



CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER MAY 2007

Chief	Peter Ross 3 Welgelee Road Constantia Hills, 7806	☐ fax	021 689 9450 (W) 021 689 9240
Secretary	Ian McWalter 74 Strubens Road Mowbray, 7700	☐ fax	021 712 2506 (H) 021 685 6000 (H) 021 509 4065
Treasurer	Lance Wiseman☐ 9 Albert Road, Mowbray, 7700	☐ ☐	021 509 0469 (W) 021 689 2235 (H) 021 686 7104 (W)
Scribe	Margaret Currie	☐/fax	021 686 7300 (W) 021 671 3674
Hon Padre	Myra Horn	☐	021 558 4045

Dear Member

What glorious weather we enjoyed over Easter! Now it is time to batten down the hatches and prepare for winter, hopefully, as our dam levels are down alarmingly. Can you feel the chill in the morning and evening and see the days drawing in?

THE HUMBLE TATTIE

Did you taste a tattie scone at the Gathering? I hope you did - Mary Douglas makes rare tattie scones! All around the world people celebrate their exotic foods such as Russian caviar or Chinese deep fried scorpions. However, it is the more ordinary foods which keep us going, such as vegetables, pasta, fruit, rice, dairy produce and the humble tattie (potato for those who need a translation!).

I recall, with my mouth watering, new Ayrshire potatoes served with butter and chopped chives. There is nothing to beat this everyday food.

Born on a farm in **Milltimber** and now living in **Kettleridge** in **Fife**, **Alan Romans** waxes lyrical over his obsession with the humble tattie. His favourite subject at school was biology, which he then studied at **Aberdeen University**. From there he progressed to teaching at **Montrose Academy**. His involvement in the plant world wasn't merely theoretical. Some of his friends became *roguers*, which requires great skill and observation in identifying disease and genetic mutation. He also became involved in the organic movement.

I have vivid recollection of the famed Ayrshire potatoes pulled from the red Ayrshire soil. I also have a strong memory of the following song:

*Wha' saw the tattie howkers.
Wha' saw them gaw'n awa.
Wha' saw the tattie howkers
Sailin' doon the Broomielaw.*

This referred to the boatloads of Irish who regularly came over to Scotland to lift the annual potato crop. Alan speaks of a Scots potato named *up to date* which was so good that it was actually exported to South America, the home of the potato! I also recall, during the war years, as a school girl being set the task of designing a poster exhorting the population to *Eat More Potatoes*, the only food available in any quantity. Long live the humble tattie!

FROM THE CHIEF

Our scribe has reported elsewhere in this newsletter on the festive Highland Gathering which was held on the 7 April at Wynberg Boys High. It is held in Cape Town once every 3 years, so I hope that you could make it! The organising committee comprised representatives from both Pinelands and Cape Town Caledonian Societies which, I am pleased to say, has resulted in all concerned getting to know one another very well. This augurs well for the future as the feelings have been quite highly strung in the past!

There was great support from so many so thank you to those who gave generously of their time including those who manned our Society stall which we shared with Will Carter of Staghorn Outfitters. Tony Reis, pipe major of the Caledonian Pipe Band and Judy Lucas deserve special mention for the many organising hours which they spent. I would also like to especially thank someone who helped enormously even before becoming a member of our Society! He was Frankie Birt and I am indebted to him. I hope that you will all meet him soon as he is a great character who likes to contribute to getting things done!

We are now working on the functions going forward so we will keep you posted. A viewing of the 2006 Edinburgh Tattoo and a whisky tasting are on the cards. The AGM is also approaching so please give this some thought if you would like to make a difference yourself or nominate someone who can. Our Council of 9 members is the smallest in our history so we really do need some extra hands!

Yours aye,
Peter

FUNCTIONS

The sun was shining on a glorious day for the **Western Cape Highland Gathering**, and, after all the hard work which had gone into preparation, we reaped the benefit. Scottish culture and tradition were on show to a steady flow of spectators who came along to view the proceedings, in a glorious setting with a backdrop of Table Mountain. The dancing, piping and drumming heats were ongoing, culminating in the final march of the massed bands after judging had been completed. Congratulations to all the winners and, indeed, everyone who took part in whatever capacity - well done and, of course, a special vote of thanks to the overworked Gathering Committee.

If you entered the Gathering **fund raising raffle**, you would have been contacted by now. The winners were:

- First Prize: Bill Heeps
- Second prize: Ken Hundermark
- Third Prize: Peter Sarkozy

Well done to the winners and for all those who entered, thank you!

The **Irish Evening** attended by both Societies for the purpose of raising funds towards the proceeds of the Gathering, was a lively happy event. The dancing by the **Judy Lucas School of Dancing** was a joy to behold. The lasses, all sizes, were so graceful; a credit to their teacher.

New Members' Afternoon Tea

Date 27 May

Venue Home of the Chief and Lady President

Over the last few months we have acquired a number of new members and it seems a good time to invite them to tea with the Chief, Lady President and Council in order to welcome them and give us an opportunity to get to know them. Those concerned will receive an invitation.

Video Evening

Date and time: 22 June, 19h00 for 19h30

Venue 3 Welgelee Road, Constantia Hills (Home of the Chief and Lady President)

An exciting video evening will be held on 22 June. The curtain raiser will be a video taken of the Highland Gathering and the main feature will be the 2006 Edinburgh Tattoo. Soup and rolls are included in the entrance fee of R25 per person. We expect a good response so be sure to book your seat early by phoning Nicky Ross on Tel 021 712 2506.

July or August: AGM – Exact date, time and venue to be advised in next newsletter

August: Whisky tasting

26 August: Kirkin' of the Chief at Gardens Presbyterian Church

September: Chief's At Home

October: Congress, Seniors' Lunch

December: St Andrew's Nicht

Full details to follow. We are engaged in planning the year ahead. Watch this space for further information.

Pinelands

For details, please telephone **Anne Miller at 021 591 1499**.

Should you require transport to functions please telephone our Secretary, **Ian McWalter, at 021 685 6000 (a/h)** to arrange this.

FOR SALE

Kennedy tartan kilt - waist 40 inches, length 23½ inches - like new. Green tweed day jacket 40 inch chest and leather sporran. Black dress jacket 40 inch chest and dress sporran. Anyone interested please telephone **Joyce Wilkinson 073 555 1913**.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Just at a crucial moment, a few days before the Gathering, our Chief **Peter Ross**, had to be admitted to hospital for emergency surgery to his leg. There is much to be said for the Ross genes as there he was, fulfilling all his duties on **the day**. We are really sorry you had to undergo this tribulation, Peter, and are glad everything went well and wish you good health in the days ahead.

I should like to add that Peter was ably supported by **Nicky**, who is always there, quietly smiling. Our best wishes to Nicky, also.

Mieke Gordon reports on improvement in her health after her bout of tick bite fever. Keep it up, Mieke!

Stuart Torrance has also spent a spell in hospital due to a shoulder operation. We hope you are much better now, Stuart, and able to enjoy your sister's visit. We hear, also, that your daughter, **Lindsay**, has returned to Cape Town. That's good news for you.

To Councillors **Helen Johnson and Myra Horn** we hope you are both much better after your recent bouts of flu and send you good thoughts.

We also send our love to **Narina Gilder** whose sister has been in intensive care seriously ill, for over a month, and hope she is now improving.

Welcome back to **Mary and Iain Moodie** from their visit to their family in Auckland. It seems they had a wonderful time and found the family well settled in.

For those who remember **Bill Lofthouse**, one time member of the Society, we hear he has passed away at a good age. Our condolences go to his widow **Grace**.

Margaret Currie, your scribe, celebrated her **80th birthday** on 19 April. Heartiest congratulations on a most creative and productive life and may the years ahead be full of love and joy, especially during this time with most of your children, grand children and great grandchildren close to you.

THIS AND THAT

Once again I find myself indebted to my hairdresser for interesting information. He tells me that whilst on holiday in the Knysna area recently he came across a small herd of Highland Cattle. Can anyone else comment on this?

FROM THE BOOK OF THE SCOTTISH ANECDOTE

By Hislop

....And so ye see, auld Pittoddles, when his third wife dee'd, he got mairrit upon the Laird o' Blaithershins' aughteenth dochter, that was sister to Jemima, that was mairrit till Tam Flumexer, that was first and second cousins to the Pittoddleses, whose brither became laird afterwards, an' mairrit Blaithershins' Baubie - an' that way Jemima in a way becam' her ain niece an' her ain aunty, an', as we used to say, her guid-brither was mairrit toe his ain grannie. Phew! I think only the Irish could beat the Scots at getting tied in knots with an explanation!!!

A SMILE

A farmer's wife, who was rather niggardly with her whisky, was giving her shepherd a drink. As she handed him his drink she remarked on it being extra special whisky, being fourteen years old. "Well, mistress," replied the shepherd regarding his glass sorrowfully, "It's verra wee for its age!"

Please excuse the format of this month's newsletter. We will revert to the normal layout next month!

With warm thoughts from you Chief, Lady President and Council
And your scribe