

President's Message

Dear Members,
We had around 250 people attend our big night on the 28th and it was a great Burns Night, a spectacular celebration of our Bard, Rabbe Burns. Jim McLaren gave a moving and yet informative immortal memory, painting Rabbe as a farmer with his trials and tribulations tae make ends meet. The ode to the haggis was truly and rightly, seriously, and em...melodramatic!.. Jim Duffy doesn't need to go to acting school, he's a natural! Talking about natural, what about that haggis: truly magnificent,



obviously a freshly harvested example, flown in at great expense and kept alive until the last minute by the caring hands of our professional haggis minders. The toast to the Lassies by Richard Lodge was just right but the reply from Annabel Blackiston was, well.. I thought a wee bit cutting! The pipeband performance was the best I have heard, and the dancers showed their usual high standards. All through the event we were supported by Rick and Dee Ubel on the keyboards and sound system. Our out of town entertainer (frae Glesgie) was keen to keep the audience in the mood and she did a great job.

So many people to thank for keeping us all entertained, especially our M.C. Alex Sutherland. He put in another great performance, cracking a few jokes here and there and keeping the evening running in fine fashion.

Denise Duffy was the leader and brains behind the whole evening: a new high water mark in organizing - thanks to you and your team for a great job well done.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for supporting the event and coming out on what always seems to be one of the coldest nights in winter.

You'll see in the program that we have a few get togethers before the next big function - our Ceilidh. Better get prak-ti-sin, dig out the music and loosen the vocals!

Aw-ra-best, Keith

Back in the early days...

They say that America was the cultural mixing pot, but Scotland went through a similar experience: albeit a bit earlier. By the end of the 13th century, all the ingredients for a "modern Scot" were present. Fermenting together were Picts, Irish, Britons, Angles, Vikings, Normans, with a dash of Flemings and Dutch. So, if you can trace your ancestry back to Scotland then you're maybe half way back to the origins of your bloodline! It was such combinations that created a great Nation with multi-talented people, many with the ambition to wander the world in search of additional cultures to assimilate. Of course, this may also explain the complex mixture called "Scotch", and its many subtle flavours.

inside...

Events Program

Scottish Battles

Caledonia Corner

Toasts & Things

Other really good stuff!

Events Program. Come along and enjoy...

There's no been a night like that for a while! Wasn't that Burns Dinner just great. Thanks to everyone for making it a night to remember.

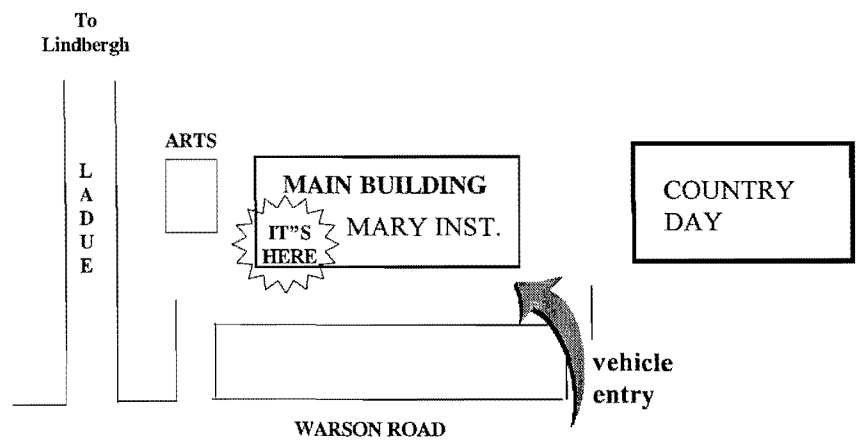
February 27th: Guest speaker Maureen Meickle, Fullbright Visiting Professor of British History at Westminster College, Fulton, MO.
Topic: *Reflections on the Borders of Scotland.*

At Mary Institute/Country Day School.

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

Please call:

**D. Duffy 532-7587
or
P. Gowran 968-5429**



March 27th: Monthly Meeting. At Mary Institute/Country Day School.
Including: *The Clan Lindsay* by Peter Geery.
Song (and guitar) of Scotland by Alex Sutherland.

April 29th: Ceilidh. At Whispering Hills Club House.

Proverbs are always interesting, and amusing: no less so in Scotland.

A' are gude lasses, but where do the ill wives come frae?

Bees wi' honey in their mouths hae stings in their tails. (Beware smoothies).

Dinna gut ye'r fish a'fore ye catch them. (Like counting chickens).

Friday flit, short time sit. (Considered bad luck to move house on Fridays).

He that blows up the stoor (dust) *fills his ain een* (eyes).

Scottish Battles (1314 - 1746)

A few of the more well-known battles that were part of the development of Scotland

CULLODEN - 1746. The 4500 Jacobite army was no match for Cumberland's 8800 Redcoats with strong artillery support. The Scots were torn apart by the 3lb cannon-balls, and lines of muskets. This was the end of the '45 Rebellion and the last battle fought in Scotland.

KILLIECRANKIE - 1689.

The Pass of Killiecrankie is a spectacular gorge, and was the site of a confusing battle. Dundee led Jacobite clans against MacKay who led the "government army" (Redcoats plus some "lowland" clans). Some 3000 Redcoats were killed, but nearly 1000 Highlanders and Dundee also died. It was to be 37 years before the next battle. (Sherrifmuir, 1715)

BANNOCKBURN - 1314.

Robert the Bruce and 5000 fiery Scots took on 3000 English cavalry and 15,000 footmen. Over 2 days of intense fighting, the Scots, helped by the natural terrain, "*sent them hameward tae think again.*" Scotland's proudest and most famous victory.

DECLARATION OF ARBROATH

In 1320, the people of Scotland indicated a desire to be free and an intention to remove any King who gave up their rights to England. This remains the most important document in Scottish history.

TOBERMORY BAY - 1480.

In between fighting the English, it was not uncommon for the clans to fight each other. Lymphads were fast fighting ships, similar to Viking longboats: Clan Donald had over 100. This sea-battle involving various clans was so furious that the bay itself turned red with blood. (called "bloody bay").

PRESTONPANS - 1745.

Bonnie Prince Charlie returned from France and raised an army to put a Stuart back on the throne of Scotland. The 2000 strong army met the 3000 English just east of Edinburgh. In a fierce surprise attack Charlie's army won in less than 30 minutes. This was to be the last Scots victory. The same army marched nearly to London before returning home, to be defeated one year later at Culloden.

ANCRUM MOOR - 1545.

An English army of 3000 destroyed Melrose and began raiding around. Some 1500 Scots gathered under the wily Border fighter, Buccleuch, and met them on the moor. The day ended with 800 English dead and 1000 prisoners taken.

HALIDON HILL - 1333.

Regent Douglas marched 20,000 men to relieve the siege of Berwick. The English were waiting, and had positioned their long-bows on high ground. An estimated 14,000 Scots died.

FLODDEN - 1513. Some 80,000 men marched south, but James IV was never one to hurry. By the time they met the English Army many had already died of the plague. (which was rampant in Edinburgh at the time). The English had time to summon reinforcements: 10,000 Scots were killed and James was taken prisoner.



CALEDONIA CORNER

Is there a St Valentine's Day in Scotland? The festival of love and lovers took its name from the Roman priest and martyr Valentine who was beheaded in the year 270, by Emperor Claudius II. In those days, eligible young men and women wrote their names on pieces of paper and placed them in two boxes - one for each sex. As the names were alternately drawn, each was the other's "amator" for the year. It seems that a similar custom was widespread in Scotland. Thomas Pennant mentions in his "Tours of Scotland" (1774) how "*young people draw Valentines and from them collect their fortune in the nuptial state.*" Robert Burns wrote a poem in 1788 about such a custom: "*For thrice I drew ane without failing...*" When the slips of paper were drawn the young people exchanged gifts, and from this developed the custom of giving letters and valentine cards. Sir Walter Scott writes in his "The Fair Maid of Perth": "*Tomorrow is St Valentine's Day, when every bird chooses a mate. I will plague you no longer now, providing you will let me see you from your window tomorrow when the sun first peeps over the eastern hill, and give me right to be your Valentine for the year.*"

**Beautiful,
glorious
Scotland....**

February in St Andrews is a bit too cold for golf, especially when the North Sea "blaws." So, the University students there started a festival of art, music, poetry, drama, and exhibitions which has grown into a fully fledged event. The Kate Kennedy Club, and the Byre Theatre, play sustaining roles. Of course, the students still do all those things that students do on cold, dark Scottish nights: eg. drink warm beer!

Wha wad ken?

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

1. What's "Ailsa Craig" famous for?
2. What's an "Arbroath smokie"?
3. When was oil first pumped ashore, (at Aberdeen) from the North Sea.

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

Congratulations to Hal Hamilton, for being first to answer correctly:

1. Battle of Bannockburn: June 23, 1314.
2. Black Isle: area around Tain (N. of Moray)
3. Burns statue: Skinker & Forsyth

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

A slightly shorter version of the "Thistle Times" this month: instead of reading another page, please take the time to fill-out the attached questionnaire about our recent Burns Dinner.

"Beautiful, glorious Scotland, has spoilt me for every other country!" Mary Todd Lincoln (1818-82), U.S. First Lady. From The Mary Lincoln Letters, 1869.

As always, we thank you for your participation. Also, we ask that you continue to make this an exciting Society by sending us interesting stories, articles, etc., by attending events, and by lobbying your friends to join our group.

Was that a "groundhog" or a "haggis" that saw its shadow the other day!?