

St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest

Thistle Epistle, March 2023

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National Tartan Day

National Tartan Day is April 6th, which is the date of the Declaration of Arbroath. The Declaration was essentially the Scots' Declaration of Independence from England. It contains the famous words: "as long as a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself."

The Society is celebrating National Tartan Day on Saturday April 1st. The Saturday which falls closer to the actual date is of course April 8th, but that conflicts with the Easter weekend.

Our celebration will be at the North Spokane County Library, 44 E Hawthorne Rd, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The event is free to all comers, and light refreshments will be served.

Schedule of Events:

- 10:00 - Opening Ceremonies (Honor Guard)
- 10:15 - Welcome & Reading of State Tartan Day Resolution - Barbara Bley
- 10:25 - The Declaration of Arbroath - Jason Gordon
- 10:35 - Angus Scot Pipe Band
- 10:50 - Scottish Poetry - Bruce Ridley
- 11:05 - Scottish Storytelling
- 11:35 - 30 min. Break (viewing exhibits)
- 12:05 - The Scottish Play - Peter Guthrie
- 12:25 - Scottish Country Dancers
- 12:55 - The Northumbrian Pipes - Brad Wakefield
- 1:15 - Slide Show of Scotland - Barbara Bley
- 2:00 - Break (View Exhibits)
- 2:25 - Lake City Highland Dancers
- 2:55 - Closing (Scottish-American Military Society)

Annual General Meeting

The St. Andrews Society AGM will be held on April 16th, 2023, at O'Doherty's, 525 W Spokane Falls Blvd. There will be a social hour from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, followed by the business meeting at 5:00 pm.

All members are encouraged to attend. It is a good way to meet other members of the Society.

The agenda is as follows:

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Establishment of quorum
3. Approval of minutes of the last AGM, held on April 24th, 2022
4. Treasurer's report
Financials for the year 2022-3 Budget for the year 2023-4
5. Membership report
6. President's Review
Review of the past year
Plans for the upcoming year
7. Bylaws amendment
The current Bylaws date from 2014. Council has approved an amended version, which requires the approval of the membership in a General Meeting. Copies of the proposed Bylaws will be available for perusal at the meeting. Members may request a copy be emailed to them prior to the meeting if they so wish.
8. Election of officers
Two positions are up for election:
 - Vice-President
 - TreasurerNominations have been received for Barbara Bley for Vice-President, and Roger Grimes for Treasurer.
Barbara Bley is the current Vice-President, having been appointed to fill in the remainder of the term of Stacey Hodges. She has been active in the Society for many years, and has been the chief organizer of National Tartan Day. In 2023 she took the lead in putting on the Society's Burns Night celebration. If elected, this would be her first elected term.
Roger has been Treasurer for one two-year term; if elected this would be his second term. Nominations may be made by any member for these positions, providing the nominee is a member of the Society and is willing to be nominated. Such nominations may be made in advance by email to the Secretary at inlandnwscots@gmail.com, or be made at the meeting.
9. Affiliate reports
Highland Games
Angus Scott
Lake City Highland Dance Spokane Scottish Country Dancers
SAMS

10. Topics from the membership

Any member may bring up questions, concerns or suggestions.

11. Adjournment

Burns Night

The Society's Burns Night held at Mukogawa Commons on January 28th was a great success. It felt that people were glad to be back in person after two years absence due to Covid - it's hard to taste a variety of whiskies and do social dancing on Zoom - though for those two years the St. Andrews Council did their best to preserve the spirit of the event.

For our event the Commons at Mukogawa can accommodate 240 at most, partly because we need a lot of space for dancing: particularly of course the Grand March. We budgeted for 225, and actually ended up with 232, so almost a full house. We do not charge dues to be a member of the Society, so our Burns Night event is our main fundraiser. We hope that it will be able to make enough to cover the other expenses of the Society for the rest of the year. Happily, this was the case this year, and the Society is on sound financial footing.

In past years Mukogawa has catered the affair from their own kitchens. Since these were closed this year, we had to find an outside caterer. Luckily, Mukogawa was able to direct us to one they have had experience with, A Catered Affair, who provided an excellent dinner. In addition, the Society provided the haggis, shortbread and Martinelli's cider. Hopefully those attending liked the haggis; Council members conducted a taste test of various haggises (haggi?) in order to find the best one - tough job, but someone has to do it.

The bar was well patronized, with a good variety of scotches to choose from. We did hear some feedback that the process of getting drinks was rather time-consuming, so we will try and rectify that next year.

All the traditional Burns Night activities were included: pipe band performance, country and highland dancers, toast to the lads and lassies and to the Immortal Memory of Robbie Burns, and social dancing to the music of Crooked Kilt. Bruce Ridley recited two Burns poems, but an extra treat was to have Ann Fields sing two of Burns' songs.

Our thanks to everyone who helped make the evening a success, but particularly to the chief organizer, Barbara Bley, whose hard work most certainly paid off with a wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

St. Patrick's Parade

St. Patrick's Day is March 17th. The St. Patrick's parade, organized by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, was held on March 11th.

Despite the inclement weather Spokane experienced in early March, the day turned out cold but dry, so the parade was able to attract a large crowd, both of spectators and participants.

St. Andrews Society and its affiliates were well-represented. As usual, the pipe band was towards the front of the parade, behind the Color Guard and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick banner. The pipe band was composed of members of both the Angus Scott Pipe Band and the Spokane County Pipe Band. Marching just after the pipe band were contingents from the Spokane Highland Games, the Scottish American Military Society, and the St. Andrews Society represented by Barbara Bley carrying the National Tartan Day banner.

Since the parade, several comments have been heard that people had seen the Games banner and that had piqued their interest enough to go to the Games website and investigate: it appears there are still a lot of people who have not heard that Spokane has a Highland Games, so the publicity afforded by the parade is very welcome.

Highland Games

The Spokane Highland Games Association held its Annual General Meeting on January 18th, 2023. Two offices were up for election: Wendi Johnson was elected as Chair, replacing Cheryl McLean, and Catherine Hill was elected as Secretary, replacing Sondra Willmann. The Treasurer reported that the Association was in excellent financial shape.

Since the meeting, Sandy Sheehan has resigned as Treasurer and Clint Hill agreed to take over. Clint served as Treasurer for several years. Wendi has appointed Cheryl McLean as Vice-Chair.

The Highland Games committee has been meeting monthly to organize the 2023 Spokane Highland Games. The Games will be held on Saturday, August 5th, at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center on Havana, with gates open to the public from 9:00 am. We are planning a full slate of events, including:

- Massed bands;
- Pipe band exhibitions;
- Highland dance competition
- Heavy Scottish athletics competition
- Vendors of Scottish goods
- Clan booths
- Celtic music
- Tug o' war
- Poetry reading
- Country dance exhibition
- Children's games
- Scottish heritage events, including hielan' coos, Clydesdale horses and sheep-herding.

The cost of admission remains at \$10 for adults.

As always, we are looking out for people who might like to become involved with the organization of the Games. In particular, we are looking for someone to take charge of the heritage events. If anyone is interested, please contact the Society at spokanescots@gmail.com. It may seem intimidating to someone who has not been involved before, but there is a wealth of experience in the other members of the Games Committee to draw from.

Highland Dance

The United States Inter Regional Championships (USIR) are being held in Portland, Oregon, from July 19th to July 23rd. This competition pits the best highland dancers in the country against each other. To get to the Championships, our regions' dancers have to place at the regional qualifying competition on May 20th. Lake City Highland Dance has three dancers going to the qualifying competition.

Preparations for the Spokane Highland Games dance competition are going great. The games will be holding a special solo choreography challenge this year, where Intermediate or Premier dancers choose their own music and make up a routine to compete for a special trophy.

The Highland Dance world is seeing more and more competitions pop up every month, however attendance at these competitions is still very low. Victoria Hawkins, the Spokane Highland Games Dance Chair, will be reaching out to studios around the Northwest and even in Canada to encourage attendance at the competition.

Lake City Highland Dance, which is run by Victoria, was recently informed they could no longer hold dance classes at their Coeur d'Alene location, and had to rush to find a new place to finish out the semester. Thanks to the love and support from the dance community, the studio was able to find a temporary location at the Jacklin Arts and Cultural Center in Post Falls.

Speaking of summer, Lake City Highland Dance is excited to be holding multiple FREE workshops during the summer for new dancers to try it out. Information for workshops will be on their website and Facebook soon.

Upcoming performances:

LCHD Spring Showcase: Warriors of Scotland May 27th - 2:00 pm
1165 W Ironwood Dr, Coeur d'Alene, ID

Throw out those trousers, put on your kilt, and come experience traditional Scottish Highland dancing! Lake City Highland Dance will be joined by the Angus Scott Pipe Band to bring the sights, sounds, and energy of Scotland to the Inland Northwest. Admission is free and there will be a fundraiser raffle to support Lake City Highland Dance.

Duke of Edinburgh

There is now a new Duke of Edinburgh, which may take some getting used to since the title was so strongly associated with its previous holder, Prince Philip.

The title has been created four times since 1726, each time being given to a member of the royal family, but in each case the holder or their immediate heir died without passing the title on. Prince Philip was granted it on his marriage to Princess Elizabeth in 1947, and held it until his death in 2021.

The title automatically passes to the eldest son, in this case of course King Charles III. However, in 1999, Prince Philip made it known that he would like it to go Prince Edward, his third son. On March 10, 2023, King Charles granted the title to Prince Edward, to hold during his lifetime, so it is not hereditary and cannot be passed on to Edward's heirs.

It has been the tradition in the royal family that the sons of the monarch have been granted dukedoms. Queen Victoria's three younger sons - after the Prince of Wales who became Edward VII - were created Duke of Albany, Duke of Connaught and Duke of Edinburgh - though the Duke of Edinburgh ceased to hold the title after, in 1900, he succeeded his uncle as Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in Germany.

Edward VII's eldest son became Duke of Clarence and Avondale, but he died young and his brother became George V. George V's sons were the Prince of Wales, who became Edward VIII, Bertie, who was made Duke of York but then succeeded his brother as George VI, and the Dukes of Gloucester and Kent. So, it was an exception to the rule when the Queen's third son was made Earl of Wessex and not a duke, and that was because it was expected that he would inherit his father's title.

Scotch Whisky

It appears that the production of scotch whisky may not be as pure as one might assume. The adverts refer to beautiful highlands and highlands with pristine mountain streams. However, it turns out that they are energy-intensive businesses, with a large carbon footprint, and the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in their area.

The owners of 140 distilleries have voluntarily pledged to become carbon-neutral by 2040, aiming to use wind, tide and green hydrogen to replace fossil fuel energy, control their water usage, and recycle the byproducts like draff and pot ale into fertilizer, animal feed and biofuel. Already since 2009 the industry has reduced its carbon emissions by half, with renewable energy going from 2% to 39% of total energy used. Whether the carbon-neutral by 2040 aim is doable is moot. Much of the technology and infrastructure required for things like capture of carbon dioxide, replacement of fossil fuels by hydrogen, and anaerobic digestion systems to produce fuel, do not as yet exist and would be expensive to retrofit once they were available.

Of course, one of the major problems is the use of peat. Burning peat is what gives so many scotch whiskies their smoky flavor. However, peatlands are considered a precious resource. They act as wonderful storage for carbon, so digging them reduces the storage and releases the carbon into the atmosphere. There have been attempts by such distilleries as Laphroaig to restore degraded peat bogs; however, peat bogs are laid down over centuries, and there is no known way to accelerate the process.

Bottom line: the carbon-neutral aim is laudable, but the jury is out on whether it is attainable. However, it does focus attention on the problem and should help even if it doesn't get all the way there.

[With thanks to the Spokesman-Review, who printed an article on this subject written by William Booth of the Washington Post].

Nicola Sturgeon Resigns

Nicola Sturgeon has resigned as Scotland's First Minister. She has held the position since 2014, replacing Alex Salmond.

Candidates to succeed her as leader of the Scottish National Party, and so First Minister, were Angus Robertson, former Westminster SNP leader; Humza Yousuf, health secretary; Kate Forbes, Finance Secretary, and Ash Regan, former minister. Voting by members of the SNP took place from March 13th to March 27th. The winner was Humza Yousuf, with 24,336 votes; Kate Forbes was second with 20,559 votes.

Yousuf, a practicing Muslim aged 37, has set out his goals as tackling the cost-of-living crisis and making a renewed push for independence.

Sturgeon gave her reason for resigning as quite simply burn-out from the "brutal" constant stress of politics and the leadership position. However, the lack of an agreed strategy to further the independence movement - see the article on Scottish Independence - may have played a part. Sturgeon's government has also been criticized for being incompetent in the basic tasks of government, particularly in areas such as healthcare and the economy.

Not everyone is sorry to see her go: Trump's take was, "good riddance to failed woke extremist Nicolas Sturgeon of Scotland"!

Scottish Independence

The UK supreme court ruled in November 2022 that Scottish government cannot hold an independence referendum without the consent of the British Parliament. The British government has strongly refused to provide such consent. This greatly complicated Nicola Sturgeon's call for a new referendum to be held in October 2023.

Sturgeon has resigned, but her successor, Humza Yousuf, has signaled that continuing the independence movement is one of his priorities, along with tackling the cost-of-living crisis.

SNP has a pro-independence majority in the Scottish parliament, so argues it has a cast-iron mandate to hold a new referendum,

The original referendum held in 2014 was to be "once in a generation" - but it was held only 9 years ago, so it is certainly not due yet. Since then, however, there has been Brexit, which the independence supporters say invalidates the original referendum since the terms of staying in the UK have fundamentally changed - in the Brexit vote Scotland wanted by a sizable majority to remain in the EU.

Large questions remain unaddressed by independence seekers, such as currency and pensions. There is also the fear that independence might result in a hard border with England. However, the EU and UK have just negotiated an agreement which alleviates the problem of having a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

There is also the question of whether a referendum would in fact favor independence. Current polls put support of independence at 49%, with 51% against. Even if independence were gained, there remains the issue of whether an independent government would be stable: supporters of independence are not a coherent bloc - Labor does not always see eye to eye with the SNP. An example of the sort of issue which could divide the country is the Gender Recognition Bill which has recently been put forward in Scotland. People could decide which gender they wish to be recognized as without any examination: so, a person could be one gender in Scotland, but another over the border in England. This Bill was blocked by the UK Government.

One of Nicola Sturgeon's ideas to avoid having a referendum was to have a general election, in which a win by pro-independence parties could be construed as a vote for independence. This idea is also causing divisions in the country.

It appears that Sturgeon's legacy is a divided and entrenched country.

Senior figures in SNP believe Sturgeon's resignation could set another referendum back five years.

Tartans & Kilts

Since National Tartan Day is fast approaching, it seems appropriate to say a little about tartan and kilts.

There are several versions of where the word “tartan” comes from. One is that it derives from the French tartarin, meaning cloth from Tartary, in what is now Russia and Ukraine. Another is that it comes from the Gaelic “tarsainn”, meaning across. In Sanskrit, which was the basis of the Indo-European languages, “tantra” refers to the basic warp of threads in weaving. Tartan was found in China around 3,000 years ago and during the Iron Age in Europe. So, it is certainly not a Scottish invention.

The word "kilt" is a derivation of the ancient Norse word, kjilt, which means pleated, and refers to clothing that is tucked up and around the body.

Scottish kilts originate back to the 16th century, when they were traditionally worn as full-length garments by Gaelic-speaking male Highlanders of northern Scotland.

Most likely, the first versions of the Scottish kilt were drab in color. However, families with a little more money could show their wealth by using vegetable dyes to color their kilts. There was not as yet the concept of clans having their own specific tartans: early travelers in the Scottish Highlands reported, "while the locals wore clothing of different, and often intricately woven patterns, these did not necessarily denote allegiance to anyone or membership of any body, but depended on location, the availability of different dyes and above all personal taste. Some wore several different tartans at once."

The Scottish kilt evolved to include more material and was called the ‘great kilt’. The style became to pleat the excess material by hand and hold it in place with a belt at the waist. The plaid was so long, you could also throw excess material over your shoulder and use it as a blanket.

Following the second Jacobite rebellion, the 1745 led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, which was supported by the highland clans, the government of King George II imposed the "Dress Act" in 1746, outlawing all items of highland dress and the playing of the pipes, with the intention of suppressing Highland culture. The penalties were severe; six months' imprisonment for the first offense and seven years' transportation for the second. The law practically eliminated the wearing of the kilt. However, the result was to make the kilt and tartan into a symbol of Scotland, and a movement grew to reinstate the kilt.

The main exception to the Dress Act was made for the Highland Regiments (such as the Black Watch). Since the kilt was part of the uniform, it became important to have a uniform tartan: so, the association of tartans with specific bodies of men became established.

The Dress Act was repealed in 1782, with the help of lobbying by Robbie Burns and pressure from highland landowners. The Celtic Society of Edinburgh, chaired by Walter Scott, encouraged lowlanders to join this antiquarian enthusiasm. Before this, the tartan and kilt were worn exclusively by highlanders. Until the late 18th century lowlanders regarded the highlanders with some fear and trepidation, and would not dream of appearing as wild and uncouth as they by wearing their dress.



What really identified the kilt with the whole of Scotland was the visit of King George IV to Scotland in 1822. Sir Walter Scott and the highland societies organized a "gathering of the Gael" and established entirely new Scottish traditions, such as Scottish Highland Games. King George IV appeared in a spectacular kilt (pictured), which lent respectability to the highland dress. At this time, clan identification by tartan became extremely popular and every family wanted to have their own tartan. Scottish weavers and tailors were only too happy to oblige, and Queen Victoria's love of Scotland and its pageantry reinforced this trend. In fact, most clans actually have several versions of their tartans, which have the same sett, or pattern of lines, but in different colors. These may have various names, such as modern, old, weathered, hunting, dress, etc.

The great kilt was difficult to put on, and could be cumbersome to wear, so that led to the development of the small kilt, generally used today. The story goes that one Thomas Rawlinson became frustrated with the Scottish kilt, so he took it to a local tailor, complaining he needed to be able to cut trees and have more functionality

from his kilt. The tailor simply snipped the garment in two, birthing the 'walking kilt,' a shorter more functional version of the great kilt.

Nowadays, although Scotland has become uniquely identified with clans and their tartans, many other nations have their own tartan. Every U.S. state and Canadian province has its own tartan. Many families, counties and cities in Ireland have theirs.

So, who can wear what tartan? Although tartans are generally associated with a particular clan or location, most may be worn by anyone. The exceptions are some of the tartans worn by the royal family which are exclusive to them.

What if your family doesn't have its own tartan, but you'd really like one? The process starts with making a design. This of course must be different from any tartan now in existence. Since there are over 4,000 registered tartans, it might be quite a job to come up with a unique one. Once designed, it has to be submitted to the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Scotland for registration, which is another arduous process. Despite this, around 150 new tartans are registered each year. It might just be easier to pick an existing one whose colors you like!