

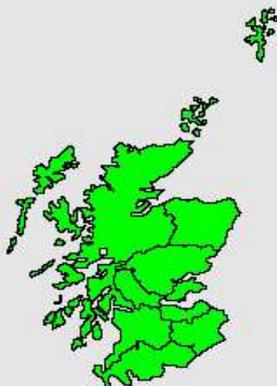


THE Saltire

No 2

Message from the Chieftain

September 2016



"Alba Gu Brath"

COMMITTEE 2016-2017

Chieftain

Douglas Melville

Vice Chieftain

Diana Paxman

Hon Secretary

Darian Ferguson

Hon Treasurer

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Club Night a winter warmer

I am confident you will find this issue of The Saltire informative and entertaining and help you to keep your diary up-to-date with our future activities and functions.

The Committee made a number of changes to the usual offerings for the winter period and of special note was our Club Night, designed to be a less formal gathering than the previous Winter Ceilidh.

The Club Night was introduced to ensure we still provided a winter function for those of us not travelling to the Northern Hemisphere over the summer period there.

A few Society members walked Scotland's famous West Highland Way during the Scottish summer.

By all reports they had a great time, returning with fond memories and sore feet, but you can read more about their experiences inside this issue.

The Weekend Away this winter was held in late August at El Caballo, in Perth's eastern hills.

The package including a substantial three-course dinner, accompanied by quality wines, good accommodation and a hearty cooked breakfast, all at a very reasonable cost.

On the Saturday, some of the group enjoyed a game of golf on the El Caballo course.

Winner on the day was Rob, on 46 off the stick, and Doug W at the other end on 90.

While the golf was on, others had the opportunity to have a natter, exchange stories or have a quiet drink and enjoy the live entertainment in the Tapas Bar.

The El Caballo package included the use of a private function room with a dance floor.

Over dinner the guests sat through a couple of short speeches, enjoyed the merriment and danced into the evening.

Our Hon Piper, Jason Hutt, got the show moving and compere Reggie McNeill was in great form.

Thanks to all who assisted in organising the event and making it an outstanding success.

Douglas Melville
Chieftain



Look out — Ball just around the corner

It's time to look out your glad rags, because the Saint Andrew's Ball is fast approaching.

For the first time, the Ball is being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Perth, on **Saturday 8th October**, this year.

In a move aimed at lightening the financial load on households, the Ball has been brought forward from November, thus avoiding having the Ball, Christmas and Burns Supper in a short time frame.

Usually, the tickets tend to sell slowly at the start and end with a rush, which causes the Committee some stressful times, therefore your assistance in booking your tables as soon as possible would be greatly appreciated.

Ticket sales close on **Monday, 3 October**.

The Society's Ball remains one of the least expensive, most entertaining and best value for money functions in Perth, with ticket sales closing **3 October**.

Please check our web page for details.

St Andrew's Day celebration

This year, the Society will be celebrating St Andrew's Day with a ceilidh on 26 November, in the Royal Park Hall, West Perth.

Further details about this event will be posted on the Society's website.

However, the big news is that Members will be able to enjoy the finger food served at the ceilidh free of charge!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2016

St Andrew's Ball: 8 October

Venue: Hyatt Regency Perth

St Andrew's Day Dinner: 26 November

Venue: Royal Park Hall, West Perth

2017

Burns Supper: 25 January

Venue: Hyatt Regency Perth

Annual General Meeting: 10 February

Venue: Perth and Tattersall's Bowling Club, East Perth

Farewell Father Napier

On a cold May evening this year, a service was held at St George's Cathedral, to mark the end of Father Graeme Napier's five-year tenure as Precentor to the cathedral and diocese of Perth.

Not only will the loss of his enthusiasm and organisational skills be felt by the cathedral (with all due respect to his successor!), his move to Sydney will also be a loss to the St Andrew Society.

The good Scot that he is, he was a good friend to the Society.

He attended many of our events during his time in Perth and was an enthusiastic Scottish Country Dancer.

Somehow, his recitations of the Poet's Grace at our events held greater authority than the rest of us will ever be able to manage!

Evensong in the cathedral, which was attended by some of our Society members, was followed by a reception on the lawn in Cathedral Square, where the enthusiasm of the speeches and the warmth of the farewells were testament to the high regard in which he is held.

Father Graeme will remain on our mailing list and we hope that if, in the future, any of our events coincide with his visits to Perth, he will join us again.

In the meantime, we wish him all the very best in his new role -- St Paul's College of the University of Sydney's gain will be our loss.

By Richard Paxman



Fun evening at the Chieftain's Ceilidh

The Chieftain's Ceilidh, held on Saturday 14 May, was a fun evening.

The evening began with our very own piper Jason Hutt (who I believe did very well in the competitions the next day), leading us in for dinner.

Our pre-dinner entertainment was provided by the Australian Air Force Cadet Drum Corps, with the young people putting on a terrific demonstration of their skills.

Everyone let their hair down to fully enjoy the live music provided by the Heel n Toe Band.

No previous experience was needed as dances were called and helpers were on the ready to assist those of us that got confused about where to be next.

For the most part the dances were not too tricky, just fun!

I think everyone got up to dance at some point in the evening.

The guests gave generously to the raffle and hundreds of dollars were raised on the evening.

Proceeds of the raffle were donated to the charity Soldier On, which supports those who have served in the Australian forces by focusing on their physical and mental health, their community and their future.

Soldier On has helped thousands of people to deal with physical and psychological wounds from their service.

The committee gathered in the afternoon to ensure that everything was in place and there were some freebees on the tables.

The RAAFA Club is great setting for the event with the staff organising the beautifully laid tables for our meal.

I would recommend joining in next year if you missed this year's Chieftain's Ceilidh.

The ticket price included a two course meal, two bottles of wine per table and a 'Chieftain's tipple'.

Just for good measure there was plenty of free parking, with easy access from the freeway.

By Elizabeth Melville



Get the AGM details into your diary now

An important date for your diary is **Friday 10 February 2017**, when the Society will ask all Members to attend the **Annual General Meeting**.

It will be held at 6.30pm for a 7.15pm start in the Perth and Tattersall's Bowling Club, 2 Plain Street, East Perth.

The Society's existence depends on the support of the membership, so the current Committee is urging people to make every effort to attend.

Meals (at very reasonable prices) and drinks at bar prices will be available, so if you would like to have dinner before the meeting, a 6.00pm arrival is suggested.

If you will be attending the AGM and if you will be joining us for a meal, please email the Society on enquiries@saintandrew.org.au to let us know, to assist with catering arrangements,

Membership dues must be paid before the start of the meeting, preferably long before that, details are on our website.

All positions on the Committee -- Chieftain, Vice-Chieftain, Secretary, Treasurer and six general committee members -- will be vacant and all members are encouraged to consider nominating for the vacancies.

The Committee is an interesting and social place to contribute towards the aims of the Society and your assistance is sought in our efforts to continuing strengthening the organisation.



Walking the West Highland Way

We trudged, wet and weary, through the centre of Fort William as we made our way to the end of Scotland's famous West Highland Way.

Some of us would have happily stayed at the warm and comfortable coffee shop on the edge of the town, but to complete the 154 km (96-mile) journey we had to put in those last few kilometres.

So we plodded on through the pouring rain, looking forward to seeing the statue at the finish of the seven-day trek and dreaming of the hot shower that awaited us in the B&B.

We turned the last corner . . . and people rushed towards us waving bottles of champagne and glasses!

Then, a piper started playing!

The weather and our aches and pains were instantly forgotten, as we laughed, cheered, danced around and knocked back our bubbles with relish.

Tourists took photographs and locals in surrounding coffee shops looked on in amazement.

The champagne and the young lass on the bagpipes (who kept playing despite the rain) had been organised by Ann-Marie Donoghue, the fiancée of Society member James Wegner, originally from Fort William.

A week previously we had all gathered, bright-eyed and excited as we looked forward to the adventure, at the start point in Milngavie, on the outskirts of Glasgow.

Scotland's first official long-distance walking route, the Way leaves from the edge of Scotland's largest city, follows the banks of its largest freshwater loch and finishes at the foot of its largest mountain.

On its course, it passes through lowland moors, woodland and rolling hills, Highland mountains and some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland.

The West Highland Way can be tackled in a variety of ways, from six to eight-day journeys.

Our seven-day walk started in Milngavie and we stopped for the night in Drymen, Rowaredennan, Inverannan, Tyndrum, Kingshouse, Kinlochleven and Fort William.



And, of course, all but two of our 11-strong group – Reggie and Esther McNeill, Ken and Liz Suttie, Eoin and Agnes Kennedy, Cameron and Joyce Dickson and Laura Grinham – were also Society members.

(The other couple, Dominic and Kathleen Kane, were relatives of Reggie and Esther, from Northern Ireland.)

Most of us had no idea of what faced us and the early part of the walk, from Milngavie to the village of Drymen, through leafy woods and on comfortable tracks, didn't give us a clue.

What we discovered before very long, however, was that walking the West Highland Way isn't for the faint-hearted!

Some of our group were experienced and strong walkers – the rest of us thought we were good

walkers until we tackled the West highland Way.

The path alongside Loch Lomond was like an obstacle course that got more and more difficult as it went on.

It saw us scrambling up and down rocky gullies, squeezing through narrow gaps and, on one memorable part, walking along a narrow ledge with a steep drop into the loch below!



Society people on the famed Scottish trek



And the further into the walk we went, the tougher it became, especially when it got into the Highlands.

There the tracks were rough, climbing steep hills was the order of most days and picking our way down scree slopes running with water was a regular hazard.

The aptly-named Devil's Staircase and the hill as we left the village of Kinlochleven will remain in most people's memories for some time – partly because of the climb and partly because of the wonderful views we got from the top.

Our entire adventure was superbly organised by Reggie McNeill, from the kilometres walked each day, to the stop-off points for lunch and the B&Bs we slept in each evening.

It was the fourth time Reggie had walked the Way and he used his knowledge and skill to ensure the adventure was a real experience for us all.

We stayed in top quality accommodation, with some of the B&Bs on a par with what quality hotels can offer.

All except Laura, that is.

Laura had decided to join the group some time after the initial bookings had been made, so she had to organise her own accommodation, and because many of the best places had been taken this varied from good quality B&Bs to a "dog-box" and a "Hobbit hut".

Neither of the latter two lodgings was salubrious!

If anything untoward was to happen to anyone in the group, it usually happened to Laura.

But she didn't let this dampen her spirits.

That attitude permeated throughout the group — we refused to let anything we faced put us off savouring the experience.

The pain of aching muscles and feet have long subsided, and all we can now remember are the good times we enjoyed and the friendships we developed.

In fact, in a recent 'wash-up' get-together we all agreed that the things we learned on the West Highland Way would stand us in good stead for any future walking adventures.

By Ken Suttie





Scot quadruple amputee climbs Matterhorn

Scottish climber Jamie Andrew has conquered his disability to become the first quadruple amputee to climb the Matterhorn.

Andrew, who celebrated his 47th birthday during the ascent of the Swiss mountain, lost both his hands and feet to frostbite after being trapped for five nights on Mont Blanc in 1999.

After lifesaving surgery, Andrew, from Edinburgh, learned not only to walk again but also to run, ski and return to climbing.

Andrew spent five years planning his assault on the 4,478m (14,690ft) Alpine peak.

"I have fantastic prosthetic legs which are custom-made for me," he said.

"For my arms I used special poles – like ski poles – to gain purchase and keep balance on the very tricky terrain that you find all the way up."

"Finally reaching the top was a dream come true.

"The summit is incredible – a tiny, little summit for



such a big mountain, with a perched ridge of snow right on the very crest and massive drops on either side of you.

"It was just beautiful to be standing there, after all the planning, preparation, trials and heartache that went in to it."

Aussie family allowed to stay in Scotland

An Australian family that had been facing deportation has been granted permission to continue living in Scotland by the UK Home Office.

Gregg and Kathryn Brain will be allowed to remain in the country after Mrs Brain secured a job meeting immigration conditions.

The couple – whose son Lachlan (7) speaks Gaelic – moved to Scotland from Brisbane in 2011 on Mrs Brain's temporary student visa, during a UK Government drive to attract people to live in rural areas.

They live in Dingwall in the Highlands and had been trying to qualify for a new visa since being told they did not meet new requirements to stay.

They had intended to move to a post-study visa, but this scheme was withdrawn by the UK government.

The family were not able to work while they were reapplying for visas.

Having run down their savings as well as donations from well-wishers while trying to find a solution, the family has been surviving on the charity of neighbours.



Mrs Brain has now been offered work as a museum curator and historian with Macdonald Hotels in Aviemore.

Scotland's first minister Nicola Sturgeon was among a number of politicians calling on the Home Office to allow the family to remain in Scotland.

"I'm glad the UK Government has finally seen sense on this occasion, but the Brains should not have had this cloud of uncertainty hanging over them for so long," she said.



Bronze Age sword found under football pitch

Archaeologists have uncovered what could be a Bronze Age sword dating back as far as 4000 years on the site of a new community football pitch.

Diggers moved into the site in Carnoustie, Angus, after a collection of relics were found while laying foundations for the new sports field.

Work to the playing fields has now been halted while archaeologists scour the site.

Early excavations have revealed a trove of artefacts that they believe could date back thousands of years, including what appears to be a sword with a gold hilt dating back to the Bronze Age.

Due to the fragile nature of the find it has to be specially lifted out in order to conserve it for experts to examine in a laboratory.

Famed for its golfing heritage, the Tayside town could now cast a new light on how Scots lived as early as 2000BCE.



"The volume of material we're unearthing is probably more than what was anticipated," Chief archaeologist Alan Hunter Blair said.

"Another interesting feature, which possibly dates from the Iron Age period, looks like a circular structure.

"It could be that there's been a continuous settlement here."

Island children have UK's best quality of life

Children living on Scotland's islands have the best quality of life among youngsters growing up anywhere in Britain, according to a report.

The annual Children's Quality of Life study named the Orkney Islands, the Shetland Islands and the Western Isles as the places with the best quality of life for children.

The study looked at employment rates, average house sizes, school performance levels, population density and personal wellbeing to make the findings.

It found the Western Isles has the lowest population density in Britain, with just nine people per square kilometre – compared with the national average of 276.

The Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands also have a low population density, with 16 and 22 people per square kilometre respectively.

The report said children can walk around in "relative freedom", with an average of 71 vehicles per square kilometre in the Western Isles, 142 in



the Orkneys and 145 in the Shetlands, compared with an average of 9587 across Britain.

And Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on personal well-being suggests adults in the Orkneys and Western Isles are among the happiest, most satisfied and least anxious.

However, just 52% to 56% of households in the Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and Western Isles have access to fast broadband – significantly below the national average of 86%.



Oor Wullie statues fetch £883,000 for hospital

An auction in Dundee of 70 colourful statues of Oor Wullie, one of Scotland's favourite comic book characters, has raised £883,000.

The money will be used to build two new operating theatres at Tayside Children's Hospital, Dundee.

Oor Wullie is a Scottish comic strip which has been published in the D.C. Thomson newspaper *The Sunday Post* since 1936.

To celebrate Oor Wullie's 80th anniversary, the Oor Wullie Bucket Trail public art project saw 55 decorated sculptures of the character, sitting on his trusty bucket, placed around Dundee, with another ten touring round Scotland.

National and local artists helped decorate the statues for the project, coordinated by the ARCHIE Foundation, DC Thomson and Wild in Art.



Each statue had its own unique design.

Bidders flocked to the Dundee Repertory Theatre to get their hands on the statues, with successful bids ranging from £50,000, for the original Wullie, to £6000.

National Library of Scotland in Kelvin Hall

The National Library of Scotland has opened its doors in the west of Scotland for the first time.

Housed in the recently-refurbished Kelvin Hall, in Glasgow, the new National Library premises extend the Library's reach out of its historic home in Edinburgh.



Visitors to the National Library of Scotland will be able to explore 100 years of Scottish life on film and video.

They will also have the Library's vast digital collections – including e-books, maps, manuscripts and reference works – from the earliest times to the present day, at their fingertips.

Among the library's digital collection are manuscripts by Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, and the last letter by Mary Queen of Scots.

The project is collaboration between Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, the University of Glasgow and the National Library of Scotland.

"Our collections tell the story of Scotland down the centuries," said National librarian Dr John Scally

"We want to connect as many people as possible to the riches, knowledge and information held within them.

"People will also be able to use our digital collections to gain access to many rare and original items, covering centuries of Scotland's history and culture.

"We have something for everyone and we look forward to welcoming people to the National Library of Scotland at Kelvin Hall."