



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Caledonians

Well, it seems the past month has been a quiet one from all of you! After Beth's brilliant contribution in the last Newsletter, I was certain it would spark a flurry of stories about your own adventures through the nooks and crannies of Scotland. Alas, the inspiration didn't strike—or perhaps you're all keeping your best tales to yourselves! Either way, my inbox remained stubbornly empty. Not even anything to sell! So, in true Caledonian spirit, this Newsletter will once again feature my usual wanderings through Scottish history, clan lore (this time I spotlight Clan Gregor), and a collection of interesting facts and snippets. I've also included an account of the Remembrance Sunday service at Gardens Presbyterian Church last weekend, along with highlights from other Remembrance Day events across the city in which Caledonians played a key role.

I hope you enjoy catching up on what the Society has been up to. And remember—you're more than welcome to join in at events like these as a Caledonian!

As I write this, just heard the news that Scotland has made it to Soccer World Cup for first time in 27 years.....very cool!

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 the Remembrance Day service at Gardens Presbyterian Church last Sunday 16th November. A fair bit of planning went into the service and we collaborated closely with Padre Eras van Zyl and his team regarding the service programme.

The service was, of course, dedicated to those who have fallen in battle fighting for our country and freedom, One remembers not only the front-line troops, but all of those serving behind the frontlines. My father often told me that for every fighting soldier, there were nine others working in support. I was also reminded that there were many of our animal friends who have died in huge numbers in the line of duty over the years.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Chieftain Andrew Bosch did a sterling job with the piping. Tunes played included Amazing Grace, Highland Cathedral and the Battle of Somme, the beauty of which often has one shedding a silent tear.

It is also a good time to reflect on the vital role played historically by the kirk not only in the parishes of Scotland, but all over the world, including South Africa of course. The kirk played a central role in Scottish parishes by governing religious and social life through the kirk session, which was responsible for poor relief, education, moral discipline, and managing church services and sacraments. The kirk session, made up of the minister and local elders,

oversaw spiritual well-being and administered a wide range of local affairs. All important events in one's life from birth, marriage and death were carefully recorded in their church registers. Just the thought of it makes me yearn to do get stuck in, once again, with my family research.

Please remember to book for our **St Andrews Dinner** which is being held next weekend on **29th November**. There will be lots of Scottish entertainment which you can enjoy in the company of friends.
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

SCOTTISH HISTORY CORNER (continued from previous editions)

Alexander II's reign (1214–1249) continued the steady consolidation of the Scottish kingdom. He worked to reduce the power of unruly regional magnates and sought to reclaim territories such as Northumbria, although these ambitions were ultimately curtailed by English opposition. One of his most significant achievements was the Treaty of York in 1237, which formally established much of the modern border between Scotland and England—a diplomatic victory that helped stabilize relations between the two realms. Alexander also turned his attention north and west, aiming to bring the semi-independent Norse-held Hebrides under Scottish control. Although he died on campaign in 1249 before completing this objective, his efforts laid essential groundwork for his son, Alexander III, whose reign would bring Scotland into one of its most prosperous and culturally cohesive periods.

A lesser known fact is that Alexander II nearly changed the balance of power in the Irish Sea by planning to conquer the Hebrides from the Viking-ruled Kingdom of Norway — and he came *very* close to succeeding.

In 1249, he launched a major campaign to seize the islands, which had long been a Norse stronghold. His fleet sailed up the west coast, and Alexander personally led the expedition. But in a twist of fate, he fell ill and died before the campaign could be completed. His ambition didn't die with him, though: his son, Alexander III, picked up the mission and ultimately secured the Hebrides for Scotland in 1266 through the Treaty of Perth, ending centuries of Norse influence.

INTERESTING SCOTTISH FACTS

1. The earliest report of a monster in the vicinity of Loch Ness appears in the Life of St. Columba by Adomnán, written in the 7th century AD. According to Adomnán, writing about a century after the events described, Irish monk Saint Columba was staying in the land of the Picts with his companions when he encountered local residents burying a man by the River Ness. They explained that the man was swimming in the river when he was attacked by a "water beast" that mauled him and dragged him underwater despite their attempts to rescue him by boat.
2. Scotland has the most castles per square mile than any other country in the world.
3. The highest point in Scotland is Ben Nevis, standing at 1,345 meters (4,411 feet) tall.
4. Scotland has more than 6,000 lochs and is home to the largest freshwater lake in the UK, Loch Lomond.

HISTORY OF THE CLANS

In this Edition I focus on Clan MacGregor:

Clan MacGregor is one of Scotland's oldest Highland clans, traditionally claiming descent from Griogair (Gregory), said by legend to be a son of the ancient King Alpin and therefore linked to the same royal line as Kenneth MacAlpin. It is perhaps this from which the clan motto comes, 'S Rioghal Mo Dhream, which translates to "Royal is my race". Whether or not the royal connection is literal, the MacGregors were certainly an early and powerful clan, their ancestral lands centred in Glen Orchy, Glenstrae, Glenlyon, and later around Loch Katrine.

From the Middle Ages through the 16th century, the clan was repeatedly drawn into conflicts with neighbouring powers, especially the expanding Clan Campbell, whose rise and acquisition of lands pushed the MacGregors into increasingly strained circumstances. Tensions escalated into violent feuds, culminating in the notorious Battle of

Glen Fruin in 1603, after which James VI outlawed Clan MacGregor, banning the name itself. MacGregors were forbidden to bear arms, their lands were confiscated, and many members were forced to adopt other surnames (such as Murray, Grant, Stewart, or Drummond). Some were executed simply for using the name “MacGregor.” Despite this persecution, the clan survived through tight kinship, covert organisation, and support from sympathetic families. The proscription was lifted briefly, reimposed, and finally abolished permanently in 1774.

Perhaps one of the most well-known of all MacGregors is Rob Roy MacGregor, who became a legendary folk hero during the time of the proscription, paying little attention to the proscription order — a cattleman, Jacobite, and skilled fighter, he supported the Jacobite cause in 1715, his exploits capturing the imagination of Scotland and beyond.



Location of Balquhidder, Loch Katrine and Loch Voil (the dark patch just to the left of Balquhidder on my location map above, left) and Rob Roy’s grave (right). You will always find someone has left flowers, a piece of MacGregor tartan, a sprig of Scots Pine, or a white “Jacobite” rose.

Rob Roy is buried in the Balquhidder Kirkyard in the Central Highlands of Scotland, where his wife and two sons are also buried. A simple epitaph, but one which says it all, reads, "MacGregor Despite Them". I have visited the churchyard quite a few times and highly recommend making the trip up from Stirling, using the backroads if you have time, as its well worth it. Stop at Loch Katrine and Loch Earn. And after visiting Rob’s grave, carry on further down the single-track road to Loch Voil.

CALEDONIAN SOCIETY AT REMEMBRANCE SERVICES AND PARADES

Remembrance Day is a Memorial Day observed in former countries of the British Empire, and current Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty. It was with a great feeling of pride and sensitivity that the Society was represented at three Remembrance Services in Cape Town during November 2025.

The Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital held a moving time of remembrance in the grounds of the hospital on Friday 7th November. Why would a children’s hospital hold a remembrance service for all who died or served during times of war? In simplicity, it was returning ex-servicemen from World War II who wanted to erect a memorial to all service men and women who were lost during that war. However, they didn’t want an inanimate object but wanted a ‘living’ monument and, in 1945, the idea of a children’s hospital was proposed.

Of course, there was more to it than that, but suffice it to say that they all donated a day’s pay to start the project, and the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital was opened in 1956 to honour “The innocent victims of war.....”

The Nelson Mandela Pipes and Drums Band led in the Moths and their Flag Holders from various ‘Shell holes’ as well as a contingent of Navy Cadets who assisted during the morning. There were many dignitaries in attendance, many of whom had the opportunity to share the progress of the hospital since its opening.



Everyone was reminded that next year will be the 80th anniversary of the hospital and will be a special celebration.

Chieftain Mark Ogilvie and Past Chief Stuart Munro were privileged to lay a wreath on behalf of the Society and Scots in South Africa together with many others including little children from the hospital's school for children of the hospital staff.



The Cenotaph, Cape Town. On Sunday 9th November The Cape Town Remembrance Memorial Service was held at the Cenotaph in Cape Town. Again, the Nelson Mandela Pipes and Drums Band led the march of Moths and Flag Bearers, and South African Army Band led the military personnel. The Executive Deputy Mayer, Alderman Eddie Andrews, delivered the keynote address after the religious Ceremony led by two Military Chaplains, one Christian Chaplain and one Muslim Chaplain. Both the keynote address and the religious messages were pertinent and moving. Many wreaths were laid by Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Military Personnel, various organisations, public figures and the public in general.



Chieftain Mark Ogilvie and his wife, Leatetia, together with Past Chief and Lady President, Stuart and Jacinta Munro,



were privileged to lay a wreath on behalf of the Society and Scots in South Africa. All four climbed the steps to the Cenotaph, Jacinta laid the wreath and the four bowed heads to salute the fallen.

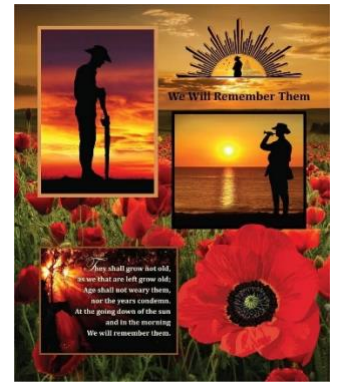


Grateful Thanks to Reggie Lord for all the Remembrance photographs above – (Sub Editor, Stuart Munro)



Remembrance Sunday at Gardens Presbyterian Church. The Caledonians in attendance were piped into the church to the tune *Battles O'er*, played by piper Andrew Bosch. After a welcome by Padre Eras Van Zyl, Chief Peter Ross delivered a brief address, followed by the symbolic lighting of candles and a reading by Chieftain Mark Ogilvie.

The hymn *Once a Year I Wear a Poppy* was then sung, after which Chief Peter Ross read



the poem *In Flanders Fields*—a poignant message of sacrifice and remembrance voiced through the perspective of fallen soldiers of World War I. Its imagery of red poppies growing among soldiers' graves evokes both the bloodshed of war and the resilience of life.

At the conclusion of the poem, *Amazing Grace* was played on the pipes, followed by Past Chief Stuart Munro's reading of *Lest We Forget*. The sounding of the Last Post, a minute of silence then Reveille was played which preceded the laying of wreaths, accompanied by the pipe tune *Highland Cathedral*.

The commemoration continued with Chieftain Mark Ogilvie reading *We Will Remember Them*, and a tribute to those who have died in war, with the playing of *The Battle of the Somme* - a fitting piece, as it was composed by Pipe Major Willie Lawrie, who fought in the battle himself.

The service concluded with the gathering being ceremonially marched to the hall to the rousing tune *Scotland the Brave*.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Alas, no news 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

Just a reminder that if you need a new kilt, or repairs to a kilt, contact Kathy. Kathy made me a the most fantastic kilt using my choice of tartan. I can highly recommend her work — it's excellent quality and costs only a fraction of what you'd pay for an equivalent kilt in Scotland. Many believe that repairs are not possible, but in the hands of an expert, it is! 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: Alas, I have still not sold my kilt. I have a Gordon Tartan kilt that I am selling as I have replaced it with one of the Maxwell tartan (made by Kathy, above). It's a really good quality kilt but it's not in perfect condition. There is a tiny bit of fraying here and there (not much and not easily seen) and there has been a small repair (again, not easily seen). Make me an offer and I will see if I want to sell at the offer made.

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



ENTERTAINMENT & DATES TO DIARISE

1. **St Andrews Day** will be celebrated on **29th November 2025**. Venue is the Rondebosch Golf Club. Hopefully, you've all have received notification of this special event in the life of your Society, which includes entertainment and a delicious two course supper. **Time is running out, so book now or you'll lose out.** There will be an official photographer to photograph you in your Scottish finery (Free!) as well as piping (Band), Highland dancing and you can trip the light fantastic when you join in "The Gay Gordons". Alderman Ian Neilson, the past Mayor of Cape Town will entertain you with his "Toast to St Andrew" in his own inimitable style. Don't forget the really splendid prizes to be won in the raffle as well a delicious supper to go with the comradery of your fellow Caledonians and friends. Enjoy the atmosphere of Scotland. **If you don't know how to book, contact the Editor NOW – details below.**
2. **Burns Nicht** is the next big event after St Andrews. Will once again be using the Rondebosch Golf Club, due to good accessibility from Southern Suburbs, Sea Point, and the Northern areas. **Another date to remember: Saturday 24th January 2026**

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