

SCOTTISH ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS



PRESIDENT'S EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

Wisna' that Halloween party fun. We had a small but enthusiastic group participating in the ancient festival of dressing up in silly costume and dookin' fur apples. From the wee weans to the big bairns, it was a sight to be seen —and you can see some of it in the pictures (courtesy of Tom Brennan's trusty hand) reproduced throughout this edition of the Thistle Times. We also added to our usual traditions by having two professional clowns amuse the gathering in fine fashion —thanks to Marilyn Geery for arranging their participation at our festive occasion.



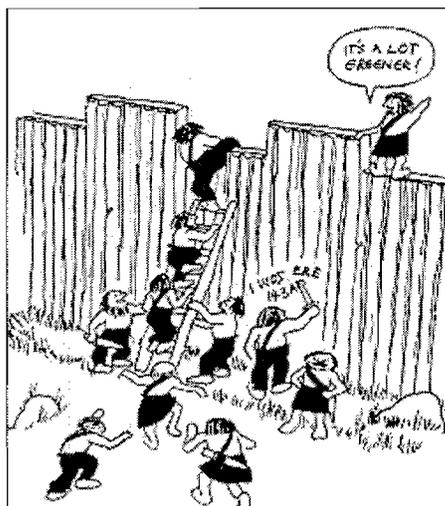
Another big event this month was, of course, that American democratic tradition in which President Bill Clinton became the first second term Democratic President since Franklin Roosevelt! You know, we all have our differences of opinion —but it's interesting to see history in the making. After all, we ourselves are a very romantic and historical Society, and proud to be that. It was almost a Scottish characteristic the way that Dole and Clinton went after each other during the election build-up, yet when the dust settled, it was great to hear Dole tell his supporters that Clinton was a capable leader, and hear Clinton thank Dole for his 25 plus years of service to the U.S. That's democracy, and that's why we choose to live here, where we can

have opinions and the freedom to maintain our cultural heritage from years past.

Talking of debate, your Board members have been hard at work again, and I can assure you that the program this year is going to be the best ever. A lot of people give their time to turn ideas into real events that we can all enjoy. I ask you to make those endeavors worthwhile by participating, and enjoying our

Back in the Early Days

Hadrian's Wall is a famous landmark today, but did you ever think what it might have looked like when first encountered:



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Upcoming Events

The "heart" of Melrose

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Event

St Andrew's Country Dance Evening

November 16th, 7:00pm. Dog Museum, Queeny Park. This is a fun night of informal Scottish dancing. No need to be an expert. Reservations via Kathleen Parle: 314



the program for the rest of the year is shaping up:

November 24th (**new date**): Kirking o' the Tartan at St Peter's Church, Ladue Rd. St Andrew Society members are welcome to join their Kirking.

December 16th, 6:30pm: Christmas Party
Country Day/MI School, Old Warson Rd.

January 25th: Burns Dinner, Adams Mark Hotel

February: Historical and contemporary clothing. Country Day/Mary Institute School.

March: Open. We welcome any ideas and suggestions.

April: Annual Ceilidh May: Picnic & Scottish BBQ June: Pool Party & Games

**We welcome
Ideas, Volunteers
Contact
Marilyn Geery
Tel: 314 227 2785**



our hard-working Board members for this year have already made a great start, with some new ideas and plans.

We are trying to take a modern team-based approach to how the Board is organized, and this is shown on the right.

If you would like to help with any of the events, or have comments on how we are doing, please feel free to contact myself or one of the Board members.

DIRECTIONAL

T. Brennan*, Historian
W. Nicoll, Planning

CURRENT EVENTS

M. Geery*, Prog. Coord.
P. Gowran, Assoc. Prog.
A. Sutherland, Entert/music
G. Steadman, PR
V. Masterson, Pipeband

PRES OFFICE

J. McLaren*, Pres.
D. Duffy*, VP

OPERATIONAL

K. Parle*, Past Pres.
A. McLaren*, Treasurer
P. Geery*, Membership
A. Stirrat*, Honorary
H. Hamilton*, Attorney
T. Hunter*, Chaplain
C. Sutherland*, Corres Secr.
T. Gowran*, Record Secr.

(* denotes voting Board member)

The "Heart" of Melrose

Not many people know that the lovely Border town of Melrose was where rugby "sevens" originated. Rugby sevens is a very fast-paced and exciting (if not exhausting) version of the typical 15-a-side game, and this event now has it's own world series. But, if you have ever visited Melrose there is no doubt you will have vivid memories of the great Melrose Abbey.

Founded in 1136, the Cistercian Abbey was created by monks who had travelled from Iona by way of Lindisfarne. The Abbey was destroyed in the Wars of Independence (1322) and was re-built by Bruce, only to be reduced to ruins again in 1544. Due largely to it's fine sculptural work the importance of the Abbey was recognized and a restoration program was encouraged by Sir Walter Scott in 1822. Over the years, there were stories about Melrose Abbey being the burial place of the heart of Robert the Bruce, this having been carried back from the "Holy Land". Indeed, the first confirmations of this were during some excavations in 1921, but the casket was re-buried at that time under the direction of His Majesty's Office of Works.

On September 3rd, 1996, archeological excavations of the Chapter House floor of Melrose Abbey, re-found the lead container. Within this casket, lay a smaller conical casket about 10 by 4 inches. While no one is absolutely sure, the Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic Scotland said " it is a very important artifact". Within the outer container, the 1921 investigators left a message saying, "enclosed leaden casket containing a heart was found beneath the Chapter House floor..." Experts agree that it is highly probably that this casket contains the heart of Robert the Bruce. The casket will not be opened and will be again re-buried at Melrose Abbey.

If you have the opportunity, you should visit this site. If not for the fact that you visited the heart of a great Scot, then for the pleasure of fantastic ruins of a great Abbey in a town where the fish and chips are a delight — and, if you time it right, you can see a wonderful game of rugby.

Some facts about Robert the Bruce: born 1274 son of Earl of Carrick and Annandale; became King at age 31, and died in 1329 in Cardross, propbalby of leprosy; married Isabella of Mar and their son was King David II: was defeated at Methven and hid amongst the hills where he saw a spider making a web — at that moment he vowed to to free Scotland for it's own destiny; three of his brothers were executed by Edward I of England; at Bannockburn on 24 June, 1314, Bruce's Scottish army had their greatest victory; he died in 1329 and his body was buried at Dunfermline. Apparently, his heart (in a lead casket) was taken on the Crusades, by the Black Douglas, and was subsequently returned and buried in Melrose Abbey.



Was it a character, complete with earth walking vehicle, from the Independence Day invasion? Or another great Halloween costume?

And how about this character? Straight from the "fairy hill" of Tomnahurich!



The Brahan Seer

The Scotland of today, with its “black gold” and “silicon glen” seems far removed from the legends and tales that describe the culture. While the Druids, or “seers of the Gaidhealtachd”, are long gone there are many tales of the great gift possessed by those with the “Dha Shealladh” -- *two sights*. Highland Seers were noted for their ability to 'see' events happening a great distance away and to have the capacity to accurately predict certain futures.

The legends seem to be more than just fairy tales with many confirmed instances of the powers of the Seers. Of course, other cultures have also had their prophets a la Nostradamus, but the remarkable fact about Highland Seers is how frequent the stories are. Some say the Church played a role in the loss of such abilities by denouncing the practice as being evil, others claim that modern life is not close enough to nature to allow “reading” of the signs. Of the notable Highland Seers, one in particular seems to have had far reaching “sight”. He was called Coinneach Odhar (Kenneth MacKenzie), the legendary Brahan Seer of Kintail.

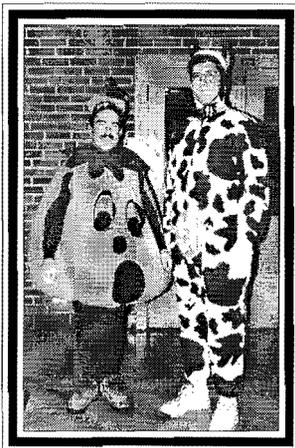
Born on the Isle of Lewis at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the “sidhe” led this young boy to a strange holed stone which endowed him with the power to see into the future. Many of his prophecies, recited through the generations, have come true. A few examples are:

When walking over Culloden Moor one time, he predicted a great slaughter would take place for the Highland clans, which indeed came to pass in the Battle of Culloden in 1746. He foresaw the coming of railways, through prediction of “black bridleless horses”.

He made a number of predictions concerning the Highland Clearances: “the day will come when the Big Sheep will overrun the country to its northmost shore”; and: “the clans will become so effeminate as to flee from their native hills before an army of sheep”.

The Brahan Seer foresaw the age of piped gas and water: “the day will come when fire and water shall run in streams through all the streets and lanes of Inverness”. He made two predictions concerning “Tomnahurich”, the fairy hill of Inverness. He said that: “ships will one day sail round the back of it” — in 1847 the Caledonian canal was built. Also, he said that “one day the Fairy Hill would be under lock and key and the fairies secured within” — in 1860 it was made into a cemetery.

The Brahan Seer’s predictions were too bizarre for the people of his own era, and he was cruelly burnt to death in a barrel of tar on the Black Isle. There is to this day a stone marking the place. It is said that just before he went into the barrel, he threw his precious stone into the loch, saying that those who brought this crime upon him would never possess the stone nor ever know its secret.



Here’s a quiz about the Halloween Party.

One of these pictures has clowns.
One of these pictures has clowns with pumkin mosaic virus, and a bad case of mad cow disease.



Caledonia Corner

Ever wonder what all those American Football (not the soccer type) players do when their teams don't make it into post-season games in the NFL? Well it turns out that the "World League" is active and growing in Europe. Scotland not only fields a team, but the "Scottish Claymores" beat the Frankfurt Galaxy 32-27 last June, at Murrayfield, to win the World Bowl.

At the start of this year's NFL season, 17 Claymores players were in training camps for 12 NFL teams across the U.S. — 13 actually made it and suit-up for teams from the Chicago Bears, to the Kansas City Chiefs, to the San Francisco 49ers. Troy Ridgley made it to the St. Louis Rams teams and is currently on injured reserve.

Meanwhile, back in Scotland, plans are already underway for another big season (starts April 1997). Over 60 local players are going through national trials for 7 places on the Claymores team. The current local hero is Scott Couper (wide receiver) who played for both the national side and the All-World League team. Scotland's World Bowl winning coach, Jim Criner, believes that as the grass-roots effort improves, Scotland can produce several top class players.

It's interesting to watch all the young kids in the U.S. trying to improve their soccer (Scottish Football), while the young kids in Scotland are all trying to improve their football: American style rather than fitba'!

Wha wad ken?

First to answer all three wins a Society flag pin.

1. In what year did Logie Baird first demonstrate his invention (television).
2. Who sang "Roamin' in the Gloamin".
3. What is "Lammas"?

All replies to Jim McLaren:

Phone: (314) 532 5986

Fast e-mail: mclaren@inverizon.com

Snail mail: 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Ct,
Chesterfield, MO 63017.

Answers to the previous quiz:

1. All Saints Day, and the eve is Halloween.
2. Battle of Stirling Bridge: 1297
3. Glenkinchie distillery is SE of Edinburgh

Looking forward to hearing from you: answers or interesting questions welcome.

Not to be outdone by the lads, the lassies are also getting in on this act. Alisa Hall is taking over from former Oakland Raiderette Ramona Braganza as choreographer of the ...
....Weir Scottish Claymores Cheerleaders!

Heard some more of those Scottish nicknames, that we printed last month, and they are pretty bad. However, one that is typical of Scottish humor is:

An old hardened shipyard worker on Clydeside had lost an eye years ago. His mates called him "Aladdin" — because he had only one lamp!

The popular rock group, "The Grateful Dead" have made quite an impression with their concerts all around the world. What's interesting is when they influence different cultures at the same time, witness:

...a Mexican street artist at the Edinburgh Festival drew a picture of a pipeband in which the pipers and drummers were all skeletons dressed in tartan. Weird, eh?

Well he had also made up a title for this work of art...

70 ASYS & THINGS

Congratulations to Anne Gough of Ballindalloch, Morayshire! She was one of the 3000 runners from all over the world who completed the 26 miles from Marathon to Athens on October 20th. The event was held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the modern Olympics, and followed the same route that the messenger, Pheidippedes had taken when he ran to report the Greek victory over the Persians in 490 BC.

*In search of lodgins we did slide,
To find a place where we could bide;
There was eighty-twa o' us inside
In a single room on Rothesay, O.
We a' lay doon to tak' our ease,
When somebody happened for to sneeze,
And he wakened half a million fleas
In a single room in Rothesay, O.*



Recent expeditions to Loch Ness have failed to find any evidence of the legendary beast.

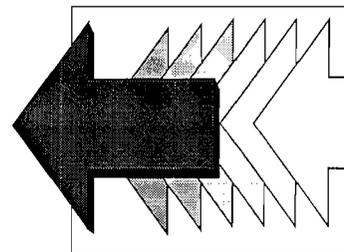
Can you help them out?

YOUR DUES ARE DUE

If you haven't already paid, please send those in.

Know anyone interested in joining, send us their number.

DUES & Leads To: Peter Geery, (314) 227 2785.



Thank you for your participation and help...

Hope you all enjoyed reading our very own newsletter, the Thistle Times.

Comments, and new material to the Editor:

Jim McLaren, 2214 Stoneridge Terrace Court, Chesterfield, MO 63017

or call (314) 532-5986, or e-mail: mclaren@inverizon.com.

Website address is <http://www.inverizon.com/scotlink>