



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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JUNE 2025

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Caledonians

Welcome to the first newsletter from the Society in quite some time!

We aim to send this out regularly to keep you informed about what's happening within the Society—upcoming events, news, and anything of Scottish interest we can share. If you have any information about members, events, or items of Scottish relevance that you'd like to see included in future editions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'd be glad to include it in the next newsletter.

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Dear Caledonians

I am so pleased that we will be getting a regular Society newsletter back on the road again! I would like to thank our very own learned Professor Andrew Bosch for taking up the challenge as the editor. He will be assisted by the very literate Past Chief Stuart Munro with this endeavour.

We recently held our traditional Kirkin' of the Chief and Chiefs at Home at the Gardens Presbyterian Church on Sunday 18 May. It was the first time since 2019 that the event was held. It has always been a very important event in our calendar, but then the Covid lockdown happened from 2020 to 2022 and we all know the impact that had on Societies like ours. No doubt it had a hugely detrimental effect on attendances at the Church as well.

Our Honorary Padre, Eras van Zyl, guided us very ably through the service and the ceremony involving the Pledge of Office by myself and our Council members. They each received a Society badge and a Certificate of Service and Honour. It is a great privilege for me to be heading up this competent team. I have no doubt that their collective efforts will be for the greater good of our members. I can also say that the average age of Council members is now considerably lower than previous Councils, a very good sign indeed! We have always said that we need some fresh new blood and indeed we seem to have found it!

The new Council taking the oath of office



We are delighted about the opportunities which may arise from the closer collaboration between our Society and the Church. Most of you will know that we pay our tributes to “Those who have fallen” at the annual Remembrance Day service. In fact, we need a researcher to work through our records to find the names of our members who lost their lives during the 2 World Wars. If anyone would like to volunteer for the job, please let me know.

(you can contact me at peter@activpro.co.za). Once the names have been determined, our plan is to create a memorial plaque for display in the Church.

Just in closing and talking of collaboration, I am a member of the “Africa Scotland Business Network” an organisation which is ably led by one of our members, Claire Alexander. I was invited to attend a whisky tasting at the WhiskyShop at Mason’s Press in Woodstock. Its very well situated, as it is in the same building and 2 doors away from Dunvegan Kilts and Tartans.

The whisky tasting was well attended and led by whisky master and connoisseur Hector McBeth. Hector who knows whiskies better than anyone else I have ever met, was an entertaining host who guided our palates through 6 magnificent whiskies. The evening became rowdier and rowdier as the night proceeded. I was hardly surprised! Their stock is very reasonably priced which resulted in my purchase of three bottles of the water of life, “uisge beatha”. I would strongly recommend a visit to both establishments if you are in the area. I sense and smell that a whisky tasting is looming in our calendar in the near future.

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

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

The founding of the Society has its origins in a tragic event—the sinking of the steamship *RMS Teuton* off Quoin Point, between Danger Point and Cape Agulhas. The ship had sailed from Plymouth, England, and arrived in Cape Town on August 29th, 1881, after a 23-day voyage. The following day, Tuesday, August 30th, she departed Table Bay en route to Natal. At approximately 7:30 p.m., she struck an object off Quoin Point. Initially, the damage was not believed to be serious, but by 10:30 p.m., the vessel was bow-down and sank shortly thereafter.

One survivor described the scene: “She went down like a streak of lightning... I would not have thought it possible that a vessel could go down so quickly.” A detailed account of the disaster is preserved in the book *Tales of Shipwrecks at the Cape of Storms*, co-authored and researched by one of our former members, Gabriel Athiros. While the exact number of survivors and casualties varies between sources, it is estimated that of the 226 people on board, only 36 survived. Among them was a 15-year-old Scottish girl, Miss Elizabeth (Lizzie) Ross—the sole female survivor—who had been travelling third class with her family. Reflecting on the ordeal, Lizzie later recounted: “I was in the cabin with my mother and father, getting the baby to sleep, when I heard a dull grating sound. Soon after that we were all called up to the deck, where the Doctor and Chief Officer told us there was no immediate danger and that we were to be calm as, if the ship would sink, the boat (sic) would save us. I and my mother and father were in the boat when I saw the ship sinking and we were capsized. I caught hold of a barrel, and after floating a little was taken into the carpenter’s boat. A great number of spars were floating about, and I hoped that papa would be saved, as he was a powerful swimmer.”

Tragically, he was not. Lizzie was the only member of her family to survive. In Cape Town, she was taken in by the minister and elders of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and cared for by Mr. and Mrs. Runciman. She was later educated and became a teacher.

In the wake of the disaster, it became clear that there was a need for the Scottish community in Cape Town to unite—for fellowship, to preserve their shared culture and heritage, and to support fellow Scots in times of hardship. As stated in its founding purpose, the Society aimed to “give aid and pecuniary help to those who require it under distressing circumstances.”

The Society was formally constituted, and at the first meeting of its Council on October 6th, 1881, it was resolved to hold a St Andrew’s Night celebration that November to raise funds. A Burns Night Supper followed in February 1882, drawing nearly the entire Scottish community in Cape Town—though only the men were allowed to attend. Until women were admitted as full members, they could only watch the festivities from the balconies surrounding the venue!

MEMBER NEWS

Chieftain (and your Editor) Andrew Bosch recently experienced an unexpected cardiac-related collapse. The good news is that, after receiving three stents, he's back to running and piping as usual. It just goes to show—you can't outrun bad genetics! Despite a lifetime of healthy habits, including logging approximately 240,000 km of running, eating a healthy diet, keeping lean, and avoiding unhealthy behaviours, some factors simply come down to heredity. In Andrew's case, it was the genetic legacy from his father that couldn't be altered by lifestyle alone. On a positive note, this event occurred significantly later in life than when his father suffered a fatal infarction, and Andrew's excellent baseline fitness meant a remarkably quick recovery—he was back on the road training just two days after the stents were inserted.

ART EXHIBITION

The Immediate Past Lady President, Jacinta, has taken up painting and will be holding an exhibition of her work at Alliance Francaise in Cape Town (155 Long Street), opening on 3rd July for a month - the opening evening will be entertaining, as well as having the opportunity to buy any of her work. Let Jacinta know if you would like to come along (for catering) - it's free!! (Phone 072 602 6144 or Stuart on 084 028 2402).

SCOTTISH HISTORY CORNER

Kenneth MacAlpin, also known as Cináed mac Ailpín, was a Gaelic prince who rose to prominence in the late 9th century and is credited with unifying Scotland. He inherited the throne of Dál Riata (roughly corresponding to modern Argyll) after his father's death and later consolidated power in Pictland. By uniting the Pictish and Gaelic kingdoms, he formed the Kingdom of Alba and became its first king—a realm that would eventually evolve into Scotland. According to tradition, while he is considered the founder and first ruler of the Kingdom of Scotland, he never formally held that title during his lifetime.



Eas a' Chual Aluinn

INTERESTING SCOTTISH FACTS

1. The official animal of Scotland is the Unicorn.
2. Scotland has approximately 700 islands.
3. Scotland is home to the oldest tree in Europe. It is a twisted yew, and it has been around for 3,000 years.
4. Edinburgh was the first city in the world to have its own fire brigade.
5. Scotland is home to the tallest waterfall in Britain, named Eas a' Chual Aluinn. Just outside Lochinver (Sutherland), it is just over 200m, which is 3 times the height of Niagara Falls.

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 will be playing at the Christmas in Winter festival in Tulbagh on the 27th June. This promises to be a dazzling festival filled with cheer, and family-friendly fun. The event is held in historic Church Street. It's the perfect time to enjoy the winter season and immerse yourself in the holiday spirit. The event is opened with the magical Farmers Electric Light Parade and a Christmas light switch-on, followed by a weekend of live music, wine tasting, Kidz Winter Wonderland and Enchanted Forest, street entertainment, Christmas decorations, traditional meals, an artisanal craft and food market, stages, and multiple bars. Click the link below to see more details and get tickets. The band will be playing on the Friday evening.

The band also plays every Saturday outside Mitchells Ale House at the Waterfront, at 4PM.

<https://tickets.tixsa.co.za/event/christmas-in-winter...>

HIGHLAND DANCING

The following are two 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

I will provide more information in future editions if I can get anything worth sharing, such as exhibitions, etc

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

June:

- 02nd June: Frances Rogers
- 12th June: Anne Stevenson
- 14th June: Anne Cook
- 19th June: Lynn Hele
- 22nd June: Heidi Kruger
- 28th June: Andrew Robson

July:

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

ENTERTAINMENT & DATES TO DIARISE

1. Seniors/ Pensioners Lunch: This event will take place on 22 June at G Block, 1st Floor, Panorama Palms, Uys Krige Drive, Panorama. No cost, but if you want to attend, please contact Ian at 065 847 7763 or Alison at 065 918 7258, for catering purposes.

And to look forward to:

2. Scottish Heritage Evening: Date to be advised in following months
3. Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo: A video of the 2024 event will be shown in September. A fish and chips supper will be provided. More specific details with respect to booking your place will be provided nearer the time.

Yours aye

Editor Andrew Bosch

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