Welcome to The Thistle. Your own newsletter that chronicles the news, gatherings, happenings, and items of interest to our Scots community in southern California. Those of you who are regular readers will know that there have been several months of hiatus in Thistle publication, due in large part to the demands of a very busy year during which the Society has reached new goals in terms of increased membership, event attendance, and participation in the running of the Society by a greater number of volunteers.

2016 represented a high watermark of visibility for the Society in the community in which we all live and work. Our traditional Burns Supper in January at the Altadena Town & Country Club attracted a record number of guests who gathered at the Altadena Town & Country Club to celebrate the great man and his world-wide contributions that have lasted over 200 years. This was followed by our Tartan Day Celebration at the Intercontinental Hotel, Century City at which we welcomed TV personality and presenter Ross King and internationally renowned actor Celia Imrie. This was followed in May by our special reception for new members, then came the Garden Party where we raised a record amount that helped fund our multi-year commitment to Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles; many thanks to all of you who made this possible. Just when we thought things couldn’t get any better we were offered the US premiere screening of Whisky Galore. Months of planning, coordination, trans-Atlantic telephone calls, marketing, and outreach resulted in 400 plus members, friends, and special guests gathered at the Writer’s Guild Theatre in Beverly Hills for this special screening of the remake of this iconic Scottish film. Producer Iain Maclean and executive producer Michael Ryan flew in from Scotland to answer questions following the screening and just in the last few days we have learned the film has acquired a major US distributor and is expected to be in general release this summer – don’t miss it.

Are you beginning to understand why the Thistle has been in hiatus? But there’s more. Our annual dinner recognizing St. Andrew’s Day was held in November and plans were underfoot for Burns Supper in January – more on that elsewhere in this issue.

Thank you to all who made 2016 such a memorable and successful year by participating in these events through planning and execution or through buying tickets and attending. 2017 has already kicked off to a great start and looks like more successes lay ahead.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society will be held 26th February, 2017 at the home of Barbara and Jack Dawson.

The AGM is an opportunity for all members to learn about the state of their Society and to vote on matters that come before the membership, including the election and nomination of new Board members. Reports will be presented by the President, and the Treasurer, as well as individual reports from committees chairs. Notification of the AGM was made to all members in good standing via the postal service and included a form of Proxy for those members unable to attend in person. If you do not plan to attend the AGM please mail your signed Proxy form to the address noted on the form.

All attendees are requested to bring a food dish of their choice to be shared. Liquid libations will be provided.

Ecurie Ecosse was a motor racing team from Scotland. The team was founded in November 1951 by Edinburgh businessman and racing driver David Murray and mechanic Wilkie Wilkinson, its most notable achievement was winning both the 1956 and 1957 24 Hours of Le Mans. The team also raced in three Formula One races. Ecurie Ecosse’s cars were always...
You’ve Got Mail!

Electronic distribution of this newsletter and other Society information that is sent to your email in-box helps the Society reduce costs and overhead while at the same time ensuring speedy and timely delivery of important information. We have not entirely eliminated traditional mail however, instead relying on a combination of electronic distribution and regular mail delivered by your postal carrier. The reason for this is to ensure as far as possible that all our members and friends are aware of our gatherings and have the opportunity to purchase tickets and attend Society events. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of all types of delivery, including social media and the website, and your input is very helpful in determining how best to tailor our communication and outreach. The majority of Society members use electronic forms of communication in their daily lives, however we are aware that some do not and we will continue to make every effort to make sure all of you are kept up-to-date on Society news, events, and gatherings.

Please express any views you may have in writing, email, or by telephoning. Contact information for Board of Trustees members may be found on the website or by contacting Ian Skone-Rees at (818) 769-5166.

Flowers of the Forest

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the passing of Dr. John Benton.

Dr. John departed this world in December 2016 following a brief decline in his health. Dr. John was a man for all seasons who led a life full of colourful experiences and major accomplishments. As a physician he was well known in Pasadena where he grew up and lived with his wife Cynthia. John was a frontline physician during the Korean conflict. Following his military service he became deeply involved and a leading light in the Southern California Sports Car community; he flew his own plane and acquired two iconic Morgan sports cars that he religiously drove to the Morgan owner’s club gatherings at Beckhams (now demolished to make way for new development). John was a past president of the St. Andrew’s Society and a long time member of the British United Services Club and the Scottish American Military Society (SAMS). John enthusiastically attended meeting of these organizations until the ravages of advanced age finally caught up with him. RIP Dr. John, you are missed.
Just before 5 in the morning, the slender streets of little Dingwall, a town in the heart of the Scottish Highlands, were completely silent.

No cars waited at the handful of stoplights downtown; even the bakers hadn’t stirred. In the cool, still grayness, I tiptoed through the streets, marveling at the squat green hills that frame the town, feeling slightly disoriented, though I knew it must be impossible to get lost in such a snug place.

I rounded a bend and came upon what had drawn me to this sleepy town: George Cockburn & Son, champions of Scotland’s first national haggis competition in 1976.

Ah, haggis. Before I’d gone to Scotland this year, I wondered what exactly made the dish — sheep’s innards packed into sheep’s stomach — qualify as a delicacy. But as an adventurous cook and eater, I pride myself in trying everything at least once, so I eagerly spooned a first taste of it into my mouth at a castle in Edinburgh. It was a revelation — intensely rich and meaty, with the earthy flavor of what my mother calls “spare parts” combined with the comforting muskiness of oatmeal. It instantly won me over.

During my five-week stay in Scotland, I would seek it out wherever I went — trying it both in its traditional form, as “haggis, neeps and tatties” (haggis, turnips and potatoes), but also tucked within dumplings and presented in other modern forms on menus. (Sadly, I was unable to find a bar snack of haggis nachos a friend had told me about.) In one of Edinburgh’s best traditional Scottish restaurants, though, I noticed that Cockburn’s haggis was often on offer. The butchery may be tiny but it ships to restaurants and grocers all over Britain. Then I heard that Cockburn was the first champion haggis maker in the country. I knew I had to visit.

Curious, I dialed the owner with an unusual request: Could I come and help you make haggis? Though the company doesn’t offer haggis-making tours to the public, my experience is instructive because there are plenty of places to learn. (See below.) However, getting to those may not offer the idyllic train trip I took through Northern Scotland, past Inverness and the scenic Moray Firth, to Dingwall.

Like many small towns in Scotland, Dingwall has a train station, a hotel, a few Chinese takeouts, more than a few pubs and a local business that gives the place name recognition, in this case, Cockburn haggis. The morning I navigated its empty streets, I arrived at the small shop at just the right time — the meat truck had pulled up, and Fraser MacGregor, a clean-cut, muscular man in a sharp blue-and-white pinstriped doctor’s-style coat, blue dress shirt, neatly knotted tie and sleek white fedora, was hard at work hoisting boxes of suet and lamb, each weighing many kilograms, into his spacious, pristine kitchen.

Mr. MacGregor, 46, hadn’t been at the 1976 haggis competition himself, but he’s been working at Cockburn since he was 16, eventually buying it from Jocky McCallum, the owner who came up with the winning haggis recipe. Haggis, Scotland’s national dish, has been made and consumed in the country for centuries — long before the poet Robert Burns wrote an ode to it in 1787. It’s the ultimate peasant food — a dish that involved stuffing lungs and livers into a stomach casing ensured that no part of the animal went to waste. It has become such a source of national identity that in addition to the meat traders’ competition for haggis making, there are others for eating and hurling the food.

A haggis fan himself, having had it for dinner two to three times a week since he was a ”bairn,” Mr. MacGregor prides himself in keeping the tradition alive.

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Please see Haggis, page 7
Calendar of Events

26th February, 2017 2:00 pm. AGM
To be held at the home of Barbara & Jack Dawson
5278 La Cañada Blvd., La Cañada, CA 91011

12th March, 2017 2:00 p.m. Meet-Up
McLeod Ale Brewing Co.
4741 Calvert Street
Van Nuys, CA 91411

15th April, 2017 6:00 p.m. Tartan Day Celebration
Intercontinental Hotel
2151 Avenue of the Stars
Los Angeles, CA 90067

Date TBA New Member Reception
27–28th May, 2017 Scottish Fest
Orange City Fair Grounds
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Date TBA Annual Garden Party
Sportsmen’s Lodge, Studio City
Information: eileensr@me.com

14–15th October, 2017 Seaside Highland Games
Ventura County Fairgrounds
Ventura, CA

For more society information and news log on to:
www.saintandrewsla.org

Scottie

The angular profile of the Scottish Terrier is as recognizable as the sound of the bagpipes. While the background, characteristics and temperament may not be as well known, the Scottish Terrier, or “Scottie” as more popularly known, is as synonymous with Scotland as the kilt.

The Scottie’s actual origin is somewhat obscure with little documentation, however, John Lesley, the Bishop of Ross, references in his book “The History of Scotland from 1436-1561” a breed as early as 1436 similar to the modern-day Scottie. The Highlands are the ancestral home of the Scottie and the breed was developed to assist farmers by hunting and exterminating varmints such as foxes, badgers, wildcats, weasels, rats, and anything else that gave the Scottish farmer a problem. This dog needed to be able to work independently of the farmer, freeing him for more traditional tasks on his land.

Believed to be one of the oldest of the terriers, the Scottie has common ancestry with four other terrier breeds that were grouped under the Skye Terrier name — the modern Skye, Cairn, Dandie Dinmont and West Highland White Terrier (Westie). Scotties and Westies are most closely related originating in the Blackmount region of Perthshire and Rannoch Moor.

Today’s Scottie is thought to have been originally known as an Aberdeen Terrier; having been brought down from the Highlands, they were abundant in and around Aberdeen in the mid to late 19th century and began appearing successfully in dog exhibitions. Around 1883 there was a movement among Scottish Terrier owners to purify and maintain the Scottie as a separate breed from other terriers that possessed names such as the “Rough-haired,” Paisley, Highland, Aberdeen and Skye.

Distinct character descriptions of the Scottie include being alert, confident, feisty, fierce, gentle, independent, intelligent, loving, playful, spirited but dignified, stubborn, yet above all loyal. The nickname “Diehard” was given in the 19th century by George, the fourth Earl of Dumbarton because of their rugged nature and determination. The Earl had a famous pack of Scottish Terriers so brave that they were named “Diehards”. They were supposed to have inspired the name of his Regiment, The Royal Scots, as “Dumbarton’s Diehards.”

Scotties typically have a thick, wiry outer coat with a soft, dense undercoat. They do not shed so brushing and “hand stripping” maintain the two rolling coats and rich look. There are six recognized coat colors from the most recognizable black to a variety of brindle and wheaten.

Preservation of the breed has been officially fostered and encouraged since 1881 with founding of the Scottish Terrier Club of England (STCE), the first club dedicated to the Scottish Terrier. The Scottish Terrier Club of Scotland (STCS) was founded in 1888 followed by the Scottish Terrier Club of America (STCA) in 1900. The American Kennel Club (AKC) began in 1884 with the Scottish Terrier becoming a recognized AKC breed one year later. Soon after, the United Kennel Club (UKC) was formed in 1898 with UKC-recognition of the breed following in 1934.

A verse by Margery Doud (see page 6), St. Louis Central Library, is an apt tribute to the Diehard:

Volunteers Needed

If you would like to be more involved in the Society and help meet the stated goals in our mission statement of preserving and promoting Scottish history and culture please contact a Board member at their email address listed on the website.
Whisky Galore – The Remake

The Society had the great privilege of screening the US premiere of Whisky Galore – The Remake, 24th September, 2016 at The Writers Guild Theatre in Beverly Hills. We welcomed over 400 VIPs, members, and guests to this unique event which was made possible by the support of a wide range of sponsors and the hard work of a dedicated committee. Producer Iain MacLean and Executive Producer Michael Ryan held an entertaining panel discussion following the screening hosted by TV and radio personality Danny De Lillo.

ROBERT BURNS SUPPER – 2017

On 28th January 2017 205 members, friends, and guests gathered at the Sportsmen’s Lodge, Studio City for the best attended Robert Burns celebration the Society has been privileged to host.
distinctive in their Flag Blue Metallic paint.

**Formula One**

Ecurie Ecosse had four Formula One Grand Prix entries, over three seasons. The first was by David Murray himself, driving a Cooper T20 in the 1952 British Grand Prix. However, he retired with engine trouble early in the race.

For the 1953 event the team entered two cars a Cooper T20 for Jimmy Stewart a new Connaught A Type was entered for Ian Stewart. Unfortunately neither of the drivers finished the race; Jimmy spun off track on lap 79, and Ian retired with engine problems.

The team's last F1 outing was at the 1954 British Grand Prix, where the Connaught was again entered, this time driven by Leslie Thorne. Although this time the car did take the finish, it came in twelve laps down on the leaders. From this point onward the team concentrated on sportcar events.

**Formula Two**

Ecurie Ecosse also raced in the European Formula Two Championship, from 1969 until 1971. Their first race was in 1969 at Thruxton where driver Graham Birrell finished 11th in a Brabham BT23C. At Enna Birrell couldn’t start the race because he had crashed the car in practice and the team couldn’t repair the car before the race. In 1970 Ecurie Ecosse entered the same car for Birrell. At Crystal Palace Birrell finished in 11th position. In the next race held at the Hockenheim ring Birrell finished in 12th position. In Imola Richard Attwood took over from Birrell; after finishing sixth in the first heat, he was unable to start the second heat and was therefore not classified. In 1971 Ecurie Ecosse had a new driver; Tom Walkinshaw, they also had a new car: a March 712M. At Thruxton Walkinshaw retired on lap three due to a puncture. At the Nürburgring, Gerry Birrell finished in ninth position. In their last two races, at Jarama and Crystal Palace, Walkinshaw failed to qualify for the race.

**24 Hours of Le Mans**

In the 1956 24 Hours of Le Mans Ron Flockhart and Ninian Sanderson were the winning drivers in a Jaguar D-Type. Ron Flockhart won again with a D-Type in the 1957 event, partnered this time by Ivor Bueb. The team’s second D-Type — driven by Sanderson and his new partner John Lawrence — finished second, a rare privateer 1–2 finish.

The 1958 Le Mans race was less successful; both of the Ecurie Ecosse D-Types, this time with Masten Gregory and Jack Fairman added to the driver line-up, suffered engine failure within a few laps of the start.

Things went from bad to worse for the team in the 1960 running. The, by now much modified, D-Type at Le Mans in 1959, alongside a newly acquired Tojeiro-Jaguar. Once again, neither car made it to the final flag, the D-Type suffering engine failure after 70 laps, and the Tojeiro a fire after 137.

TO ANY SCOTTIE

by Margery Doud

He knows no fear; he knows no treachery
Alert and brave, affectionate and wise
Watching for those he loves, into his eyes
Comes sudden light, the flash of fealty!
With a heart as honest as the wind-swept moor
With courage rugged as the stony earth
Of Scotland, hardy country of his birth,
He battles to the death. And thus secure
Within our hearts his place is permanent.
I read this tribute, words so richly spent
And ask, “What one is this to win such a praise?
Lives there a man so valiant in these days?
But, reading, farther on the answer lies
A shaggy little dog with wistful eyes.
And so, even though he’s the boss now, Mr. MacGregor says he makes the shop’s haggis every week. "Normally you start at the bottom and work your way up to the top," he said. "But no, I’m still doing the same job I was when I was 16."

The prized haggis recipe was handed over with the store, and the version made today is the one that won. Cockburn haggis is in such demand that Mr. MacGregor spends two mornings each week making a total of about 1,100 pounds for clients all over Britain and beyond, to countries including Hungary and Germany. In January, when Britain lights up with Burns suppers celebrating the work of Robert Burns, Cockburn is inundated with orders, as haggis is the star of all these suppers. That month, Mr. MacGregor makes haggis seven days a week, churning out about 15 tons by the end.

I was grateful not to be visiting in January but still, I quickly realized I wasn’t quite prepared for the task at hand. After handing me a white coat and fedora Mr. MacGregor handed me, he asked if I needed anything, a cup of tea perhaps, and then we set to work. The process had begun the night before, with Mr. MacGregor boiling 220 pounds of lamb lungs and livers, which he now started fishing out of a giant silver vat with a large netted scoop. Soon, he had built up a huge mound of steaming meat, spices, oats and onions all mixed together. Mr. MacGregor now had a big, brown porridge-like pile before him, which he fed into a machine that funneled haggis into plastic tubing of various sizes — one-, two- and several-pound versions. But there was a special casing for high-end proprietors. For a fancy hotel that had ordered a traditional haggis, he disappeared into his fridge for a moment, emerging with what looked like a sickly yellowish white plastic bag.

"Feel it," he said, smiling. "This is a sheep’s stomach." My nose wasn’t anywhere near his hands but I could already smell it — a rubbery fetid stench, something like melted rubber combined with rotting meat. And when I pressed my fingers on the stomach, it felt rubbery and wrinkly.

As the haggis meal filled it, puffing it up, the stench of the stomach grew even stronger. When Mr. MacGregor saw me grimacing, he confessed that it wasn’t his favorite way of having haggis. "I always eat it packed in tubes."

After that, the bulk of our job was done — Mr. MacGregor and I settled into a quiet rhythm, picking up lung after heart, until there were none left to de-vein. By a rough count, we had a few hundred lamb pieces in front of us. Squeamishness was going to get me nowhere. Gradually, Mr. MacGregor and I settled into a quiet rhythm, picking up lung after heart after lung, until there were none left to de-vein.

Once we had a nice mound of heart and lung bits, Mr. MacGregor mixed these in a trough with liquid left over from boiling the lamb parts, meal, dried onions and a variety of spices — the secret recipe. Then he ran the mixture through a giant processor, twice, amassing several troughs of light brown pulp.

Now this was starting to look more like the haggis I’d eaten in Edinburgh. When I’d first arrived in Scotland and inquired about haggis, a local friend, finding my enthusiasm for the stuff amusing, had said, "Do you like porridge? It’s like a meat porridge." And it’s true — while haggis at its inception was stuffed into sheep’s stomachs and boiled, the versions you’ll find in Scottish homes and restaurants these days tend to be a mealy mess of meat, spices, oats and onions all mixed together.

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As the haggis meal filled it, puffing it up, the stench of the stomach grew even stronger. When Mr. MacGregor saw me grimacing, he confessed that it wasn’t his favorite way of having haggis. "I always eat it packed in tubes."

After that, the bulk of our job was done — Mr. MacGregor and I loaded the haggis tubes into the boiler and 30 minutes later, we were hauling out our dark-chocolate-brown bounty. Since some of them had split open during boiling, Mr. MacGregor nudged me to dig in.

I pinched a bit with my fingers and popped it into my mouth.

On my way to Dingwall, as my train had raced past verdant country tableaus and breathtaking waterways, I wondered if the ride itself would be the highlight of my trip. Standing in that kitchen, lamb bits between my nails and a mouth filled with freshly made haggis, however, I realized that the ride paled in comparison. This had made the trek worth it. I was so taken with the flavor, I instinctively closed my eyes to hold that feeling a little more.
Drivers

The drivers included David Murray himself; Jimmy Stewart; his younger brother, three-time F1 World Champion Jackie Stewart; fellow F1 drivers Jim Clark, and Innes Ireland; Masten Gregory; Ian Stewart; Leslie Thorne; Ron Flockhart; Ninian Sanderson; Roy Salvadori; Ivor Bueb; John Lawrence; Jack Fairman.

1980s revival

The original team ceased operating in 1971, but the team name was revived in the 1980s by enthusiast and driver Hugh McCaig. In 1986 the team won the C2 class of the World Sportscar Championship; they had been runners-up the previous year. They also entered Vauxhall Cavaliers in the British Touring Car Championship with some success in 1992 and 1993, including a win at Thruxton in 1993 for David Leslie.

2011 revival

Team boss Hugh McCaig announced that four young drivers, Alasdair McCaig, Andrew Smith, Joe Twyman, and Oliver Bryant, would revive the team once more and drive a return to sports car racing for the team, 25 years after winning the World Sportscar Championship in 1986 in the C2 class. The team will enter an Aston Martin DBRS9, along with the help of Aston Martin Racing Partner Team Barwell Motorsport, into the 2011 24 Hours of Spa in the GT3 class. They will be racing for outright victory for the 2011 edition of the famous Spa 24 Hours as it is the first time that GT3-spec cars are the top class of car, before it was GT1 (2000–2009) and GT2 (2010). The driver line-up will consist of Alasdair McCaig, Andrew Smith, Joe Twyman and Oliver Bryant.
Bienvenue à Montreal!

It’s not every day that you are chosen as the Guest of Honor for a Society that has been around for over 180 years. Nor is it every day that the President of a Saint Andrew’s Society is chosen to be honored. The Saint Andrew’s Society of Montreal recently honored our own President, Ian Skone-Rees, for their 144th Annual Saint Andrew’s Ball. To be chosen as the Guest of Honor for the Saint Andrew’s Ball in Montreal is both prestigious and a distinction, showing that the individual chosen has made a significant contribution in their community. Past honorees have been: The 16th Earl of Kinnoull, The Duke and Duchess of Argyll, Major General Mike Riddell-Webster, Lord & Lady Dalmeny, The Earl and Countess of Hopetoun to name just a few.

Founded in 1835, the Montreal Saint Andrew’s Society maintains an illustrious impact on its community and continues to be the foundation for all Scots in the city of Montreal. In 2017 Montreal will celebrate its 375th Anniversary and the 150th anniversary of the coming into force of the British North America Act that established the country of Canada.

However don’t let this mislead you into thinking this was just one evening’s event. The Montreal Society has been doing this since their formation in 1835 and it shows. No this is not a one evening gathering — there are events — dinners, debutante presentations, lunches, throughout the week. Some held at iconic Montreal venues, such as the Montreal Rackets Club and the Royal Montreal Curling Club (the oldest active sports club in North America). President Brian Mackenzie (nephew of our own Board of Trustee’s member Dr. Richard Mackenzie, and Vice President Jason MacCallum welcomed Ian and Eileen and seven members (Kimberlee Bradford, Dr. Richard MacKenzie and his daughter Tara, Dr. David Warburton, OBE, and his wife Leslie, Steve Tom, and Maggie Landau) of our own Society who made the trek north.

The ball room of the Hotel Château Champlain was awash with tartan, the skirl of the pipes from the Royal Highland Regiment, The Black Watch of Canada, and more contemporary music filled in between the reels and strathspeys. Starting at 4.00 p.m. the last of the dancers were still there at 3:00 a.m. the following morning. Later that morning Ian and Eileen and Dr. David Warburton and his wife Leslie attended the Black Watch regimental church of St Andrew and St Paul where Ian was asked to read the two lessons; this was followed by a brunch at the MacDonald Stewart Foundation, where Vice President of the Foundation Bruce Bolton donned Father Christmas costume and played the pipes. Brunch was a time for thanks to all who had made this such an eventful and successful week and culminated in a totally unexpected invitation to Ian and Eileen to become members of the Officers Mess and the Colonel’s Circle of THE BLACK WATCH (Royal Highland Regiment of Canada).

Thank you to all at the St. Andrew’s Society of Montreal for an unforgettable week — we’ll be back. We also hope that our new friends in Montreal will visit us in Los Angeles.

Au revoir! Il faudra revenir!
What is suddenly going on to encourage a 25% upswing in tourism to Scotland? Is the current interest in Single Malt Scotch? A sudden desire to eat porridge and Haggis? Or is there something else in the air? Or should I say, On the air. While all of those are wonderful things to enjoy while in Scotland, I can point to one very important person. Diana Gabaldon.

It was an episode of Doctor Who that inspired a hopeful novelist to research 18th century Scotland. This busy period of time is not immediately familiar to most Americans, but to Diana Gabaldon, the author of the Outlander series of books, it became her inspiration. The sight of a young Jamie McCrimmon in a kilt was enough to start her search and her journey. A journey that has literally launched thousands of travelers toward fair Alba.

The series, set in the highlands near Inverness begins just after World War II. A combat nurse on a second honeymoon visits a ring of standing stones. She suddenly finds herself in the midst of a chase between Redcoats and Highlanders on the same hillside, in 1743. She’s a strong woman, but will she be strong enough to survive the 18th century? Will she find someone to partner with in that time? Enter a man, dubbed by Ronald D. Moore, the “King of Men” (Well of course, he’s Scottish) from Diana Gabaldon’s imagination, James Alexander Malcolm Mckenzie Fraser was in need of immediate care… the rest, well, as she told her publisher; “There’s more.”

Not only are there 8 novels, there are shorter books, short stories and one graphic novel so far, and still…there’s more

So, why the effect to drive thousands to their computers to plan and then visit Scotland? Besides the books, Sony decided to create a series for television based on the books. Ronald D. Moore found that his wife’s favorite book was also loved by his producing partner, and the rights were going to be available. Starz cable network began broadcasting the series here in the US in August of 2014. You can catch up on the previous seasons on Amazon Prime.

The series is filmed almost entirely in Scotland, the studio is in Cumbernauld, near Glasgow and the Scottish countryside and landscape are characters as much as the Clan MacKenzie and Fraser. With the British Army and a cast of hundreds, Sam Heughan, fills the role of Jamie Fraser and Claire Randall, our English WWII nurse is portrayed by Caitriona Balfe. Many of the cast find themselves speaking Gaelic with the help of Adhamh O Broin, a champion of the Gaelic language.

Between the beauty and the romance, the action and adventure, there is also the lure of history to draw adventures to the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness, and towns such as Culross. The board of tourism has a map of Outlander location sites, many which are open to the public. Companies such as Carnegie Tours among many others, report an increase of 500% in their Outlander themed tours. The tourism board also reports 175,000 visits to the Outlander section on it’s website since last August according to the Hollywood Reporter back in March of 2015.

Will this end anytime soon? There is one book currently being written, the series is set and filling season three, from the book entitled Voyager, the third of the 8 written so far, so as in the words of Diana Gabaldon “There’s more.” I am sure that the next time you are in Scotland, and you hear the phrase “He looks just like Jamie.” You can smile, as this author is going to keep Scottish tourism a growth industry for years to come.

If you are ready to join the adventure, let me know, Sassenach’s as well as Scots are always welcome.
Ian Fleming is best known for his James Bond series of spy novels. Fleming’s childhood was spent travelling to his Scottish grandfather’s mini-estate in Arnside in the Highlands.

Educated at Eton, Sandhurst and, briefly, the Universities of Munich and Geneva, Fleming moved through several jobs before he started writing. Many believe that the character of Bond was based on Sir Fitzroy Maclean, a Scottish soldier, writer and politician who Fleming met during the war. Outgoing and charismatic, MacLean embodied many of James Bond’s masterful traits. The friendship between Fleming and MacLean is often cited as the impetus for Fleming to write his first Bond novel, Casino Royale, in 1952. The spy thriller was a huge success, followed by eleven sequels.

The Scottish link to James Bond was cemented in 1962 when Scotsman Sir Sean Connery appeared on screen as 007 in Dr. No. The charismatic lady’s man became an instant icon. Connery’s Scottish heritage appealed to modern audiences, as did his fast cars, hi-tech gadgets and beautiful women. Battling evil villains has always been central to the Bond legacy, but not all of 007’s rivals featured a male nemesis. There were plenty of seductive sirens that turned the tables on the unsuspecting secret agent. Whether they were kung fu fighting or dodging bullets, these girls knew how to fight back! Deadly and venomous, the bad girls in the Bond films had one particular weapon in their bag of tricks that rendered Bond and most men helpless — they were knockouts! Lucky man, that 007, surrounded by smart and lovely ladies to either trip him up or bail him out!

Over the past six decades, several actors have portrayed James Bond, but the Scottish roots of both Fleming and Connery influenced the depiction of the super spy from the very beginning. While typically portrayed on screen as an English gentleman, Sean Connery’s Bond embodied the characteristics of the ideal Scotsman. Confidence personified, with a vodka martini in hand — shaken not stirred — Sir Sean Connery was a resourceful hero with the athleticism and brilliance associated with the legacy of the proud descendants of Scottish heritage. 🇬🇧

Christopher Varaste is a friend of the Society, a published Author and Screenwriter and has written for Vanity Fair, the Washington Post and the New York Times.
The St. Andrew’s Society of Los Angeles wishes to thank all our supporters and sponsors who have contributed and continue to contribute to the goals of the Society.

MISSION

The purpose of the Society is to promote Scottish history, traditions, and culture by developing educational and charitable undertakings that nurture relations between the Society, the people of Los Angeles and the greater community.