

A Blythe Yule  
2010  
an a Guid  
Hogmanay!

# the thistle

The St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles

**2010 Membership Dues**  
Your membership dues for 2010 are now payable.  
**DON'T DELAY, PAY TODAY!**  
Membership categories and rates are posted at [www.saintandrewsla.org](http://www.saintandrewsla.org)

## Rabbie Burns' Birthday Celebration Dinner



On January 30, 2010 we will celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Robert Burns' birth with selections of poetry, music and toasts honoring Scotland's greatest poet. The Haggis will be saluted with the greatest of fanfare and shared with all our intrepid guests. The Immortal Memory will be toasted and the Toast to The Lassies will be followed by the always enjoyable reply. The venue for this gala event will be The Thursday Club in La Canada. A full bar and table wine will be available throughout the evening. Through the generous support of The Balvenie Ambassador Andrew Weir, of William Grant and Sons, the single malt will be there for those who want it!

Contact John Lowry  
JEmmettLowry@aol.com

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



**This is my last message as President of the St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles. Our By-laws state that "...no President shall be elected for more than two years..."**

Our Society has needed more participation by its members in its governance. All members are welcome at our Board of Trustees' meetings. Indeed, we have introduced plans for rotating staggered terms for Trustees so that more members will be able to serve on the Board. We needed more attractive events, and we have had them. Increasing our presence at Highland Games has helped to attract new members. And membership communication has been enormously enhanced by our quarterly newsletter, The Thistle.

We have also tried to fulfill the declared purposes of our Society. There's been our Scottish Heritage Day, a great ceilidh, trophies and donations for winners in Highland dancing, and support for the uniquely education-based Pasadena Scottish Pipes and Drums pipe band.

As for next year, our kick-off will be our traditional Burns night on 30th January 2010 at a great venue in La Canada. Our Annual General Meeting of all of the Society's members will be held on 6th March 2010 at the home of Jack and Barbara Dawson. Many more great events will be held throughout 2010. Watch The Thistle and check our website for the details!

We must continue bringing in new members that share our goals. We need to maintain our good relationship with our mother Society in Edinburgh. We must also continue to be ever more prominent amongst Scottish organizations.

I am very grateful to all our capable members who have made such successes of our increasing number of activities. You're all a great lot, and it has been a privilege to serve as your President.

Thank you all.

*John Benton*  
John Benton

Contact John Benton via email at: [tavernman1@hotmail.com](mailto:tavernman1@hotmail.com)

## Seaside Highland Games Continue to Thrive



L-R: Ventura City Councilman, Neal Andrews; Dame Barbara Hay, Her Majesty's Consul General, Los Angeles; Capt. James J. McHugh, Commander, Naval Base Ventura County; John Lowry, Chief, Seaside Highland Games.

**With a partnership and a fellowship worthy of note, the St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles membership continues to support the Seaside Games and their outreach.** Recognizing that the purpose of both organizations is to promote and educate the community to Scotland and her history has made the union an easy and comfortable fit.

A Festival highlight is always Saturday's Grand Parade and Opening Ceremonies, and this year was no exception with a very

Please see **Seaside**, page 6



## In Gear Sure as The Sunrise

**At the beginning of the 20th century, Scottish carmakers were among Britain's leading manufacturers. There were nearly fifty car manufacturers in Scotland before 1914.**

Albion was one of the most

important and enduring, and their company slogan, *Sure as The Sunrise*, reflected the quality and reliability they were famous for. Originally known as Albion Motor Car Company Ltd, the company was founded in 1899 by Thomas Blackwood Murray and Norman Osborne Fulton. They were joined a couple of years later by John F Henderson who provided

additional capital. The factory was originally on the first floor of a building in Finnieston Street, Glasgow and had only seven employees. In 1903 the company moved to new premises in Scotstoun. The Albion Motor Car Company Ltd was renamed Albion Motors in 1930.

In 1900 they built their first

Please see **Albion**, page 6

Photo: Amanda Peacock

# Letter from Edinburgh



**This will be the twenty-fourth year that Edinburgh has received a gift of**

**a Christmas tree from the people of Hordaland as a gesture of thanks for the support that Scotland gave Norway during World War II.**



*The giant Christmas Tree, a gift from Norway, on the Mound below Edinburgh Castle.*

Four years ago there were problems having a tree shipped the seven hundred and eighty miles from Norway to Scotland and so they asked if we could choose a tree from one of our forests in the Borders and they would contribute the cost of transporting it. This is a much more sensible idea and I don't know why this method wasn't adopted long ago, but of course in those days we were generally not so environmentally educated!

The tree is erected in Edinburgh at the head of the street called the Mound which was formed when the area known as the Nor Loch was excavated, which lay below Edinburgh castle between there and the hill which eventually became the site of James Craig's 18th century New Town.

To mark the start of Edinburgh's Christmas celebrations, the eighteen

hundred lights on the tree were switched on at a special Light Night ceremony held on November twenty-seventh.

For many years now as a part of Edinburgh's Winter Wonderland, we have had an ice rink formed in East Princes Street Gardens and this is a very popular venue.

There is also a Helter-Skelter —slide down it if you dare and other amusements. We also have the Edinburgh ferris wheel which is sixty feet high and stands beside our world famous Sir Walter Scott's

Monument in Princes Street, and is very much enjoyed. One year, my wife and I travelled on it and the views over the chimney tops and roofs of the New Town were very spectacular.

We also have the traditional German Christmas market in Princes Street Gardens, and this being its tenth anniversary year, it is provided by stallholders based in Frankfurt. They sell ornaments, jewellery, toys and candles, as well as German food and drink,

welcome on a cold night. There is also a selection of food, sausages, and fried potato cakes, candied sweets, cheeses and German beer! Scottish produce is also on sale.

We also celebrate Hogmanay in a

## Saint Andrew's Society Los Angeles Calendar of Events

**January 30, 2010**  
Burn's Supper

**March 6, 2010**  
AGM at the home of Jack and Barbara Dawson

**For up-to-the-minute news and information about current and future activities check the society website.**

[www.saintandrewsla.org](http://www.saintandrewsla.org)



big way with a street party on Princes Street where party-goers are now regulated and restricted to 100,000 — entry by passes only — following previous years' disasters when too many people attended.

**On behalf of our St Andrew Society may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year!**

*Kenneth*

**Kenneth Sinclair Stewart**  
*Secretary of the World Federation of Scottish Societies,  
Membership Secretary  
The St Andrew Society,  
Member of Council / Trustee*



*The Ferris Wheel in front of the Scott Monument, ice-skating in Princes Street Gardens, and the clocktower of the Balmoral Hotel in the background.*



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The publisher accepts no responsibility for the opinions expressed, accuracy of information, or similarity of names submitted by authors.

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## Scotland's Influence in the United States

*A series of articles prepared by David Cargill*

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

### John Witherspoon



**T**he Declaration of Independence, which has many similarities to the Declaration of Arbroath, the document which made the case for Scottish independence, bears the signatures of fifty-six pioneering men: amazingly, twenty-one had some Scottish ancestry.

One notable signatory was John Witherspoon, the representative from New Jersey, but also the only clergyman in attendance at the signing.

Born in Gifford, East Lothian on February 5th 1723,


Witherspoon studied at the University of Edinburgh achieving a Doctor of Theology and then embarked on a truly unique journey to the new world. Following the Battle of Falkirk in 1746, Witherspoon was imprisoned for his opposition to the Jacobite rebellion. He then embarked on three well-known published works on Theology before marrying Elizabeth Montgomery and fathering nine children, five of which survived to adulthood.

Forming a friendship with a young American called Benjamin Rush changed the whole course of Witherspoon's life. Rush recommended Witherspoon for a teaching post in New Jersey and within months Rush provided a letter from Benjamin Franklin inviting the 45 year old and his family to leave Scotland and join the College of New Jersey. Witherspoon accepted the offer, and he would be instrumental in rebuilding the college after the war and creating Princeton University, acting as its President from 1768 until 1794.

During his Princeton reign, Witherspoon found the university in debt and the courses well below standard. He raised money from Scotland, purchasing books and critical equipment and even taught several lectures introducing syllabus and course materials from his own personal Scottish university experiences.

In 1776, at the first drafting of the Declaration of Independence, Witherspoon demanded the deletion of a phrase that the British monarchy had sent to America "not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries." Later, he was also instrumental in drafting the peace declaration with Britain.

In 1789, Witherspoon was instrumental in forming a newly independent American National Presbyterian Church. He opened the first General Assembly with a sermon and presided until the election of the first general moderator.

John Witherspoon suffered eye injuries and was blind by 1792, dying two years later the age of 71. Scottish sculptor Alexander Stoddart was commissioned to create two replica sculptures of the inspirational figurehead: one bronze statue at Princeton University and the other in the Scottish town of Paisley. There are other statues of John Witherspoon in Scotland and the USA, as well as several streets in New Jersey and Washington DC bearing his name and commemorating a truly special Scottish legacy. 


www.saintandrewsla.org



Her Majesty's Consul General, Dame Barbara Hay, with Saint Andrew's representatives at the British United Services Club Ladies Night held at the Alta Dena Country Club.  
L-R: John Benton, M.D.; Ian Skone-Rees; Bob Matheson and Bob Turner.



application, pay membership dues, and keep up-to-date on upcoming events, and reviews of events past.

Your communications director sends out regular announcements and other information to all members who have listed an email address with the Society. However of all those members with a valid email address, on average only 50% open the messages! There may be a good reason for this. If you do not have our email address in your trusted address book, the messages sent to you from the Society may end up in your JUNK folder. So please add this address to your trusted address book, [rees1@mac.com](mailto:rees1@mac.com). This will ensure that you will receive messages we send. Once you've received them I can't make you read them, but I hope you will! If we can depend on members reading our electronic messages we will be able to reduce our printing and postage costs and communicate more efficiently. Ed. 

**Methods of communication have changed.** It's been a long time since I filled my Parker fountain pen with Quink blue/black ink with the intent of putting pen to paper. Now the written word has been replaced with the electronic word sent via email. Some would decry this inevitable evolution and mourn the lost art of letter writing. But it has its advantages: speed and lower cost being two that are especially important to organizations like ours. There is a caveat. The effectiveness of email and internet websites depends on the intended recipient logging on and reading the message!

The Saint Andrew's Society has a website that is regularly maintained and contains valuable and helpful information. From there, you can download a membership

## Scotch Corner

### *The Balvenie*



Following a successful acting career Andrew Weir left Scotland for New York City in early 2005. As Western USA Balvenie Ambassador (based in San Francisco), Andrew has the privilege of sharing the Balvenie story with enthusiasts from San Antonio to Seattle and from California to Colorado.

**The Balvenie is a unique range of single malts created by David Stewart, the Balvenie Malt Master. Each has a very individual taste, but each is rich, luxuriously smooth and underpinned by the distinctively honeyed character of The Balvenie.**

Produced in Speyside in the Scottish Highlands, the exceptional quality of The Balvenie Single Malt is due to the fact that The Balvenie Distillery retains and nurtures a high level of craftsmanship that other malt whisky producers no longer employ: nowhere else will you find a distillery that still grows its own barley, still malts in its own traditional floor maltings, still employs coopers to tend all the casks and a coppersmith to maintain the stills.

Today the Balvenie Distillery produces a multi-award-winning range of The Balvenie Single Malts,



*The St. Andrew's Society wishes to thank Andrew Weir and William Grant & Sons for their support of our Burn's Night celebration January 30, 2010. Slainte, Andrew!*

which includes The Balvenie DoubleWood 12 Year Old, The Balvenie Signature 12 Year Old, The Balvenie Single Barrel 15 Year Old, The Balvenie PortWood 21 Year Old and The Balvenie Thirty. A limited edition and a rare vintage cask over 30 years old are also bottled each year.

The Balvenie is produced by William Grant & Sons Ltd, an award-winning independent family-owned distiller founded by William Grant in 1886 and today run by his direct descendants.

William Grant & Sons Ltd distills some of the world's leading brands of Scotch whisky, including the world's favourite single malt Glenfiddich®, the handcrafted range of The Balvenie® single malts and the world's fourth largest blended Scotch Grant's®.

For more information and details on how to build your own virtual whisky shelf, **THE PLACE TO RECORD** your own malt whisky journey, and share malt ratings and notes with other enthusiasts, visit:  
[www.thebalvenie.com](http://www.thebalvenie.com)

# The Queen of Scots



**M**ary Stuart started life at the top. She became queen of Scotland at 1 week old and by 15, she was queen of 2 countries. Talk about climbing the corporate ladder!

## *Her Childhood*

Mary Stuart was born on 7th December 1542 in Linlithgow Palace. Even with several half brothers, she was the only legitimate child of James V, making her heir to the Scottish throne. She was not just a baby face, but in fact a baby when she was crowned Queen of Scotland, and as Margaret Tudor's granddaughter, she was also in line for the throne of England, after Henry VIII's children. Talk about being born with a silver spoon in your mouth.

She was supposed to marry Henry VIII's son, Edward, but the Catholics were opposed to this plan, resulting in Henry VIII's invasion of Scotland in order to force this issue. Mary was subsequently sent to France, at the age of 5, for her own safety. She was raised at the French court as a Catholic. Whilst most of us would be thinking about GCSEs, at age 15 she married Dauphin Francis, son of Henri II of France. She became Queen Consort of France after his death in 1560.

Shortly after her escape to France, Henry VIII's daughter, Mary Tudor, died, without any heirs, and the English throne was inherited by Mary Stuart's cousin, Elizabeth.

## *Sailing Home*


In 1561, Mary missed the wind and the rain and decided to go back to Scotland, now officially a Protestant country after religious reforms led by John Knox. She was Roman Catholic, and only after assurances from her half-brother, Lord James Stewart (later Earl of Moray) that she would be allowed to practice her faith did she return.

In 1565, Mary married her cousin, Henry, Lord Darnley. He was overly ambitious and wanted to rule Scotland not as the Queen's consort, but as King. He was what many would consider a typical Scot - arrogant, ill-behaved, faithless and untrustworthy. By now, Mary was pregnant with her son, James VI, who would eventually become King of a United Britain. As her relationship with Darnley began to deteriorate, she took up with David Riccio, an Italian opera singer (obviously he didn't look like Pavarotti), whom she made her Italian Private Secretary. Riccio was subsequently killed by Darnley in a jealous rage. Shortly after the birth of her son, Darnley was found murdered (maybe hell does have no fury like a woman scorned).

3 months after Darnley's death, Mary married the Earl of Bothwell, James Hepburn, who was also suspected of killing Darnley (oh, maybe it was the jealous boyfriend). This union proved to be Mary's downfall. The Protestant Lords opposed to this marriage took up arms and led an insurgency against her. She subsequently surrendered and was taken to Lochleven Castle, and was forced to abdicate in favour of her son.

## *Off With Her Head*

Like an early female version of Houdini, Mary escaped in 1568, only to be defeated at the Battle of Langside, near Glasgow. She fled to England, believing that Queen Elizabeth I would support her cause, but was instead kept in captivity in England for 19 years. During her captivity, Mary encouraged many Roman Catholic plots against Elizabeth, culminating in the Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I. This subsequently led to demands for Mary's execution.

As with her life, her death was a spectacle. On 8th February 1587, Mary was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle in Northamptonshire. She walked to her execution wearing a black gown. Her maids disrobe her revealing a bright red petticoat and a red lacy satin bodice, the traditional catholic color of martyrdom. When Mary's executioner held up Mary's head and said 'God Save The Queen', Mary's red wig came off in his hand and her grey haired head tumbled and rolled to the ground. She was buried in Peterborough Cathedral, but her son James VI had her body exhumed in 1612 and reinterred in Westminster Abbey, thirty feet from the tomb of her cousin, Elizabeth I. 

## Poet's Corner

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Poets' Corner is the name given to a section of the South Transept of Westminster Abbey due to the number of poets, playwrights, and writers now buried and commemorated there, including Scotland's own Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell, and Robert Adam.

### 3 Poems by the Reverend Chuck Robertson


#### The food of life

Bless the cake and cookies, O God  
that remind us of how sweet life can be  
Bless the coffee and tea, O Spirit  
that stimulate our thoughts and keep us awake  
Bless those who provide the snacks, O Jesus  
and multiply the gift like fish and loaves  
Bless our company and study, O Holy One  
as we share our thoughts & the food of life.

#### My humble dinner

Bless, O God, my humble dinner  
the roast beef that I might rehear  
and the hands that graciously prepared it  
the leftover rice that will fill the plate  
and the tasty bread adorned with butter  
may this little meal strengthen me  
may the wine revive me  
may the raspberry dessert please me  
that in all I do I may please you.

Amen

The first person to be interred there was Geoffrey Chaucer. The erection of a magnificent tomb by Nicholas Brigham to Chaucer in the middle of the sixteenth century and the nearby burial of Edmund Spenser in 1599 started a tradition that is still upheld. It is hoped that this submission of poetry by the Reverend Charles (Chuck) Robertson, will be the start of a similar tradition for *The Thistle*. 

Please send your submissions for publication to the Editor via email to rees1@mac.com.

#### Albion, from page 1


motor car, a dogcart made of varnished wood and powered by a flat-twin 8hp engine with solid tyres.

In 1903 Albion introduced a 3115 cc 16hp vertical-twin, followed in 1906 by a 24hp four. One of the specialities the company offered was solid-tyred shooting-brakes (station wagons). The last private Albions were powered by a 15hp monobloc four of 2492 cc. Passenger car production ceased in 1915.

Although the manufacture of motor cars was the main industry in the first ten years of Albion's existence, it was decided in 1909 to concentrate on the production of commercial vehicles. During World War 1, they built for the War Office large quantities of 3 ton trucks powered by a 32hp engine using chain drive to the rear wheels. After the war, many of these were converted for use as charabancs.

Trucks and buses were manufactured in the Scotstoun works until 1980. The buses were exported worldwide. Almost all Albion buses were given names beginning with "V", these models being the Victor, Valiant, Viking, Valkyrie, and Venturer.


After several changes in ownership, Albion continues today as a subsidiary of American Axle & Manufacturing Company of Detroit, Michigan producing axles, chassis systems, crankshafts, and chassis components,

Mark Knopfler's song *Border Reiver*, the first cut on his 2009 release, *Get Lucky*, contains direct references: *My Scotstoun lassie, She's an Albion and Sure as the Sunrise*. 

#### Seaside, from page 1

special guest doing the honors of declaring the Games "Officially Open." Dame Barbara Hay, Her Majesty's Consul-General, kindly consented to be our guest. Dame Barbara has only recently arrived at the Los Angeles post after fulfilling challenging roles for the Crown in former Soviet satellite countries. As a Scotswoman, she appeared comfortably at ease in welcoming the throngs of "oor ain."

Clan Row was its usual bustling place with more Clans and Societies in attendance than ever before. The Scottish Heavy Athletes—our *Large Men Throwing Stuff*—were brought closer in and shared Morgan Arena at the extreme end of Clan Row with Sara Lisiecki's Herding Dogs and Bydand Forever's rifle and Gatling gun demonstrations.

Comfortably situated near the friendly faces in the Moffat, MacPherson and Currie Clan tents and close enough to catch some tunes from Alex Beaton's Center Stage, the Society venue was a comfortable place for members and friends to relax and enjoy some food and bev. But did they do that? They were mostly milling about, seeking bargains amongst the vast array of vendors or chatting up old friends who seemed to be everywhere on the grounds. We are very pleased that such comfort can be found at Seaside and are thankful and grateful that our St. Andrew's Society friends find this bit of the Pacific shore such a peaceful destination each October. Now, haste ye back next year, won't you? 



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