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

NO OCTOBER GATHERING –

The Caledonian Board met this summer and decided that even though 2-5 members attend gatherings on Zoom each month, the number of people available to attend gatherings in person (6-10) and the work of setting up does not support having monthly gatherings. Also, recruiting performers for programs becomes difficult. A performer is insulted if their audience is meager.

The Board considered holding Zoom-only meetings in alternate months. However, some members cannot participate with Zoom, and developing a Zoom-only program requires as much time and effort as planning an in-person meeting, aside from on-site setup. In addition, experience has shown that few people commit to regularly attending Zoom-only gatherings. During the COVID period, attendance at Zoom-only gatherings varied widely regardless of the program topic or guest performer. Attendance averaged six people and sometimes fell to just four.

Therefore, the current plan is to have hybrid (in-person and Zoom combined) gatherings four times between November 2026 and June 2027: November, January, March, and June. The program in November will focus on St. Andrew and in January on Robert Burns. What themes would you like us to focus on in March and June?

We are open to your feedback. How do you see our organization moving forward? Do you feel that just four hybrid gatherings this year is about right? Would you support and commit to attend alternating monthly hybrid (in-person) and Zoom-only gatherings? If you think we really should meet monthly, would you attend, help with creating programs, and help with set up & take down?

Email your comments to me (rmcfadde@minspring.com) and I'll bring them to the Board at our next meeting.

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

October – No Caledonian & St. Andrews Society Gathering in October

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.*

Halloween and Witches

Over time ghosts, ghouls and witches have been closely associated with Halloween. In popular culture witches have been known to wear all black with wide-brimmed hats, often with a black cat and broomsticks nearby.

Scotland, however, has a dark history of witch persecution. In earlier centuries, changing attitudes toward "dark magic" and people who did not conform to cultural or religious norms fueled suspicion and accusations. Paranoid hunts spread through Scottish communities as authorities sought those believed to draw power from the Devil.

Over nearly two centuries, Scotland's persecution of alleged witches became one of Europe's most intense and tragic episodes of witch-hunting. The trials grew from late medieval lack of modern knowledge and beliefs about harmful magic, but when the Witchcraft Act of 1563 came into force, it transformed scattered accusations into a sustained nationwide campaign of prosecution. It made both practising witchcraft and consulting witches capital offences.

It was incredibly easy to be branded as a witch. Many lived in an era when simply being a woman could lead to accusation. Healers, midwives, and nurses might be suspected of links to the Devil if their treatments worked too well—or not well enough. Accusations also arose from disputes between neighbours, unexplained illness, crop failure, bad weather, or other misfortunes that were attributed to harmful magic. Poverty or low social status made it easy to brand someone as a witch, as was owning or even talking to a cat, or having a scar, mole, or skin tag. Most of those accused were women, although men were also targeted; in Scotland, about 15% of the accused were male.

The first major panic erupted during the North Berwick witch trials (1590–1592), prompted partly by King James VI's belief during the circumstances of "the little ice age" that witches, not climate change, had raised storms to endanger his voyage to Denmark where he planned to marry Anne. His fear of witchcraft and direct involvement in hunts intensified: he questioned suspects, approved torture, and in 1597 published *Daemonologie*, a philosophical and theological defence for the existence of black magic. making witch-hunting a Christian duty.

Between the late 16th and mid-17th centuries, Scotland experienced five major nationwide witch panics: 1590–91, 1597, 1628–31, 1649–50, and 1661–62. Local judicial commissions wielded broad powers and relied heavily on torture—including sleep deprivation, thumbscrews, and pricking for "Devil's marks"—to obtain confessions. These methods produced coerced admissions and led to further arrests.

Scotland's witch hunts were exceptionally severe. Modern estimates suggest that 4,000–6,000 people were tried and more than 2,500 executed, giving Scotland Europe's highest per-capita execution rate—about five times the European average.

By the late 17th century, scepticism about witchcraft grew. This roughly corresponds to the early modern period in Europe, beginning with the Renaissance and Reformation and ending with the start of the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. Across Europe, laws were introduced bringing witch hunts to an end. Judicial authorities increasingly questioned extreme torture-based confessions, and political stability reduced the conditions that had fuelled earlier panics. The last execution in Scotland occurred in 1727.

Scotland confronts this history through memorials, research, and recent pardon campaigns that acknowledge the human cost of the witch hunts and honour those harmed by fear, superstition, and state power. Scotland has transformed the way it remembers people accused of witchcraft. Rather than viewing them through the lens of past superstition, it now recognises these mostly female

victims as casualties of injustice, fear, and state-authorised violence.

Witches of Scotland Tartan

The Witches of Scotland tartan was created in 2025 to honour those persecuted under the Witchcraft Act between 1563 and 1736. Its colours and thread counts carry symbolic meaning: **black and grey** evoke the darkness of the period and the ashes of those executed, while **pink and red** represent the legal tapes that bound the accused and draw attention to continuing systemic injustice. A **three-thread white check** symbolises the campaign's three aims: **Pardon, Apology, and Memorial**. A broad black band of **173 threads** marks the 173 years the Witchcraft Act remained in force, counting both the first and final years.

AI Meets History at Cromarty Museum

Cromarty Museum, in Cromarty on the Moray Firth near Inverness, is partnering with Smartify to launch **Fisherfolk of Cromarty**, with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This free, self-guided digital walking tour brings the town's past to life on the streets where it unfolded, offering visitors, families, and young people an engaging way to explore Cromarty's heritage.

Visitors to the Black Isle museum can explore nine locations across the town, using a smart phone to overlay historic 100-year-old photographs directly onto today's Cromarty and putting the past right into the streets where it happened.

Historically referred to as Fishertown, visitors follow a mapped route through residential lanes, across the Links and down to the harbour. At each stop, a short audio story provides context around the photographs and offers a glimpse into what life was like in Cromarty at the beginning of the 20th century. Their experience is enriched by local history, anecdotes and reflections from local people.

This tour is free and fully self-guided, designed to be explored on foot. It is a marvelous way to see local heritage and the life of Fishertown, including the often-overlooked work of the women in this fishing town.

For those interested in viewing this local heritage site but not planning a trip to Scotland soon, remote viewing available: A full desktop version is available via the Cromarty Museum website for remote users, students, and international audiences.

Peter Knowles, Head of Content at Smartify said: "Augmented Reality and subtle AI animation bring the historic scenes and their people gently to life, creating an immediate, personal connection between Cromarty's past and present. The accompanying audio stories, told by local residents Ronald, Iris, and Arthur, give the whole experience an authentic feel that's truly grounded in the community. It's a powerful example of how creative digital innovation can help regional museums punch well above their weight."

Lübeck Letter

On October 11, 1297, William Wallace and Andrew de Moray wrote a letter to the mayors of Lübeck and Hamburg saying that "The Kingdom of Scotland has, by God's Grace, recovered by battle from the power of the English".

The Lübeck Letter is a rare surviving document announcing that merchants can trade freely in Scottish ports. It was a diplomatic and economic message to the Hanseatic League cities, thanking

them for support and inviting their merchants into Scottish ports.

After the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297, Wallace and Moray became Guardians of Scotland. The Lübeck Letter is both a medieval trade invitation and a rare and direct link to Wallace's political and economic diplomacy— and a tangible reminder of Scotland's diplomatic outreach after the Stirling Bridge victory.

The text, in Latin, is preserved in the National Records of Scotland and is the only known original document issued by Wallace. It bears his seal — the front displaying the Scottish lion rampant and the reverse showing a bow and arrow, thought to be Wallace's own. This is the only surviving seal belonging to Wallace.

The letter was first found in the Lübeck archives in the 1820s. It was often mentioned in books thereafter. In 1942, Lübeck, on the Baltic coast of Germany, was attacked by Allied aircraft. As a result, the town's archives, including the letter, were moved to a salt mine for safety.

At the end of the war, the Soviet army took the papers east. The archives were later handed over to the archive administration of East Germany, but the medieval documents were not among the records. It was assumed that they had been lost.

In the 1970s Lübeck documents were found in the archives of the USSR. In 1990, after some negotiation, the town's medieval records, including Wallace and Murray's letter, were returned to Lübeck.

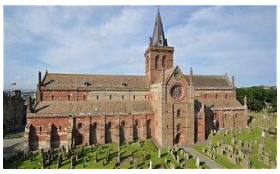
Today, the Lübeck Letter is held in National Records of Scotland and is often displayed in exhibitions, including at the Scottish Parliament

Cathedrals in Scotland

Impressive as they are, castles should not be the only historic buildings on your list of places to visit in Scotland. Scotland also has marvelous cathedrals, some very old with interesting histories, unique architecture, and imposing heights. In many cases they can be toured for the price of a donation. Most have informative written materials, but some have made it even easier to tour their buildings with an app on your smart phone. Here are some examples.

Medieval Glasgow Cathedral is the oldest building in Glasgow. Building began in 1136 and took about 350 years to finish. It is the only Cathedral on the Scottish mainland to have mostly survived intact the 1560 Scottish Reformation. Tours are available, although you may prefer a self-guided audio tour with medieval music in the background. You should allow about 45 minutes to tour inside and double that time if you're climbing up to the Necropolis afterwards.

Access to St. Giles in Edinburgh is along the Royal Mile, but in 1124 when it was built, this location was on the eastern edge of Edinburgh. With its rich history spanning over 900 years, it is older than most of the Old Town. Guided tours are available, but for making your way around at your own pace, you can purchase a 25-minute audio tour at the front desk that you download onto your smart phone.



Located in Kirkwall, Orkney Island, St. Magnus Cathedral is the most northern cathedral in Scotland. Various tours and a detailed guidebook provide information about the Cathedral and its graveyard. Visitors with smart phones or tablets can download an app providing an audio-visual tour of the cathedral. The app provides an array of digital content including images, videos and audio descriptions about the Cathedral.

Best of all, if you are not planning a trip to Scotland soon, some cathedrals offer their apps online and you can tour from the comfort of your easy chair at home.