they claim babies born on February 29<sup>th</sup> will grow up to have unique talents.

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## Winter Activities in Scotland

Winter snow in Scotland is a given, especially in the Highlands, so there are numerous ways the Scots have found to enjoy it.

### Skiing, snowboarding, and sledging

Scotland has five easily accessible ski centres located in beautiful Highland and Aberdeenshire scenery. The centres are suitable for both beginners and seasoned skiers or boarders. Glencoe Mountain also has free sledging. After taking the chair lift, it’s a short walk to the Plateau Café where sledges are available in bunkers just outside the café.

### Sled Dog Racing

There are over 150 competitive sled dog racing teams in Scotland. The sport takes place on forest tracks. There are races and training areas in several areas of Scotland.

### Free-roaming Reindeer



Reindeer were once native to Scotland and found over a large range. However, they became extinct hundreds of years ago, likely

due to a mixture of natural climate change and over hunting. In modern times, the Cairngorm Mountain range is one of the only places in the UK that is a suitable habitat for reindeer to thrive. The Cairngorm reindeer herd is the only free-ranging herd of reindeer in their natural environment. These tame and friendly animals are a joy to all. Visitors can learn about these fascinating creatures with a guided walk right in the midst of them.

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## Oil Shale Bings

Before oil wells were ever drilled in America, in 1847 James Young, a Glasgow-born chemical engineer, came up with the idea of distilling paraffin wax from coal. (Paraffin is a flammable, translucent, waxy solid obtained by distillation from petroleum or shale and used in candles, cosmetics, polishes, and sealing and waterproofing compounds.) In the Victorian age, paraffin was used for lighting and to support the industrial revolution.

For about 60 years, until after World War I, Scotland was the world's leading oil producer, thanks to an innovative new method that transformed oil shale into fuel. At its height, there were 120 works wrestling 600,000 barrels of oil a year from the ground.

The process was costly and took a lot of effort. To extract the oil, the shale had to be shattered and superheated. Then, it produced huge quantities of waste since for every 10 barrels of oil, six tons of spent shale would be produced. Two hundred million tons of waste went into enormous slag heaps. Locally, they were called "bings" from an Old Norse word meaning "a heap."



When the Middle East's reserves of liquid oil brought the end of a local culture and way of life in the mining villages of West Lothian only the massive, brick-red bings were left as souvenirs.

Some have found a second life as construction material, but most were abandoned and ignored, becoming streaked with red and green. Only recently have the bings become more than unsightly slag heaps looming over West Lothian mining towns. Recent surveys of their flora and fauna have found them transformed into unlikely hotspots for wildlife. More plant species have been identified on some bings than are on Ben Nevis.

An oil-shale trail allows visitors to hike among the bings and there is even an oil-shale museum (Museum of the Scottish Shale Oil Industry). For more information about these new tourist attractions:

<https://www.scottishshale.co.uk>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/mar/16/west-lothian-scotland-spoil-heap-wastelands-whivered-into-life>

<https://www.scottishshale.co.uk/stories/five-sisters/>

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## Scottish Youth Hostel Association

Traveling through Europe for the young and adventurous was made reasonably inexpensive by staying at youth hostels. It is still possible to travel inexpensively as Scotland has over two dozen hostels, some even in larger cities like Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Perth, and Inverness.

Now called HostellingScotland, this organization started in 1931 with a focus on providing inexpensive and safe overnight housing for young people wishing to travel through Scotland. While they still cater to traveling youth, they also provide family friendly accommodation in a relaxed and comfortable environment. As the pictures show, many hostels are housed in former single-family homes, others in repurposed churches, gaols, or other public buildings.

All hostels have a choice of accommodations with cost effective rates for both large and small families. Families can choose a fully catered stay or take advantage of excellent self-catering facilities. Some hostels allow dogs as well.



Family favourites include the Portree Youth Hostel, located in the heart of Portree, capital of the Isle

of Skye. This hostel sits in a natural harbour, surrounded by hills, and offers a range of accommodations from small private en-suites to spacious shared dorms.



Oban Hostel has a seafront location with stunning views, and is close to shopping and restaurants. It is on the Caledonian Way Cycle route. It is also available for exclusive private rental.

Pitlochry Youth Hostel is set in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland, with stunning views over the town and surrounding area.



has two stunning beaches, one on either side of the harbor.

### Portpatrick

Located on the west coast of the Rhins of Galloway, Portpatrick has views of the northern Irish coast just 21 miles to the west. The Gulf Stream gives the coastline a pleasant climate. There is an old castle and visitors can take a clifftop walk to see Killantringan Lighthouse.



## **Best Scottish Seaside Towns of 2024**

Each year readers of The Scotsman newspaper suggest their ideas of the best Scottish towns for tourists to visit this year. With stunning scenic landscapes, majestic cliffs, and thousands of miles of beautiful coastline, these various locations may provide a very relaxing holiday. Here are a few they recommend:

### Stonehaven



Located on Scotland's north east coast, Stonehaven has beautiful old castles and an attractive harbor.

### St. Andrews

Known for its golf courses, this university town is also a beautiful seaside town. The golden sands of beaches at St.



Andrews may be familiar to viewers of the movie "Chariots of Fire".



### Lossiemouth

Located in Moray, this town is known as The Riviera of the North. It



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

Mailing Address:

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