



CAPE CALEDONIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Caledonians

I'm happy to report that we're seeing a wee bit more engagement creeping in! I've had quite a few lovely comments from people enjoying the newsletter, and it's wonderful to note that Beth Odendaal's sister, Jenny Barrow, has joined us — all the way from the UK.

We're now heading into that very busy three-month period from November through January, when the Society celebrates St Andrew's Day (November), Remembrance Sunday, and Burns Night (January). Venues are already booked, and subcommittees are in place to handle the arrangements — so there's plenty to look forward to!

In this edition, we continue with what should now be familiar themes in our newsletters: articles on Scottish history, clans, interesting news from Scotland, the Celtic in Cape Town event, and a few fascinating facts to round things off.

Lang may your lum reek
Andrew (Chieftain & Editor)

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Dear Caledonians,

This year is flying past so fast! The weeks and months just keep on rolling by. I can hardly believe that we will be celebrating Christmas in 2 months' time! There are many people who believe that time flies faster as one gets older. You've got to believe it! 😊

Be that as it may, Caledonians worldwide are entering their really busy season. And we, the Caledonians of Cape Town, are also heading into a few busy summer months. In November we start off commemorating those who have fallen with a Remembrance Day service on 16th November. This will be followed by our St Andrews Dinner on 29th November and then a tribute to our bard with Burns Night being celebrated on 24th January, 2026. Somewhere in the middle of this excitement will be the Society's AGM, and celebrating Christmas and Hogmanay with our families. Please see further below in this newsletter for a few more details about the Society's functions. We will also be sending out fliers for each our functions in the usual way. We look forward to your support and seeing you at these events as we celebrate our Scottish roots and heritage.

Most of us South Africans are keen sports lovers. Supporting the Proteas and Springboks with plenty of "gees" is what most of us just love to do. And the same can be said for supporting Scotland's national teams, especially (for me) their rugby side which frequently features really good South African players, like Duhan van der Merwe and WP Nel. But the real dilemma for me is when the Boks play Scotland. My loyalties are so torn that I often wish for a tied result! When it really comes down to brass tacks, I suppose the most loyalty will lie with the land of your birth rather than your ancestry. But I am sure you will agree, it will always be a close race!

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)*

David I's reign marked the beginning of what historians often call the "Davidian Revolution," which saw the introduction of feudalism, monastic orders, and a significant shift in Scottish governance and society. Upon his death in 1153, his grandson Malcolm IV succeeded him at the age of just 12. Known as "Malcolm the Maiden," his reign (1153–1165) was marked by internal unrest and ongoing struggles with powerful regional lords, especially in the Highlands. He was also forced to cede Northumberland and Cumbria to Henry II of England, a major territorial loss that symbolized growing English pressure.

For those of you who like exploring, when next in Scotland, go to Melrose Abbey (Scottish Borders). It was founded by David I, and I found it an interesting ruin to explore. Another fun ruin to explore related to this era is Roxburgh Castle (also Scottish Borders). This was one of David's favourite residences and a key strategic site during his reign.

To continue, Malcolm's successor, his younger brother William I—better known as William the Lion—ascended the throne in 1165 and ruled for nearly 50 years. He attempted to reclaim the northern English territories but was captured during a failed invasion in 1174. This led to the humiliating Treaty of Falaise, under which William was forced to acknowledge the English king as his overlord. Not cool! Although this agreement was later nullified by King Richard I in exchange for a large payment (yes, money played a role even in those days), it underscored the increasing influence England sought to exert over Scotland. We will see more of that in future episodes in my little history series. But I must digress again: I can't NOT do a "sneak preview" and mention the phrase "a parcel of rogues" in Scottish history, which most famously refers to the group of Scottish nobles and commissioners who signed the Treaty of Union in 1707, which united the Kingdom of Scotland and the Kingdom of England into the Kingdom of Great Britain. The phrase comes from the well-known patriotic poem and later song, "*Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation*," written by Robert Burns. Burns condemned the Scottish politicians who accepted the terms of the union, seeing them as betraying Scotland's sovereignty for personal gain or political convenience.

But back to where we currently are in our history: Despite these setbacks (The Treaty of Falaise), William the Lion strengthened the Scottish monarchy internally by continuing David I's policies of administrative reform and founding many royal burghs. His long reign stabilized the kingdom and paved the way for his son, Alexander II, who would inherit a more consolidated Scottish realm in 1214.

INTERESTING SCOTTISH FACTS

1. Scotland Has More Than 2,000 Castles

That's roughly one castle for every 25 square miles! Many are ruins tucked away in glens or on remote islands — some so small they're barely more than a fortified tower, yet each has centuries of history behind it.

2. The World's Oldest Known Calendar Is in Scotland

Near Crathes in Aberdeenshire, archaeologists discovered a series of ancient pits dating back **10,000 years** — used to track lunar months and seasonal changes. It's older than Stonehenge and shows that Scotland's earliest inhabitants were already astronomers.

3. The Telephone Was Invented by a Scotsman

Alexander Graham Bell, born in Edinburgh, invented the telephone in 1876. His early experiments were inspired by his work on sound and speech — influenced by his mother's hearing loss and his father's work on elocution.

4. The Unicorn Is Scotland's National Animal

Chosen for its association with purity, strength, and independence, the unicorn has been a Scottish symbol since the 12th century. You'll find it on royal coats of arms, old coins, and even on modern Scottish government documents.

OWN A SCOTTISH ISLAND

An "exceptional opportunity" to own a Scottish island has come up.



Gasker Island, situated in the Outer Hebrides, is on the market for less money than a typical Edinburgh flat. It is situated to the west of South Harris and northwest of the Isle of Taransay (There's an annotated map here to show its position) and extends to approximately 71 acres. It is available to buy through Galbraith for offers over £120 000.

It is "uninhabited and unspoilt", with no buildings or structures.

You could build a small cabin and have an ideal retreat from the world!



HISTORY OF THE CLANS

This month I am highlighting Clan Stewart (also spelled Stuart). This is one of Scotland's most historically significant clans, rising from noble origins: The name "Stewart" comes from the title of High Steward of Scotland, a hereditary office responsible for managing the royal household. A kind of royal household manager. His descendants took 'Stewart' from that title — and the name stuck.

The first to hold this position was Walter fitz Alan, a Breton knight who arrived in Scotland during the 12th century in the reign of King David I (see history section, above). His descendants adopted "Stewart" as a surname and grew in power and influence.

The Stewarts reached the height of their prominence when Robert the Bruce's daughter, Marjorie Bruce, married Walter Stewart, the 6th High Steward. Their son became Robert II of Scotland, the first Stewart king, in 1371. From then on, the House of Stewart ruled Scotland almost uninterrupted for over 300 years, until 1603, when James VI of Scotland inherited the English throne, becoming James I of England and beginning the Stuart (that's the French spelling — they adopted it later when in exile) dynasty.

Throughout the centuries, various branches of Clan Stewart held lands across Scotland, including Appin, Atholl, and Bute, each with its own story and loyalties. Some Stewarts supported the Jacobite risings (especially the Stewarts of Appin), fighting to restore the exiled House of Stuart to the Scottish throne.

The clan's royal legacy, turbulent political alliances, and role in key events like the Wars of Independence, the Reformation, and the Jacobite rebellions make them central to the story of Scotland itself. So, whether you're walking through ancient castles or Highland glens, chances are you're not far from where the Stewarts once reigned supreme. Their legacy is everywhere and woven deep into the very fabric of Scotland's story. Most dramatic for me is Stirling Castle, which was one of the principal royal residences of the Stewart (Stuart) monarchs and is one of the most important and impressive castles in Scotland. Poor old Mary, Queen of Scots, perhaps the most famous Stewart, was crowned here in 1543 as an infant in the Chapel Royal. If you find yourself in or near Stirling, a visit to the Castle is a must. I can highly recommend the guided tours— the costumed interpreters really bring the Stewart court to life. Tanith and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit there.

CELTIC IN CAPE TOWN



The Celtic in Cape Town Gathering was held at Wynberg Boys High School on Saturday 18 October. The drums and pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders, Nelson Mandela Artillery Pipe and Drums, Cape Town Caledonian Pipe Band and the Wynberg Boys High School Pipe Band all made the stirring sound of the pipes drift through the surrounding hills and vales of Wynberg.



NEWS OF MEMBERS

Thanks to Beth Odendaal who sent the following article on her and Peter (Odendaal) walking the Great Highland Way. Beth sent many fantastic pics, but I had to be ruthless and choose just a few!

'Walking the way' in Scotland

If you enjoy hiking, the great outdoors, and magnificent scenery, then put on your hiking boots and walk the West Highland Way in Scotland. We made it easier for ourselves by slack packing i.e. walking with a day pack and your main luggage gets transported from your overnight stay to next destination. So, all you must do is walk.....



Above: Bridge of Orchy

August 2023 – we took the Caledonian Sleeper train from London to our start point at the Bridge of Orchy. This is the last third of a 96 mile (154 Km) walk from Milngavie in Glasgow to Fort William. Pressed for time, so 60 km was all we could fit in.

Arrived in time for breakfast at the Bridge of Orchy hotel, then spent the day exploring the area. After an excellent supper we opted for an early night.

9th August – Day one: after a good breakfast we set out on the first leg of our adventure. First objective was the cairn at the top of a rise, before we descended to Inveroran. The views were awesome, and the weather stayed dry.



Above: First Cairn

Wee shop at the Inveroran Hotel sold scrumptious tablet; we decided we were going to need that sugar boost so bought quite a lot. Hiked onwards and stopped for lunch next to Ba bridge where we encountered midges for the first time. Needless to say, lunch was quick. Then, on to Kings House. Crossing Rannoch Moor was an incredible experience, hiking along the old Military Road. Arrived at Glencoe Mountain Resort, just before Kings House, where we met our transport to our Bed and Breakfast in Ballachulish. The Kings House Hotel was unfortunately booked out.



Above: Road to Kinlochlevin

Ballachulish – found a reasonably priced place to have supper which was haggis rolled in batter and deep fried with chips. Really delish. After a good Scottish breakfast our transport arrived and back we went to King House, start of day two.

Serious hiking people traffic now, as there were a lot of campers at Kings House. After a couple of relatively easy kilometers, we came to the dreaded “Devils’ Staircase”. A pretty serious climb but thank goodness we had done a lot of training at Helderberg Nature Reserve, so made it quite easily. Saw a couple of Red Deer but could not get the camera out in time. From the cairn at the top of the staircase it was mostly downhill to Kinlochleven – only 14.7 kilometres, but stunning scenery through the mountains. Arriving at our destination we found our guest lodge, The Highland Getaway Inn.

Short rest and shower etc. then explored the town. Supper at the lodge was great – Haggis wrapped in chicken breast and bacon, with cheese sauce and veg. Pudding was “Spotted Dick” -google it, it was really yummy. The beer and wine were good as well!

Day three, last leg to Fort William. Only 25.6 Kilometres, but mostly flat walking, except for the climb out of Kinlochleven. Once again, the views more than made up for the exertion. The rain at last caught up with us and thank goodness for the raingear we had packed. Amazing to see all the hikers in various types of rain gear. The annoying part was seeing the rain coming, putting on the gear, then taking off again when the squall had passed, only to do it all over again. But all part of the fun. The final few kilometres down into Fort William was in the rain; we took a wrong turn which added on a couple of kilometres, but we eventually found our accommodation. Then off to Weatherspoon's for supper.



The next morning, before catching the bus to Glasgow, we went looking for the official end of the West Highland Way – the old man on the bench (on the left). It was right next to Wetherspoons, where we had supper the previous evening!!!!!! **WE MADE IT! 60km JUST IN TIME!**

KILT MAKER

I recently had a new kilt made by kilt maker, Kathy. She was recommended to me by Will Carter, the former owner of Staghorn, that many of you might remember. Many of you will know Will, as he attends some of our functions. At the time when I was trying to find a kilt maker, Will gave me Kathy as a contact, saying she was the best kilt maker in the business. I contacted her and she has 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. Kathy also does alterations, repairs, etc. She can be contacted on 076 342 5371.



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 one Saturday each month outside Mitchells Ale House at the Waterfront, at 4PM. Check their website for details.

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

I have checked, and there are no exhibitions planned in the near future.

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.

ITEMS FOR SALE/ WANTED: Callies Scottish Marketplace

I introduced the idea of this section a few issues back, where 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.

However, great news, this month we have somethings to advertise!



Tartan Ties: Caireen has these two ties she is selling. If interested, Call **Caireen on 062 694 9700** and make her an offer!

Kilt: I have a Gordon Tartan kilt that I am selling. 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



WILL YE BE GREETIN' GUISERS ON SAMHAIN??



Halloween in Scotland is more than just costumes and sweeties for guisers, it's a tradition with roots stretching back over 2,000 years. The story begins with the Celtic festival of Samhain (or Samhuinn), when communities marked the end of harvest and prepared for the long, dark winter ahead. Find out a wee bit more below! Samhain wasn't just about food and fire; it was a mystical time when people believed the veil between our world and the Otherworld grew thin. Spirits, both friendly and frightening, were thought to walk among the living, and many of today's Scottish Halloween traditions, like guising and lanterns come directly from these ancient beliefs.

Fast forward to the 8th century, when the Catholic Church introduced **All Saints' Day** on November 1st. The evening before became known as **All Hallows' Eve**, and over time this transformed into the **Hallowe'en** we know today.

So while Halloween may feel modern with its pumpkins and trick-or-treating, the history of Halloween in Scotland reveals a fascinating blend of ancient Celtic rituals and Christian traditions that shaped the holiday as we celebrate it now. Now let's take a deeper dive in to the origins of the Celtic Samhain festival.

The roots of Halloween in Scotland lie in the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (or Samhuinn). Traditionally held on 31st October, the last day of the harvest, Samhain marked the turning of the seasons as summer gave way to winter. It was celebrated not only in **Scotland, Ireland**, and the **Isle of Man**, but also had close cousins in **Wales, Cornwall**, and **Brittany**. For the Celts, this was a time of great change and deep symbolism. Cattle were brought in from the fields and slaughtered for winter stores, while bonfires blazed in every village. These fires were thought to cleanse the community and keep away evil spirits.

Samhain was also thought to be the night when the veil between the living and the Otherworld was at its thinnest. Spirits known in Gaelic tradition as the *Aos Sí* could pass freely into our world. To keep them appeased, people left offerings of food and drink outside their homes, hoping to secure health and safety for the cold months ahead. This mystical blend of fire, superstition, and seasonal change made Samhain one of the most important festivals in the Celtic calendar and it laid the foundations for many of the Scottish Halloween traditions that followed.

While the ancient traditions of Samhain faded over the centuries, they've been spectacularly reimagined in modern times. In 1995, Edinburgh's [Beltane Fire Society](#) revived the festival spirit with the first Samhuinn Fire Festival, held on Halloween night. What began as a small community event has grown into one of Scotland's most striking annual celebrations.

The Beltane Fire Society describe it in evocative terms:

“The nights are getting longer, and the veil draws thin between our world and the next. As we turn to face the dark wintry months together, hundreds of otherworldly creatures will awaken all over Calton Hill and gather for an epic struggle between Winter and Summer. Witness the dramatic battle between the Winter King and the Summer King up close, before the mysterious Cailleach emerges to decide each of their fates.”

Halloween has always held a special place in Scotland, not only because of its ancient Celtic roots but also thanks to the way it has been woven into community life for centuries. Unlike the more modern celebrations that focus on costumes and sweets, Scottish Halloween carries a sense of folklore, superstition, and seasonal change that sets it apart.

However, remember that Halloween this year is next Friday – 31 October 2025

(Submitted by Stuart Munro with grateful thanks to the Scotland Shop Blog)



BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to all the following Members with Birthdays in November:

Mark Ogilvie 1st Ashton Roger 5th Alistair Ross 18th Ron Adams 20th Roy MacRobert 25th
 Lizzie Cruickshank 26th Roy Henderson 27th Neal Allen 29th

ENTERTAINMENT & DATES TO DIARISE



The Children's Hospital Trust (**The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Rondebosch**) is holding their Remembrance Day Service on **Friday 7th November**. If you would like to attend, 10 seats have been reserved for the Cape Town Caledonian Society. Please advise if you would like to lay a wreath and join us with refreshments afterwards. **Please confirm by Monday 3rd November to Stuart Munro 084 028 2402 or samunro@iafrica.com** so that your name/s can be added to the Hospital Trust's listing for the day. **Oh, and wear a touch of Tartan!**



The Cape Town Remembrance Day Service/Parade will be held at the Cape Town Cenotaph on **Sunday 9th November**. A wreath will be laid on behalf of the Society by Past Chief and Past Lady President, Stuart and Jacinta Munro together with Society Councilor, Mark Ogilvie and his wife, Leatetia.



The Society's Remembrance Day Sunday will be at Gardens Presbyterian Church on **Sunday 16 November**. Everyone is welcome to attend and take part. It's on this day that we remember and celebrate all those Members of the Society and Personal Family and Friends who died protecting us during WW1 and WW11 and all other conflicts. We would love to see the church full of Caledonians wearing a Touch of Tartan.



St Andrews Day: The Society will be celebrating Scotland's Patron Saint, St Andrew, on **Saturday 29th November**. The venue is Rondebosch Golf Club. We're looking forward to an interesting, very enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Details regarding the price and booking of tickets will be announced soon.

Please diarise these dates:

October 31st : Halloween (Samhain): Friday 31st October: Anyone Tricking or Treating??

November 7th : Remembrance Service – Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital

November 9th : Cape Town Remembrance Day Service

November 16th : Cape Town Callies Remembrance Day Service

November 29th : **ST ANDREW'S DAY CELEBRATION** with Cape Town Callies.

After the Samhain activities, enjoy the month of November 2025 with the Cape Town Callies



Editor: Andrew Bosch

Send in your Snippets of News for our December Newsletter soon.

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