

HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

www.caledonians.com

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JUNE GATHERING

Our June gathering will be on Sunday, **June 14th**, at 2:00 p.m. We will meet at Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125.

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=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjkxQT09>

JUNE PROGRAM

TBD.

SCOTTISH MOVIE NIGHT

The May movie night on May 31st will be the last until fall.

SUNSHINE REPORT

Please let Bonnie know if someone is ill or injured and she will send a card on behalf of the Caledonians. (425) 806-3734

Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

June

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

20 Prosser Scottish Fest and Highland Games, 2880 Lee Rd., Prosser, WA 9am-6pm. \$6 & \$12. <https://prosserscottishfest.org>

26 Tacoma Scots Celtic Concert, Frontier Park, Graham, WA, 6pm-9pm, <https://www.tacomagames.org/general-information>

27 Tacoma Scots Highland Games, Frontier Park, Graham, WA. 8am-5pm.

<https://www.tacomagames.org/general-information>

July

11-12 Skagit Valley Highland Games. Skagit County Fairgrounds, Mount Vernon, WA.

<https://www.celticarts.org/highland-games>

24-26 Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games.

Enumclaw Expo Center, 45224 284th Ave. SE, Enumclaw, WA <https://www.sshga.org/the-games>

August

1 Spokane Scottish Highland Games. Spokane County Fair & Expo Center. 9:00am-5:30pm

<https://www.spokanehighlandgames.net>

September

12-13 Kelso Highlander Festival, Tam O'Shanter Park, Kelso, WA. 9am- 5pm. Free.

<https://www.kelso.gov/visitors/highlander-festival>

Recap of May Gathering

The May gathering featured an interesting DVD titled "Castles" that described with pictures and animations how and why castles were built.

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.

Why We Have Highland Games

The Highland Games began as ancient clan gatherings, where contests of strength, music, and dance played an important role in social and political life. Events such as the caber toss, hammer

throw, and tug-of-war reflected not only physical skill but also clan unity and pride. Over time, these gatherings developed into organized festivals that celebrate Scottish strength, artistry, and culture.

For Scots living abroad, the Games became a way to stay connected to their homeland. They provided a tangible link to ancestry, language, and music – not only for those born in Scotland who moved abroad, but also for later generations.

Scottish festivals bring together people from many parts of Scottish culture to create a vibrant shared experience. Pipers, drummers, dancers, entertainers, clan and society members, reenactors, and others all help make these events memorable, drawing both Scots and non-Scots alike.

Today, these gatherings combine athletic, dance, and music competitions with clan tents, whisky tastings, and ceilidhs to create immersive experiences that bring people together. They play an important role in preserving Scottish culture and remain a valued part of modern life. By showcasing Scottish heritage and keeping traditions alive, they invite people from all backgrounds to explore their Scottish identity or simply take part in a traditional craft.

Those who first organized Scottish Games in Scotland could never have imagined that, centuries later, countries as far away as Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States would host these events and attract thousands of people from all walks of life.

Peat Lands

Healthy peatlands are among the planet's most effective carbon sinks. They also help reduce flooding and wildfire risk by regulating water flow, filtering and purifying water, and supporting a unique variety of plants and wildlife.

Peat is a dark, spongy soil formed over centuries from layers of sphagnum moss and other vegetation in waterlogged conditions. A single meter of peat can take about 1,000 years to develop. Scotland contains 13% of the world's blanket bog, a type of peatland found only in a few cool, wet, oceanic regions. Yet about 80% of Scotland's peatlands are degraded due to drainage, fuel extraction, overgrazing, and wildfires. Heavy deer grazing and trampling damage the thin vegetation layer and prevent bog plants from regenerating. As

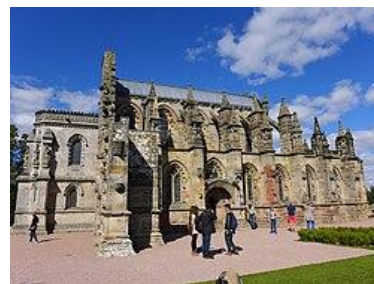
a result, exposed peat dries out and erodes, contributing to climate change by releasing carbon dioxide instead of storing it.

One of the first and largest projects of its kind in Scotland is restoring more than 1,000 hectares of globally rare, threatened habitat near Loch Ness as part of Britain's largest rewilding initiative. A partnership of charities, landowners, and businesses is working to protect and restore a connected area of blanket bog – one of the world's rarest habitats – across three neighboring and varied landholdings.



Roslyn Chapel

A visit to Roslyn Chapel, located in the village of Roslin in Midlothian, Scotland, about seven miles south of Edinburgh, is a must for tourists.



Built in the mid-15th century by William Sinclair, 1st Earl of Caithness, this ornate chapel has practically every surface inside and outside carved in an outstanding display of medieval craftsmanship. It was originally established as a Roman Catholic church, but after the Scottish Reformation in 1560, Catholic worship ended. The altars were destroyed, and the chapel fell largely into disuse. Its preservation began after Queen Victoria visited in 1842 and called for the ruined, overgrown chapel to be saved.

There are 13 elaborately carved pillars in Roslyn Chapel. One of them is famously known as the Apprentice Pillar. According to legend, the Apprentice Pillar was carved by the master mason's young apprentice while the mason was abroad seeking inspiration for the design. When he returned and saw the finished work, he flew into a jealous rage and killed the apprentice with a blow to the head. The master mason was then said to have been executed for the murder. Inside the chapel, the face of the Master Mason was carved in a position where he must forever look down on the beautiful pillar created by his apprentice.



The chapel was the subject of a terrorist attack on 11 July 1914, when a bomb exploded inside the building. This was as part of the suffragette bombing and arson campaign of 1912-1914, in which suffragettes carried out a series of politically motivated bombing and arson attacks nationwide as part of their campaign for women's suffrage. Churches were a particular target during the campaign, as it was believed that the Church of England was complicit in reinforcing opposition to

women's suffrage. Between 1913 and 1914, 32 churches were attacked nationwide.

Since the late 1980s, the chapel has been linked to speculative theories involving the Knights Templar, the Holy Grail, and Freemasonry. These ideas gained widespread attention through Dan Brown's bestselling novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) and its 2006 film adaptation. However, medieval historians say there is no factual basis for these claims. Even so, publicity from Brown's book and the subsequent movie brought financial success to the struggling church. About 159,000 visitors came in 2007-08 at the height of popular interest and visitor numbers have remained high over the years.

Sunday services are held now under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Episcopal Church, but Roslyn Chapel remains privately owned.

Quiet Travel

Travelers to Scotland are increasingly seeking slower-paced, less crowded destinations that offer peaceful experiences away from the hustle and bustle of cities. VisitScotland has compiled a guide to several quiet locations and experiences across Scotland. Most of these locations embrace the great outdoors, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in nature.

Dumfries & Galloway

Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park is an ideal escape from busy city life, offering visitors a peaceful natural setting and exceptionally dark skies free from light pollution. As one of the first places in the world to receive Dark Sky status, it is among the best stargazing locations in the UK. On clear nights, visitors can see more than 7,000 stars and planets with the naked eye, as well as the Milky Way. Nearby Moffat proudly holds the title of Europe's first Dark Sky Town.

Argyll & The Isles

Few experiences feel more freeing than wild swimming surrounded only by the sounds of nature. For a safe introduction, consider staying at Carry Farm, a peaceful rural retreat on Argyll's scenic west coast. In addition to wild swimming, the farm offers quiet-travel activities such as birdwatching and fishing.

Shetland

Enjoy a refreshing walk to Ramnahol Waterfall, where a peaceful natural setting, lush greenery, and the soothing sound of falling water create an ideal place to relax and reconnect with nature.

Orkney



The Broch of Gurness, one of the highlights of Orkney's rich archaeological heritage, is an ideal destination for travelers seeking a peaceful escape. Set in a quiet coastal area, it offers visitors a chance to explore ancient history while enjoying sweeping views and reflective walks. With beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, and some of the clearest night skies in the UK, Orkney is an exceptional place for a memorable and restorative holiday.

Perthshire

Forest bathing, a Japanese practice dating to the 1980s, offers physical and mental wellness benefits and is an excellent way to embrace quiet travel. Known as *shinrin-yoku*, or "taking in the forest atmosphere," it involves immersing yourself in nature for relaxation and renewal. Faskally Wood in Tay Forest Park near Loch Dunmore, just northwest of Pitlochry, is an ideal place to try it. The woodland features a variety of tree species, some more than 200 years old, and well-marked trails, including the accessible Dunmore Trail.

Angus

Immerse yourself in nature at Montrose Basin, a peaceful estuary of the River South Esk. Covering 750 hectares, its tidal mudflats provide important feeding and roosting habitat for many bird species, making it an excellent birdwatching destination. Nearby hotels in the Angus Glens offer great bases for walkers and climbers exploring the region's dramatic scenery, including ten Munros over 3,000 feet. With ever-changing views and remarkable terrain, the Angus Glens are an ideal place to experience the area's peace and natural beauty.

Clackmannanshire

Take a wildlife walk at Black Devon Wetlands nature reserve, a peaceful haven that captures the spirit of quiet travel. With its mix of wet grassland, reedbeds, and pools, the reserve offers a welcome escape from everyday life and excellent opportunities to spot waders and wildfowl in their natural habitat. Nearby, visitors can also enjoy historic towns, castles, farm shops, and golf courses.

Aberdeenshire

Spend a peaceful day at Newburgh Seal Beach, a hidden gem in the Aberdeenshire town of Newburgh. One of the few places in Scotland where seal sightings are almost guaranteed, it offers a quiet escape from the crowds, whether travelling on the NE250 Road Trip or simply looking for a secluded natural retreat.

Surprising Turns of Events at the Battle of Bannockburn

- (1) By 1314, Bruce had laid siege to Stirling Castle under an agreement that it would be surrendered to the Scots if the siege lasted until midsummer. To stop an English relief force from breaking the siege, he assembled a large army and used the time to train his schiltrons – tight formations of soldiers, often armed with pikes – to a high level of readiness.
- (2) Edward II assembled a larger force of knights, men-at-arms, and archers before marching from Falkirk toward Stirling. The Scots, meanwhile, chose a naturally defensible position and dug pits lined with sharpened stakes to help repel a cavalry attack.

The first fighting began when the English advance party came within sight of the Scots. Henry de Bohun, nephew of one of the vanguard's joint commanders, spotted Bruce and charged at him. Bruce avoided the attack and killed de Bohun as he passed, though the force of the blow broke the handle of his axe. This dramatic moment, described by the 14th-century Scottish poet John Barbour, was later commemorated on the old Clydesdale Bank £1 note.

- (3) Edward II appears to have planned to intercept the Scots as they tried to leave the battlefield. Instead, Bruce's men advanced steadily from the cover of nearby woods. Despite their cavalry and greater numbers, the English were

unprepared, apparently assuming the Scots would not fight. As a result, the cavalry charge failed due to poor coordination and because there was too little space. The lack of time and room before the armies met also limited the effectiveness of the English archers, who were not deployed once the fighting closed at close quarters. Pressed back between burns and bogs, the English lines collided, broke apart, and began to collapse.

(4) Camp followers who had been watching the battle then rushed down the slopes to finish off armored soldiers trapped in the mud. At first, the English mistook them for fresh reserves, and when they joined the attack, panic in the English ranks grew even worse.

The English army broke apart and fled. Edward II first headed toward Stirling, then turned toward Falkirk and Linlithgow before reaching Dunbar and eventually escaping farther south by boat. Many English soldiers were captured, while others apparently drowned in the River Forth.

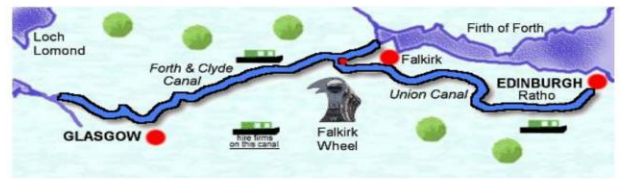
Bruce defeated the English, secured Stirling Castle, and firmly established his position as king. His Scottish rivals were forced to leave the country.

Forth & Clyde Canal & Falkirk Wheel

Construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal began in 1768, and the waterway opened in 1790 after 22 years of work. Stretching 35 miles (56 km) from Bowling to Grangemouth, it crosses the narrowest part of the Scottish Lowlands and links the Firth of Forth with the Firth of Clyde, making it the longest of the Lowland canals. The canal was formally abandoned in 1962 but reopened in 2001 as part of the Millennium Link project, which restored water travel between Edinburgh and Glasgow by connecting it to the Union Canal through the remarkable Falkirk Wheel boat lift.

Before the Falkirk Wheel was built, the two canals were linked by a flight of 11 locks. The 35-metre (115-foot) height difference meant each passage used about 3,500 tonnes of water and could take most of a day. By the 1930s, the locks had fallen into disuse and were dismantled in 1933. The Forth and Clyde Canal closed at the end of 1962, and by the mid-1970s the Union Canal had been blocked at both ends, made impassable by culverts in two places, and routed through pipes beneath a housing estate.

Canal Map



The effort to restore central Scotland's canals and reconnect Glasgow with Edinburgh was led by British Waterways, with support from seven local authorities, Scottish Enterprise, the European Regional Development Fund, and the Millennium Commission.

Rather than rebuilding the old lock flight, planners chose to create a striking modern landmark: the Falkirk Wheel. The wheel lifts boats 24 metres (79 feet), though vessels must still pass through two locks to reach the Union Canal, which lies another 11 metres (36 feet) higher.



The only rotating boat lift of its kind in the world, the Falkirk Wheel was inspired by a double-headed Celtic axe, a ship's propeller, and the ribcage of a whale.

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