

Merry  
Christmas

the

# thistle

The Saint Andrew's Society of Los Angeles

December 2008

## Membership Dues 2009

membership dues are payable by January 31, 2009. Dues notices were mailed to all members November 18. If you did not receive a notice or have mislaid it a copy may be downloaded and printed from the Saint Andrew's Society website: [www.saintandrewsla.org](http://www.saintandrewsla.org).

Membership dues are the society's principal form of revenue and your prompt payment will help ensure we will be able to continue to improve the benefits and services our members deserve. Thank you.

Kilts, Cannon, Canines, Cavorting, Cabers, and Quaffing were all to be had at the 6th Seaside Games. For a full report see page 5.

## Kirkin O' The Tartans



Saint Andrew's members celebrated the annual Kirkin, October 26 at the Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church. Pictured above (L-R): Alan MacDonald, Vickie Pushee, Jack Dawson, John Lowry, Dave Moffett.

a message from John Benton, M.D., President



**T**here's little of the year 2008 left. It's been a busy one, and there's much yet to do 'ere the dawn of 2009.

Our new monthly newsletter, *The Thistle*, has had a very positive reception from our members and has provided The Society with an effective method to communicate with and inform our members. *The Thistle* is also mailed to an ever growing list of sister organizations across the country and overseas, allowing us to exchange information and ideas with our brethren no matter where they may be. Our 77th Burns Night Dinner, planned by our Secretary, Peggy Steiner, was held in January at the The Beach Club in Santa Monica. The 78th celebration in 2009 promises to be a gala event which

will celebrate the bard's 250th anniversary (invitations will be mailed soon and I encourage you to sign up early to avoid disappointment). In February we had our AGM at Jack and Barbara Dawson's home in La Canada. Be it be noted that AGMs are more like a ceilidhs!

In May, there was our annual reception for new members, hosted by our Membership Chair Vickie Pushee at her home in Brentwood. Our Annual Garden Party was held at the home of long-time member Barbara Grant. Our Society inaugurated its membership tent at the Seaside Highland Games held in Ventura in October. These games are organized by our vice president John E. Lowry, and his wife, Nellie.

Please see **MESSAGE**, page 2

## In Gear

*This is the second of series of articles devoted to cars. Not just any cars, but those owned by members of the Saint Andrew's Society that may be regarded as representative of the Golden Age of Motoring. Each issue, this column will feature a member's own automobile love affair. If you have a love affair to reveal, contact the editor.*

### Ford's Model A, by Jack Dawson, Trustee

*There are a few objects that we assume to be extensions of our bodies: a car, a motorcycle, a boat...What then is the car? It is,*

*I think, the flesh given to those old phantoms, personal freedom, individual liberty."*

**Pontus Hulten, 1984**

**2008 is the 80th anniversary of Ford's Model A.** Henry Ford introduced the first mass produced car, The Model T, in 1908. By 1926 he had sold about fifteen million

and Henry thought they could sell them forever. However, it became so obsolete that many dealers switched brands or went broke. Ford finally acknowledged a new

## Hogmanay A guid New Year to ane an a and mony may ye see!



**While New Year's Eve is celebrated around the world, the Scots have a long rich heritage associated with this celebration—and have their own name for it, Hogmanay.**

There are many theories about the derivation of the word *Hogmanay*. The most likely source seems to be the French. *Homme est né* or Man is born.

### Hogmanay Traditional Celebrations

Historians believe that we inherited the celebration from the Vikings who, coming from even

Please see **HOGMANAY**, page 4



Jack & Barbara Dawson with their Model A in Switzerland during their trip in 2001.

car was needed and in less than a year miraculously designed and put into production the Model A. About five million Model As were

Please see **FORD'S MODEL A**, page 2

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The Thistle is the official publication of the Saint Andrew's Society of Los Angeles. It is published four times a year. Deadline for each issue is the first day of March, June, September & December. Submit articles and photos to the editor at: rees1@mac.com.

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CONTRIBUTORS

- John Benton, Cynthia Benton, David Cargill, Jack Dawson, John Lowry, Alan MacDonald, Victoria Pushee, Ian Skone-Rees, Editor



Boxing Day

Despite its name, Boxing Day, which is celebrated on December 26 in Great Britain, has nothing to do with pugilistic competition. Nor is it a day for people to return unwanted Christmas presents. While the exact origins of the holiday are obscure, it is likely that Boxing Day began in England during the Middle Ages. Boxing Day is celebrated in Great Britain and in most areas settled by the English (the U.S. is the major exception), including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Outdoor sports such as soccer, horse racing and hunting are popular on this holiday.

Some historians say the holiday developed because servants were required to work on Christmas Day, but took the following day off. As servants prepared to leave to visit their families, their employers would present them with gift boxes. Reduced to the simplest essence, its origins are found in a long-ago practice of giving cash or durable goods to those of the lower classes. Gifts among equals were exchanged on or before Christmas Day, but beneficences to those less fortunate were bestowed the day after.

Church Alms Boxes

Another theory is that the boxes placed in churches where parishioners deposited coins for the poor were opened and the contents distributed on December 26, which is also the Feast of St. Stephen. As time went by, Boxing Day gift giving expanded to include those who had rendered a service during the previous year. This tradition survives today as people give presents to tradesmen, mail carriers, doormen, porters, and others who have helped them.

St. Stephen's Martyrdom

The Feast of St. Stephen also takes place on December 26. St. Stephen was one of the seven original deacons of the Christian Church who were ordained by the Apostles to care for widows and the poor. For the success of his preaching and his devotion to Christ, St. Stephen was stoned to death by a mob. As he died, he begged God not to punish his killers.

In the familiar Christmas carol, Good King Wenceslas' gifts of flesh (meat), wine, and firewood were made to a poor man whom he observed struggling through the snow "on the Feast of Stephen."

As William Shakespeare is England's national bard so Robert Burns is Scotland's. And nearly 250 years after he was born into a poor Ayrshire farming family the universal appeal of many of his poems and songs endures.

In 2009 the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns will be celebrated. The Bard generates in the region of £200m every year to the Scottish economy. Not bad for a man who left debts of £14 when he died.



Calendar of Events

- January 24, 2009 Robert Burns and St. Andrew's Day Annual Dinner Dance. The Beach Club, Santa Monica. February 22, 2009 Annual General Meeting March 14, 2009 Annual Scottish Heritage Day May 3, 2009 New Member Reception Date TBA Garden Party October 25, 2009 Kirkin O' The Tartan Full details for all events may be found on the website, www.saintandrewsla.org

Message, from page 1

We're planning more for 2009, including an evening devoted to Highland Dancing, and a day devoted To Scottish Heritage. The Thistle and our website will keep you informed! In the meantime Seasons Greetings to you all and a Very Happy New Year.

John Benton

Contact John Benton via email at: taverman1@hotmail.com



Ford's Model A, from page 1

sold. There are still over 250,000 still registered. I and my wife, Barbara, have a 1931 closed cab pick-up and a 1930 Briggs Town Sedan. The truck is great for parades and we occasionally use it to haul stuff. The sedan is our touring car and has taken us through Switzerland, Germany, Australia, Italy, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. This fall we travelled with twenty other Model A owners to Nova Scotia (New Scotland), but that's another story.

## Scotland's Influence in the United States

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

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

*Education has always played an important part in Scottish*

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

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

### David Dunbar Buick



*The Editor's personal 1948 Buick Roadmaster convertible. This car is equipped with the famous Dynaflo transmission and in-line eight cylinder engine producing 150 bhp. It also has hydraulically operated power push button controls for the top, windows and seats. The brightwork is stainless steel. In 1948 this car sold for \$3,500.*

**O**ne of the most iconic brands in the American car industry can be traced back to a little known Scottish car enthusiast. The Buick car company, the corner stone of the General Motors Empire, was created by David Dunbar Buick in 1903.

Buick was born in 1854 in the fishing town of Arbroath, Angus, but remained in his native Scotland for only two years before emigrating with his family to Detroit.

During the 1890's Buick developed an interest in automobiles and he began to experiment with internal combustion engines, creating the ground-breaking overhead valve engine.

Buick's innovative designs often left his Buick Car Company financially stretched and he regularly approached banks and his



*David Dunbar Buick.*

work partner Ben Briscoe for loans. Although Buick remained involved in the company's research and development, the loans eventually signed away much of Buick's shares and control to William C. Durant, who would later create GM. The Buick Car Company produced 16 cars in 1903 and 34 cars in 1904 each selling for \$1200.

In 1937, a General Motors styling researcher created a new Buick logo by researching the ancestral arms of David's original Scottish family name spelled "Buik." The Scottish family crest design is a tri-emblem shield inside a circle and today this design is the internationally recognized corporate symbol for Buick.

David Dunbar Buick deserved fame and fortune yet died in almost poverty. In 1921, David's business partner Ben Briscoe calculated that had David kept all the shares in his Buick car company the total value would be in excess of \$21M. Since its creation, Buick has sold over 35 million vehicles.

On March 5th 1929 at the age of 74, David Dunbar Buick died of colon cancer in a Detroit hospital. The Angus born lad was still working as an inspector at Detroit's trade school. 🚗

**Hogmanay**, from page 1

further north than the Scots, paid even more attention to the passing of the shortest day. In Shetland, where the Viking influence was strongest, New Year is called Yules, from the Scandinavian word.

It may not be widely known but Christmas was not celebrated as a festival and virtually banned in Scotland for around 400 years, from the end of the 17th century to the 1950s. The reason for this has its roots in the Protestant Reformation when the Kirk portrayed Christmas as a Popish or Catholic feast and therefore had to be banned. Many Scots had to work over Christmas and their winter solstice holiday was therefore at New Year when family and friends gathered for a party and exchange presents.

There are traditions before midnight such as cleaning the house on 31st December (including taking out the ashes from the fire in the days when coal fires were common). There is also the superstition to clear all your debts before *the bells* at midnight.

Immediately after midnight it is traditional to sing Robert Burns' *For Auld Lang Syne*.

An integral part of the Hogmanay partying, which continues very much today, is to welcome friends and strangers, with warm hospitality



*Slainte mhat!  
A very Merry Christmas  
and  
A Happy New Year  
from The Editor.*

**"The most widespread national custom is 'first-footing'...a tall, handsome, and dark-haired man bearing a gift is strongly preferred."**

and of course a kiss to wish everyone a *Guid New Year*. The underlying belief is to clear out the vestiges of the old year, have a clean break and welcome in a young, New Year on a happy note.

*First footing* (that is, the first foot in the house after midnight) is still common in Scotland. To ensure good luck for the house, the first foot should be that of a dark male, (believed to be a throwback to the Viking days when blond strangers arriving on your doorstep meant trouble) who should bring symbolic coal, shortbread, salt, black bun, and whisky. These days, however, whisky and perhaps shortbread

*"Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot and auld lang syne  
For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne,  
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet, for auld lang syne."*

**Scotch Corner**

*"The king o'drinks as I  
conceive it, Talisker,  
Isla or Glenlivet."*

*The Scotsman's Return from Abroad  
R.L. Stevenson 1880.*

**H**ere, lodged far from any neighbour in the small coastal community of Carbost at the head of Loch Harport, on Skye, is one of the finest yet most remote distilleries of all, producing a wonderful award-winning Island malt bottled at above average strength.

**Talisker's**™ soft, peaty water is drawn from twenty-one underground springs that rise from Hawk Hill (Cnoc nan Speirag) beside the distillery. These same springs have fed **Talisker** from its beginning in 1831. As its name suggests, the hill is home to birds of prey, usually including Peregrines.

Today, 20,000 gallons of cooling water an hour from the fast running Carbost Burn fill a traditional **Talisker** feature — five wooden *worm tubs*, located outside the still house.

In November 1960, a simple lapse of concentration led to the leaving open of a valve on the No. 1



spirit still, which was then still coal-fired. When the spirit reached boiling point a disastrous overflow occurred onto the flames below and the resulting fire burned down the still-room. The distillery was fastidiously rebuilt around exact copies of the old stills and reopened in 1962.

**Talisker**™ embodies all the spirit of this rocky, storm-lashed island and its strong, steadfast people. Skye's only distillery this may be, but like the men of the island the malt has character enough for ten.

For more information visit  
[www.whisky.com](http://www.whisky.com)



are the only items still prevalent (and available).

**Torch and Bonfire Ceremonies**

The magical Firework display and torchlight procession in Edinburgh—and throughout many cities in Scotland—is reminiscent of the ancient custom at Scottish Hogmanay pagan parties hundreds of years ago.

And it is worth remembering that January 2nd is a holiday in Scotland as well as the first day of the year, to give Scots time to recover from a week of merry-making and celebration, all part of Scotland's fascinating cultural legacy of ancient customs and traditions surrounding the pagan festival of Hogmanay. 🍷

## Seaside Games Sets New Attendance Record



Heavy weights fly as heavyweights show their muscle.

For full results of the Seaside heavy athletics go to [www.saaa-net.org](http://www.saaa-net.org)

The St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles and its members proved to be huge supporters of the Seaside Highland Games this year and the Society tent on *Clan Row* was a bustling place all weekend! This Scottish/Celtic Festival staged at the Ventura County Fairgrounds has grown to now host more Clans and Societies than ever before (80) and was attended by far more Scotophiles and true Scots than in their six year history—just short of 23,000! An aggressive ad campaign got the word out to many first-timers and Society members were keenly aware of the Games' commitment to excellence. Multi-media campaigns and the thousands of free and discounted tickets distributed each year bring in unknown—and unknowable—numbers through the gate. We do know, however, that one simple \$2 off coupon in a free local paper proved to be worthwhile by the scores of coupons redeemed with gate crew members.

Every Games venue was bustling the entire weekend—from the Gordon Highlander re-creation demonstration and herding dogs in Morgan Arena to the lively and educational Children's Glen and Highland Dance areas near the main entrance—people were interested and entranced by what they could see and enjoy. Three stages occupied by some of the best Celtic entertainers in the country were humming with quality sounds as were a dozen or so smaller venues with fiddlers, choirs, classrooms, and even a brass band for those who dropped by. You could not miss the bagpipers and bands, alone and en masse, as they marched the grounds from one end of *Clan Row* to the other. And, we hope you did not overlook the Scottish Heavy Athletes as they thundered to set three new records in heaving their heavy tackle and cabers! It is truly a show like no other. The new darts venue drew many participants from across the Western US and will pull in more new

players and observers as the word spreads. And the SASLA tent was there amidst it all!

One stage—the Celtic Rock Stage—remained open and rocking on Saturday until the wee hours and has a strong possibility of that becoming a tradition on the Field.

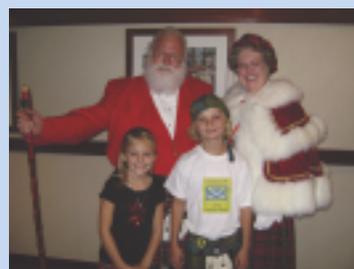
If food and drink were your cup of tea, it was all available, from good Scottish meat pies and bangers to burgers and fries, the Games Food Court was the place to be. Fine British beers and ales washed down helpings of fish and chips and you could even get an education on Scotch whisky—with tastes—in Ray Pearson's Glenfiddich classroom. Classes in the Gaelic language were very popular this year and the Celtic Arts Center Gaelic Choir demonstrated exactly how much you did *not* know about Gaelic speaking and singing!

Merchandise vendors aplenty for your gifting needs were there, as were several dozen British car owners, from local British Car Clubs showing off their fine automobiles. The military was represented by Yellow Ribbon America and by the *Soldier's Angels Campaign* (who assisted the children in writing letters to US service personnel overseas) and the Masonic Order did their usual fine job with the free Child I.D. program.

Plans are already in the works for the 2009 Games (October 10th & 11th) and we hope that many of you will become Seaside Ambassadors and invite your friends and relatives to join us in Ventura next year! 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿



The Wicked Tinkers strut their stuff.



Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus (alias Fred & Elizabeth Minter of Clan Donnachaidh) with Luke & Jinger Worthington.



Gordon Highlanders on parade.

## In The Dog House

How I Went to the Dogs,  
And took my husband along with me!

By: Cynthia Benton

I became involved with dogs after we moved to Pasadena in 1977, when I became good friends with a neighbor who had shown dogs for years. In 1988 I got my first showdog, a Cairn Terrier, Angus, whose formal name was CH. Gay Tayl Aonghas MacMhaolain. Why that? you ask. Well, at the time I thought I was part of the MacMillan clan (my maiden

name is Bell) and thought it quite appropriate! Prior to Angus we had two English Springers, Winston and Clementine, so I guess you could say we're Anglophiles.

In 1994 I acquired an English Springer Spaniel, Tavish (CH. Silverhill



Cynthia Benton and Sydney.

Tavish), and in 1996 his sister, Scout (CH. Silverhill To The Moon Alice). Tavish and Scout had rather spectacular show careers and in 1999 at the English Springer Spaniel National Specialty Show in Portland, Tavish went Best of Breed over 275 entries, and Scout went Best Opposite Sex (in other words, Best Female)—the only time that litter mates, and owned by the same person had achieved this. In 2000, Tavish retired after Westminster, and Scoutie had her one litter from which came my current showdog, Sidney (CH. Silverhill Alice Is At It Again). Sidney, a champion in 2003, didn't win much until I decided to retire her, at which point she started winning—at the age of seven! She turned eight yesterday (November 29) and is the #19 springer in the country. Following her upcoming shows in December, she will be retired but will continue her role as princess!

## Committee News

The **Board of Trustees** met on Saturday December 6. Minutes will be posted on the website.

The **Communications Committee** coordinates production of The Thistle and other related outreach projects. The committee met on November 14 at the Robin Hood pub to discuss and plan the editorial content for the end of year issue.

The **Membership** chair has reported five new members since June 2008.

Any member interested in joining a committee please contact the appropriate committee chairperson. Contact details are posted on the SASLA website. All members are welcome to attend committee meetings and Board of Trustee meetings. Dates are posted on the website. Meeting minutes are posted on the website.

## Highland Games Calendar – 2009

February		
14th & 15th	Queen Mary Scottish Festival	Long Beach, CA
March		
13th–15th	Sonora Celtic Faire	Sonora, CA
April		
4th	Bakersfield Highland Games	Bakersfield, CA
25th & 26th	Sacramento Valley Games	Woodland, CA

Please refer to the SASLA website for a comprehensive calendar of Highland Games and Scottish celebrations.

## Welcome New Members

The vitality and strength of any organization thrives on new blood and we all most heartily welcome the following to our midst, in the certain knowledge that they will add, contribute to, and participate in our Saint Andrew's Society.

### NEW MEMBERS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2008

Life Member	
Frances Buchanan	November 2008
Members	
Eileen Skone-Rees	September 2008
Virginia Elwood-Akers	October 2008
Alex Weir	October 2008
Mayfield Marshall	November 2008

  
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