

HEATHER BELL

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALEDONIAN & ST. ANDREWS SOCIETY OF SEATTLE

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NEXT GATHERING

Members of Caledonian & St. Andrew's Society will continue to gather using the electronic app Zoom for the next several months, due to the current health crisis and prohibitions on large gatherings of people.

Our next gathering is Sunday, April 11th, at 2:00pm. An e-mailed link will be sent to everyone who has computer access a few days in advance of this date. You can also join by clicking on this link or copying and pasting this address into your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/713418301?pwd=K1ZUQnBOSE53YURUYjE4SW4ySjlxQT09>

You can participate by phone by calling 1-253-215-8782 and entering the meeting ID: 713 418 301 and then the passcode: 004905. For those without a camera on your computer, you can do both, letting you see everyone on the computer and connecting with people on your phone.

APRIL PROGRAM



Entertainment for the April 11th gathering will be a musical performance by Red McWilliams. Red has been a staple of local highland games for many years. He combines a percussive guitar with a rich baritone voice and a

positive attitude to entertain crowds at many Scottish Highland Games, Irish and Celtic festivals, renaissance faires, as well as in coffee houses, pubs, clubs, and restaurants. His repertoire ranges from ballads to patriotic to historical music, punctuated by off the wall comments. You can keep up with him on his Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/redmcwilliams

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Plan ahead to join us each month for gatherings on Zoom. We will have a variety of local, national, and international talent for the program.

May 2: Seamus Gagne, harpist

June 13: Charlie Zahm, balladeer (returning)

FACEBOOK

The Caledonians have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/seattlecaledonians/?ref=bookmarks>

Diana Smith frequently posts interesting articles and notices, so check back often.

SUNSHINE REPORT

Bonnie reminds people that she does not have e-mail, so please call her when you have information about Caledonians who are ill or passed away. Her phone is 425-806-3734.

Calendar of Seattle Area Scottish Events

Several highland games that had been cancelled in 2020 are also **cancelled in 2021**, including the following:

Tacoma – May 22

Bellingham – June 5

Mount Vernon – July 10-11

Seattle – July 23-25

There is not enough information about Spokane, Prosser and Kelso yet to know what their plans are.

Recap of the March Caledonian Gathering



Maggie and Mike McKinney performed for the March gathering on Zoom from their home studio in

Florida. They are well known in the Florida area at highland games where they frequently perform as wandering minstrals. It was 80° in Florida that day and they had turned off their air conditioning so we could hear them without its background noise, a generous action on their part! They were happy to chat with us both during their performance and afterward.

Articles and Topics About Scotland and Things Scottish

Information based on articles in *The Scottish Banner* and using *Wikipedia*.

Tariffs on Scotch Whisky Suspended

A new agreement to suspend the 25% tariff by the U.S. on Scotch Whisky was made on March 5th. The U.S. is reciprocating on a move made by the United Kingdom when it left the E.U. on January 1 to suspend tariffs on U.S. goods.

Increased tariffs had been a major component of the last U.S. administration's trade policy. Wine and spirits were hit particularly hard.

The Biden administration is not making final changes, but agreed to lift tariffs for an initial period of four months.

Exports of Scotch Whisky dropped by 35% over the months since the tariffs were put in place in October 2019. What made things especially frustrating for food and drink industries was that the tariffs were merely collateral damage. The original dispute leading to tariffs was over subsidies to Boeing and Airbus!

The hope is that this action is the first step in returning to normal trade relations, although there is some concern that this is short-term and issues may worsen by the end of the four months. On June 1st, U.K. tariffs on imports of some American distilled spirits are slated to double to 50%. If this occurs, the U.S. will likely reinstate its tariff on Scottish spirits and raise it to match.

Allure vs. Reality for Scottish Islands

During the past year of unprecedented confinement due to the coronavirus pandemic, many in Scotland turned to their islands, bastions of timeless wonder, as a way to escape the virus spreading in more populated areas.

Since the 18th century, life on the islands was seen as antiquated, yet beautiful, where one could escape the distractions of the modern world. They were exotic places, frozen in time, and sheltered from the complexities of the present. Islands attracted visitors who were seeking a different level of beauty and physical experience than they could have at home. They came, they loved their experiences, and they took pleasant memories home.

However, the reality of island life for residents is starkly different from that experienced by those who only visit for a time and then leave. The issue is not merely the dearth of industry and well-paying jobs on many islands. There also is a housing crisis caused by tourism on the larger islands. This housing crisis forces many younger residents to leave the islands as so many housing units are turned into Bed and Breakfasts to accommodate the tourist trade, leaving no places for young people to live or houses to buy. House prices have skyrocketed, putting the few available

for sale out of the reach of younger people. Some have likened it to an “economic clearance.”

Hunt the Gowk Day



April 1st in Scotland is Hunt-the-Gowk Day. A Gowk is a Scottish term for “cuckoo”, an emblem of simpletons, and thus a “gowk” is the butt of any practical joke. Unlike in other countries, Hunt-the-Gowk Day is uniquely a two-day event. The first day people are sent on phony errands, with

the second day allegedly devoted exclusively to pranks involving the posterior region of the body. There apparently also is Scottish Country Dance for this day, called—wait for it—“Hunting the Gowk”.

The Pineapple

The pineapple is a tropical fruit indigenous to South America, where it was cultivated for many centuries. Introduced into Europe in the 17th century, the pineapple became a significant cultural icon of luxury. Pineapples were first grown in Scotland in 1731. Because they were an exotic fruit, they were considered a symbol of wealth.

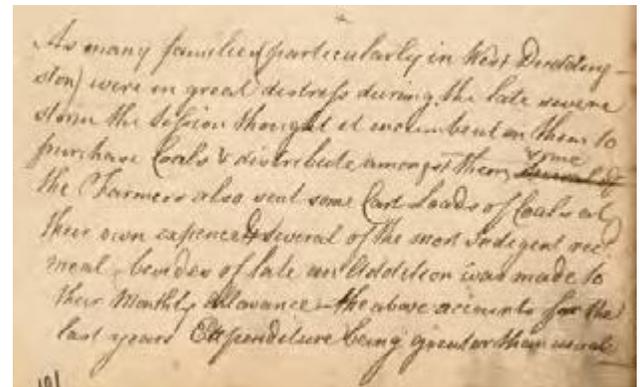
There is a building near Airth in Stirlingshire called The Pineapple. It was built in 1761 as a summer garden retreat by the 4th Earl of Dunmore.



The structure sits on a pavilion and was built some distance from the house to take advantage of a south-facing slope where it presides over an immense walled garden. The pineapple folly is 45 feet high, cut from stone to a very high standard. Each of the curving stone leaves is separately drained to prevent frost damage.

The Pineapple and its surrounding walled garden and grounds are owned by the National Trust for Scotland. The buildings and walled garden are all restored. The folly itself is not open to visitors, but the gardens and surrounding grounds are open all year.

Good News For Researchers



Thousands of volumes of historical records from the collections of National Records of Scotland (NRS) are now available online for the first time. Images of more than a million pages from the kirk session and other court records of the Church of Scotland can now be viewed and downloaded on ScotlandsPeople. These records contain details of key events in communities across the country between 1559 and 1900.

These records offer remarkable insights into the everyday lives of ordinary Scots, capturing important moments such as births, marriages, and deaths. The church court also adjudicated on the paternity of children, awarded relief to the poor and needy, and provided basic education, as well as disciplining parishioners for what could be called antisocial behavior—drunkenness, cursing, and breaking the Sabbath. They also document how people dealt with exceptional historical events such as wars, epidemics, crop failures, and extreme weather.

Viewing the images is free, but unlike other genealogical records on the ScotlandsPeople

website, the kirk session are not indexed. More information on how to access these records is on www.ScotlandsPeople.

Unicorns



Figurehead of the *HMS Unicorn*, one of the oldest warships in the world.

For thousands of years, people believed that unicorns really did exist and revered them even though no one ever had seen one. They have been part of cultures as diverse as the Greeks of the classical age, the Babylonians, ancient Jewish scholars, and civilizations arising along the Indus River. There are references to them in the Bible and the Koran.

The unicorn is thought to represent strength, purity, innocence, power, chivalry, and even magical powers. In Celtic mythology, it also was seen as a symbol of masculinity and power. The lion and unicorn were thought to always be fighting to be crowned king of beasts.

Unicorns even have their own name day. People celebrate National Unicorn Day on 9 April.

Despite being mythical, unicorns were much admired in Scotland for hundreds of years. They appeared in the 12th century on the coat of arms of William I. King Robert adopted the unicorn as Scotland's national animal in the late 1300s and they were added to the royal coat of arms of in the mid-1400s. James II wholeheartedly embraced the legend that unicorns symbolized purity and power. The chains wrapped around the unicorn symbolize how powerful it is, controlled only by the monarchy.

You can go on a unicorn hunt in Scotland. They can still be seen, carved into over 100 sites in different places, including at Edinburgh, Stirling, Fraser, and Brodick castles; cathedrals such as St. Giles

Cathedral in Edinburgh; easily seen at Holyroodhouse, Linlithgow, Culross, and Falkland palaces; in a stone carving at St Andrews University; and as the figurehead of the wooden sailing frigate *HMS Unicorn* in Dundee.



One of a 7-tapestry series depicting the history of the unicorn at Stirling Castle.

Unicorns were prominent on Mercat (Market) crosses in all seven of Scotland's major cities, as well as the center of lesser towns of Dunfermline, Jedburgh, Melrose, Culross, Crail, and Cupar.



Mercat Cross, Aberdeen

Must-Eat Foods When in Scotland

Visiting Scotland is more than a visual treat with gorgeous scenery, historic castles and other buildings, museums, hiking trails, mountains to climb, and many lochs to enjoy. A person's got to eat, and there is no reason why you shouldn't make trying culinary treats unique to Scotland a part of your visit. Here are a few of those.

The iconic dish of Scotland that most have heard of, although maybe not all have eaten, is **haggis**. Originally a common-place meal time concoction for poorer families made from whatever was handy in the kitchen, haggis is made of sheep's pluck minced with spices, salt, oatmeal, suet and onion inside a lining of the animal's stomach (nowadays it can be artificial).



The combination of **neeps (turnips) and tatties (potatoes)** is typically served with haggis, but they are

also featured in other Scottish dishes. For instance, a recipe originating in Orkney adds butter and chives to the mix to get a dish called clapshot.

Scottish salmon bred in the fresh, cold waters around Scotland is found in high-end super-markets and restaurants around the world. It's renowned for its taste and texture.



The hearty taste of **Scottish porridge** is an excellent way to start your day on a visit to Scotland. Made with Scottish-cut oats cooked with salt, not sugar, it is thick and hearty.



A full Scottish breakfast will leave you full and content. Much like a full English breakfast, the Scottish version adds black pudding, lorne sausage,

and tattie (potato) scones.

Bangers and Mash are associated with supper meals all over Great Britain. The Scottish version for bangers



(sausage) can include exotic flavours, such as apple or venison, along with locally raised, high quality meat. Mash (mashed potatoes) are typically made fluffy with the addition of butter and milk.



Scottish cuisine includes **black pudding**. This traditional food made from sausage meat and oatmeal and blood may not be to everyone's taste, but it is popular among Scots. It is available in as wide ranging Scottish eateries from chippies to the best restaurants.

Scotland is known for deep-frying quite a variety of food (think battered, deep-fried Mars Bars), but its **fish supper** is not to be missed on a visit to Scotland. Known in other places mundanely as "fish and chips," the popular fish supper is a meal with a uniquely Scottish flavor since the fish is usually haddock instead of cod. Sold in Scottish chippies or shops specializing in this menu, flakey haddock is deep fried in a light batter so it remains juicy inside and is served with twice fried potatoes, soft inside and crispy outside. You can flavor your dinner from an array of sauces, including salt and vinegar, curry, and tangy brown chip-shop sauce.



Grouse are game birds unique to Britain. The Scottish version is locally found in heather moorlands. Grouse is a dinner time favorite and

delicacy, tender with a mild, gamey taste. Grouse hunting is arguably the most expensive, although exhilarating, sport in Scotland, as the bird is the fastest-flying game bird in the UK. Their flight speed can exceed 70 mph.

Leek and tattie soup is a staple from long back, warming people up from cold Scottish winters. Even though it is the sort of food that you might expect to be



served when you visit Grandma for lunch, it also is often a staple at Burns Suppers.

Bacon butty is delicious for a quick lunch. It's an unfussy rasher of Scottish-style bacon placed inside a white roll with butter, flavored with a generous amount of ketchup or brown sauce.



Scotch pie is the original "fast food," and can be served cold or hot. Minced mutton or other meat is baked with spicy seasoning in a double crust using special straight-sided moulds.

Shortbread has been a dessert option since before the seventeenth century, although the first printed recipe of this delicious, buttery treat wasn't until the eighteenth century, in 1736. Bakers and housewives all have their favorite recipes, and make it into all kinds of shapes and sizes. Shortbread is best enjoyed freshly made with a cup of tea, although it is commonly found in tourist shops conveniently packed into a variety of brightly colored canisters.



Another delightful dessert is **sticky toffee pudding**. This wee gem consists of a moist sponge cake made with dates, covered with a toffee sauce,

and served with vanilla custard or ice cream. It can be found in most Scottish pubs.

Scottish Tablet is a sweet treat cooked until it crystalizes from just three ingredients: sugar, condensed milk and butter. Usually cut into flat rectangles or squares, it can be found all over Scotland where creative makers utilize a wide variety of flavors. Even whisky can be found in some tablet!



A fellowship founded in Seattle in 1902 to foster a love of Scotland, her people, and her heritage.

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