

President's Message

Dear Members,

It was a good turn-out at our last meeting at Country Day. We were entertained by Peter Geery with a talk on the Clan Lindsay and we also sampled a few little ditties from our resident celeb., Mr Alex (buddin'-Beaton) Sutherland. Many thanks to Pete for his explanations of the goings-on of Clan



Lindsay. It was interesting to hear where the Clan originated and it's development through the centuries. Alex was, as usual, outstanding, with a good balance of humour and seriousness and a full dose of true Scottish hospitality. Remember "wane" is spelt c-h-i-l-d-r-e-n!

It's full steam ahead for the Ceilidh. The phone's been ringing off the hook, so you better git ye'r order in fur a tickit. Kathleen's been practisin' on the piano, "O dear what can the matter be" ... Oh, dear me...! Hope to see you there,

Aw-ra-best, Keith

DID THE EASTER BUNNY COME?

Coincidentally, the pagan festival of the spring equinox corresponds with Christian *Easter*. In the old times, the season of rebirth in Scotland was the feast of *Frigga*. Later, under the influence of the Romans, it was called *Pesse*. The combination of festivals resulted in the importance of the "egg". There was once a pagan egg dance and later the egg became the combined symbol of fertility, purity and resurrection. Hence, the centuries old custom of dying and rolling eggs! Hot cross buns: represented the full moon!

Back in the early days...

Whether you believe "nobles" were heroes or villains probably depends on which stories you've heard. However, the fact is that nobles were a necessary and very functional group in developing societies. In Scotland, there were Earls and Barons. Earl was the only noble title to predate the Normans. Barons held their land *in liberam baronium* of the King. They were entitled to wear the scarlet Cap of Maintenance, signifying their right to exercise jurisdiction in their own mini-kingdoms. Although you will see some variations, including a variety of gilt coronets which became popular, the scarlet cap remains the basic badge of Scots feudal barony.

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Events Program. Come along and enjoy...

Another enjoyable and entertaining night was had at the March monthly meeting (Mary Institute/Country Day). "*The Clan Lindsay*" by Peter Geery was very informative and interesting, followed by Alex Sutherland who gave a remarkable performance in the singing (and leading the singing) of a varied collection of Scottish folk songs.

April 29th, 7:30pm: YES! It's our annual CEILIDH.

With a live Ceilidh band, participation (songs, poetry, stories, jokes, music...), beverages, snacks & stovies.

Raffle: donations for prizes are still welcome.

Rumour has it that Camerons Scots meat pies can be purchased.

At WHISPERING HILLS CLUB HOUSE

12545 Markaire, St Louis 63146

(off Olive, west of I-270, on Ross or Whispering Hills)

May 22nd, 7:30pm: Monthly Meeting at Country Day/Mary Institute
"*Scottish Heritage with a Twist!*"

Dr Tom Forrester and Dr Jim McLaren

with a musical session by Diane Ladendecker.

June 26th: Picnic and Scottish B-B-Q.

(location is being worked on, hope to have some
"mini-games" for kids both small and big!)

April 30th: 2:30-5:00pm: 17th Annual English Tea (\$7 advance, \$8 at door)

Beefeater Chapter of Daughters of the British Empire.

For information/reservations contact,

Peggy Flynn 314 423-2185, or Helen Gerleman 314 429-6917.

Recall that great sound of the pipes and drums of the St Louis Invera'an Pipeband? Well, here's what they're up to these days....

May 20 & 21: Old Mines, MO. Frontier Rendezvous.

May 20: Lindenwood College, MO. Commencement.

June 10: Kansas City, MO. Highland Games (competition).

June 17: Chicago, IL. Highland Games (competition).

July 14 & 15: St Jacob, IL. Parade and show.

July 22: Ft Wayne, IN. Highland Games (competition).

Sept 23: St Michael/St George's, St Louis. Church Service.

Oct 7: Glencoe, MO. Celtic Festival.

Oct 14: Atlanta, GA. Highland Games (competition).

Oct 21: St Peter's Church, Ladue. Kirkin' o' the Tartans.

Oct 28: Grace Church, Kirkwood. Kirkin' o' the Tartans.

Your support and encouragement is welcomed.

**We still need
volunteers to
help make this
exciting program
happen.**

Please call:

D. Duffy 532-7587

or

P. Gowran 968-5429

Ghosts and Ghoulies

There seems to be more ghosts in Scotland than any other country: probably because they like the weather, and castles are a great place for ghosts to hang out! So, you don't believe? Well, it's easy to say that here in St Louis, but I've yet to see the person who can walk alone around an old castle on a dark, windy Scottish night and not feel that presence! Scotland also seems to have a high proportion of female ghosts. Lady Anne Douglas (Drumlanrig Castle, Wigtonshire) has created a stir on several occasions by appearing with her head in her hand. The Cummings girl (Rait Castle, Nairnshire), who has no hands and a bloody nightgown, makes frequent appearances. Green is also quite common as a ghostly colour, and at least five "Green Ladies" are known: at Fyvie Castle, Ballindalloch Castle, Crathes Castle, Ashintully Castle, Huntingtower Castle, and Newton Castle. Of course, Stirling Castle has a "pink" lady who visits the soldiers.

One of the most famous ghosts is Duncan Campbell (Inverawe House, Argyllshire). One night Duncan's cousin Donald was murdered by a Stewart, who happened to be a guest in Duncan's house at the time. It is said that the ghost of the murdered Donald appeared and begged Duncan to murder the Stewart in revenge. Being a good Scot, Duncan refused to betray the trust of his guest, so the ghost of Donald said "Meet me at Ticonderoga". Now Duncan had no idea what this meant at the time. Three years later (1758), Duncan sailed for America with the Black Watch to fight in the Seven Years War. Then the amazing thing happened: he was killed in a battle at Ford Ticonderoga, and his ghost returned to haunt Inverawe House to this day.

Scottish "supernaturals" are not all of the frightening kind. Fairies and wee folk abound, and often visibly appear to children - although the signs are clear for all to see. Brownies (or "*gruagachs*") are fairies who care for cattle in the Highlands, and it is not unknown for farmers to leave little saucers of milk for them. The wee people are generally termed *Daoine Sith* in Gaelic, and a famous 18th century sighting, in Inverness-shire, by a young shepherd boy and his sister has been recorded: upon seeing a long line of tiny shaggy horses bearing riders in tartan jackets and long grey cloaks, the boy asked, "what are ye"? One answered him, "Not of the Race of Adam, and the People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland"! The wee folk remain today in the thoughts and actions of many Scots:

*He wha' tills the fairy green
Nae luck again shall hae.
An' he wha' spills the fairy ring
Betide him want and wae.*

*But wha' gaes by the fairy ring
Nae dule nor pine shall see;
An' he wha' cleans the fairy ring
An easy daith shall dee.*

*...he wha' cleans
the fairy ring
An easy daith
shall dee.*

CALEDONIA CORNER

There was a time in recent memory when "Black Gold" was the hot topic in Scotland! In 1970, exploration rigs found gas, then oil, in the North Sea. Nigg Bay, and the quaint granite city of Aberdeen were transformed almost overnight. Tremendous debates raged over "ownership" of this valuable natural resource: some may remember the posters "It's Scotland's Oil"! The Scottish National Party made a revival and almost took Scotland to modern-day independence, but eventually had to settle for larger representation in the British Parliament. Needless to say the press joined the ranks of the debate, and not always on the side of Scotland. Since we are Scots and enjoy a good humorous story (even at our own expense), I take the liberty of "re-publishing" some of the commentary "visions" which were created about the Scots - should we be allowed to claim the oil!.....

... It is not inconceivable that the affairs of "South Britain" will be settled in a couple of afternoons every year by the Edinburgh Parliament, thus reversing completely the system which has hitherto existed. It is even possible that the other nations of the European Community will be taking their orders from Scotland, once the difficult problem of communicating with the "Arabs in kilts" have been overcome.

With her stranglehold on the two most precious liquids known to man - oil and whisky - Scotland is now the most powerful nation in the west. Under the newly-concluded Gleneagles Treaty, oil from the North Sea will be supplied only to those nations willing to concede moral, intellectual and spiritual superiority to the Scots. The more oil a nation needs, the more Burns Nights it will have to hold... The Guardian.

**..thousands of
fabulously rich
Scots....**

Wha wad ken?

First to answer all three wins one of the Society flag pins.

1. What's the most western island?
2. What is "Torness"?
3. What are "Pool Ewe Gardens" well-known for?

All replies to Jim McLaren
2214 Stoneridge Terr Ct,
Chesterfield, MO 63017
or phone: (314) 532-5986

Congratulations to Diane Radford, who wins a flag pin, after some previous close-calls (*Thank you for staying with it, well done!*) Answers:

1. "Murrayfield": National rugby stadium.
2. "Black Watch": Regiment and a tartan.
3. "Doon the water": sailing down the Clyde

Please send in any interesting questions, with your name / phone number.

Thousands of fabulously rich Scots football (soccer) fans roared into Heathrow yesterday in their executive jets, and piled into taxis for Wembley. The fans were mobbed by well-dressed Englishmen begging for alms. "Ye didna want to know us when we came by coach and were sick all over the Underground", complained a fan while throwing bundles of fivers to the crowd. "This is a real poverty-stricken country", remarked a pipe-layer from "Millionaires Row", Peterhead, "why can ye no find yer ain oil"!

"Even Everton fans were never like this", commented a Football Association spokesman. "but if we want our trickle of oil from the North then we'll have to learn to live with it".... The Daily Mirror.

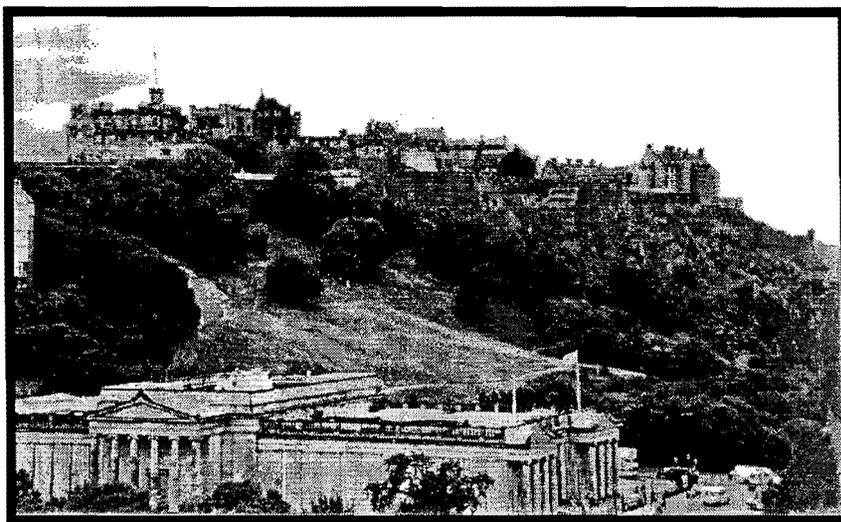
No further bulletins are being issued since the Loch Ness monster has recovered from oil poisoning, after escaping into the North Sea! Punch.

CALEDONIA CORNER

Most of the castles that tourists visit today are spectacular in structure but somewhat dismal in colour. Greyish bare stonework seems to be the favorite of the modern interior decorators. In years past, when these castles were more than just a tourist stop, the interior walls were actually quite bright. It was common to paint bright heraldry on the walls, and to hang emblazoned tapestries around the great rooms. It seems strange that these walls are left bare today, when the originals were likely much more attractive and interesting!

The Castle of all castles.....

... had the nine of diamonds in his coat of arms...



OK, you guessed it! It's Edinburgh Castle, with the National Gallery of Scotland in the foreground, but does anyone know where the picture was taken from? (*I'll buy a drink for the first person to give me the correct answer*).

The "Curse of Scotland" was the term given by many to the "Nine of Diamonds", and it brought fright to anyone who had it dealt to them in a card game. Why? Well, one story refers to a French card game called "Comette" which Mary Queen of Scots brought to Scotland in the 16th century. Apparently, the game became a national past-time, and the nine of diamonds was the winning card. Enthusiasm for the game reached fever pitch, and entire fortunes, estates and castles were lost on that single card - hence the development of the expression.

The story continues.... that the First Earl of Stair, who was deeply involved in planning the Massacre of Glencoe (1692), had a nine of diamonds in his coat of arms!

And yet again.... that during the second Jacobite Rebellion (1746), the Duke of Cumberland wrote an order to his men that no mercy should be shown in the upcoming battle at Culloden - the order was written on the back of a playing card. Yes, it was the nine of diamonds, that curse of Scotland!

TOASTS & THINGS

While not entirely Scottish, I thought the following poem was timely....
(it was sent to me by a friend in South Africa, who wisely remembered it was spring up here - after all he's Scottish, of the Clan Findlay. Besides, who can resist when you have contributions from the other side of the world!)

The Vernal Equinox

*I plant a garden every spring; Start out with that vernal zing;
I buy my seeds, prepare the soil, Don't mind the hours of arduous toil.
And then I carefully prayerfully sow, And wait and wait for things to grow;
But by the time seeds germinate, I am ready to terminate,
For I am thoroughly disenchanted, With what comes up - I never planted!*

**You're the gowk
and I'm nane.**

Did you celebrate April 1st in the traditional manner? In the old calendar, April 1st closed the octave of days at the end of the vernal equinox, and became a day for jokes and fooling around. In Scotland it's called "Hunt the Gowk"! But it only lasts till noon, after which time any jokes receive the reply:

*The Day of the Gowk is gane,
You're the gowk and I'm nane.*

Membership in our Society has improved this year, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Peter Geery, and your assistance in bringing the Society to the attention of friends and relatives. We now have 201 members and 137 families in our Society - isn't that great news!

Let's all keep up this effort. Remember that the more members we have the more dues will be available to cover the cost of overheads, and promoting Scottish events in the St Louis area (ie. fewer price increases in the events which we run, and all enjoy attending).

Enroll a friend, or Neighbour: Contact Peter Geery, (314) 227 2785.

Thank you for your participation and help...

Enjoy reading our newsletter, the Thistle Times? We need you to continue sending in stories or jokes or even printed material of interest. Suggestions and ideas are also welcome — we want to do the best job possible for everyone!

*Jim McLaren, 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Court, Chesterfield, MO 63017
or call (314) 532-5986.*

**You're making
a difference...**

Many thanks to those who've already sent me some excellent material, especially Ann Bain for the article this month, and please keep up the active involvement.