



"Alba Gu Brath"

COMMITTEE 2011-2012

Chieftain

Brian McMurdo

Immediate Past Chieftain

Ken Suttie

Vice Chieftain

Doris LaValette

Hon Secretary

Darian Ferguson

Hon Treasurer

Diana Paxman

Members

Cameron Dickson

Mike Haines

Cheryl Hill

Eoin Kennedy

Jeff LaValette

Reggie McNeill

Honorary Piper

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What a great Chieftain's Ceilidh!

I'm pleased to report that my first Chieftain's Ceilidh as Chieftain was a huge success.

We welcomed a 90-strong group of guests, many of them new to our events, and I was especially glad to welcome a large group from our friends at the St Andrew's Lodge, who chose to hold their Ladies Dinner at our ceilidh.

They helped to fill the gap left by many of our regulars, who were unable to attend because they had expected the event to be held on 5 May and had made other arrangements for 19 May.

What those regulars missed was a real, old-fashioned ceilidh.

Reggie McNeill and his sub-committee put together a great program, with plenty of dancing, singing and contributions from the guests.

We had singers, a funny recitation and an impressive display of piping by a young Scot, Alasdair MacKerron, from Edinburgh.

It was great to welcome Alasdair to his first Society event since arriving in Australia last year, and I'm sure everyone at the ceilidh would love to hear him play again.

However, all you people who missed out on this excellent event can look forward to our Winter Ceilidh, on 11 August.

It will be held in the Scarborough Sportsmen's Club, which proved such a success when we used it for the first time last year.

We'll include more information about the Winter Ceilidh in the next issue of The Saltire, but put that date in your diary!

Brian McMurdo
Chieftain

I recently had the sad duty of passing on the deep condolences of the members of the Society to two long-serving committee members who lost loved ones.

Michael Sedgwick, former husband of previous Hon Treasurer Pauline Sedgwick, passed away on 11 April, in England.

Tragically, Michael died on Pauline's birthday, when he should have been celebrating with Pauline and their family.

Then, on 18 May, Susan Bogie's mother, Irene, who was well-known to many Society members, passed away.



MEET THE COMMITTEE

The Chieftain . . . Brian McMurdo



Brian and Alice McMurdo

Brian McMurdo is in his first year as Chieftain of the Society, but he isn't short of experience, with four years as Honorary Secretary already under his belt.

When he agreed to become Secretary, four years ago, the Society was in dire need of someone to undertake that important role.

Not only did he step into the breach, he provided the Society with valuable continuity over the next few years.

"I took on the job with a bit of reluctance, but I had a great time as Secretary," Brian said.

"As Secretary you are abreast of all Society business and it certainly keeps you busy!

"At the last AGM I, again reluctantly, took on the position of Chieftain.

"This was because our good friend Ken Suttie decided to take a back seat after many years as Chieftain and a committee member.

"I'm glad to say that he is still a member of the committee, as Immediate Past Chieftain, as his support is invaluable."

Brian has slotted comfortably into his new job and aims to use the experience gained with the Society and other organisations for the benefit of the membership.

Brian was born in Dumfries and brought up in the mining villages Sanquhar and Kirkconnel, with his father coming from Sanquhar and his mother from Kirkconnel.

These two villages are only three miles apart and only a stone's throw from Robbie Burns country, which is probably why Brian gets such enjoyment from the works of the Bard.

At the age of 17 he joined the Royal Marine Commandos, with which he spent nearly 10 years, seeing service in all parts of the globe.

"I was based in Singapore for four years, and I got married for the first time there," Brian said.

"However, my first wife didn't like the military life and we ended up divorcing, but not before we had produced a son, Alistair.

"I had to leave the forces, though, to gain custody of my son."

In 1978, Brian met his lovely wife, Alice, and they were married nearly a year later at Cadder Parish Church, in Bishopbriggs, where Alice was brought up and Brian had settled on leaving the Marines.

Brian and Alice came to Australia in 1985, with their two sons, Andrew and Fraser, to join Alice's sister and brother-in-law.

"We immediately fell in love with the place and now call it home," Brian said.

"I became involved with a number of organisations in WA, one of which was the Scottish Freemasons.

"I was honoured to become the Right Worshipful Master of Lodge Robbie Burns on two occasions — there's that Burns connection again!

"I also took up soccer refereeing when my playing days came to an end."

Brian was introduced to the Society through a friend and former Vice-Chieftain Lorna Binnie.

"After joining it took us a little while to settle, but once we had attended some pre-Ball dance classes we got to know more people.

"I think a lot of members over the years have received their initial introduction to the Society through the dance classes and some strong friendships have been forged."



MEET THE COMMITTEE

It helps to be a 'wee bit tight'!

When Diana Paxman accepted the role of Honorary Treasurer two years ago, she faced the unenviable task of taking over from long-serving Treasurer Pauline Sedgwick.

However, Diana has gone on to make the job her own, introducing her way of doing things and keeping the Society's finances on an even keel.

She and her husband, Richard, have been members since 2006 and they credit the Society with reintroducing them to Scottish country dancing, which they grew to love while living in Scotland.

"I met Richard in Aberdeen while he was serving with the Gordon Highlanders and I worked for the French oil company Total," Diana said.

"We married in 1978 and after five years of working in the North Sea, Richard answered a job advert for oil rig workers in Australia and so we moved to WA in 1983, along with our two children Oliver (2) and Lucy (6 weeks).

"Rebecca arrived three years later."

Diana's Scottish connection comes from her mother's side of the family.

She was a Burnett of Kemnay, a branch of the Burnetts of Crathes, in Royal Deeside.

"I had a connection to Australia even before I moved here through my Burnett grandfather, who was the RAAF Chief of Air Staff, in 1940.

"His task was to expand the RAAF and to enhance its capacity to provide aircrew, through the Empire Air Training Scheme, to the Royal Air Force, in the UK."

Born in Glasgow, Diana spent the first nine years of her life on the island of Islay, famous worldwide for the single malt whiskies produced in the island's eight distilleries.

The farm on which she grew up is now the Kilchoman Distillery, established in 2005 and the first to be built on Islay for 124 years.

Her family then moved to the village of Insch, in Aberdeenshire, where her father farmed.



"With Scottish people having the reputation for being a 'wee bit tight' with their money, being treasurer and Scottish goes hand in hand!!!" Diana laughed.

"But, seriously, being treasurer of such an organisation is a great honour and a great responsibility."

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Castle Campbell

Everyone is awestruck by Castle Campbell . . . an imposing ruin that stands in solemn isolation upon a narrow ridge, overlooked by a crescent of the Ochil Hills, in Clackmannshire.

Two precipitous ravines hem it on either side, through which thunder the Burn of Care and the Burn of Sorrow.

The setting couldn't be more dramatic.

Located at the head of Dollar Glen, immediately to the north of the town of Dollar, the oldest part of Castle Campbell was built in the early 15th century, when it was called 'Castle Glume'.

Around 1465, it passed through marriage to Colin Campbell, 1st Earl of Argyll, a powerful Highland chief who needed an impressive Lowland seat at the heart of the realm, within easy reach of the royal court.

Castle Glume fitted the bill perfectly.

In 1489, the earl changed the name to Castle Campbell, and there the Campbells stayed for the next 200 years, until they tired of all those steps and relocated to Argyll's Lodging, a fine townhouse beside Stirling Castle.

Castle Campbell is one of Scotland's best-preserved tower-house castles.

Standing 20m high, the tower house itself served as the family residence.

The service access was at ground level, but the main entrance was at first-floor level and inside were four floors of accommodation.

The two upper floor chambers were altered around 1600, including adding the fine vaulted ceiling at the top, with its two grotesque carvings representing the Green Man.

The castle itself was designed to serve three main purposes.

Firstly, it aimed to provide adequate defence, though the castle would never have been able to survive artillery attack.

Secondly, the castle was a statement of the lord's wealth and power, and as such would have been an imposing sight.



Thirdly, it was home for an extensive household of a member of the senior nobility, who also had to provide hospitality to important guests and their entourages.

Mary Queen of Scots stayed here in January 1563 and the Protestant preacher, John Knox, in 1556.

In 1600, the Campbells added a two-storey range, now in ruins.

On the first floor was the great hall, used as the principal reception and banqueting suite, with a withdrawing chamber at one end and the court kitchen at the other, while there was a row of vaulted storerooms below.

In its overall appearance, this range bore a striking resemblance to the royal lodging in Stirling Castle, built for James IV in the 1490s.

The earl would have been a frequent visitor to the royal castle and clearly wanted to copy it.

It is likely that the gardens of Castle Campbell were formally laid out and maintained for the exclusive use of the family and guests.

By Ken Suttie



Brave by name and brave by nature

It isn't before time, but at last there is a major animation film based in Scotland . . . Brave.

The first fairy tale produced by Pixar, the famous digital animation studio, Brave takes place during the 10th century in the Highlands of Scotland.

It also features Merida, the first female hero in a Pixar film.

A skilled archer and the headstrong daughter of King Fergus and Queen Elinor, the feisty, flame-haired Merida lives in the Scottish kingdom of DunBroch.

She is promised in marriage to one of the sons of the three Lords, Dingwall, Macintosh and MacGuffin, but the princess refuses to be dictated to and is determined to live her own life.

When Merida defies one of the kingdom's traditions by sabotaging an archery contest between the three lords, she inadvertently causes controversy and chaos throughout the kingdom.

In response to the chaos, Merida turns to an eccentric elderly wise woman for help and she is granted an ill-fated wish.

Merida must discover the true meaning of



bravery by undoing the spell to save her family and kingdom.

The film features many famous Scottish voices, including Bill Connolly as King Fergus, Kelly Macdonald as Princess Merida, Robbie Coltrane as Lord Dingwall, Kevin McKidd as Lord MacGuffin and Craig Ferguson as Lord Macintosh.

Emma Thompson is the voice of Queen Elinor and Julie Walters is the Wise Woman.

The film is due to hit the cinemas on 21 June.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Winter Ceilidh: 11 August

Venue: Scarborough Sportsmen's Club

St Andrew's Day Ball: 1 December

Venue: Kings Hotel, Perth

2013

Burns Supper: 25 January

Venue: Parmelia Hilton Hotel, Perth