



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Caledonians

I can't believe it's already time for the next edition of our Caledonian newsletter! I know it's a bit of a cliché, but time really does seem to fly—especially as I've gotten older. I remember how, back in school, the weeks used to feel like they lasted *forever*... though perhaps that's because I didn't enjoy school all that much. Then I got to university, where I was finally studying subjects I was passionate about, and suddenly the weeks started flying by. Lately, the pace seems to have picked up even more. Maybe it's a mix of working in a field I genuinely enjoy, time spent training for running, playing the pipes, getting older, and just having lots of interesting and fulfilling things on the go—but sometimes it feels like the week is over before it's even begun! That said, putting this newsletter together on behalf of the Society has been a fun and rewarding new task. I hope you enjoy reading it.

If you have any interesting stories, updates, or tidbits you'd like to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch—I'd love to include them in the next edition. I made the same request last time and, sadly, didn't hear from a single person! Surely someone out there has something worth sharing—don't be shy!

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Dear Caledonians,

The Cape winter is still very much with us, one can feel it in one's bones. I am sure that one feels it even more as the years progress! I have long held the view that our winter in the Cape normally arrives late and usually only starts in the month of July. That is normally the first month of heavy rains and biting cold and this year seems to be no different.

I often wonder if there are any members in the Society who love doing research about their ancestors and family trees. This has always been a most enjoyable and rewarding pastime for me. I was most fortunate in having such a great head start which was provided by my late father, Robert Fleming Ross, who passed away in 1992. He took a real interest in tracing his roots and compiled numerous files of documents, letters and information gleaned over many years from many different sources. This collation of data served as a wonderful basis on which I could build through further research.

In 2004 I decided to connect with some of my Scottish and English cousins. I organised a Ross Family Reunion which was held in Edinburgh. We all gathered over an extended weekend in a bed and breakfast which I booked in advance. In total 12 of us gathered, many of us meeting face to face for the first time. I shared with them all of the research my father and I had done and presented them all with a family tree manual. They all brought along their own family trees. I organised a one-day excursion to a village called Skirling (not Stirling!) which is south of Edinburgh in Peeblesshire, fairly close to Biggar. My family lived there for more than 200 years on a croft called Great Laws a few miles outside of Skirling. Well, we visited the croft of course and I even managed to find a part

of the hearth stone. Their cottage was no longer there as the local farmer had planted oat fields on the same spot. The churchyard in Skirling was full of graves of my ancestors. It was interesting to compare the dates on the tombstones with the records which we had collated. What a magnificent time we had together knowing that we shared a common ancestry. We are still regular contact with one another as a result of that weekend.

I may continue my family research story in a future. But in the meantime, we would be very interested to hear from you if you have any similar stories you would like to share in our newsletter. If so, please let us know!

“May yer blessings outnumber the thistles that grow and may trouble avoid ye wherever ye go.”

Yours aye,
Chief Peter Ross

MEMBER NEWS

Jacinta Munro’s Art Exhibition



Jacinta’s art exhibition, titled *“One Breath at a Time,”* opened at Alliance Francaise, 155 Loop Street, Cape Town, on the evening of Thursday, 3rd July. An enthusiastic audience gathered — friends both local and from abroad, including the Chief of the Cape Town Caledonian Society, Peter Ross, as well as family, past and present colleagues, and members of the public exploring Cape Town’s vibrant art scene on the first



Thursday of each month.

Jacinta’s message to everyone attending is: **“Thank you so much to all for sharing in the opening night of the exhibition with me. It was an exciting evening, filled with emotion, discussion, and dance by the Sanna-Moon Belly Dance School, each dance carefully chosen, to illustrate the flow of movement in my artworks. You came out in your numbers to support and share this night. Thank you, too, to those who purchased my artwork, may they all have a special place in your home.”**



More than seventy guests enjoyed the evening, engaging with the artwork and Jacinta’s personal insights into each piece, alongside refreshments and snacks. Over seventy works were on display, showcasing a range of techniques and thematic approaches. Nine of these are featured here.

The exhibition concludes at **12 noon on Saturday, 2nd August** with a complimentary painting class open to all who book in advance. Participants will have the opportunity to create their own artwork and take it home. To reserve your spot, contact Jacinta at 072 602 6144.

And one more exciting note — Jacinta has been invited to exhibit at another venue. Full details will be shared in the next newsletter.

SCOTTISH HISTORY CORNER

After Kenneth MacAlpin’s death around 858 AD, his descendants continued to rule the emerging Kingdom of Alba. His son, Constantine I, succeeded him and faced ongoing threats from Norse invasions, which would remain a major force in Scottish politics for centuries. Over time, the kingdom gradually expanded its influence north and south, often through conflict and strategic alliances. In the 10th century, King Constantine II further solidified the monarchy’s power and is notable for being one of the first rulers to refer to himself explicitly as “King of Alba.” By the reign of Malcolm II in the early 11th century, the foundations of a unified Scottish kingdom—both in territory and identity—were more firmly established. Malcolm’s grandson, Duncan I, and later Macbeth, made famous by Shakespeare, would continue to shape the turbulent but defining years of medieval Scotland.

INTERESTING SCOTTISH FACTS

1. The Scots invented the modern world (in many ways):

Scotland has produced a remarkable number of inventors and thinkers. Among them are Alexander Graham Bell (telephone), James Watt (improved the steam engine), and John Logie Baird (television). The Scottish Enlightenment also shaped modern philosophy, economics, and science.

2. Scotland has its own *official* tartan register:

The Scottish Register of Tartans, maintained by the National Records of Scotland, was established in 2008 and catalogues over 7,000 tartan designs—new tartans must be formally registered and documented.

3. Golf was invented in Scotland:

Scotland is widely recognised as the birthplace of modern golf. The game was first recorded in the 15th century, and the Old Course at St Andrews is often referred to as “the home of golf.”

4. Scotland has more redheads than any other country:

Approximately 13% of Scots have red hair—the highest percentage in the world. It’s believed this is due to a higher frequency of the recessive *MC1R* gene.

5. Scotland once tried to start a colony in Panama:

In the late 1690s, Scotland launched an ambitious (and disastrous) colonial venture called the *Darien Scheme*. It aimed to establish a trading colony called “New Caledonia” in Central America, but it failed and financially crippled the country—partly contributing to the 1707 Act of Union with England.

6. There are more Scots descendants abroad than in Scotland:

While Scotland’s current population is around 5.5 million, it’s estimated that over 50 million people worldwide claim Scottish ancestry—especially in Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand.

7. The shortest commercial flight in the world is in Scotland:

Operated by Loganair, the flight from Westray to Papa Westray in Orkney lasts just around 90 seconds. It covers a distance of less than 3 km (1.7 miles).

The first of the two images below shows the location of Westray and Papa Westray in relation to the northern Scottish mainland, showing Thurso and John O’ Groats for location reference. In the second image, I’ve zoomed in and marked the airports on both Westray and Papa Westray.

I found Orkney to be a fascinating place to visit, especially from an archaeological and historical perspective. The ancient Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, the mysterious Ring of Brodgar, and the striking St. Magnus Cathedral are particularly intriguing. That said, I was struck by how stark and exposed the environment felt—completely unlike the Scottish mainland. I don’t think I’ve ever felt so consistently cold! It’s a harsh, windswept place—but undeniably full of history.





HISTORY OF THE CLANS

In this section, I'll be highlighting a different clan each month, beginning with those that played the most prominent roles in Scottish history. These include Clan Donald (MacDonald), Clan Stewart, Clan Campbell, Clan MacGregor, Clan Chattan, Clan Cameron, Clan Fraser, Clan Mackenzie, Clan Douglas, and Clan Gordon. These clans are well known for their historical significance—whether through their influence on politics, control of territory, association with castles and seats of power, or their involvement in key events, including clan conflicts and battles against England (a personal favourite topic of mine!).

Of course, one could make a strong case for other clans as well, but this is the selection I've chosen to begin with. Starting next month, I'll kick off the series with **Clan Donald**, followed by the others in the months to come.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Glasgow has been confirmed as the host city for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, which are scheduled to take place from 23 July to 2 August 2026. For a time, the Games were without a host after Australia withdrew due to rising costs. In September 2024, it was announced that the Scottish Government would step in to host the event. This will be a scaled-down version of the Games, with competitions held across four venues and no dedicated athletes' village.

SENIORS/ PENSIONERS LUNCH

Unfortunately, we had to cancel this event due to an exceptionally low number of expressions of interest. If you were potentially interested but chose not to get in touch about attending, we'd really appreciate your feedback. Understanding what may have influenced your decision will help us plan future events that are more appealing and better suited to members' preferences. Please feel free to contact either the Chief, Peter Ross (contact details are at the top of this newsletter), or myself, Andrew Bosch (my email is also listed above). We welcome your thoughts.

WHATSAPP GROUP

To improve communication within the Society, we're in the process of setting up a WhatsApp group. All members will be added automatically for your convenience, and the group will be used to share notifications about upcoming events and other important Society news.

If you'd prefer not to be part of the group, you're of course free to leave at any time—it's as simple as removing yourself from the chat.

PIPE BAND

If anyone wants 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 every Saturday outside Mitchells 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

DANCING COMPETITION

The Claddagh Irish & Highland Dance Studio will be hosting a competition at Kirstenhof Junior School on **16th August**, starting at **9:00 AM**. The event will be followed by a workshop.

It promises to be a lively and enjoyable morning—well worth attending to soak up the atmosphere and support the dancers. If any members have children or grandchildren, this is a wonderful opportunity to come along, introduce yourselves, and perhaps spark an interest in a fun and vibrant Celtic tradition!

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).

BIRTHDAYS

Members Birthdays for next 2 months

July:

- 03rd July: Kim Mills
- 14th July: Audrey Marshall
- 30th July: Darryn Fisher

August:

- 05th August: Alison Stevenson (Council Member)
- 10th August: Colleen Rennie
- 15th August: John Cutmore
- 17th August: Debra Combrinck
- 18th August: Carina Forbes
- 29th August: Eras Van Zyl (Honorary Chaplain)
- 31st August: Sam Smith

ENTERTAINMENT & DATES TO DIARISE

1. International Folkdance evening, 23rd August, 6PM at Panorama Primary School (see details below)

AFRIKAANSE VOLKSANG- EN VOLKSPELE BEWEGING

Afrikaanse Volksang- en Volkspele Beweging

TYGERBERG VOLKSPELELAER
member of
AFRIKAANSE VOLKSANG- EN VOLKSPELE BEWEGING
presents

International Folk Dance Evening
23 August 2025
18:00 @ Panorama Primary School
R50 per person
(Includes authentic snacks representative of each group's culture)

Tickets via Quicket:
<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/319539-international-folk-dance-evening-2025/>

rscds
Cape Town Branch

Music and dancing bring cultures together. Come and enjoy a showcase of Greek, Portuguese, Scottish, Spanish, and traditional Volkspele.

Catering - Includes authentic snacks representative of each group's culture.

Admission free for children under 3 years

Video of last years International Folk Dance evening: 17 August 2024

<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMSDCBLWp/>

2. Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo: A video of the 2024 event will be shown on 30th August, at Vista Nova School. A fish and chips supper will be provided. More specific details with respect to booking your place will be provided shortly.
3. Battle of Britain Memorial service, SA Naval Museum Chapel, Simons Town, Sunday 14th September (wear tartan)



4. Scottish Heritage Evening: We are planning this for the 27th September (dependent on availability of venue, artistes, etc). The programme is a work in progress based on availability of entertainers, but we hope to have a mix of piping, a Scottish singer, Highland dance, whisky tasting, etc. More detail next month

Yours aye

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