



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Caledonians

And here we are at the end of another year. It certainly finished with a bang, thanks to a fantastic St Andrews Dinner, which is featured in this newsletter. We've included some photos so those of you who couldn't attend can see what you missed!

Next up is Burns Night—full details can be found in the “Coming Events” section. I'm also pleased to report that there has been some interest in our “For Sale” section, and I was contacted about playing the pipes at a farewell function. I hope these are encouraging signs that Callies is making its presence felt among our members, and that you too can sense this welcome revival.

Lang may your lum reek
Andrew (Chieftain & Editor)

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Dear Caledonians,

Thank you to those members and friends who joined us for St Andrew's Dinner on 29th November. Such a pity that more of you could not join us, but those of you who did will confirm that we had a most enjoyable function honouring our Patron Saint. A superb meal was served by Rondebosch Golf Club and we were entertained by highland dancers and a mini pipeband from the Nelson Mandela Artillery Pipes & Drums. Alderman Ian Nielson was the guest speaker for the evening and did a splendid job!

Can you believe the festive season is upon us? December has arrived and 2026 is just around the corner! This is such a special time of the year as communities and families all around the world gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through worship, scripture, prayer, and acts of love. I am sure that many of you will be celebrating Christmas with you families and those who are nearest and dearest to you.

We would like to wish all of you, our members and friends a really special and Merry Christmas and a Happy and New Year. May Santa bring you and the young ones lots of presents. If you are travelling, please stay safe and adhere to the rules of the road.

We will be in contact with again shortly after Christmas with an invitation to our Burns Nicht at the end of January. Please watch out for this as we would love to see you there!

That's all from me this month. Take care. *May yer blessings outnumber the thistles that grow and may trouble avoid ye wherever ye go.*

Yours aye, Chief Peter Ross

Take care.

SCOTTISH HISTORY CORNER (continued from previous editions)

Alexander III ascended the Scottish throne in 1249 at just eight years old, inheriting a kingdom that was comparatively stable but still vulnerable. His minority was marked by political manoeuvring among rival noble factions, yet Scotland avoided the prolonged civil strife that so often plagued medieval realms during child kingships. By the time Alexander assumed full control in the early 1260s, he proved to be a capable and confident ruler, determined to complete the work his father had begun.

One of the defining challenges of his reign was the unresolved question of the western seaboard. The Hebrides and the Isle of Man remained under Norwegian influence, and tensions simmered as Alexander pressed Scotland's claims. These came to a head in 1263, when King Håkon IV of Norway launched a large naval expedition to reassert control. The resulting confrontation culminated in the Battle of Largs—an inconclusive clash militarily, but a strategic turning point. Norwegian forces withdrew, and Håkon died soon after, weakening Norway's position.

Three years later, Alexander achieved a decisive diplomatic victory with the Treaty of Perth in 1266. Norway formally ceded the Hebrides and the Isle of Man to Scotland, in exchange for a monetary payment, finally bringing the western isles under Scottish sovereignty. This success secured Scotland's maritime frontier and ended centuries of Norse dominance in the region.

Freed from external threats, Alexander III presided over a period of remarkable peace and prosperity. Trade expanded, towns grew, and Scotland enjoyed rare political stability. Chroniclers later looked back on his reign as a golden age—an era when the kingdom was united, confident, and secure. Tragically, this stability would not long survive him, and Alexander's sudden death in 1286 as the result of an accident, would plunge Scotland into a succession crisis that reshaped its future.

On the night of 19 March 1286, the king was riding from Edinburgh to Kinghorn in Fife. Despite worsening weather and warnings from his attendants, Alexander chose to continue his journey. In the darkness, near the coast, his horse lost its footing and fell, throwing the king. Alexander was killed instantly.

INTERESTING SCOTTISH “GHOST STORIES”

One of Scotland's most famous ghost stories centres on a piper sent underground to explore the tunnels beneath the Royal Mile. His music was heard moving beneath the city and then suddenly stopped. The piper was never seen again. To this day, visitors report hearing faint piping from beneath the castle.

Glamis Castle is said to have hidden a terrible family secret: a malformed heir allegedly kept hidden away for life. While the truth is debated, sealed rooms and bricked-up chambers have fuelled centuries of speculation. The castle is often described as one of Scotland's most haunted.

Culloden Battlefield is a “must visit” for me any time I find myself near Inverness. I love walking the battlefield, and with a good working knowledge of the details of the battle, can imagine the scene as it might have been that day on 16 April 1746. Culloden Moor can have a very eerie atmosphere when the mist is down, with the memorial cairns, Leanach cottage, and the flags flying. It has been claimed that distant cries and the clash of weapons can be heard on a still night; lingering echoes of the final Jacobite battle. I ran around the Moor late one night, but must admit it was quite eerie, but also silent.

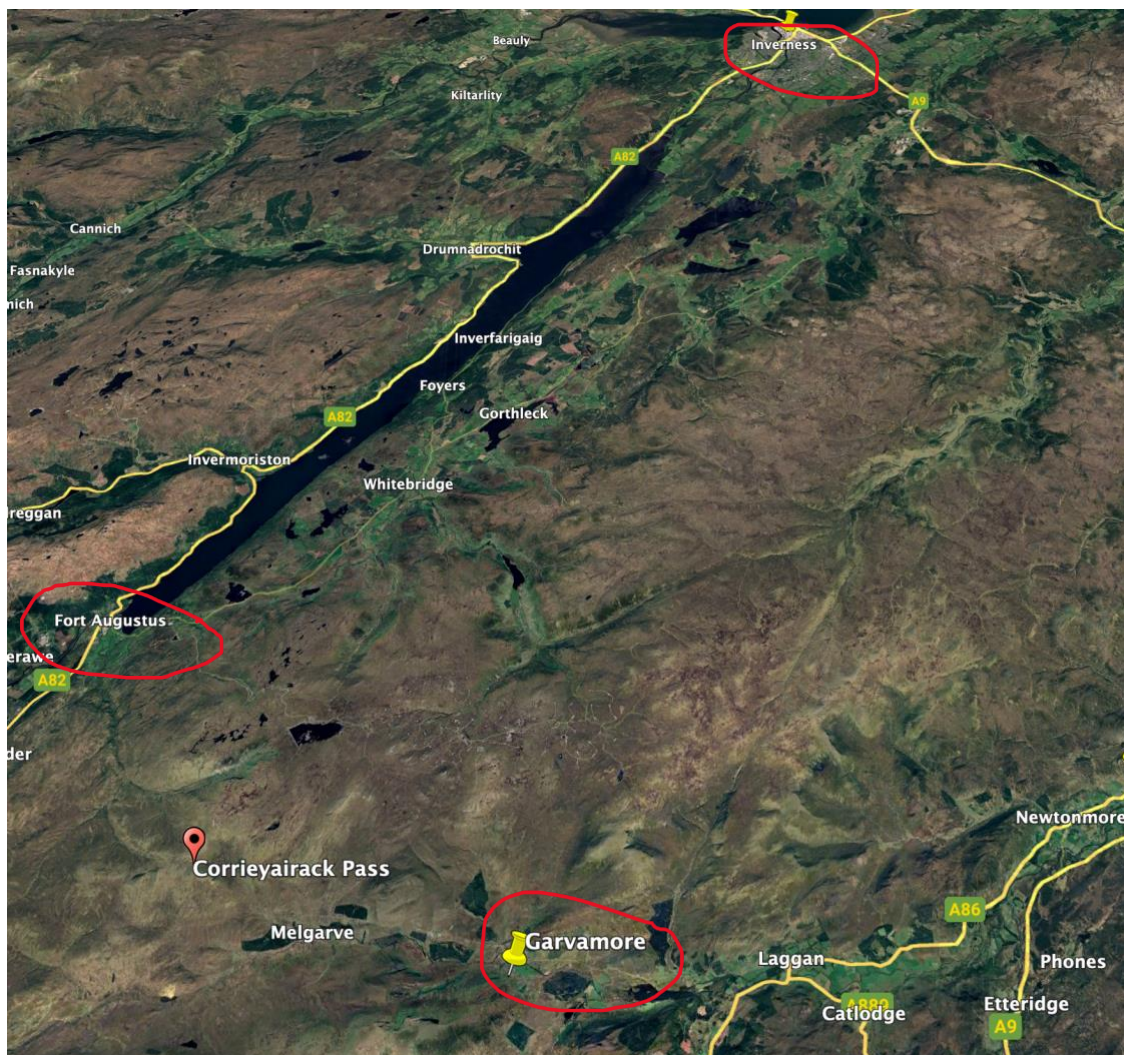
Stirling Castle: The Green Lady

A mysterious figure in green is often seen on the castle ramparts and in the Queen's rooms. She is thought to be a lady-in-waiting to Mary, Queen of Scots, who died trying to save the queen from a fire. The scent of burning is sometimes reported alongside sightings.

Rebuilt in the 20th century, Eilean Donan has a much older story. Visitors and caretakers have reported sightings of Spanish soldiers from the 1719 Jacobite rising, when Spanish troops occupied the castle before it was destroyed by government forces.

And here, from a piper's perspective, is one of my favourites. The Corrieyairack Pass cuts through the Monadhliath Mountains between Speyside and Lochaber. It is a bleak, unforgiving route, notorious for sudden changes in weather and often smothered in thick, clinging mist.

In 1958, during a training exercise by the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, Lieutenant Colonel D. J. S. Murray was leading eighty men across this desolate ground from Fort Augustus to Garvamore (see map below). It was a thoroughly *dreich* day and as conditions worsened, the platoon lost its bearings in the swirling mist. Then, out of the grey silence, came the unmistakable sound of bagpipes, faint, but steady. Believing the music to be coming from pipers at the Garvamore camp, the soldiers followed the sound until they finally reached safety. Only then was it discovered that no pipers, and indeed no soldiers at all, had been out from the camp. There was no piper anywhere nearby. Yet every man in the platoon swore he had heard the pipes, their reviving strains cutting through the gloom. That uncanny experience entered piping folklore and later inspired the modern *piobaireachd* *The Phantom Piper of the Corrieyairack*, composed by Captain John A. MacLellan.



Google Earth image showing Fort Augustus and Garvamore. I have included Inverness Laggan and Newtonmore for orientation/ location purposes.

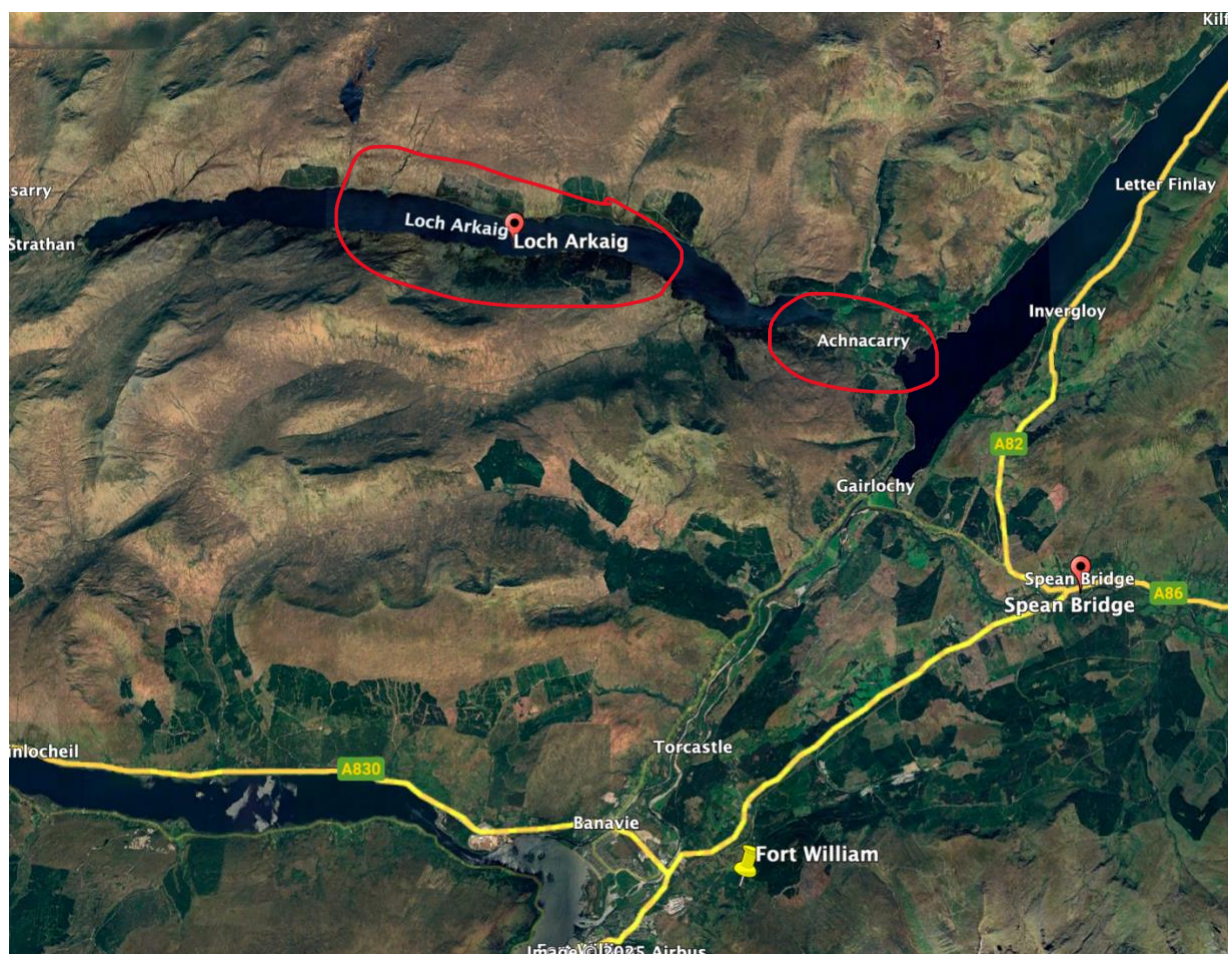
HISTORY OF THE CLANS

Clan Cameron is one of the great clans of the western Scottish Highlands, with its roots firmly planted in Lochaber from at least the 13th century. The clan name is thought to come from the Gaelic *cam-shròn* (“crooked nose”), possibly referring to an early chief. Surrounded by rugged mountains and glens near Ben Nevis, the Camerons developed a strong warrior reputation and became known for their independence and loyalty to their chiefs, whose seat was later established at Achnacarry Castle, near the western edge of Loch Arkaig (see map below).

Loch Arkaig is where legend has it that Spanish gold was hidden after the failure of the 1745 Jacobite Rising. In 1746, gold sent from France and Spain to support Bonnie Prince Charlie allegedly arrived too late. It was entrusted to Jacobite supporters and is said to have been buried or hidden near Loch Arkaig to keep it out of government hands. A fascinating place to visit: The history oozes out of every rock and the dark, brooding waters of the Loch. If you allow it to, your mind can really play tricks on you..... Tanith did a run on the far shore one evening while I sat practicing a new bagpipe tune; she arrived back saying “wow, that was quite scary”.

Throughout the medieval period, Clan Cameron was frequently involved in feuds and conflicts with neighbouring clans, most notably Clan Chattan and the Mackintoshes. One of the most famous episodes in Scottish clan history, the Battle of the North Inch in 1396, saw Camerons face Clan Chattan in a formal combat before the king in Perth. These struggles helped shape the clan’s identity and secured its hold over the Lochaber region.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Clan Cameron became steadfast supporters of the Jacobite cause. Under their chief Donald Cameron of Lochiel, remembered as “The Gentle Lochiel,” the clan played a prominent role in the Jacobite Rising of 1745 alongside Prince Charles Edward Stuart. After the defeat at Culloden, the Camerons suffered land confiscations and harsh penalties, but their estates were later restored. Today, Clan Cameron endures as a proud cultural and family clan, with descendants around the world continuing to honour its history and traditions.



ST ANDREWS NIGHT

The St Andrew's Night celebration was recently held at the Rondebosch Golf Club. It followed a slightly modified format, while still retaining all the traditional elements. The streamlined programme ensured the evening moved briskly and kept everyone entertained throughout.

The event opened with the piping-in of the dignitaries, followed by toasts, Highland dancing, the St Andrew's address, a mini pipe band performance, and an exciting raffle draw. The photographs below capture some of the key moments from the evening.



Above, left: Chief Peter opening proceedings; Right: Enjoying the entertainment



Above, left: St Andrew's address; Right: Pipe band in action



Above, left: Group photo; Right: MC Past Lady President Jacinta Munro



Above, left & right: More entertainment

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Alas, again, no news this month.....Come, members.....send me stuff about what you have been doing....visits to Scotland, family in Scotland, etc.

PIPE BAND

If anyone has a yearn to learn the bagpipes and join a band, contact Pipe Major Grant Scheffel of the Nelson Mandela Artillery Pipes & Drums (Grant can be contacted by clicking the link: grant@bagpipes.co.za)

The band plays one Saturday each month outside Mitchells Scottish Ale House at the Waterfront, at 4PM.

HIGHLAND DANCING

The following are three Highland Dance studios that can be contacted for anyone who might be wanting to try out Highland Dancing:

1. Celtic Dance Tapestry: Contact Hayley 083 2852825 (they often perform at our events)
2. Claddagh Irish & Highland Dancing: 083 564 6717 (Heather)
3. Lucas Highland Dance Studio: Contact Lesley 082 448 6335

COUNTRY DANCING

Anyone interested can contact Heather Hodgson (info@scd.za.net) for dancing in the Fish Hoek area (Wednesday nights at 7:45PM, at St Margaret's Anglican Church in 5th Avenue).

Dancing also at Lynfrae Scottish Dancing Club (Wednesday nights at 7:30PM, at the Congregational Church Hall, Main Road, Claremont). Anyone interested can contact Hilary Kerr (hilary@kerr.za.net).

PIPER FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS & EVENTS

If anyone requires a piper for a wedding, funeral, or other event, please contact me via email (Andrew.bosch@uct.ac.za) or 081 742 3706 to discuss your needs.

KILT MAKER

Just a reminder that if you need a new kilt, or repairs to a kilt, contact Kathy. I can highly recommend her work. She can be contacted on 076 342 5371.

ITEMS FOR SALE/ WANTED: Callies Scottish Marketplace

In this section, members can buy and sell Scottish items — anything from clothing eg a kilt, Prince Charlie Jacket, etc to memorabilia. If you're looking for something in particular, you can also post a request here. Since this is within our own community of friends, it provides a safe and trusted platform where you don't need to worry about scams. Email me your "advert" or item request and I will include it in the following Newsletter.

Kilt 1



I still have my Gordon kilt that I am selling as I have replaced it with a Maxwell.

Make me an offer.

Andrew.bosch @uct.ac.za
or 081 742 3706

Kilt 2



Amor is selling the Royal Stewart kilt pictured.

Length 72cm.

Contact Amor and make an offer

Schreuder.amor@gmail.com

Kilt & More

Assorted Scottish attire & other items: Tartan Trews, Jacobite shirt, formal shirt, sporran, kilt, tie, socks, Glengarry, formal jacket (Prince Charlie?). Most items size large. Being sold as a single “lot”.

Contact Beatrice to discuss on 084 808 7530



ENTERTAINMENT & DATES TO DIARISE

1. **Burns Night** is the next big event. Venue is Rondebosch Golf Club, due to good accessibility from Southern Suburbs, Sea Point, and the Northern areas. Saturday 24th January 2026. Details about booking will be sent to all members shortly.
2. **AGM:** 7 February. Further announcements shortly.

MERRY CRISTMAS and A VERY HAPPY, PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2026

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