A message from Ian J, Skone-Rees, FSA Scot, President.

Another year has slipped by and now that 2019 is a distant memory we look forward to a New Year full of new opportunities and no doubt some challenges.

The publication of this issue of The Thistle has been delayed more than once and for those of you who look forward to each issue arriving in your in-basket I apologise. The full calendar of events the Society has embarked on is no doubt partly to blame — there are only so many hours in the day to get everything properly accomplished. However 2019 has seen several new volunteers stepping up to the plate to help plan and execute our various activities, including contributions to this newsletter. I very much hope this trend will continue into this year; I know those of you who contribute your time find it fun interacting with your fellow members and satisfaction in the knowledge you have helped the Society grow and prosper.

As I write this your Board and other volunteers are in the process of finalizing details for our signature event of the year, Robert Burns’ Supper. As you read this you will be looking back on fond memories of a stellar event that included several new features to augment our traditional celebration of the Bard. The chief of these was of course the debut of the St. Andrew’s mini pipe band recruited and organised by member Richard Strayer and Society piper Cindi McIntosh — could this be the embryo of a full St. Andrew’s pipe band? Time will tell. In the meantime our sincere thanks to Richard and Cindi for taking on the task of organising this new Burns tradition. Photos of the event are on page five of this newsletter.

While your Board is occupied with creating an annual calendar of events we are conscious that we all have lives beyond the St. Andrew’s Society and that is the principle reason in 2019 we published a calendar so that we could all plan ahead and thereby eliminate as many conflicts as possible. The calendar was also designed to provide something for everybody with our Meet-Ups offering a low or no-cost way to gather with fellow members to celebrate our Scottish heritage in addition to our signature events.

During the course of the last few years we have been fortunate to develop relationships with other clubs and organizations that share similar objectives as our own. Many of these are alumni associations of Scottish and other UK universities. In the most part they represent american students who have spent part of their university career as visiting students to these institutions; some are émigrés who have made southern California their home. Members of these groups have attended our events and in many cases have become members of our St. Andrew’s Society.

Those of you who have attended recent key events of the Society will recognize we make special recognition of them as welcome members of our organization. My personal thanks to the organizing secretaries of these groups who have informed their memberships of our events and who have been so supportive of our Society.
With the establishment of the new Society official tartan and the development of our online shop with new items the coordination of order fulfillment and shipping has increased in complexity. To take care of this a Quartermaster position has been established. Scott Graham, who many of you know, has volunteered to take on this new role. Scott has a wide range of experience with sourcing items and coordinating fulfillment of orders both for his clan and the Seaside Highland Games. All items may be ordered online, but if you have any questions about your order please contact Scott Graham at h-ofan@sbcglobal.net.

Several new items have been added to the range of merchandise available in the Society tartan. All of which can be ordered and paid for online at the new Society Shop page on the website. http://saintandrews-la.org/merchandise/

In addition to the lapel pin and blazer badge there is a lady’s sash, gentleman’s tie, and a rosette, all in pure new lightweight wool woven and manufactured in Scotland by our exclusive supplier, House of Tartan. You may also place your order for a full 8yd. kilt in 16oz pure new wool that will be delivered complete with hose flashes. All items may be paid for online with your credit card or PayPal.

There are other items in the pipeline, including a polo shirt with embroidered Society crest and a lady’s ‘V’ neck Tee.

Visit this page on the website often to keep up-to-date with new offerings.

Order your kilt soon and it will be delivered in time for you to wear at Seaside Highland Games 2019.

The website should be the first resource to go to for any information regarding the Society.

Not only does it list upcoming events and all relevant details including location, time, and description. It also displays in the Gallery section photographs and video of past events. For example if you attended the Robert Burns Supper this year all 246 photos are there to see so you can relive what was one of the best attended Burns Suppers the Society has held. If you were not so fortunate to attend you can now vicariously take part in the evening.

There is also a comprehensive listing of Highland Games and Festivals, both in America and Scotland. Visit the merchandise page and pick up a lapel pin or embroidered blazer crest, featuring the Society shield. Pay for these online with your credit card or PayPal. Talking of payment you can also renew your membership online using the same credit card.

Information about how to apply for a Society Grant is also listed, including all the forms an applicant will need to complete.

There’s more … please visit.

Available at: http://saintandrewsla.org/merchandise/
John Lowry, from my point of view, emanates all that is Scottish by his mere presence. And it is rare that he and his wife Nellie are absent from events and opportunities to celebrate the ‘old country’. They have not always been satisfied just by participation, but have usually found their way into visionary leadership. Seeing John at the most recent Seaside Highland Games in Ventura encouraged me to find out more! 

RGM — John, you have been a long standing member of the Scottish community here in Southern California. Tell me a little of your Scottish family history?

JEL — The Lowry Family were among the earliest settlers in the New World giving us little to go on as to our Scottish roots. As to a Clan connection, my allegiance has been principally to the House of Gordon from up in Aberdeenshire, headed by our Chief Granville Gordon, heir to the moniker “Cock o’ the North.” He and his family have become good friends. In fact, he attended the Seaside Highland Games as Special Guest a few years back.

RGM — Scottish history, especially in 18th and 19th Centuries, has been pretty rocky. This has encouraged or forced many individuals and families to migrate. How did you and/or your family end up in the US? In Southern California?

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RGM — Are you involved in other Scottish or Celtic activities or interests other than those already mentioned? SASLA hopes to establish a network of communication and shared activities with other Celts in Southern California.

JEL — I particularly value my years of membership in SASLA, having served as President for four years - going back to the virtual “dynasty” when attorney J. Howard Standing held sway as President. Serving as J’s Vice-President for many of those years was both enlightening and exciting. He designed what is today the official State of California Tartan! Together, from high up in the “peanut gallery”, we rode it through the State Legislature to passage! Nellie and I have also served in various capacities in our Knights Templar Order (now with Emeritus status). Nellie has served as Graham Clan Genealogist for thirty years and as Gordon Treasurer for many of the same. My second and very important Scottish Clan is the MacLarens down from the ‘Braes of Balquhidder.’ Good friend Dr. Houston Lowry (no known family connection) was searching for an “honest soul” to serve as MacLaren Treasurer (after they had been looted!) and I was chosen. I served as their Treasurer for eight years. Chief Donald MacLaren of MacLaren is Chief and has also attended Seaside. That service cemented my relationship as a MacLaren. In addition, Nellie and I have been charter or original members of a number of festivals across the state.
RGM — The Scots are known for their allegiance to the mother country. The St Andrews Society provides opportunities to celebrate this through its activities and events. With your many years of commitment and service to the Scottish diaspora, do you have any suggestions on how to enhance the appeal and impact of our Society, especially to the second and third generation of Scots today?

JEL — It seems to me that SASLA is doing a superb job in its outreach to the community and to sister Celtic organizations. We, as founder/operators of the Seaside Highland Games, are honored to have a close working relationship, a co-sponsorship with SASLA, in assuring that the Games go forward to teach and encourage generations to come. In this current ‘non-joining’ era that we live in, garnering the interest of young folks to become actively involved in something so esoteric as a group that focuses on preserving and maybe reenacting ancient history is, well, a tough call. But happily, the Seaside Games and SASLA have done exactly that, now being governed by a bright, young Board of Directors who have chosen not to be outsiders to their Celtic roots. They realize that this could all perish if there is but a short interruption in their efforts. We clearly don’t want that to happen! Scottish roots, by tradition are strong! SASLA needs to continue to awaken that spirit by encouraging a newer generation of members. It’s only then that the traditional Celtic excitement to ‘celebrate culture’ will live on, not just by hearsay, but through mentoring by the present day “tried and true warriors”! Then the ‘Claymore of Tradition’ will be passed into trusting hands!!

RGM — Thank you John! And thank you for acknowledging Nellie’s valuable contribution to fanning the spirit of the ‘old country’ through active participation and commitment! I cannot imagine where we would or perhaps wouldn’t be without having you both as part of SASLA and its mission to honor our Celtic roots through collegiality and occasion!  

**BURNS 2020 WHISKY TASTING**

*The Balvenie Distillery Co.*
Burns 2020
St. Andrew's Societies can be found across the globe, all of them happy promoters of Scottish traditions and culture.

Some are open only to those who can prove Scottish descent. At least one, in Washington D.C., accepts only men as members per their bylaws, but many are open to all those who are Scots or feel an affinity toward Scotland and Scottish culture. However, the formation of such societies has a history that reaches beyond the objective of furthering Scots tradition.

The earliest St. Andrew’s Society on record is the St. Andrew’s Society of Charleston in South Carolina, founded in 1729 by a group of immigrant Scotsmen who had gathered to celebrate St. Andrew’s Day in a settlement on the fringes of the British Colonial frontier. These founding members not only sought society amongst those who shared their homeland and traditions but sought to provide charity to all they could. Membership was open to all, and “any Man of Honour and Integrity, of what Nation, Degree or Profession soever” might be admitted, but it seems to have been primarily regarded as a Scottish society.

The society met four times a year on the last days of February, May, August, and on St. Andrew’s Day. There were fines for member non-attendance at five shillings sterling, with the amount doubled to ten shillings if the member missed the St.
Andrew’s Day meeting. Aside from member donations and dues, this was one of the sources of funding the society used to administer their charitable works. By November of 1730, the society coffers held £700 and had dispersed £460 in charity. These disbursements were often to assist widows, orphan children, new immigrants, or those who had fallen on hard times, and they were not limited to society members or even Scots. As the frontier expanded the Scots expanded with it, carrying with them the ideas and traditions they had formed. It is likely that the seeds for later societies were planted by those who migrated from Charleston and other frontier areas who had heard of the Charleston society and decided to found their own, leading to the current prevalence across the world. The aims and goals are still the same today as they were when those original Scots sat down and drew up a charter: charity and society, a mantle proudly taken up by generations of Scots since.

Our own society was established in 1930 and in addition to carrying out its mission of promoting Scottish history, traditions, and culture by developing educational and charitable undertakings we also give grants to individuals and worthy charitable organizations both in our own community and in Scotland. Chief among our beneficiaries include Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, the National Libraries and Galleries of Scotland, and Enable Scotland, as well as individuals who are pursuing Scottish cultural activities.

Application procedures for grants may be found on the Society website.

Source: “Rules of the St. Andrew’s Society, Charleston, South Carolina, 1729 – 1829”
The Declaration of Arbroath

"As long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself”.

These are the best known words in the Declaration of Arbroath, foremost among Scotland’s state papers and the most famous historical record held by National Records of Scotland. The Declaration is a letter written in 1320 by the barons and whole community of the kingdom of Scotland to the pope, asking him to recognise Scotland’s independence and acknowledge Robert the Bruce as the country’s lawful king.

The Declaration was written in Latin and was sealed by eight earls and about forty barons. Over the centuries various copies and translations have been made, including a microscopic edition.

Scottish Independence

The Declaration was written during the long war of independence with England which started with Edward I’s attempt to conquer Scotland in 1296. When the deaths of Alexander III and his granddaughter Margaret, Maid of Norway, left Scotland without a monarch, Edward used the invitation to help choose a successor as an excuse to revive English claims of overlordship. When the Scots resisted, he invaded.

Edward refused to allow William Wallace’s victory at Stirling Bridge in 1297 to derail his campaign. In 1306 Robert the Bruce seized the throne and began a long struggle to secure his position against internal and external threat. His success at Bannockburn in 1314, when he defeated an English army under Edward II, was a major achievement, but the English still did not recognise Scotland’s independence or Bruce’s position as king.

On the European front, by 1320 Scottish relations with the papacy were in crisis after the Scots defied papal efforts to establish a truce with England. When the pope excommunicated Robert I and three of his barons, the Scots sent the Declaration of Arbroath as part of a diplomatic counter-offensive. The pope wrote to Edward II urging him to make peace, but it was not until 1328 that Scotland’s independence was acknowledged.

The Declaration was probably drawn up by Bernard, Abbot of Arbroath. It was authenticated by seals, as documents at that time were not signed. Only 19 seals now remain of what might have been 50 originally, and many are in poor condition.

Versions, copies and facsimiles

The document in National Records of Scotland is the “file copy” of the Declaration: the only version to survive in its original form. It was kept with the rest of the national records in Edinburgh Castle until the seventeenth century. When work was being done on the castle, the Declaration was taken for safekeeping to Tyninghame, the home of the official in charge of the records. While there it suffered damage through damp and it returned to the custody of the Deputy Clerk Register (the predecessor of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland) in 1829. Conservation staff at the NRS monitor the Declaration to ensure it survives for many centuries to come.

Although the Declaration was damaged during its absence from Edinburgh Castle, the full text was known from an engraving made in the early eighteenth century, which was re-engraved around 1815 by William Home Lizars and Daniel Lizars.

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Meet-Up

St. Andrew’s Society Meet-Ups are informal gatherings of members and friends and an opportunity for others interested in Scottish culture to mingle with those of like mind. These are fun events with no need to buy a ticket, just come along and enjoy the camaraderie.

Meet-Up At The Tam
8th December, 2019

Another grand gathering at the iconic Tam O’Shanter in Atwater Village. Fun times with old friends and new, some of whom went home as great trivia winners with super gifts donated by Gary Carr, Kimberlee Bradford, and Cindi McIntosh.
2020 marks the 700th anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath, one of Scotland’s most important historical artifacts. To celebrate, the famous document will go on public display for the first time in 15 years at the National Museum of Scotland.

The Declaration is a letter dated 6 April 1320 written by the barons and freeholders of the Kingdom of Scotland to Pope John XXII. The letter asked the pope to recognise Scotland’s independence and acknowledge Robert the Bruce as the country’s lawful king.

Despite the Scots’ success at Bannockburn, Robert I had not been recognised as king by either King Edward II of England or the Pope. At the time, the Pope desired peace between England and Scotland so that both kingdoms could help in a crusade to the Holy Land. The Declaration sought to influence him by offering the possibility of support from the Scots for his long-desired crusade if they no longer had to fear English invasion.

Written in Latin, it was sealed by eight earls and about 40 barons. It was authenticated by seals, as documents at that time were not signed. Only 19 seals now remain.

The surviving Declaration is a medieval copy of the letter, the original having been dispatched to the pope in Avignon. It is cared for by National Records of Scotland and is so fragile that it can only be displayed occasionally in order to ensure its long-term preservation. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to see it.
Kilt Measurement Guide

Please complete and mail to:

Scott Graham
SASLA Quartermaster
3441 Military Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90034
310-839-5066 • h-ofan@sbcglobal.net

Name:
Address:
Tel:
Email:

Date: _______________________

1. Height
   Weight (lbs)

2. Waist

3. Seat

4. Length

Tartan

Pleating
   Pleat to Sett
   Pleat to Stripe

Signature: _______________________

St. Andrew's Society
Los Angeles
6 Nations Rugby

Contributed by Steve Adams

Scotland’s Men’s National Team started play in the 6 Nations tournament on the first of February in Dublin against Ireland, with an eye on improving their performance after a disappointing Rugby World Cup in Japan, where the Scots did not make it out of group play after being defeated by their Japanese hosts 28-21 — many rugby fans felt it was the most exciting game of the tournament.

The Scots started the annual tournament that includes England, Ireland, Wales, France and Italy with a new Captain in fullback Stuart Hogg (72 International appearances) and six players looking to make their international debuts with Scotland.

Head coach and former Scottish international Gregor Townsend picked 38 potential players for his 2020 squad.

This year’s Six Nations started a mere 3 months after the Rugby World Cup Final won by South Africa, after they stunned favored England in the Final. England and Semi-finalist Wales appear to be the favorites for this year, with very young and vastly improved France (Losing Quarterfinalist to Wales) considered in the mix as well. Ireland, Italy and Scotland look to battle it out and play the roles of spoilers in this year’s competition.

Scotland are the holders of the Calcutta Cup, given to the winner of the Scotland-England match. The oldest rivalry in international rugby will resume at Murrayfield—the temple of Scottish rugby—on 2/8.

This article was written prior to the meeting of Ireland and Scotland at the Aviva stadium, Dublin. Scotland proved a strong opposition to Ireland but owing to a series of missed opportunities narrowly lost to the Irish 19–12. Ed.

All 6 Nations games are broadcast on NBC Sports

Supporting the Portable Scottish Arts

The term Portable Arts confuses a lot of people. All it really means is — well just that — Scottish artistic and cultural pursuits and skills that move around — bagpiping, kilt making, highland dancing … well you get the picture.

The St. Andrew’s Society of Los Angeles Mission Statement clearly outlines our commitment to foster and support these activities and to this end we offer grants to individuals who successfully complete an application. The following are those who have received funds over the past the year.

CORPORATE DONATIONS
Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles
National Libraries and Galleries of Scotland
Pasadena Scottish Pipes & Drums
Seaside Highland Games

INDIVIDUAL GRANTS
Emma Schiff Highland Dance
Megan Ashworth Highland Dance Judges Exam Prep.
Sage Tousey Highland Dance
Lucas Leilani 2018 World Piping Championships
Gilchrist Macquarrie Gallic Language Development
Beret Dembach Highland Dance
Erin Blair Highland Dance
Maty Ennis Highland Dance
Elizabeth Anderson Highland Dance
Mary Cassidy Farrar Highland Dance
Tess Foley Highland Dance
Penryn Buck Highland Dance
Nancy Saylers Highland Games Volunteer

This article was written prior to the meeting of Ireland and Scotland at the Aviva stadium, Dublin. Scotland proved a strong opposition to Ireland but owing to a series of missed opportunities narrowly lost to the Irish 19–12. Ed.

All 6 Nations games are broadcast on NBC Sports
Thirsty?

It has been overheard at our events that the St. Andrew’s Society is a drinking club with a Scottish problem! Not true! We have no problems with these wonderful supporters who keep us from dehydration.

Alexander Murray have provided whisky to the Society for several years. Their generosity is without parallel and we thank them for this wonderful partnership.

Alistair Boase of MacLeod Ale & Brewery in Van Nuys has provided wonderful brews for Society events and welcomed us for ‘Meet-Ups’ at the brewery. Please visit and thank Alistair for his wonderful generosity.

Welcome to two new Society sponsors.

Traditional Scottish Breweries – Belhaven and Tennent’s
Welcome New Members
The Newest Members Of The Society

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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.