Gatherings and events for our membership and friends of the Society just keep on coming. In fact it is the goal of our organizing committees to hold an event each month. So please log in to our website and click on the event tab to make sure you do not miss any of these exciting gatherings.

Of course none of these events happen of their own accord; they are the result of hard work, planning, and organization by dedicated volunteers who are passionate about the growth of our Society. We are indebted to you all, including those of you not involved in planning but who buy tickets and bring friends to make our events fun and so successful. Talking about successful our Robert Burns Supper January 26th was the best attended in the history of the Society with over 200 guests enjoying the traditional celebration. We were honoured to welcome back Deputy Scottish Counsellor for USA Rory Hedderly as our guest speaker. In addition twenty-two members of Edinburgh University Alumni Association joined us, as well as alumni from Oxford University. 17th Squadron based at Edwards AFB was represented by Wing Commander Jonathan Smith, Capt. Kingslee Gourrick, and Warrant Officer Brad Abbleby and his wife Donna; our thanks to all of them and all of you for making this Burns Supper one for the records book.

Hard on the heels of our Burns Supper came our second gathering at MacLeod’s Ale & Brewery Sunday 10th February where our members were joined by sixteen members of the Outlander Group and members of Los Angeles British Meet-Up Group. Organized by Board member Cindi McIntosh we were regaled with limericks in the traditional fashion which became increasingly more ribald as the afternoon progressed; this was followed by a darts tournament organized by MacLeod’s owner Alistair Boase. Yours truly was carried along by the skill of my partner Peanut Adams and we crossed the finish line unpredictable winners.

The calendar for 2019 is filling up with more of these informal gatherings and I hope your whistle will be wetted with the prospect of:

- Miniature golf tourney
- Curling (for Dummies)
- Tour and seminar at USC
- KiltKrawl

The full calendar may be found on the Society website under the Events tab.

Also well into the planning stage is our next key event to be held at the British Consul General’s Residence in Hancock Park 16th June. Please mark this in your diary. This stunning property has been owned by the British Government for many decades and its beauty and grandeur will make it an event you will not want to miss.

By the time this lands in your in-box eligible members will be preparing to attend the Society’s annual general meeting (AGM). This is an important meeting for all members of the Society who are interested in the status of the Society, including its financial condition, review of the past year, and our charitable giving activities and outreach. Eligible members will be asked to vote on nominees for the Board of Trustees who will serve for three years. If you have not paid your membership dues for 2019 and you wish to participate in this process it’s not too late; simply click here and make your payment with a credit card or PayPal. Friends of the Society who are not paid-up members are welcome to attend but will not be eligible to vote.

Your Society needs you!

Contact Ian Skone-Rees via email at: rees1@mac.com or iskonerees@saintandrewsla.org
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://saintandrewspla.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.

If you order a kilt soon it will be delivered in time for you to wear at our next formal event at the British Consul General’s Residence 16th June, 2019.
George Mitchell

A conversation with Richard G. MacKenzie, MD

The Thistle provides an opportunity to introduce a member to the Society as a whole. Members are chosen at random for interview. With each interview, I am surprised by the richness of each individual’s life experience, an experience that reflects the true quality of the Scots! As Sir Walter Scott once remarked – “Every Scottish man has a pedigree! It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and poverty!”

George Mitchell is the kind of individual that any society would want to have at least a dozen of! It is said that the expat Scots are among the most devoted to their homeland and culture, promoting it through celebration, music and song, kilts, legends and myths — pride in their heritage. And George confirms that through his commitment, leadership and active participation in the St. Andrews Society LA (SASLA). I caught up with him, following one of the quarterly Board of Trustee meetings to find out more!

RM — George - Tell me a little of your family’s Scottish history and Clan roots.

GM — Unfortunately and surprisingly, I don’t know a lot about that, despite the fact that one of my Great Aunts was deeply involved in our family’s history/genealogy. She actually was the one who traced a branch of the family back to Scotland. Mitchell, of course, is a Sept — a division or family within a Clan. I don’t know if she traced us to a specific Clan. Sadly, her research has been lost. It is said that the Mitchell family originally lived below the Border, moving north to Scotland and taking the name with them. Interestingly, when I first joined the Saint Andrew’s Society in the 1970’s, it was a requirement to prove one’s Scottish heritage. I wonder if my application and supporting documentation is still buried in the archives somewhere!

RM — How did you, or your family before you, end up in the US?

GM — Again, the extensive research my Great Aunt completed has been lost. However, I do remember her telling me that some of my English ancestors came over on the Mayflower and that I was a descendant of William Brewster, an avid Puritan and the Spiritual Leader of the Plymouth Plantation.

Interestingly, I also remember my father telling me that one of his cousins, concerned over the growing war in Europe prior to the United States entering the conflict, traveled to Canada and joined the Black Watch. He served overseas until he was wounded and invalided out.

RM — What has been your personal history and path here in the US?

GM — My work history looks pretty straightforward on paper, but quite engaging and stimulating, in reality. I spent 40 years in Law Enforcement, serving with Municipal, County and Federal agencies. I started with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and served for several years before transferring to the Anaheim Police Department, where I was fortunate to serve as both a Field Training Officer and SWAT member.

I then transitioned to the United States Secret Service, where I was commissioned as a Special Agent. The next 25 years took me to every State in the US and all but one continent (Antarctica) in the world. The Secret Service has a dual mission — investigations and protection. I was fortunate to experience the full range of both criminal investigations (including working undercover) and protection. I traveled the world with US Protectees and provided coverage for a full range of Foreign Dignitaries (Presidents, Prime Ministers, Kings and Queens — not to mention a few rather dodgy Dictators) while they visited the United States.

One of my best memories involves serving as the Lead Advance Agent for President Reagan’s visit to the United Kingdom, shortly after he left office. He gave the Churchill Speech at the London Guildhall. He was feted at a formal dinner by the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street and treated to a private reception by HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales at Kensington Palace (where I also met the very young Princes William and Harry).

The crowning moment (no pun intended) was a visit to Buckingham Palace where President Reagan was invested as a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath. Not only was I fortunate to be allowed on a private portion of Palace grounds to prepare for the motorcade arrival, but I was greeted by HM the Queen and HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales at Kensington Palace (where I also met the very young Princes William and Harry).

The Secret Service and the United States Secret Service have several important functions. One of these is to provide protection for the President, Vice President, and other high-ranking government officials. Another important role is to investigate and prevent acts of terrorism and other criminal activities. The Secret Service also has a responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the nation’s financial systems.

RM — What has been your personal history and path here in the US?

GM — My work history looks pretty straightforward on paper, but quite engaging and stimulating, in reality. I spent 40 years in Law Enforcement, serving with Municipal, County and Federal agencies. I started with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and served for several years before transferring to the Anaheim Police Department, where I was fortunate to serve as both a Field Training Officer and SWAT member.

I then transitioned to the United States Secret Service, where I was commissioned as a Special Agent. The next 25 years took me to every State in the US and all but one continent (Antarctica) in the world. The Secret Service has a dual mission — investigations and protection. I was fortunate to experience the full range of both criminal investigations (including working undercover) and protection. I traveled the world with US Protectees and provided coverage for a full range of Foreign Dignitaries (Presidents, Prime Ministers, Kings and Queens — not to mention a few rather dodgy Dictators) while they visited the United States.

One of my best memories involves serving as the Lead Advance Agent for President Reagan’s visit to the United Kingdom, shortly after he left office. He gave the Churchill Speech at the London Guildhall. He was feted at a formal dinner by the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street and treated to a private reception by HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales at Kensington Palace (where I also met the very young Princes William and Harry).

The crowning moment (no pun intended) was a visit to Buckingham Palace where President Reagan was invested as a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath. Not only was I fortunate to be allowed on a private portion of Palace grounds to prepare for the motorcade arrival, but I was greeted by HM the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh! I had a brief, but thoroughly enjoyable conversation with them until the President’s arrival. The Duke was particularly interested in the various firearms we employed and asked if he could see my sidearm. Discretion being the better part of valor, I suggested it might not be the most appropriate time! From her expression, I believe the Queen was in full agreement.

Please see George Mitchell, page 4
As the dignitaries entered the Palace for the Investiture, a Footman took me aside and advised the Queen had arranged for refreshments to be served to the Agents in a nearby reception room! An unexpected, but thoroughly appreciated act of kindness/graciousness.

Departing the Palace, we returned to Malcolm Forbes’ Estate in Battersea where Elizabeth Taylor and Mr. Forbes, who was extremely proud of his Scottish heritage, hosted the Reagans at a banquet to celebrate his investiture. Not your average day at work!

Upon retiring from the Secret Service, I finished out my career in Law Enforcement with 5 years as a Chief of Police in Santa Barbara County. I am now happily, fully retired!

RM — Have you been involved in Scottish activities/interests here other than for the St Andrews Society LA?

GM — Absolutely! In addition to serving as a Vice President for SASLA, I am also a Vice President for the Seaside Highland Games. As part of my duties with the Seaside Games, I was appointed the Director of Piping and Drumming and was responsible for oversight of the Pipe Band competitions.

I am also a member of the Scottish Knights Templar and served for a number of years as the Charity Coordinator.

Years back, I was the Lead Drummer in the Gordon Greys Pipe Band (a forerunner of the Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band) and I’m currently taking lessons on the Great Highland Bagpipes.

I’ve been fortunate to have made a handful of trips to Scotland and have thoroughly enjoyed exploring both the well and less-traveled parts. I hope to return soon.

Do you have any suggestions as to how to enhance the activities of St. Andrews Society?

Having been on the Board as both a Trustee and as Vice President, I’ve watched the Society grow in many ways.

We’ve expanded our international image by establishing relationships with our sister Saint Andrew’s Society in Montreal and with the Scottish Government, while continuing our close relationship with HM Consul General in Los Angeles.

Looking to attract younger members, who ultimately are the future of the organization, we’ve explored increasing our social media outreach and designing events like our recent “Meet Ups”. At the same time, we hold dear the traditions and events which have long been a part of the Society such as our Burn’s Night. We are also looking to include “family friendly” events. This will ensure the children of members are exposed to the Society and Scottish culture in fun and appropriate ways and will enable our members with children to bring them to events that are affordable and child friendly.

Our charitable giving still strongly supports the history, arts (music and dance), language, and culture (including athletics) of Scotland. Most recently the Society committed to a recurring sponsor role for the annual Seaside Highland Games. Additionally, our long-term pledge to Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles speaks volumes of our commitment to giving and our generosity of spirit.

I think we are on the right track. We are exploring activities and events that are new and exciting while retaining traditional events that are member favorites. I think the Society has a very bright future in the coming years.

RM — Thank you George! Much of what has been accomplished by the Society has been through your enthusiasm and commitment! Our pride both in our heritage and present day organization is reflected in the splendor of the recently created and registered, official St Andrews Society LA Tartan. And much of that came about through your design and efforts.

Thank you again!

As noted above George Mitchell was instrumental in the design and registering of the Society’s official tartan, but he didn’t stop there and those of you who have attended our most recent events or who have visited the merchandise page on our website will have seen another new addition. The official SASLA cap badge. This stunning accessory may be worn as a traditional cap badge or as a fly plaid brooch or in fact any way you wish to display your membership in the Society or proclaim your Scottish heritage.
17th Squadron Celebrates Robert Burns

L_R: Ian Skone-Rees; Eileen Skone-Rees; Wing Commander Jonathan Smith; David Warburton, OBE, MD; Leslie Warburton
Sports Report
By Steve Adams

Scottish Tennis Great Andy Murray to Retire 2019.

Prior to the start of this year’s Australian Open, a very emotional Andy Murray announced that 2019 will likely be his last year of competitive Tennis, citing a chronic hip problem as the underlying reason.

The plucky Glaswegian, who has won 3 Grand Slam Singles titles (1-US Open and 2 Wimbledon), a two-time Olympic Gold Medalist (with a Silver Medal in the 2012 Mixed Doubles), 45 career singles titles and lead Great Britain to the 2015 Davis Cup Title.

More than a sportsman, Mr. Murray has used his celebrity to advocate for Malaria No More UK, Rally Against Cancer and has been a very outspoken advocate for equal pay for women’s professional tennis players and for more equitable treatment for women at the Grand Slam events.

In 1910, the tournament became known as the Five Nations when France joined the competition. It would stay as the Five Nations until 1999, after Wales upset of previously unbeaten England handed the last Five Nations trophy to Scotland.

The tournament became The Six Nations Championship when Italy joined in 2000.

Six Nations rugby is an assault of the senses: The sound of impassioned voices of thousands of fans singing their national anthems, the sight of the respective fans resplendent in costumes and colors of their countries, and the sound of bone hitting flesh in a very physical sport that pits size, speed and guile.

Ireland are the defending champs-winning the Grand Slam (Winning all 5 matches) in 2018. They are the favorites coming into 2019, after having defeated the New Zealand All Blacks-the Defending Rugby World Cup Champions during the November internationals. Wales and England both had very good Results in November as well, and have the players and coaching to challenge Ireland. Scotland defeated England last year, and had wins against Argentina and Fiji to go with a narrow loss to South Africa in November. France Looks to improve on a 5th place finish last year, and Italy is hoping to avoid The Wooden Spoon-the name given to the team who finishes at the bottom of the 6 team table.

With The Rugby World Cup being played in Japan in September and October of this year, this year’s Six Nations is a mouth-watering hors d’oeuvres for fans of the oval ball to see who will succeed in Japan and possibly knock off the mighty New Zealand All Blacks.

Six Nations Rugby Begins
2/1/2019
Scotland overcomes Italy – 33-20

International rugby began in 1871, when England and Scotland played a match, with Scotland coming out on top. (Every year, Scotland and England play for The Calcutta Cup)

In 1893, Ireland and Wales joined Scotland and England to form the inaugural Home International Championship, won by England. (Those 4 teams are referred to as The Home Nations)
St. Andrew’s Charitable Giving Reflected in The Guardian Newspaper Report on Mongolian Pollution

SASLA has made a $50,000 pledge to support research at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Recently some of the work that we are supporting was cited in The Guardian newspaper in an article prominently citing our research findings and ideas.

Dr. David Warburton, in this case ably assisted by his daughter Nicole Warburton, have been leading global pollution impact studies across the lifespan in Mongolia for over 15 years. Among other important discoveries, they have found that Mongolia has the worst seasonal winter time air pollution in the world. This is caused by the need for domestic heating in the capital city of Ulaan Baatar, where over 60 percent of the 1.5 million population still live in the native felt tents called Gers or poorly insulated and leaky wooden houses. Ulaan Baatar is the coldest capital city on earth, since the temperature is extremely cold over the winter, frequently reaching -40 degrees (where F and C converge). Hence, each of the over 250,000 Ger district families is forced to burn around 3 tons of coal each over he 3 coldest months, so that they don’t freeze to death. This produces indoor and outdoor atmospheric pollution conditions similar to those we used to see in Edinburgh (Auld Reekie) and London (The Smoke) during the 1950 and 60s, that some of us remember unfondly. The impacts on public health that we have measured and reported with our Mongolian colleagues include the obvious, ie asthma and chest infections in children as well as adults, plus the somewhat less obvious, ie heart attacks in the over 60s. Damian Carrington in his article in the Guardian concentrated on the markedly adverse effect of air pollution on fetal wellbeing, pointing out that it is at least as bad as smoking and is associated strongly with early miscarriage or fetal loss. He cited our paper on early fetal loss during the winter in Mongolia, which is extraordinarily highly correlated with many different components of air pollution including particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter and sulphur dioxide. He pointed out that subsequently similar results have been found in Italy and Iran so that these findings can be now generalized across the globe. Our newest preliminary unpublished work now suggests that there is also a powerful negative effect on overall fertility, as well as on fetal growth. We are presently resubmitting a major grant on fetal brain growth during the pollution season in Ulaan Baatar. We received a congratulatory note from Dr. Roger Glass, the Director of the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health who wrote “Most interesting and significant results which I hope will be confirmed and lead to some policy changes in Mongolia and beyond. Your trainees were outstanding.” We wish to thank the St Andrews Society of Los Angeles for their generous support and pledge to provide occasional reports in The Thistle as our research efforts on this and other interesting and important topics unfold. We also would like to acknowledge the leverage of your personal tax dollars at work as the Society’s support has allowed us to compete successfully for key peer reviewed national level funding from the Fogarty International Center as well as the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Please visit this link to see the Guardian article and click on Mongolia within that article to bring up our original paper.
Meet-Up At MacLeod’s Sunday 15th February, 2019

The Outlander Group were well represented.

Darts professional Peanut Adams

Diana MacFarlane and Jen (Québecois)
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
   (Measure tightly, not too tight)

3. Seat
   (Measure normally, not tight)

4. Length
   (Length: point above to hip bone to the middle of the knee cap)

Tartan: St. Andrew’s Society
Los Angeles

Pleating:
- Pleat to Sett
- Pleat to Stripe

Signature: ____________________________
St. Andrew’s Society: Bringing Scottish Tradition to Southern California

By Kimberly Stevens – KCET – September 21, 2016

Over the years, the group became less rigid and admitted members with some Scottish ancestry. Eventually, it changed again by opening the group to anyone interested in Scottish culture and history. And although the organization is named after the Patron Saint of Scotland, it is not a religious organization, and it is not connected with any clan.

According to U.S. census data, there are an estimated 5,000,000 people residing in the state of California with some Scottish ancestry.

Donnie Jack, the Scottish Affairs Counsellor for the Americas/British Embassy based in Washington D.C., maintains there is a groundswell of Scottish pride in Southern California. “The enthusiasm people here have for Scotland and all things Scottish is an amazing thing to see,” he said. “It is key in the preservation of the culture, and often I see more excitement here than I do back in Scotland.”

In January, Robert Burns, the Scottish poet of legend is celebrated all over Southern California at numerous dinners and parties. There is even a California state tartan, the quintessential Scottish fabric with criss-crossed and vertical bands. It was officially introduced in 1998 and inspired by the Muir Family Tartan. J. Howard Standing, the former president of the Saint Andrew’s Society was behind the initiative. According to the societies website, the tartan’s blue reflects the sky, the Pacific ocean and the rivers, while the green reflects the sierras, fields, forests, mountains and parks. The red, gold and blue signify the arts, sciences, and industry of the people of the State of California. The tartan is registered by The World Registry of Tartans, The Scottish Tartans Authority, The Scottish Tartans Society and entered in the The Registry of All Known Tartans. It was enacted by the California Assembly unanimously, and signed by Governor Gray Davis in 2001.

There are three prominent Highland Games that take place close to Los Angeles: The Queen Mary Scotsfest in Long Beach which occurs in February, The Seaside Highland Games in Ventura which takes place in October and Scotsfest in Costa Mesa which is held over Memorial Day weekend.

Please see Scottish Tradition, page 12
But whether it’s in your blood or not, the thirst for knowledge about all things Scottish even trickles down to liquor. Scottish whisky (In Scotland whisky is spelled without the "e") and the interest in the history along with the collecting and making of Scottish spirits is on the rise nationally, and has been incredibly popular in Southern California as well, with tastings and lectures happening around the city regularly.

And art forms like Highland dance has become competitive internationally. “Highland dancing attracts everyone, not just people with Scottish descent,” said Sharon Farrar, owner of the Highland Dance School. Farrar, who still teaches and also judges across the country, has fostered many world champions over the years. “I think people love the music first and then they see the dance and they want to be part of it,” she added, noting that most of the young dancers today represent a wide variety of ethnicities and cultures. “This dance form is highly athletic and the dances tell stories — there is history and preservation of the Scottish culture in every step, even if the dancer doesn’t have Scottish ancestry per se.”

Steve Busch, a bagpiper who often performs at Saint Andrew’s events as well as weddings and funerals grew up in Ventura and started playing the bagpipes when he was 16. He took lessons, belonged to numerous bands and eventually became a soloist. He estimates there are over twenty organized and registered bagpipe bands in the Los Angeles area and many more that play on their own. In his experience, only about half of the bagpipers he knows have Scottish heritage. “The Scottish people have done a tremendous job preserving their culture and promoting it,” he said. “But in a place like Southern California, it really is the uniqueness of the culture that attracts people and inspires them to take part,” he added noting that he was fascinated by the pipes first and only later learned that he had some Scottish ancestry.

“There is a great treasure trove of Scottish culture here in Southern California,” Skone-Rees said. “It is our hope that more people will take part in the events we all have to offer and help preserve this amazing culture.”

K CET partnered with St. Andrew’s Society and the WHISKY GALORE event to promote the third season of detective drama SHETLAND.
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

Craig Stevens
Simon A McIlroy
Erin E Brown
G. Michael Howells
Elizabeth St Denis
James Ramage
Mary Sapp
Ashley Jordan
Kenneth O'Neill
Latha Duncan
Jill Hardash
Shawn Ledingham
Amani Roland
Vicki Stiefel
Mimi Brooks
Anne Epstein
William Mochon
Jaime Chambers
Victoria Fox
Robert Cuthbertson IV
Samuel Hickman
William (Bill) Lowry
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.