

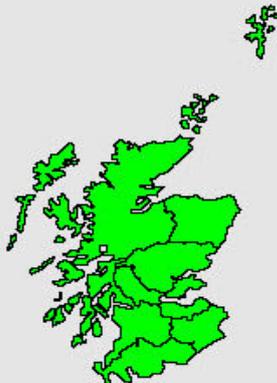


THE Saltire

No 1

Message from the Chieftain

February 2014



"Alba Gu Brath"

COMMITTEE 2013-2014

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Brian McMurdo

Immediate Past Chieftain

Ken Suttie

Vice Chieftain

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Darian Ferguson

Hon Treasurer

Diana Paxman

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Another great Burns Supper

Our recent Burns Supper provided a clear reason why it is the most popular event on the Society's calendar of events.

There was something for everyone.

The Bard of Ayr was well and truly remembered through the toasts in the formal part of the evening . . . Ken Suttie addressed the haggis, I delivered the Immortal Memory, Michael Haines gave the toast Tae the Lassies and Laura Grinham responded on behalf of the lassies.

Then we had three wonderful singers from the floor . . . young Jane Jackson, Jim McGuire and Eleanor Love . . . and Sandy Milligan gave an excellent rendition of the famous Robert Burns poem, *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

Sandy even made-up and dressed-up for the part! Great fun.

As well as providing the dance music for the ceilidh part of the evening, the Heel n Toe Band also gave us a song or two (the band said it was one of the best events they had played at).

I should mention here that the Burns Supper saw our new Honorary Piper, Alex Foster, of the Perth Metro Pipe Band, play for us for the first time during pre-dinner drinks and when leading the Haggis party.

And the whole event was held together with great aplomb by our MC duo, Diana Paxman and Reggie McNeill.

Of course, there wouldn't have been anything for them to hold together without the great work put in by the event manager, Vice-Chieftain Doris LaValette.

The next date on the Society's calendar is the Annual General meeting and I hope to see many members at the St Peter and Emmaus Church hall, on the corner of Banksia and Green Streets, Joondanna.

The AGM is being held on Sunday, 16 February, and members are asked to be there by 2pm for a 2.30pm start.

We always have a bit of a social get-together after the AGM, with a few nibbles and drinks, and perhaps a bit of dancing.

Please come along and give the Society your support.

Brian McMurdo
Chieftain



Momentous Year for Scotland

2014 will be a momentous year for Scotland, with two massive international sports competitions, hundreds of local events in the Year of Homecoming and a national referendum that will be vital for the future of the country.

At the same time, Stirling will be celebrating the 700th Anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn.

And, of course, Edinburgh will be hosting the world's greatest annual arts festival.

Homecoming Scotland 2014

In 2014 Scotland welcomes the world to join in the exciting Year of Homecoming.

The first Homecoming year in 2009 was such a success that the organisers are doing it all over again in 2014.

Alongside the world-class Commonwealth Games, which Glasgow will host in July, and golf's Ryder Cup, to be staged at historic Gleneagles in September, there's a packed program of events and festivals showcasing all that's great about Scotland . . . mouth-watering food and drink events, activities in the great outdoors, plus arts, culture and ancestral heritage to explore.

Browse the Visit Scotland Homecoming pages to find out more: <http://www.visitscotland.com/en-au/see-do/homecoming-scotland-2014/>

Celtic Connections

The Homecoming 2014 year of celebrations got off to a great start with Celtic Connections, Scotland's premier winter music festival.

Now in its 21st year, this Glasgow festival blends traditional and distinctive Scottish sounds with a variety of music from across the globe

As part of the Year of Homecoming 2014 celebrations, Celtic Connections held the first International Burns Concert on Robert Burns' birthday, in Scotland's new performance venue, the SSE Hydro.

The 3000-strong crowd was a respectable turnout, given the tally of 11 other Celtic Connections shows happening simultaneously.



The Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) were cast in the unaccustomed role of a 54-piece "house band" for the show's headline acts, with some strikingly imaginative arrangements.

In musical terms the highlights came thick and fast, with most performers' slots including a Burns or Burns-themed number alongside their own material.

The contributions from the 30-year veterans Capercaillie included Karen Matheson's beautiful version of *Ae Fond Kiss* and a mini-suite of material from Donald Shaw's award-winning Hebrides: Life on the Edge soundtrack.

Rachel Sermanni enthralled the audience with a gossamer-fine *My Love is Like A Red, Red Rose*, and young Australians The Mae Trio achieving the same with their spine-tingling harmonies on *John Anderson My Jo*.

South Africa's Mahotella Queens sang and danced with gusto, in tribute to both Burns and Nelson Mandela, who was remembered in a Glasgow context . . . it was the first place in the world to grant him freedom of the city, in 1981.



Bannockburn Live: History, food and music

The celebration 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn will be held on 23-24 June 2014.

It will commemorate the battle that saw the forces of Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, defeat the invading English army under Edward II, in 1314, during the wars of independence.

An incredible new experience will change how people learn about the battle and Scottish history, in general.

March this year will see the opening of the brand new Battle of Bannockburn visitor centre; featuring an innovative attraction with state-of-the-art 3D battle simulation that transforms the way visitors of all ages learn about Bannockburn.

The centre will deliver a world-class experience in time for the battle's 700th anniversary.

The 3D virtual environment immerses visitors in a compelling and realistic medieval battle.

Focusing on the brutal mechanics of war, it's the tactics and choices of Robert the Bruce and Edward II that take centre stage.

The experience also explores the stories of the battle, common myths and misconceptions, and the wider implications it had on Scottish history.

Input from leading experts ensures that the experience is as authentic as it is breathtaking, allowing visitors to witness the sights and sounds of medieval battle as it would have been in 1314.

Visitors from around the world are expected to commemorate Scotland's most famous battle at Bannockburn Live.

The three day spectacular takes place from 28 to 30 June, the weekend following the 700th anniversary and the official opening.

It features a realistic re-enactment of the Battle of Bannockburn in a special arena, allowing spectators to witness medieval warfare first-hand.

Also, an array of themed villages will be built, presenting the sights, sounds and atmosphere of medieval and modern Scotland.

The program will be packed with music, Scottish food and drink, crafts, literature and outdoor activities, with something for all of the family.



Poem inscribed on Bannockburn monument

In preparation for the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, the National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland are transforming the ancient battleground near Stirling.

The weather-beaten statue of Robert the Bruce has been restored, the topmast of the 1870s flagpole has been replaced (complete with battleaxe weathervane) and a specially-commissioned poem has been inscribed on the rotunda monument at the heritage site.

Scottish writer Kathleen Jamie, a professor of creative writing at Stirling University, composed the commemorative poem that appears on a new timber ring crowning the Rotunda.

The poem:

*Here lies our land: every airt
Beneath swift clouds, glad glints of sun,
Belonging to none but itself.
We are mere transients, who sing its westlin'
winds and fernie braes,
Northern lights and siller tides,
Small folk playing our part.
'Come all ye', the country says
You win me, who take me most to heart.*



Commonwealth Games honour for Scotland

In six months time the Opening Ceremony of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games will officially launch the start of Glasgow and Scotland's biggest-ever festival of sport.

The 2014 Commonwealth Games, officially the XX Commonwealth Games, will be held in Glasgow, over 11 days of competition, from 23 July to 3 August.

It will be the largest multi-sport event ever held in Scotland.

A total of 17 sports and 261 medal events will be contested at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

A record 22 para-sport events will be contested in five different sports (athletics, cycling, lawn bowls, swimming and weightlifting) and para-track cycling will be held for the first time

The Athletes' Village, in Dalmarnock, will form the centrepiece of the wider Clyde Gateway Project, a £1.6 billion inner-city regeneration project for the East End of the city.

The village covers a 35 hectare site and will house 6000 athletes and officials in 2500 residential units.

One of the key aspects of Glasgow's successful bid was the fact that the city already has 70 percent of the planned venues in place.

The majority of venues are within a 20-minutes' drive of the Athletes' Village, in the East End, South Side and West End districts of the city.

Hampden Park, Scotland's National Football Stadium, on the South Side, will be the main venue for athletics and the closing ceremony, while the opening ceremony will be held at Celtic Park, in the East End.



Clyde is the official mascot of the Games.

It was the work of young Beth Gilmour, who came out on top in a competition among Scots children to design the mascot.

The only sports held outside the Greater Glasgow area will be the diving and full-bore shooting events.

Diving will be held at the Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh, while the shooting competitions will take place at the Ministry of Defence target ranges at Barry Buddon, near Dundee.

Media mogul

Edinburgh man Wullie McTavish is on his deathbed, knows the end is near, is with the nurse, his wife, his daughter and two sons.

"So", he says to them: "Bernie, I want you to take the Braid Hills houses and, Sybil, take the flats over in Morningside and Bruntsfield.

"Tam, I want you to take the offices in Charlotte Square and, Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings in the New Town."

The nurse is just blown away by all this, and as Wullie slips away, she says, "Mrs McTavish, your husband must have been such a hard-working man to have accumulated all this property".

Sarah replies, "Property??? . . . He has a paper round!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2014

Chieftain's Ceilidh: 10 May
Venue: Stirling Bowling Club, Stirling

Winter Ceilidh: 2 August
Venue: RAAFA Club, Bullcreek

St Andrew's Day Ball: 29 November
Venue: Hyatt Regency, Perth

2015

Burns Supper: 25 January
Venue: Parmelia Hilton Hotel, Perth



Ryder Cup in Scotland after 40 years

The Ryder Cup will be staged in Scotland in 2014, for the first time in more than 40 years and only the second time in the tournament's history.

Scotland plays host to the greatest tournament in match play golf, at the magnificent Gleneagles Hotel, in Perthshire, on 23-28 September.

It was at Gleneagles, a little more than 90 years ago, that 20 men assembled for an international challenge golf match between Great Britain and the United States.

The 1921 match had no name, no real fanfare and no trophy to play for, but it eventually gave rise to the phenomenon of The Ryder Cup, first officially played six years later.

When last played in Scotland, at Muirfield, East Lothian, in 1973, the American team, containing the likes of Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Lee Trevino, beat Great Britain and Ireland.

At the last Ryder Cup, at Medinah Country Club, Chicago, the European team overturned a four-point deficit going into the last day's singles matches and went on to win.

With such history, The Ryder Cup 2014 will be a tremendous occasion with Europe looking to



complete a hat-trick of successive wins and the American team coming back hungrier than ever.

Few courses in Scotland can match the amphitheatre of the PGA Centenary Course, which has undergone extensive renovation to key holes to provide added drama during the 2014 Ryder Cup.

Referendum to decide Scotland's future

Next autumn, the people of Scotland will vote on whether the nation should become an independent country.

The date for the independence referendum has been set for Thursday, 18 September, 2014.

Everyone over the age of 16 who lives in Scotland is eligible to vote.

That means the 800,000 Scots who live in other parts of the UK don't get a vote, while the 400,000 people from elsewhere in Britain who live in Scotland do.

Members of the armed services serving overseas who are registered to vote in Scotland are also eligible.

Voters will be asked the yes/no question: "Should Scotland be an independent country?"

There is no turnout requirement for this referendum, which means a "Yes" vote of "50% plus one" would be enough to gain independence.

The campaign for Scottish home rule began in earnest almost as soon as the unification with England took place, in 1707.

Opponents of the move were outraged by claims that the Scots who put their names to the Act of Union were bribed,

It moved Robert Burns to write: "We are bought and sold for English gold. Such a parcel of rogues in a nation."

The Scottish National Party (SNP) was created in 1934 through the amalgamation of the Scottish Party and the National Party of Scotland.

In a devolved Scotland, the SNP won its first election in 2007, forming a minority government, then became the first party to win an overall majority in Scotland in the 2011 poll.

The SNP could simply declare independence, but the party has taken the view that, on an issue of such significance, it would first need the backing of the Scottish people in a referendum.



Burns Supper entertainment first-class



Two the stars of the Society's fabulous Burns Supper on 25 January were Jane Jackson (top) and Sandy Milligan.

Jane has been described as having "the voice of an angel" and her version of *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose* brought tears to a few eyes.

Here from Scotland on a working holiday, Jane will soon be recording an album.

Anyone interested in getting a copy of the CD, should contact Heather at the House of Tartan (see advertisement below).

Sandy gave an excellent recitation of the Burns' poem *Holy Willie's Prayer* and really got into the part by making-up and dressing-up!

They were part of an impressive array of guests who volunteered to entertain the capacity crowd in the Parmelia Hilton's Argyle Room.



Happy 80th birthday

A lady goes to the bar on a cruise ship and orders a Scotch with two drops of water.

As the bartender gives her the drink she says, "I'm on this cruise to celebrate my 80th birthday and it's today."

The bartender says, "Well, since it's your birthday, I'll buy you a drink. This one is on me."

As the woman finishes her drink, the woman to her right says, "I'd like to buy you a drink, too."

The old woman says, "Thank you. I'd like a Scotch with two drops of water, please."

"Coming up," says the bartender.

As she finishes that drink, the man to her left says, "I'd like to buy you one, too."

The old woman says, "Thank you. Bartender, I'd like another Scotch with two drops of water, please."

"Coming right up," the bartender says. As he gives her the drink, he says, "Ma'am, I'm dying of curiosity. Why the Scotch with only two drops of water?"

The old woman replies, "Sonny, when you get to my age, you've learned how to hold your liquor... holding your water, however, is a whole other matter."

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Lost Burns manuscripts in exhibition

A new exhibition at the National Library of Scotland will showcase the Glenriddell Manuscripts, a rare collection of Robert Burns' work written in his hand that was lost for more than 50 years.

The display celebrates the centenary of the two volumes, which include *Tam o' Shanter* and *Holy Willie's Prayer*, being repatriated to Scotland.

Believed to be worth at least £3 million, the volumes have been ranked as the most important piece of "Burnsiana" in existence, and are rarely available to be shown to the public.

Without them, we might never have truly understood our greatest poet.

"They are certainly in the top two or three manuscript collections of Burns' work and arguably the most important and the most famous," said Gerard Carruthers, co-director of the centre for Robert Burns studies.

"The manuscripts were written for Captain Robert Riddell of Friar's Carse, Dumfriesshire, a wealthy and influential friend of Burns.

"One volume contains verse, while the other contains 27 letters."

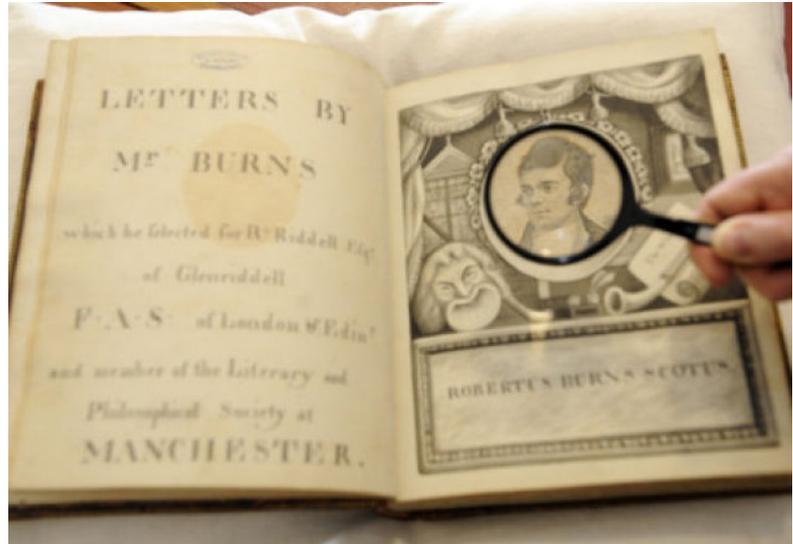
Riddell and Burns quarrelled shortly before Riddell's death in 1794, and Burns tried to get the collection back from Riddell's sister.

"I know that at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written," Burns wrote to Riddell's sister.

"They are many of them local, some puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake – a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who 'watch me for my halting', and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident among my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion; I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts."

The volumes eventually ended up in the hands of Burns' biographer Dr Currie, whose daughter-in-law gave them to the Liverpool Athenaeum in 1853, before they disappeared from sight.

They eventually re-emerged in the hands of John Gribbel, an American collector based in Philadelphia, who gifted them to the National



Library of Scotland in 1914 under terms which ensure that they will remain in possession of "the people of Scotland – forever".

Robert Betteridge, the curator who organised the display, said, "We are only able today to make the Glenriddell Manuscripts available for people to see because of the intervention and generosity of John Gribbel.

"It is fitting that we mark the centenary of their gift to the people of Scotland in this way."

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