HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

www.caledonians.com

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NOVEMBER GATHERING

Our November gathering will be on Sunday, **November 8th**, 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 with Zoom is: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjkxQT09

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

St. Andrew's Theme.

SCOTTISH MOVIE NIGHT

Scottish Movie Night will resume in November.

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

November

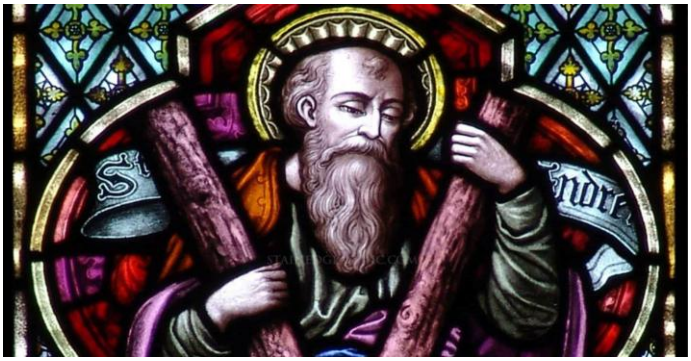
8 Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering, 2:00pm, Haller Lake United Methodist Church, 13055 1st Ave. NE., Seattle, WA https://caledonians.org 206-714-2601

Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

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

St. Andrew, Patron Saint of Scotland

St. Andrew's Scottish legacy weaves together legend, faith, and national identity, giving him a central place in the country's spiritual and cultural history.



While St. Andrew is widely recognized as a national and religious figure in Scotland, his patronage list is unusually broad, covering **occupations, health, social statuses, and even modern military branches**, making his patronage far more eclectic than that of most saints.

It's no surprise he is the patron saint of fishermen, fishmongers, and rope-makers because of his origins as a fisherman. However, he is also the patron saint of a vast number of others: singers (from a tradition that Andrew taught with song), miners (protection in dangerous underground work), pregnant women and women wishing to become mothers, old maids and maidens, spinsters, butchers and textile workers (possibly connected to medieval guilds), and farm workers (because of the rural nature of early Scotland). His support is sought to provide healing, in particular protection

against sore throats, convulsions, fever, and whooping cough.

The fisherman from Galilee and brother of Simon Peter never visited Scotland. He taught in Antioch, Ankara, and Edessa and was martyred in the city of Patras.

Around 357 Andrew's relics were destined to go to Constantinople. According to legend, a dream warned St. Regulus (St. Rule) to carry Andrew's relics to "the ends of the earth"—a place then identified with distant Scotland—for safekeeping. He sailed north with only a few bones but was reportedly shipwrecked on Scotland's east coast. He built a mud-walled church in Muckros, a small fishing village nearby. Later the town was called by the Gaelic name *Kinrymont* and became a major pilgrimage site for Catholics.

In 1070, the Church of St. Rule was begun in the Romanesque style to better hold St. Andrew's relics. The grand Cathedral of St. Andrew was subsequently built between 1158 and 1318. A tower from the Church of St. Rule was incorporated on the cathedral grounds. Around this time, the surrounding town changed from its Gaelic name to be called St. Andrews. On the 5th of July the Cathedral was consecrated in the presence of King Robert the Bruce, who, according to legend, rode up the aisle on his horse.

Remains of East Tower of St Andrews Cathedral & St Rule's Tower

Furthering St. Andrew's importance, the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 invoked St. Andrew's protection and highlighted his spiritual significance to the Scottish people. St. Andrew was officially recognized as the patron saint of Scotland during the signing of that document.

Beyond his religious role, St. Andrew symbolizes Scottish identity in the Scottish flag, royal heraldry, chivalric orders, and celebrations with feasts held in his honour as far back as 1000 AD. However, widespread celebration of his feast day began only in the 18th century.

Surprisingly, the tradition of celebrating St Andrew on 30 November began not in Scotland but among Scots in America seeking to reconnect with their roots. In 1729, wealthy Scottish immigrants founded the St Andrew's Society of Charleston in South Carolina. The world's oldest Scottish society of its kind, it became known across the region for helping local orphans and widows.

Scottish Trivia (Answers at the end of this newsletter.)

1. Roughly, how many islands does Scotland have?
2. What is the name of the pouch worn in front of a kilt?
3. What soft drink is often described as Scotland's other national drink"?

Frogs and Toads in Scottish Folklore

Frogs and toads occupied an uneasy place between the ordinary and the supernatural in Scottish rural folklore.

Frogs and toads were seen as omens of seasonal fortune, household guardians, or tools of sympathetic magic. Whether in homes or fields, practical needs intertwined with old beliefs.

Spring ditches offered crofters an early guide to summer weather. One folk tale tells how important it was to know where frogs laid their spawn. They believed spawn at pond edges or in shallow ditches that usually dried in summer predicted summer weather to be wet; clumps in the deepest pools foretold severe drought. Though modern observers might dismiss this as rural superstition, the belief reflected close attention to seasonal water levels. Frogs were thought to anticipate the coming summer's weather.

Other folk tales put a frog in the house, specifically in the *ream pig* or *ream bowie,* an earthenware jar where cream stood before churning. Not only was it unlucky to wash the jar, but a frog in the jar was also thought to keep the cream unspoiled and not vulnerable to bad weather and malicious neighbourly spells when it was churned into butter.

Often frogs were important ingredients in rural medicine, mostly for curing stubborn illnesses in both animals and people. Remedies utilizing frogs were stark, many involving ingesting the amphibian. Other cures mostly relied on sympathetic transfer. Today we would view them as desperate and hazardous.

While frogs were somewhat tolerated, toads inspired loathing. People believed they spat poisonous fire or released toxic vapour when angered, making them dangerous to handle. Yet this feared creature was also said to hide a precious jewel in its skull. The toadstone, or *crapaudina*, endured in European folklore for centuries. In north-east crofts, people believed that even the ugliest head could conceal a priceless talisman.

There was widespread use of repulsive, toad-focused charms and medicines to heal chronic illnesses. Toads also were featured in coercive folk magic. A man wearing the dried tongue of a toad on his chest was promised the ability to bend any woman to his will, neither by genuine affection nor courtship. One grim medical practice used a toad in an effort to draw illness from human flesh into its own cold body.

Beliefs about frogs and toads reflected the anxieties of Scottish rural life: frogs promised productive butter churns and seasonal guidance, while toads represented poison, secrecy and supernatural power.

Instruments of War

Think of warfare and you would likely think of artillery, tanks, air power and landmines. However, bagpipes were also part of many Scottish regiments' artillery. Bagpipes played a unique and significant role in the military. Amongst the chaos and terror of war bagpipes could be heard by the troops. Bagpipes offered them comfort, support, and confidence in what must have been such chaotic conditions. Hundreds of pipers were thought to have been killed in both World Wars, though no exact figure seems to be available. Interestingly, bagpipes were classified as a weapon of war until 1996.

Scottish Thistle

The thistle is considered the oldest national flower in the world on record. It was adopted as the Emblem of Scotland during the reign of King Alexander III (1249-1286). A widely told legend tells how sleeping Scottish clansmen were awakened when a barefoot member of a Norse invasion force under King Haakon IV of Norway stepped on a thistle and cried out. Because the awakened Scots were able to repel the invaders, the thistle was then chosen as Scotland's emblem in recognition of its role in saving the nation.

Although the story is widely known, historians have found no definitive written evidence of when the thistle was adopted as Scotland's emblem. The legend may date to the 13th century, but records don't confirm its use as a royal symbol until it was used on James III's coins in 1470.

Exploits of Earls of Elgin

James Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, a Scottish diplomat, is well known as the British "Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" to the Ottoman Empire (of which Greece was part). Between 1801 and 1812, he oversaw removal of sculptures from the Parthenon and its surrounding structures and their shipment to Great Britain. His stated reason was to protect the sculptures, because (1) the Ottoman Empire had no interest in them; (2) he was told that marble sculptures that fell were being burned to obtain lime for building; and (3) he believed previously published drawings showed that the current remains were rapidly decaying.

He later sold the (stolen) marbles to the British government. Several years later they were sent to the British Museum for restoration and display.

James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, followed his father's destructive path. Born in 1811, he was a Scottish Liberal statesman and diplomat. During his career he served as Governor-General of Canada, 1847-54, and Viceroy of India, 1862-63. Between those assignments, in 1857 he was appointed special envoy to China and Japan to

assist in the process of opening up these countries to Western trade.

In 1860, to intimidate the emperor during the Second Opium War in China, he ordered the burning of the Old Summer Palace in Beijing. The building was an architectural wonder with immeasurable collections of artworks and historic antiques. This inflicted incalculable loss of cultural heritage. Subsequently, he compelled the Qing dynasty to sign the Convention of Peking, an unratified treaty, adding Kowloon Peninsula to the British crown colony of Hong Kong.

Scottish Novelists and Non-Fiction Writers

From poetry and historical novels to crime fiction and experimental writing, Scotland's literature reflects its rich cultural identity and worldwide influence. Well-known writers such as Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Arthur Conan Doyle, and J.M. Barie offer an introduction to the classics, while other authors reveal the range of modern Scottish storytelling.

Born in Glasgow in 1909, historical novelist **Nigel Tranter** was Scotland's most prolific writer. His extensively researched fiction and non-fiction focused mainly on Scottish history.

His first book, *The Fortalices and Early Mansions of Southern Scotland* (1935), expressed his lifelong interest in castles. His debut novel, *Trespass* (1937), combined romance and adventure in a Scottish setting.

Over his career, he wrote over 100 historical novels covering centuries of Scottish history, non-fiction about Scottish castles, children's adventure stories, and Westerns under the pen name *Nye Tredgold.* With his wife May Jean Campbell Grieve, he co-authored The *Queen's Scotland* series.

John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, was born in Perth in 1875. A multifaceted man, he was a Scottish novelist, historian, British Army officer, and Unionist politician. He also served as Governor General of Canada.

He wrote more than a hundred books, including acclaimed biographies, histories, and adventure thrillers such as *Prester John*, *Greenmantle*, and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, a "shocker novel", whose film adaptation the Caledonians watched on Scottish Movie Night.

Alongside his writing, Buchan led wartime propaganda efforts, served in Parliament, and promoted Canadian unity as Governor General.

If you are interested in reading the works of more modern Scottish writers, consider the following 20th century and contemporary authors.

- **Muriel Spark (1918–2006)**: Author of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, known for her sharp, crystalline prose.
- **Alasdair Gray (1934–2019)**: Postmodern novelist and artist, famous for *Lanark*.
- **James Kelman (b. 1946)**: Celebrated for his Glaswegian working-class voice in novels like *How Late It Was, How Late.*
- **Irvine Welsh (b. 1958)**: Known for *Trainspotting*, Welsh explores gritty urban life and Scottish dialect.
- **Douglas Stuart (b. 1976)**: Booker Prize-winning author of *Shuggie Bain* highlighting contemporary Scottish life.
- **Diana Gabaldon (b. 1952)**: Author of the *Outlander* series, blending historical fiction with romance and adventure.
- **Ian Rankin (b. 1960)**: Creator of the Inspector Rebus series, a cornerstone of modern Scottish crime fiction.
- **Alexander McCall Smith (b. 1948)**: Author of *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series.
- **Val McDermid (b. 1955)**: Renowned crime writer, known for psychological thrillers.
- **Ali Smith (b. 1962)**: Experimental novelist, acclaimed for works like *How to Be Both*.

Answers to Trivia: 1. Over 900 2. Sporran 3. Irn-Bru