



The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg
Spring 2014

President's Message – Spring 2014

Address to the Society at Burns' Night, January 25, 2014.

Lads and Lassies, distinguished guests, officers and members of the Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

I am honored and humbled to be selected your new President by my colleagues in the Society and I will do all I can to make the new year a success for the Society.

I know I will not be able to do that on my own but will depend on the active participation of our Board and members.

The various Activity Committees maintained by the Society's Board of Directors remain focused on finding or developing Scottish activities that are of interest to the general membership of the Society.

I have been very impressed by our scholarship and grant programs which sponsor deserving students studying Scottish-related subjects. We will continue developing these charitable activities.

One of my personal goals, which I know is shared by the Board members, is to encourage young people to join us older folks to pass on our Scottish heritage and history to future generations. We're not sure what the magic formula is to attract younger members but we are investigating.

Burns Night is a wonderful way to begin the year. We invite you also to Tartan Day on April 6 at the Boxwood Inn, Spring Kirking at Historic Christ Church near Kilmarnock in May, a Spring Luncheon in May/June, a Summer Luncheon in August, a Ceilidh & Picnic in the fall, Fall Kirking at a local church in October/November; and the Christmas Luncheon in December. Dates and locations will vary. These fun events are great opportunities to meet your Society colleagues in celebration of our Scottish heritage.

We welcome the involvement of both Society Board members and volunteers from

the general membership to involve themselves in organizing and assisting with the functions and programs of the Society.

Our Board members and our general membership is composed of immensely talented individuals who have made the Society what it is today and who are shaping what it will become tomorrow.

As for me, with your help I promise I will do my best to serve the Society and its members.

My best wishes to all for 2014.

Yours Aye, Marshall S Thomas

Burns' Nicht 2014

Burns Nicht 2014 was held at Colonial Heritage on January 25 and was a rousing success with 112 attendees, an imaginative program, great music and excellent cuisine. Byron Adams returned with his singing dog Skye, who loves the pipes. Byron also gave the ode to the haggis, toasted it, and dismembered the creature. Dinner was served as Folk Group So'lach (Ron Morgan and Lisa Wathen) serenaded us with great Celtic tunes. Williamsburg Pipes and Drums then raised the roof and did their best to blow out the windows with all the tunes we know and love. They were wonderful. Pipe major Lynn Newcomer was rewarded with some 'pay the piper' scotch.

Jamie Griffin then spoke on the Immortal Memory and gave us a clear and insightful view of the remarkable Robert Burns. A series of toasts followed, and then Edward and Glenda Lindsey gave separate toasts to the lassies and the ladies, focusing on the amazing but hilariously true psychological differences between the sexes.

Following that was the presentation of the Scot of the Year award, posthumously awarded to our beloved Joyce White and accepted by her husband Jim and daughter Wendy Silliman.

Flowers of the Forest were noted for 2013, then new members and outgoing and incoming Board members were introduced. Marshall Thomas succeeded Dave Lowery as President for 2014, with Duncan McIver as his Vice President. The raffle and silent auction followed, with dancing music from the Ford's Colony Dance Band. The evening ended with 'Auld Lang Syne.'



Byron Adams and his singing companion Skye

Folk Group So'lach (RonMorgan and Lisa Wathen)





Enter the Williamsburg Pipes & Drums

Happy guests





Jim and Wendy with Scot of the Year Award for Joyce White

Society Presidents old and new – Dave Lowery and Marshall Thomas



Tartan Day 2014

The Tartan Day 2014 celebration sponsored by the Society took place on Sunday April 6 at the Boxwood Inn, Lee Hall. It was a perfect day, bright sunshine, clear skies and cool breezes. Attendance was satisfying due to the good publicity the Society had generated. A varied and interesting program began at noon and ended around four. Williamsburg Pipes and Drums entertained the crowd with old bagpipe favorites. Kathy Kasley played beautiful lullabies on the harp. Connie Smith performed Gaelic language songs on the porch as Stella Fogg and Burn Runk's dancers showed us lively Scottish Country Dancing inside. Later Celtica held forth on the porch with their wonderful Celtic music. A roving fiddler, Arden Clark, played lovely, dreamy tunes outside for all to enjoy. And finally, the 76th Regiment of Foot, the MacDonald Highlanders, represented by James Taylor, demonstrated its gear and musketry to the delight of all.

Tables were present for Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, Scottish Products (with Scotland House), Scottish Clans, Back River Strings, Tidewater Genealogy Society, Golf, Williamsburg Regional Library, and Scottish Culture.

The Boxwood Inn was a good host and supplied tasty lunches, life-giving coffee and other sustenance. Our thanks to all who helped and contributed to this great day, especially Duncan McIver and his hard-working team. Following are a few photos from the event. Please see the full gallery on the website www.scotsofwmbg.org.

Arden Clark (right)





Connie Smith (below)





Celtica (above) - James Taylor of the MacDonald Highlanders (below)



News From the University of Glasgow, by Erin Park

I am honored to be the recipient of the 2013 Ken Graham Educational Grant. This scholarship helped fund the first year of my undergraduate degree program at the University of Glasgow, an opportunity which would not be possible without this support. This year I am studying Gaelic, history, and English language. One of the reasons why I chose to study in Glasgow was because of the rich social and cultural Gaelic community, along with other Scottish arts and cultural activities. I thought I would give a sketch of the university education system, Gaelic scene in the city, and other cultural activities, which has benefited me socially and in my studies.



Of course, a large group of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow aren't native speakers themselves. However, there are numerous ways to learn Gaelic in the city. One of the ways (and the one I'm most familiar with) is the university degree program in Gaelic Studies. The degree runs three different tracks in first and second year: fluent, learner, and beginner to accommodate different abilities that students have when they enter. In third and fourth year students from all levels choose from a

variety of Gaelic and Celtic classes. These can include more specialized classes such as “War Poetry” and “Language Planning.” In first year the Gaelic portion of my degree involves class four times a week, plus the usual homework and exams. My class, which is the fluent track, is split into three parts: language, which involves translation and writing assignments; literature, which this year is modern Gaelic novels and poetry; and special lectures on more specific subjects each week across all three Gaelic sections.

History and English work similarly, but not exactly the same way. For English I have three different portions of the course running at once – i.e. Phonology, History of English, and Children and Language. All are self-contained and taught by different professors. Exams comprise questions from all subjects covered in the course, usually about five or six per semester. Every week we have separate, smaller class, usually capped at about 15 students, in which we study and discuss one of the subjects that week. History is taught in rough chronological order, with each professor teaching for about two weeks consecutively. My fall semester focused on a thousand years of Scottish history and particularly the changing nature of Scottish national identity, and my spring semester is focusing on medieval European history. The unique nature of the Gaelic degree, combining study of advanced language skills, literature analysis, history and various issues relating to Gaelic provide a well-rounded, interdisciplinary education, which is complemented by the skills I am gaining in history and English Language. Beyond the degree courses, the university also is running a Gaelic initiative called “Gaelic @ University of Glasgow” which serves to promote Gaelic on campus both for students and staff, speakers and non-speakers alike. Every week the initiative hosts two drop-in conversation groups, provides introductory non-credit classes, and gives support with translation requests and Gaelic-related issues to the university community. This culminates with “Latha na Gàidhlig” or “Gaelic Day” which took place on November 22nd this year. It began with a drop-in Gaelic cafe with the student Gaelic association's ceilidh band titled “*Turralaich*” and continued with a concert, a literature competition, a Gaelic-themed pub quiz, and a Gaelic club night hosted in conjunction with the Centre for Contemporary Arts. Gaelic is certainly alive and well on the campus.

But what about outside the university? The Glasgow Gaelic School which comprises of primary and secondary sections is quickly growing, and is ranked in the top ten secondary schools in Scotland. Besides classes for children, there are classes for adult learners as well, including the parents of those at Glasgow Gaelic School. Many of those at the school are not speakers of Gaelic, which gives a lot of hope for the growth of new Gaelic families. Bilingual signs are being introduced,

both in Glasgow and at the university, and along with the occasional Gaelic graffiti (see the third and fourth photos), and Gaelic advertisements in the subway and elsewhere, so Gaelic is becoming less of an anomaly in the city's eye.

Gaelic arts in the city are not lacking either. Gaelic arts are supported as a part of a broader initiative to promote arts throughout the city called Glasgow Life. They run frequent reinvented ceilidhs with unusual themes, a Gaelic drama club for youth, and they promote bilingual signage. Another key organization, An Lòchran, “promotes Gaelic arts and culture in Glasgow” not just within the Gaelic community but to a wider audience by maintaining a high level of artistic



excellence and variety of medium. They put on a wide variety of festivals and events and are based in Partick, in Glasgow, along with the Gaelic Books Council. Musical opportunities are never lacking with the annual Celtic Connections festival, constant gigs in the many Gaelic pubs throughout Glasgow (The Park Bar, The Islay Inn, Deoch an Dorus, and more), and even the chance to learn a song or two yourself! I was able to attend a workshop put on by Urban Teutchers, the duo of Kathleen MacInnes and Sineag MacIntyre, both well-known traditional Gaelic singers. The group was small as each class swapped between Sineag and Kathleen

throughout the day so as to learn as many different songs as possible. At the end of the workshop everyone had afternoon tea and a mini-ceilidh.

Beyond just Gaelic, Glasgow is a center for other Scottish cultural arts. One of the most prominent is the National Piping Centre. It is the international centre for piping excellence. It provides lessons, practice space, an auditorium, a museum, and a reference library, among other facilities. The piping lessons are given by some of the most renowned pipers and piping instructors in the world, including Roddy MacLeod MBE, Stuart Samson MBE, and Chris Armstrong. Students can receive a degree in 'Scottish Music – Piping' through the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in conjunction with the National Piping Centre, in addition to intensive courses in piping by the NPC and courses for study-abroad students on Scottish culture and bagpiping in agreement with the universities of Glasgow, St. Andrews, and Edinburgh.

Highland dancing is also prevalent in the Glasgow area. I take lessons with Christine Aitken in Paisley, a well-known and respected teacher and judge, and one of the most famous teachers in Scotland at the moment, Christine Lacey, lives in Alexandria, which is close to Glasgow. She was honored with an MBE this year for her commitment and contributions to highland dancing, one of only a handful of highland dancing teachers and judges ever to be honored with this award. Other types of traditional Scottish dancing, such as Scottish country dancing, step-dancing, and ceilidh dancing are also popular in the area. Ceilidh dancing in particular is popular, because Scottish students learn the dances in school as a part of Physical Education. I have been to all sorts of ceilidhs in my time at Glasgow so far, and these ceilidhs are one of the most vibrant parts of traditional culture that is still extremely popular among all ages today.

So although Gaelic may be a small language, with only around 60,000 speakers, its community is still vibrant and active throughout the Lowlands, and not just the Outer Hebrides. Other aspects of highland culture, including the music and dancing, is also vital throughout Scotland. The future Gaelic community of Glasgow have a powerful legacy to fulfill as the language grows and becomes more mainstream. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this movement at a very exciting time for Gaelic, and I hope the next time you are in Glasgow, you will take the opportunity to experience this special cultural community for yourself.



Translation: Keep Gaelic Alive



Translation: This is our country

Highland Kilts and Gear – by Marshall Thomas

Several years ago I did a Spectator article on buying highland clothing and gear. I was buying kilts, kilt jackets, sporrans, and all the rest of it for the first time and I was amazed at what a difficult task it was. I finally accepted that the cost of the items was going to be outrageous no matter what. But then I ran into all sorts of problems buying highland clothing and gear on-line. Some suggestions and comments:

- Do NOT buy anything from Scotland directly. Not unless you want to receive unexpected bills from US Customs for your imports of Scottish textiles. It seems it's OK to import billions of dollars worth of textiles from China, but not Scotland. There are several excellent US firms on-line that will obtain any highland item you want, from Scotland, without you having to deal directly with the Scottish firm of origin or US customs.
- Do NOT ever, under any circumstances, order any made to order items by mail that requires you to provide detailed measurements – especially kilts or kilt jackets. It doesn't matter how carefully you measure. When the item arrives it will not fit. That's been my experience. Even if you order from a US company, they pass the order on to Scotland where the item is prepared. I don't know why this process cannot be done correctly but it seems it cannot. Remember, Scotland is on the other side of the planet, and you cannot return made to order items.
- Example one, I ordered a kilt jacket that had sleeves that would have fit a tall basketball player fine, and the waist area was so short it looked like it was made for an infant. I know what a kilt jacket is supposed to look like. This was done so badly that the US go-between even agreed to redo the order.
- Examples two and three, I ordered two made to order kilts – a year or so apart - that did not fit me when they arrived. My wife had to fix both of them. The most recent one looked like it should have fit, but the two buckles were placed about six inches too far away to even reach the two leather belt fastener portions. These traditional kilts require perfect measurements and perfect placement of the buckles, and you can't get that if you're on the other side of the planet. My wife fixes kilts with two little invisible metal clips inside the waistband that you engage when donning the kilt – a perfect fit. And then she moves the buckles to where they should be. Those buckles don't have any real function other than looking traditional and annoying me – and her.
- So what is the solution? First, try a sport kilt, if you like them. I bought several – they're amazingly inexpensive, very convenient, made in the USA, and fasten with Velcro. Again, a perfect fit, every time. The only problem is that the material is not wool but a poly/vinyl substance that is not as

vibrantly colorful as wool. I certainly prefer genuine wool. But I will never again do made-to-order by mail.

- **Sporrans:** Until recently every sporran I could find closed with a snap. These snaps opened fine but I found them very, very hard to close when you are wearing them, and people avert their eyes when you try too hard. My solution was never to put anything in them. Then I recently discovered Rob Roy sporrans which are a soft flexible leather sporran that opens and closes with a drawstring, not a snap. They open widely and you can put pretty much anything you want in there. And close it. Problem solved!
- So what should you do if you're here in the States and you want to order a fine genuine made-in-Scotland traditional wool kilt? At this point, I don't know. I'd suggest finding someone who will fit you personally. And if you do, please let me know.

To sum up, I love my highland gear and I love wearing the kilt. That's why I'm so concerned about getting it right.

I've had good luck with the Scottish Trading Company <http://www.scottishtradingcompany.com> , and Sport Kilt <http://www.sportkilt.com> and The Celtic Croft <http://www.kilts-n-stuff.com> . The Celtic Croft has good Rob Roy sporrans.

The Society is in the process of establishing a closer relationship with Scotland House, in Merchants Square. Perhaps they can help us out. MST



Rob Roy Sporran



Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Application for Membership

Full Name: _____

Are you, applying as a new member ☐ or as a Spouse ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ in the same household of a current member (check one)?

Member's Name if you are a spouse/son/daughter: _____

Address: _____

Telephone(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Date and Place of Birth: _____

Schools/Colleges: _____

Business or Profession: _____

Spouse's Name (if not a member): _____

Names and Ages of Children: _____

Nature of Scottish Ancestry: _____

Scottish Interests – (History, Literature, Arts, Clan Affiliation etc): _____

Clan Affiliation or Membership: _____

Date: _____ Signature of Applicant: _____

To the best of our knowledge, the above applicant is of sound character, over the age of 21 years and is entirely suitable to membership in the Society. Applicant will actively participate in the functions of the Society as circumstances allow and will perform conscientiously any duties undertaken.

Sponsor: _____ Date: _____

Co-Sponsor: _____ Date: _____

Checklist for Membership:

Initial Individual Membership in a Household– Initiation (\$20.00) plus First Year's Dues (\$40.00). Total of \$60.00.

Additional Membership within same household – Initiation (\$20.00) plus First Year's Dues (\$20.00). Total of \$40.00.

Your check made out to: St. Andrews' Society of Williamsburg

A Small Photograph of you suitable for digitization.

Completed Application with address, phone number and e-mail address included.

NOTE: All memberships are individual and only one applicant per application.