



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Dear Caledonians,

It is with great pride that I can announce that, at the AGM held on 14th March, I was elected Chief of the Society.

The full list of Council members elected is as follows:

Chief: Andrew Bosch

Immediate Past Chief: Peter Ross

Chieftain: Mark Ogilvie

Secretary: Shared between Council Members: Stuart Munro and Ian Stevenson

Treasurer: Alison Stevenson

Honorary Padre: Eras van Zyl

Honorary Piper: Andrew Bosch

My goal as Chief for the year is to help make this a vibrant and active Society, to encourage new members, and to explore opportunities for sustainable funding.

These may be ambitious goals, but they are certainly worth pursuing.

Some may wonder about my Scottish ancestry and heritage and becoming Chief of the Society. The answer to that question can be found in the short article that follows, originally written for the AGM.

It is also with great appreciation that I record my sincere thanks to Peter Ross for his dedicated service as Chief of the Society over the past six years. During this time, Peter has provided thoughtful and steady leadership, guiding the Society with a genuine commitment to its aims and traditions.

Under his stewardship, the Society successfully navigated the challenges of Covid, while continuing to host many memorable events, maintaining a strong rapport among members, and celebrating Scottish heritage in all its forms.

Beyond the formal responsibilities of the role, Peter has brought a spirit of sincerity, enthusiasm, generosity, and good humour that has been greatly valued by all. The time and effort he has given, often behind the scenes, have not gone unnoticed and have contributed significantly to the strength and character of the Society.

On behalf of all members, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Peter for his leadership and service. I am pleased that he remains an active member of the Society in his capacity as Immediate Past Chief, and we look forward to his continued involvement.

FFROM THE DESK OF THE OUTGOING CHIEF:

Dear Caledonians,

I would like to thank everyone who attended our recent AGM at Tai Ping restaurant which was held on Saturday 14th March 2026. And also to all of you who tendered your apologies and provided their proxies. This helped us to comfortably exceed achieve the minimum 20% of paid-up members quorum.

Those who attended will confirm that the enthusiasm, camaraderie, “clansmanship” and general “gees” in the Society is still strong. We worked through our agenda with ease and with many contributions coming from the floor. This all stacked up to being another successful AGM in my opinion. The AGM was followed by an vocal and interactive think tank where everyone present was invited to make suggestions regarding how we can take the Society forward in the year which lies ahead. Participation was robust and honest. This was followed by a delicious Chinese meal in reward for everyone’s efforts!

An important agenda item was the appointment of new office bearers. Perhaps at this stage I should say that having served as your Chief for the almost 6 years, I felt the time has come for me to step down. In fact, I have been wanting to do this for a while but I was waiting for a suitable successor before I could do so. I am pleased to say that such successor has volunteered to step forward. He is Chieftain Andrew Bosch who has been both our Honorary Piper and our scribe for some time. So, if you have been attending our functions and reading our newsletters he should be known to you.

He will be telling us more about himself in this newsletter. You will see and I am sure you, agree that he has an impressive affiliation to Scotland. He is passionate about all things Scottish and will no doubt be a very capable Chief. I wish him every success in this role. I will continue to serve as your Immediate Past Chief going forward and I am pleased to say that my fellow clansman, Stuart Munro, has agreed to continue standing for election to Council. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience and has agreed to be a joint Honorary Secretary.

The previous Council has largely agreed to stand again. Chieftain Mark Ogilvie as Chieftain, Alison Stevenson as Honorary Treasurer, and husband Ian Stevenson as joint Honoray Secretary. Unfortunately, my son Alistair Ross has decided to recuse himself from re-election due to work and family commitments. I would like to thank him for the role which he has played on Council.

Thanks to my Council for your support in the past. And my thanks are also extended to you our members for your entrusting me to hold office as Chief of the Society, a role which I was truly honoured to serve for a second term.

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.*

MORE THAN BLOOD: MY CHOSEN SCOTTISH HERITAGE (By Chief Andrew Bosch)

When the then Chief (Peter) asked me to write something about my Scottish heritage for the AGM, I realised that I had a slight problem... because strictly speaking, I don’t actually have any! At least not in the genetic sense.

When asked about my Scottish ancestry over the years, and in trying to explain my Scottish interest, I came to realise that heritage is perhaps something you inherit, but maybe sometimes it’s something you **choose**; something that captures your imagination and stays with you.

My fascination with Scotland started when I was about ten years old. What drove that I don’t know, but I remember cycling down to the local library to read the Scottish stories in *The People’s Friend* and *The Scots Magazine*. Those stories opened up a world of misty glens, clans, castles, and remarkable history.

Around the same time, my mother, obviously aware of my interest, regularly took me to the local park where the pipe band played once a month and to parades by the band through the city. Somewhere around that time, Andy Stewart was touring South Africa and my mother took me to that, too. Even though I was only about 9 at the time, I can still remember the show very clearly.

Time moved on and in the late 1970s I started learning to play the pipes and that was probably the moment when a casual interest turned into something a little more permanent.

My first visit to Scotland was some 10 years later, in 1987, and since then I've been fortunate enough to return almost every year. I suspect the number of visits must now be somewhere over thirty-five. During those trips, I've criss-crossed the country from north to south and east to west, including visits to more than thirty islands, some of them requiring special arrangements to hire a fishing boat just to get there, such as Mingulay and Berneray. Being an avid runner, to classify as having visited an island, I had in mind that I had to do at least an hour run on the Island. Some were so small that it took less than an hour to run the perimeter, in which cases I completed whatever loop I could put together!

On some of my visits I have included a "theme". On one such visit I followed the route taken by Bonnie Prince Charlie after his defeat at Culloden, tracing his journey across the Highlands as he evaded the pursuing English army. Driving the route and running the sections that can't be driven, really brought the history to life in a way books never can.

So, while I may not be able to claim Scottish ancestry in the traditional sense, I hope I make up for it through a deep enthusiasm for Scotland, its history, its music, its traditions, and the spirit that has inspired so many people around the world. Perhaps that is one of the unique things about Scottish culture: It has never belonged only to those who were born into it. It has also belonged to those who admire it, learn it, and help keep it alive.

SCOTTISH HISTORY CORNER (continued from previous editions)

Resistance to English rule soon erupted into open rebellion, led by figures such as William Wallace and Andrew Moray. In 1297, their forces achieved a stunning victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, where a smaller Scottish army outmanoeuvred and defeated a much larger English force. This triumph briefly restored Scottish confidence and allowed Wallace to emerge as Guardian of Scotland, ruling in the name of the absent king, John Balliol. However, the tide turned in 1298 when Edward I of England personally led an army north and defeated Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk. Wallace resigned his guardianship and continued resistance in a more limited capacity before being captured in 1305 and executed in London, becoming a martyr for the Scottish cause.

Leadership then shifted among the Scottish nobility, most notably to Robert the Bruce, who would become one of Scotland's most iconic figures. In 1306, Bruce seized the initiative by killing his rival John Comyn and having himself crowned King of Scots at Scone. This bold move reignited the struggle for independence, though it initially met with setbacks as Edward I sought to crush the rebellion.

Despite early defeats, Bruce waged a determined guerrilla campaign, gradually regaining territory and support. His perseverance culminated in the decisive Scottish victory at the Battle of Bannockburn, where his forces defeated a much larger English army under Edward II of England. This battle effectively secured Scotland's independence in practice, even if formal recognition would come later.

In 1320, Scottish nobles reinforced their claim to sovereignty in the Declaration of Arbroath, a famous letter to the Pope asserting Scotland's right to be free from English domination. Finally, in 1328, the Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton saw England formally recognise Scotland as an independent kingdom, with Robert the Bruce as its rightful king, bringing this dramatic chapter of the Wars of Independence to a triumphant close.

MOST BEAUTIFUL SCOTTISH PLACES

Big 7 Travel have named what they have determined to be the most beautiful places in Scotland. Below, I've shown below the top three in the list:

Queen's View, Perthshire



Fairy Pools, Isle of Skye



Eilean Donan Castle, Highlands



And here are some of my favourites:

Loch Coruisk, Elgol



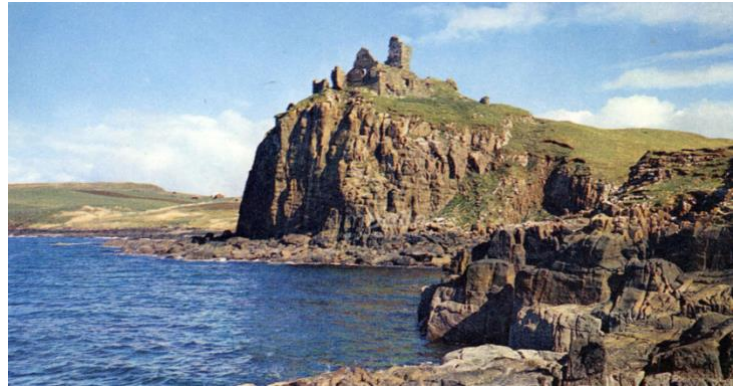
Torridon (NW Highlands)



Loch Lubnaig (Callander)



Duntulm (Trotternish)



Luss (Loch Lomond)



DID YOU KNOW

It is widely believed that Queen's View (*see photo on previous page*) got its name after Queen Victoria visited the area in 1866. However, according to *Forestry and Land Scotland*, it was actually named after Isabella—the first wife of Robert the Bruce, who lived more than 500 years before Queen Victoria's visit.

HISTORY OF THE CLANS

This month I highlight Clan Donald.

One of the largest and most powerful Highland clans, Clan MacDonald traces its origins to Somerled, a 12th-century warlord of Norse-Gaelic heritage who carved out a kingdom along Scotland's western seaboard. From this foundation, the MacDonalds rose to become the famed Lords of the Isles, controlling vast stretches of the Hebrides and western Highlands for generations. At their height, they operated almost as semi-independent rulers, commanding fleets and armies that rivalled those of the Scottish crown. The Clan Donald Visitor Centre, located at Armadale Castle, on the Sleat Peninsula, Isle of Skye, is well worth a visit and the history of the clan is covered in detail. I went thinking an hour or so would be enough time, but I ended spending an entire afternoon until closing time!



Armadale Castle & visitor centre

Their history is marked by both prestige and conflict. The clan played a central role in the shifting balance of power between Scotland and Norway, and later in internal Scottish struggles between rival clans and the monarchy. The eventual forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 brought them more directly under royal authority, but did little to diminish their influence or reputation.

Clan MacDonald is also remembered for its involvement in some of Scotland's most dramatic and tragic events, including the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692, which left a lasting scar on Highland history and identity. Despite such hardships, the MacDonalds remained a resilient and far-reaching clan, with numerous branches spread across Scotland and beyond. Their legacy endures as one of the most iconic and historically significant of all Scottish clans.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Erik Chisholm: A Remarkable Life

(4 January 1904 Glasgow, Scotland 8 June 1965 (aged 61) Cape Town, South Africa)



Erik was the father of a Member of the Cape Town Caledonian Society., Sheila Chisholm and she shared a little about him during the Society's AGM on Saturday 14 March 2026. We thought that we should share something of a man who was quite a character in his varied career and was often referred to as Impulsive... Impossible... A human dynamo...

People talked about Erik Chisholm in terms of strong adjectives. For here was a man who invoked strong feelings. Love him, quarrel with him, or detest him, but if you lived in Cape Town in the 1950s and mid-1960s you could not be unaware of this dynamic musician, composer, conductor, lecturer, writer and champion alike of new composers and down-trod animals. Dogs were high on his list of priorities. He was like some Pied Piper of Cape Town attracting dropouts and strays without trying...

At the outbreak of World II, Chisholm, a conscientious objector, was declared unfit for military service on the basis of poor eyesight and a crooked arm. During the war he conducted performances with the Carl Rosa Opera Company in 1940 and later joined the Entertainments National Service Association as a colonel touring Italy with the Anglo-Polish Ballet in 1943 and served as musical director to the South East Asia Command between 1943 and 1945. He first formed a multi-racial orchestra in India, but after arguments with his superior, Col. Jack Hawkins, he was removed to Singapore. Here in 1945 he founded the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Dubbed 'The Hardest Working Man in Singapore' while with ENSA organising concerts with the troops, Erik Chisholm's white-hot enthusiasm made him a formidably creative force.

He was a man who pursued causes with a ferocious determination, and this often lead to lengthy correspondence in the Letters to the Editor columns. Championing the cause of new, or little-known composers, was something dear to Erik Chisholm's heart. In Scotland in 1929 he founded the Active Society for the Propagation of Contemporary Music at which many important composers of the period performed in recitals of their own works.

The Active Society was by no means Erik's sole activity. He conducted the Glasgow Grand Opera Society from 1930-1939. He also founded the Barony Opera Society and the Scottish Ballet Society and conducted the Celtic Ballet. For one who so pushed the music of others, Erik Chisholm appears to have fallen short of champions to push for the performance of his own music. His list of compositions include at least two symphonies, three concertos (for piano, violin and orchestra), eight ballets, five operas, plenty of folk songs, as well as a stack of orchestral, chamber and piano works. Music poured out of him from morning till night."



Erik named one of the highlights of his musical career as the occasion when he was riding in a Glasgow tram about 1946 and heard from a friend that the University of Cape Town (UCT) was looking for a Professor of Music. He applied, got the job and spent 19 years turning it into a first class institution which enjoyed a world-wide reputation as the only music faculty of its kind to put on first-rate grand opera, using only indigenous talent. Here the Staff and students pose in the grounds of the college for their annual photo with the Dean.

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piano works. Music poured out of him from morning till night. Never-the-less, an important impulse of his in South Africa was the Opera School which he established in 1951. ... Premiere productions included Erik's own Dark Sonnet, ... Inland Woman and The Pardoner's Tale. The Opera Company travelled to Britain in 1956-57 with the British premiere of Bartok's Bluebeard's Castle.

Gregorio Fiasconaro said, "*He was the most dynamic man I've ever known*"

Right: Erik Chisholm with violinist Szymon Goldberg, his mother Elizabeth Chisholm and daughters, Morag (left), Sheila [*Cape Town Caledonian Society Member*] (right) and Fiona outside their Rosebank home in 1952.



(NB: Some Information and the photos here are taken from "Erik Chisholm: Snapshots of a remarkable life" by UCT)

BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL

A very happy birthday to all our members who celebrate their special day this coming month:

Peter Odenaal, 1 April
Wilma Olivier, 2 April
Gwilym King, 5 April
Anria Forbes, 7 April
Darryn Allan, 23 April
Lance Miller, 26 April
Jill Mitchell, 29 April
Stuart Munro, 30 April (Past Chief of the Society)

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. Nothing wanted or for sale this month.

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

If you need a kilt made, or repairs to a kilt, contact Kathy. I can highly recommend her work. She can be contacted on 076 342 5371.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Announcements will be made in forthcoming editions as your Council finalises the year ahead.

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