



"Alba Gu Brath"

COMMITTEE 2014-2015

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Are you ready to get busy?

I have been charging my batteries in preparation for the hectic times ahead in December and January.

It has been some time since our last event, but we now hit the busiest part of the year, with two events — the St Andrew's Day Ball and our Burns Supper — in effectively two months, separated by the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

In the meantime, the pre-Ball dance classes have been going ahead full steam — very well attended, so far, and a lot of fun.

For those who don't know, the classes are being held at Royal Park Hall, 180 Charles Street, North Perth, each Wednesday from 7.30pm to 9.30 pm in the lead-up to the Ball.

If you're going to the Ball, the classes ensure that you can get involved in some of our great Scottish dances if you don't already know them, while providing a valuable tune-up for those who do know them.

I'm really looking forward to my first Ball as Chieftain, and there is no doubt in my mind that it will be a cracker!

If you haven't bought your tickets yet, then you'd better get your finger out, because Saturday 29 November isn't far away.

As soon as the Ball is done and dusted, the Committee will start working on our other big event, the Burns Supper.

As usual, we'll be holding our annual event in honour of the Bard on his birthday, 25 January, and in the Argyle Room at the Parmelia Hilton Hotel, in Perth.

This is usually a wonderful evening, with its mix of the traditional Burns Supper toasts and a mini-ceilidh, with dancing to the Heel n Toe band.

The booking form for the Burns Supper will be distributed by email and placed on the website at the beginning of December, but please don't contact anyone about it now, because we're still up to our eyes with the Ball.

Douglas Melville
Chieftain



There's still time to book your ticket

The St Andrew's Day Ball is one of the best value events in the Perth social scene . . . and it's also one of the most enjoyable.

Where else, for \$145 for members and \$165 for non-members, would you get pre-dinner drinks, a sumptuous four-course meal, drinks throughout the evening, dancing and other entertainment?

It's also a good way to welcome in the festive period.

The dance program at this year's Ball will be:

The Gay Gordons

The Dashing White Sergeant

The Triumph

The Duke of Perth

Petronella

Strip The Willow

The Reel of the 51st Division

The Eightsome Reel

The Waverley

Virginia Reel

St Bernard's Waltz

Canadian Barn Dance

If you don't know these dances or need to brush up on a couple, you can still catch a few of the pre-Ball dance classes being held at the Royal Park Hall, 180 Charles Street, North Perth (see below).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2014

Pre-Ball Dance Classes: Wednesday evenings, 7.30-9.30pm, to 26 November.

Venue: Royal Park Hall, North Perth

St Andrew's Day Ball: 29 November

Venue: Hyatt Regency, Perth

2015

Burns Supper: 25 January

Venue: Parmelia Hilton Hotel, Perth

Go to the Society's website . . . <http://saintandrew.org.au/about/forms/> for more information about the St Andrew's Day Ball and the ticket application form.

Give the Bard his due

One of the "must-do" items in any exiled Scots diary is "go to Burns Supper"!

That's why we're expecting a rush on tickets for the Society's Burns Supper when tickets go on sale in December.

One of the best Burns Suppers in Perth, it will be held, as usual, in the Parmelia Hilton's Argyle Room.

We think Rabbie would like the way we go about things, with interesting toasts (one about him), Burns poetry recitation, singing (mainly Burns songs) and dancing to the Heel n Toe Band.

So take a note of the date — 25 January — and look out for the ticket application form.

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Insight into history of ordinary Scots

Highland Roots is the real story of the life of one Highland cottage throughout Scotland's turbulent history.

The book, by Professor Gordon Waddell, is a blend of history, archaeology, estate records, literature and legend.

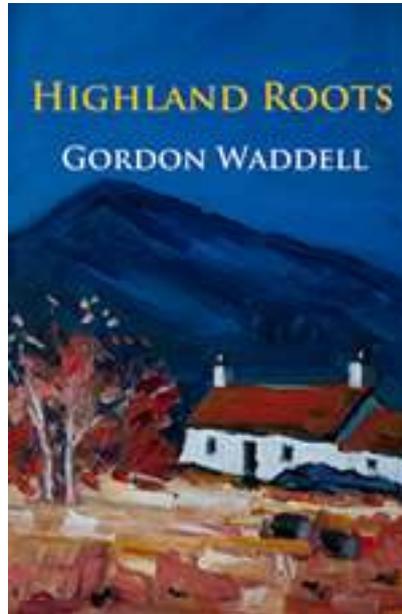
It includes a lot of quotes that give a genuine flavour of the times, but it also tries to get beneath the skin of history, to imagine how it would feel if we were transported back to those times.

What was it like to live there . . . in the Iron Age, when the Romans came, when Picts fought Gaels in the birth of a nation, in the Wars of Independence, through the Improvements and the Clearances?

Can you imagine trying to scrape a living from this land? How did people survive and raise a family before roads or schools or health care?

What was history really like for the ordinary people who had to live through it?

Dalgiridy was never important.



There were no kings or castles or great battles there, the people who lived there weren't famous, but Dalgiridy represents the many thousands of other small places and little people who made Scotland.

It was swept along on the great tides of Scottish history and played its part, even if it only had bit parts and was often helpless flotsam on the tide.

Ordinary people were but foot soldiers on the moors of time, yet without foot soldiers there would be no lords or kings, and they fought and won, and bled and died, just like those whose names went down in history.

Kings and governments may have grand designs, but what really matters is the impact on ordinary people's lives.

So, Dalgiridy offers a unique window onto the history of Scotland and her people.

Real people – real lives.

Highland Roots is available on Amazon and Kindle.

Golden Spurtle goes to the Granite City

An Aberdeen doctor has been crowned the 21st World Porridge Making Champion.

Dr Izhar Khan won the coveted Golden Spurtle at the recent World Porridge Making Championships, held annually in the Highland village of Carrbridge, in the Cairngorms.

The competitors have to create a traditional porridge with untreated oatmeal, using only water and salt.

A winning bowl of porridge is testament to the cook's spurtle, and the champion dedicated his win to a patient, who made his spurtle for him.

"I started eating porridge seven years ago. It's simple, versatile, healthy and very affordable," Dr Khan said.

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The Laird o' Udney's feel

By Diana Paxman

Before emigrating to Western Australia, I lived near Longside, in Aberdeenshire, and became familiar with the story of "the Laird o' Udney's feel" (*the Lord of Udney's fool*).

A short distance from the village of Newburgh stands the lonely ruin of Knockhall Castle, at one time a stronghold of the Udney family.

If you had gone there about two hundred years ago you might have seen an unusual figure wandering around the castle – Jamie Fleeman, known locally as "the Laird o' Udney's feel".

Jamie was born in 1713 at Ludquharn, in Longside parish, and had to fend for himself from a young age after his mother drowned in Fleeman's Pot, a deep pool near the Bridge of Ludquharn.

His early life was spent at the House of Ludquharn, where his oddness was noted by the laird and his wife, as he was not like other boys.

Jamie had a big round head, covered with dingy brown hair always standing on end, he generally wore a short doublet of sack-cloth and seldom wore shoes.

Although Jamie was a simple soul, he had a ready wit, was deeply religious, and very loyal to those who were kind to him.

In his late teens he left Ludquharn on the recommendation of the Laird and was taken into the household of the Udney family at Udney Castle, their principal seat in Aberdeenshire, where he stayed for most of his life.

Jamie is probably best known for saving the Charter Chest of the Udnys at Knockhall Castle.

Late one night, after the household had gone to bed, Jamie was awoken by a dog pawing at his bedside, and following the dog to the stairway he realised the castle was on fire.

He woke the household and with the fire taking hold, he risked his life to return to the burning building to save the Laird's iron chest, which held all the family's vital documents.

It was so heavy it usually took several men to lift it, but Jamie picked it up and threw it out the window, earning the reward of a peck of meal and sixpence a week for the rest of his life.



The chest survived better than the castle . . . it now stands in a recess in the Great Hall of Castle Fraser, having gone there with Anne Udney, who married Charles Fraser.

His act of bravery, along with details of his wit, made Jamie a local legend.

One regularly told tale describes how, when asked by an upper-class gentleman "Who's fool are you, my man?", he replied "I'm the Laird o' Udney's feel, fa's feel are you?"

Jamie was fond of animals, especially dogs.

On one occasion he was sent to Edinburgh with an important letter for the Laird, but by the time he arrived in the capital he forgotten where his master was staying.

As he walked along the streets of the city he suddenly pounced on a dog, picked it up in his arms, entered a nearby shop, took a length of cord from the counter and walked out again.

Jamie tied the cord around the dog's neck and with the words 'awa hame wi'ye' followed it home. to the Laird of Udney's lodgings – he had recognised his master's dog.

Jamie died at his sister's house at Kinmundy in 1778 and was buried in the Longside churchyard



Stuart Liddell bags Glenfiddich Piping crown

Stuart Liddell, from Inveraray, in Argyll, has been crowned the Glenfiddich Piping Champion.

The event, now in its 41st year, is seen as piping's "ultimate accolade".

The Glenfiddich championship is only open to those who have achieved success in other solo piping competitions throughout the year.

Pipers from around the world converged on Blair Castle in Perthshire to take part in the event, which was established in 1974.

Mr Liddell said, "Competing at the Glenfiddich Championship, you know that you are up against the best of the best, and there is no knowing what way it is going to go on the day," Stuart said.



"It was an absolute honour and privilege to be here competing with such talent."

Stuart Liddell previously won the trophy in 2009.

Waverley 200th anniversary celebrated at Waverley

Edinburgh celebrated the 200th anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* on 14 October at the railway station named after the novel.

Waverley Station was decorated with quotes from Sir Walter's writings to mark the 1814 publication, including the famous line: "O what a tangled web we weave / When first we practise to deceive."

Waverley was Sir Walter's first novel – he also penned the classics *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Ivanhoe*.

The story follows the adventures of Englishman Edward Waverley in the Scotland of 1745, where he becomes involved in the Jacobite rebellion and the attempt to restore the Stuart kings to the British throne.

In the first year of its publication, *Waverley* sold more copies than the total of all other novels issued in the UK that year.

By inserting fictional characters into actual events, Scott invented the historical novel and influenced every writer who followed him, including Charles Dickens, Jules Verne and, by his own admission, George RR Martin, author of the popular *Game of Thrones* series.



"*Waverley* isn't a boring, dusty old story," said Douglas McNaughton, Great Scott! campaign manager.

"The naive young hero is brought up by relatives, goes on a perilous journey and is caught up in the politics of an impossibly strange and exotic landscape -- that's basically the plot of *Star Wars*."

"And Scott wrote *Waverley* as a novel covering historical events in living memory — the 1745 Jacobite rebellion was as recent for Scott's readers as the Second World War is to us now."