

the

thistle

The St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles

November 2011



November 30th is St Andrew's Day in Scotland. The patronage of the saint also covers fishmongers, gout, singers, sore throats, spinsters, maidens, old maids and women wishing to become mothers. But just who was Saint Andrew and how did he become the patron saint of Scotland?

Saint Andrew, was an agile and hardy Galilean fisherman who also had good social skills. He brought the first foreigners to meet Jesus and shamed a large crowd of people into sharing their food with the people beside them. Today we might describe him as the Patron Saint of Social Networking!

Having Saint Andrew as Scotland's Patron gave the country several advantages: because he was the brother of Saint Peter, founder of the Church, the Scots were able to appeal to the Pope in 1320 (The Declaration of Arbroath) for protection against the attempts of English kings to conquer the Scots. Traditionally, Scots also claimed that they were descended from the Scythians who lived on the

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a message from John E. Lowry, FSA Scot President.



St. Andrew's Societies in all corners of the civilized world maintain a calendar of activities in keeping with the interests of their membership. Our venerable 80 year old club

tries for a balance between tradition and contemporary in keeping with our diverse membership—and that is a

tall order considering active memberships that reach back over half of our history! But even with our history and the fine record of charitable activities that make us so proud, we are mere babes when it comes to other cities and their Societies. San Francisco 1846, Alexandria, Virginia 1760, Boston 1659, New York 1756. One quick note from a time when Andrew Carnegie was president of SASNY, Carnegie asked his dear friend Sam Clemens to come down and visit these "mortals" and speak at that year's St. Andrews Dinner. Sam Clemens (aka Mark Twain) wrote back that he couldn't stand the noise of such a gathering and he preferred to "feed at home!" He did exactly that and then came to the dinner and talked for about ten minutes and was off and away... and the Carnegie/Clemens friendship carried on for many years!

Contact John Lowry via email
at: jemmettlowry@aol.com



Seaside 2011

9th Highland Games have a special Scottish flavour.

Late rain on Thursday suggested that for the first time in the history of the Games clan row may be moved indoors and the heavy athletics would become a series of mud wrestling matches.

But Friday dawned with blue skies, warm sun, and a gentle ocean breeze. However the physical work of unpacking the van, erecting a tent plus all the ancillary activities of properly merchandising a clan tent, caused this clansman to shed his shirt and slather himself with sun block. The ensuing evening and two days made all this seem a small price to pay for the

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In Gear Innes Ireland

As well as writing one of the all-time great motorsport books, the confusingly named Scotsman by the name of Ireland was Scotland's first grand prix winner, when he secured victory in the 1961 United States Grand

Prix for Team Lotus, a win he inherited when long-time leader Stirling Moss retired.

That is not to say that the win was not well-deserved, and Ireland after lap after lap of pressure from the moustachioed form of Graham Hill took the



Robert McGregor Innes Ireland
1930-1993

chequered flag at the Watkins Glen track. Although that was his first full GP win, he had already

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Letter from the editor

Ian Skone-Rees

Those of you visited the St. Andrew's tent at the Seaside Games probably noticed our new colorful banner that provided the marquee.

The society's shield is flanked on two sides by the waving blue and white Saltire. In the bottom right corner is the Poppy Scotland logo that may not be as familiar. Poppy Scotland helps thousands of ex-Servicemen and women, and their families each year to overcome physical, emotional and financial difficulties. It is the leading charity supporting ex-Servicemen and women and their families in Scotland and is

probably best known for running the iconic Scottish Poppy Appeal. In June 2011 Poppy Scotland merged with their sister charity The Royal British Legion (TRBL), which operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to form the largest charity group supporting the Armed Forces community across the whole of the U.K., and overseas. TRBL is represented in the U.S. by Patrick and Pamela Sweetman. Based in San Francisco they administer the Poppy Appeal across the country. For the past three years we have collected donations at the Society tent at the Seaside Games. This year a little over \$100 was collected. In addition to

Calendar of Events

Nov. 30, 2011, 6:30 p.m.

St. Andrew's Day Dinner


Spumante Restaurant
11049 Magnolia Blvd # 107
North Hollywood, CA 91601-5658

Jan 28, 2012, 6:00 p.m.

Robert Burns Supper

La Cañada Thursday Club
For further details log on

www.saintandrewsla.org

distributing poppies and collecting donations we have an opportunity to explain the meaning of the poppy and why it is was chosen as the emblem to honor our heroes. Thanks to all of you who contributed to this worthwhile cause. 

Flowers of the Forest

Florence F. Weir

1923 – 2011

Florence Anna Forschner Weir was a cherished wife and mother. In an era when few women went to college, Florence chose to study Chemistry at Elmira College, and was student body president. After graduation, she married Alexander Weir Jr, in Grace Cathedral in New York City on December 28, 1946.

She is survived by her husband Alexander Weir Jr, three children and 12 grandchildren and one great grandchild. She will be loved, remembered, and missed dearly.

The family wishes in lieu of flowers that contributions be made to the St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles.



Robert Keith Grant

1952 – 2011

Robert Keith Grant was born March 10, 1952. Beloved son of Barbara Grant, nephew of Jack Bissinger, passed away peacefully in Los Angeles on September 11, 2011, surrounded by his family and close friends. Keith was born in San Francisco and spent most of his life in Los Angeles, graduating from UCLA.

A life member of the Saint Andrew's Society of Los Angeles his infectious laugh and sunny personality will be missed by all of us.

House of Gordon USA Holds Annual AGM



Gordon clan members from all over the USA met at the Seaside Highland Games in Ventura, CA October 8, 2011 for their Annual General Meeting. Photo L-R: Lynne Gordon, VP; Nellie Lowry, Treasure; Roger J. Mills, President, and Laura Whiteside, Secretary

Sun Seekers



Our treasurer, Dave Moffett, and V.P. Dave Macpherson above the harbor of Monte Carlo in the Principality of Monaco during their Mediterranean cruise this summer. Rumor has it they did not break the bank.

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or
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The publisher accepts no responsibility for the opinions expressed, accuracy of information, or similarity of names submitted by authors.

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Ian J. Skone-Rees
Dave Moffett

Scotland's Influence in the United States

The Scots were a valuable addition to a developing world. Their past experience of working in the harsh conditions of rural Scotland, combined with their hard-working Presbyterian upbringing, made them an ideal people to help build America in its formative years.

The Scottish emigrants of the 18th Century were an educated group due to the Scottish Reformation, which had stressed the need for education, so every Scot could read the Bible.

Education has always played an important part in Scottish

society, and these Scots played a crucial role in the early development of the New World. Most headmasters of the schools in the new colonies south of New York were Scottish or of Scottish ancestry. These establishments were fundamental in the education of America's future leaders; both Thomas Jefferson's and John Rutledge's tutors were Scottish immigrants.

In this continuing series of articles we will introduce Scots or persons of Scottish descent who have left their indelible mark on the American landscape – Ed.

John Logie Baird

Baird was a Scottish engineer, most famous for being the first person to demonstrate a working television.

John Logie Baird was born on 14 August 1888 in Helensburgh on the west coast of Scotland, the son of a clergyman. Dogged by ill health for most of his life, he nonetheless showed early signs of ingenuity, rigging up a telephone exchange to connect his bedroom to those of his friends across the street. His studies at the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College were interrupted by the outbreak of World War One. Rejected as unfit for the forces, he served as superintendent engineer of the Clyde Valley Electrical Power Company. When the war ended he set himself up in business, with mixed results.

Baird then moved to the south coast of England and applied himself to creating a television, a dream of many scientists for decades. His first crude apparatus was made of odds and ends, but by 1924 he managed to transmit a flickering image across a few feet. On 26 January 1926 he gave the world's first demonstration of true television before 50 scientists in an attic room in central London. In 1927, his television was demonstrated over 438 miles of telephone line between London and Glasgow, and he formed the Baird Television Development Company. (BTDC). In 1928, the BTDC achieved the first transatlantic television transmission between London and New York and the first transmission to a ship in mid-Atlantic. He also gave the first demonstration of both colour and stereoscopic television.

In 1929, the German post office gave him the facilities to develop an experimental television service based on his mechanical system, the only one operable at the time. Sound and vision were initially sent alternately, and only began to be transmitted simultaneously from 1930. However, Baird's mechanical system was rapidly becoming obsolete as electronic

systems were developed, chiefly by Marconi in America. Although he had invested in the mechanical system in order to achieve early results, Baird had also been exploring electronic systems from an early stage. Nevertheless, a BBC committee of inquiry in 1935 prompted a side-by-side trial between Marconi's all-electronic television system, which worked on 405 lines to Baird's 240. Marconi won, and in 1937 Baird's system was dropped.

Baird died on 14 June 1946 in Bexhill-on-Sea in Sussex. 



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Kirkin' O' The Tartans

October 23, 2011

Our traditional Kirkin' was attended by 28 members and a large turnout from the regular members of the Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church congregation.

Coordinated by our own Rev. Chuck Robertson D. Min, the proceedings began with a processional led by piper John McDonald of the Pasadena Scots, playing *Highland Cathedral* followed by president John Lowry, Tartan Master Jack Dawson and members of the society. The blessing of the tartans by Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie was followed by the calling of the clans. A representative of each

clan in attendance came forward to have their name, clan, and clan motto called out. Some in attendance are still wondering what one clan's motto, *Touch not the Cat without a Glove*, really means. Dr. Ogilvie, who in 1995 was appointed Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, in which post he served until 2003, gave an inspired sermon and his presence contributed in no small measure to another unforgettable Kirkin'.

The service was followed by a brunch at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. 

Friday 14th October 2011

Bob Dylan blowin' in the bagpipes

Reuters


Bob Dylan, forever looking for a new road to walk down, has taken up the bagpipes.

The 70-year-old singer bought a set of traditional Scottish pipes while in Glasgow to play two concerts this weekend, a spokesperson for the National Piping Center said.

Dylan did not turn up at the centre's shop himself but sent a representative to pick them up.

"He's always wanted to learn," the spokesperson told Reuters. "It's a lovely sound when they are played well, and something to be appreciated."

Dylan chose a set of R.G. Hardie pipes — one of the best makes — in the Piping Centre's tartan along with a starter package including a chanter and a learning manual. She declined to say how much he paid.

Dylan has often shown an affection for things Scottish. He has cited national poet Robert Burns as a big influence, has an honorary degree from St. Andrews University in Fife, and a number of his songs are rooted in Scottish folk tunes, including "The Times They Are A-Changing." 

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Monday 17th October 2011


Story of Tam o'Shanter retold in mural

STV News

A mural inspired by one of Robert Burns's best-known works has been unveiled at the bard's birthplace museum.

A new artwork tells the story of one of Robert Burns's most famous works. The 56ft-long Tam o'Shanter mural retells the story of a man who stays too long at a


public house and witnesses a disturbing vision of witches and warlocks at a haunted kirk while he is riding home on his horse Meg. It has gone on display at the museum in Alloway, Ayrshire.

The mural was created by Edinburgh-based artist Chris Rutterford and is in the style of a graphic novel. 

Whisky around the world

Scotland has long been known as the home of whisky, and it seems the national drink is quenching the thirst of a growing number of global fans. According to figures from the Scotch Whisky Association, exports soared

by 22 percent in the first half of 2011.

Markets such as Asia and South America have developed a taste for *the water of life*, and demonstrate the strongest growth in terms of shipments while the USA, France, and Germany remain among the top ten export destinations. 

Innes Ireland, *from page 1*

won non-championship events prior to that moment of success, securing wins at the excellently-named Solitude Grand Prix and Flugplatzrennen earlier in the year.

Ireland, though, would never win another championship race, and by the time he won in the US, his departure from the Lotus works team was already secured, Colin Chapman dropping him after becoming irate following Ireland's friendly decision to casually swap his brand new Lotus 21 car with Moss for his old private Lotus 18 at the preceding Italian Grand Prix out of little more than politeness when Moss struggled to get his older car to run to his liking on the Monza banking.

The Scot continued to make GP appearances for another five years for a motley bunch of private teams, but never again stood on the podium in a full championship race, but did win a smattering of other non-championship affairs, including the comically poorly-supported 1963 Glover Trophy at Goodwood. After retiring, Ireland re-invented himself as a journalist and author, and even took the reins of the British Racing Drivers Club for a couple of years before his death. He may not have been the most successful of Scottish F1 drivers, but he was the first to give the country something to cheer in the sport. 

Seaside Highland Games, 2011

conviviality and fun enjoyed in the company of fellow Celts and guests who attended the Games. Friday's Scottish evening was a sell-out and the whisky tasting that preceeded it was well attended by aficionados and neophytes anxious to see if all the fuss about malted barley was worth the price of admission – if the jostling crowds around the serving tables were any indication they were willing and able pupils.

Saturday evening 186 guests attended a special dinner to honor Lord Huntly. The evening kicked off with a traditional procession of the haggis and an address to the haggis given by James Fraser, Director of the National Library of Scotland. Following dinner Lord Huntly gave a fascinating talk on the environmental and political challenges currently facing Scotland.

Lord Huntly, Chief of the House of Gordon, visited the Saint Andrew's tent at Seaside and is seen here with L-R: Dave Macpherson, Lord Huntly, Ian Skone-Rees, and John Benton M.D.



L-R: Neil Andrews, Ventura City Councilman; Bill Fulton, Mayor of Ventura; John Lowry, Chief of the Games, Gabby Trainor (in front); Lord Huntly, Chief of the House of Gordon, Aberdeenshire, Scotland; Jim Hartman, Lord Huntly's Piper; Bill Graham, Director of Ceremonies; Thomas Cyr, Command Master Chief for Naval Base Ventura County

Poets' Corner

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Poets' Corner is the name given to a section of the South Transept of Westminster Abbey due to the number of poets, playwrights, and writers now buried and commemorated there, including Scotland's own Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell, and Robert Adam.

Please send your submissions of original compositions, or poems that have special meaning for you, to the Editor via email: rees1@mac.com

St. Andrew's Day — A Toast

By:

Jean Blewett

Wha cares if skies be dull and gray?
Wha heeds November weather?
Let ilka Scot be glad today
The whole wide warl' thegither.

We're a' a prood and stubborn lot,
And clannish—sae fowk name us—
Ay, but with sic guid cause none ought
Tae judge us, or tae blame us.

For joys that are we'll pledge today
A land baith fair and glowing—
Here's tae the hames o' California,*
Wi' luve and peace o'erflowing!

For joys that were, for auld lang syne,
For tender chords that bind us,
A toast—your hand, auld friend, in mine—
"The land we left behind us!"

Ho, lowlanders! Ho, hielandmen!
We'll toast her a' thegither,
Here's tae each bonnie loch and glen!
Here's tae her hills and heather!

Here's tae the auld hame far away!
While tender mists do blind us,
We'll pledge on this, St. Andrew's day,
"The land we left behind us!"

*Originally Canada

Saint Andrew, from page 1

shores of the Black Sea in what is now Romania and Bulgaria and were converted by Saint Andrew.

In the fascinating legend of The Voyage of St Rule from Greece to Scotland we can see the complicated spread of devotion to Saint Andrew — from Constantinople in modern Turkey, to St Andrews in Fife. St Rule (Regulus in Latin) and the six nuns and monks who took the long sea journey with him, stands for the missionaries and monasteries who worked long and hard to bring the Good News to Britain. They lived in communities organised by a monastic Rule — hence the name St Rule or Regulus.

As Scotland slowly became a nation it needed a national symbol to rally round and motivate the country. Saint Andrew was an inspired choice and the early Picts and Scots modelled themselves on Saint Andrew and on one of his strong supporters, the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, whose statue you can see today in York, where he visited his father, a Roman General then trying to force the Picts to go back north.

Although a pagan who worshipped the Roman sun god Sol, Constantine later became a Christian and went on to make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

It all began near Rome in 312 AD when, on the night of a make-or-break battle against a rival emperor, he saw the symbol X P (Greek for the first two letters of 'Christ') in the dazzling light of the setting sun and then had a dream in which he was promised victory. Constantine ordered his troops to hold the Christian cross at the front of the army, and won.

In a similar way, around 500 years later, King Angus of the Picts, facing a larger army of Saxons at Athelstaneford in what is now East Lothian in Scotland, was overwhelmed by a blinding light the night before the battle and, during the night, had a dream. The message he was given was that he would see a Cross


in the sky and would conquer his enemies in its name.

The following morning King Angus looked into the rising sun and saw the Saltire Cross in its blinding light. This filled him and his men with great confidence and they were victorious. From that time Saint Andrew and his Saltire Cross were adopted as the national symbols for an emerging Scotland.

The Saltire Cross became the heraldic arms that every Scot is entitled to fly and wear. However, its colour was not white at first but silver (Argent), as in heraldry white stands for silver.

The first time the colour of the Saltire is mentioned is in the Acts of Parliament of King Robert II in July 1385 where every Scottish soldier was ordered to wear a white Saltire. If the uniform was white, then the Saltire was to be stitched onto a black background.

Both William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce appealed to Saint Andrew to guide them in times of national emergency. The Saltire was flown on Scottish ships and used as the logo of Scottish banks, on Scottish coins and seals and displayed at the funerals of Scottish kings and queens - that of King James VI for example and of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots. At the Union of the Crowns in 1603, London was treated to the spectacle of Saint Andrew and Saint George on horseback, shaking hands in friendship. When King George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822 he was presented with a Saltire Cross made of pearls on velvet, within a circle of gold.

The many St Andrew Societies worldwide, set up originally as self-help organisations for Scots who had fallen on hard times, form a network of Scots who are all united under the Saltire Cross of Saint Andrew. They give Scotland a European and worldwide dimension. 

Written by: Michael T R B Turnbull
(author of Saint Andrew: Scotland's
Myth and Identity)