

the

# thistle

The St. Andrew's Society of Los Angeles



## Seaside Highland Games

October 9-11

*Oh! I do like to be beside the  
seaside  
I do like to be beside the sea!  
I do like to stroll upon the  
Prom, Prom, Prom!  
Where the brass bands play:  
"Tiddely-om-pom-pom!"  
So just let me be beside the  
seaside  
I'll be beside myself with glee  
And there's lots of girls  
beside,  
I should like to be beside  
Beside the seaside!  
Beside the sea!*

**I**f any of you remember *Jill Daniels* (I don't) you will remember that familiar refrain, usually wafting from the Marconi steam radio that adorned the dining room sideboard in homes throughout Britain during WWII.

What's that got to do with large men throwing heavy objects? Not much, except they do it beside the seaside! Got it?

The Saint Andrew's Society of Los Angeles is, as you know, a contributing sponsor of *Seaside* and, as such, these games hold a special place in our calendar.

Please see **SEASIDE**, page 5

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



**T**he year, believe it or not, is approaching its close. By the time you read this, summer will officially be over and Fall will be upon us. This year has been a tumultuous and memorable one for Scots all over the world, including us in Los Angeles. Our own society has increased in membership and added new events to its calendar. But what has made 2009 different for Scots worldwide is the celebrations for Robert Burn's 250 anniversary, marked in his country of birth by *Homecoming Scotland* and *The Gathering* in Edinburgh. The gathering of clans in Edinburgh was an event that, if you were fortunate enough to attend, you are not like to forget for a very long time. Scots from southern California attended, including Cindi McIntosh, who many of you will remember as the piper from our Tartan Day celebration in April, and our own Annie and Rod Schreckengost. They walked in the clan parade up the Royal Mile from Holyrood Palace to the esplanade of

Edinburgh castle.

Many of you will have attended our Ceilidh on September 12, the first we have organized for many years. You will find a photographic review on page 5 of this newsletter. I want to thank all of you who supported this event. We can provide functions like this because a lot of folks volunteer their time and skills to organize and plan — they don't just happen! I hope you enjoyed the results of their efforts, I certainly did!

Our next event is the annual Kirkin' O' The Tartans at the Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church — let's make it a record turn-out. Work is also well advanced for our 2010 Burn's Supper which will be held at The Thursday Club in La Canada, January 30 — mark your calendar! ✉

*John Benton*  
John Benton

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## Springtime in China

The Rev. Dr. Charles (Chuck) Robertson is a member of SASLA. He visited China, his fourth visit, for two weeks in May 2009. Here are some highlights of his fascinating trip.



**I**visited China for a fortnight in May with a delegation

under the auspices of Educational Resources & Referrals-China (ERRC) of Berkeley, California.

ERRC places people with a master's degree or more and life experience in their field in Chinese universities to teach — agriculture, business, engineering, the sciences, etc. — in English to Chinese doctoral and post-doctoral students to enable them to present, write, and publish in English, and to give occasional lectures or seminars in their field. The trip provided me

Please see **CHINA**, page 6

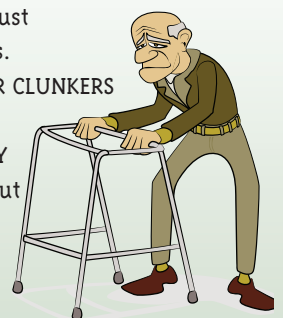
## In Gear — If my body were a Car

**I**f my body were a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish, and my paint job is getting a little dull. But that's not the worst of it. My headlights are out of focus, and it's especially hard to see things up close. My traction is not as graceful

as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather. My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins. It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed. My fuel rate burns inefficiently. But here's the worst of it — Almost every time I sneeze, cough or laugh, either my radiator leaks or

my exhaust backfires.  
CASH FOR CLUNKERS

I QUALIFY  
How about  
You?



Anonymous.



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## Letter from Edinburgh

The Gathering 2009, Holyrood Park, 25/26 July



**I attended the Highland Games and Scottish Festival opened by the Duke of Rothesay, as Prince Charles is known in Scotland.**

It was sunny and pleasantly warm and joining the crowds entering the grass surfaced parade ground I headed for the clan village of over 100 square pagoda tents many with their own clan chiefs, some of whom wore eagle feathers in their bonnets. I visited my own clans of Stewart and then Sinclair where I purchased a copy scroll of the Genealogy of Prince Henry St. Clair, or Sinclair, the 'Discoverer' of America in 1398, and then called in at some others not forgetting *Clan Currie*, and the only *St Andrew Society* represented – Singapore!

I was too late to get a seat for the Deuchars World Highland Games Heavy Events Championship but could watch them on an enormous screen erected for the purpose.

I was amused to see that hundreds of people had climbed various hilly parts of Arthur's Seat (Edinburgh's 'Mountain') which overlooks the parade ground some distance away, presumably in the hope of seeing the event for free!

Later I saw youngsters take part in the Highland Dancing Competition, and in time I joined a crowd of folk in front of the *Wee Stage* for an hour long demonstration of Scottish country dancing including audience participation which was great fun and enjoyed by all.

As I approached the immense crowd in front of the main stage

I heard the lovely Gaelic singing of *Julie Fowlis*, while I waited for the famous *Red Hot Chilli Pipers*.

I passed the *Talisker* whisky tasting tent (entry at £5 a ticket) because I have my own supply at home! At one point I had to move quickly to avoid (being trampled on by) the *Lonach Highlanders* a band of men from the Strathdon area (North of Ballater) Aberdeenshire.



*Lonach Highlanders.*

Many families sitting on rugs had quite sensibly supplied their own picnic lunch while others were forming long queues at the food outlets, but as it was too hot for me to do that, and having enjoyed my visit (well worth my £18 ticket money even though I could not attend on the second day), I reckoned that I had been on my feet for nearly six hours and seen all I wanted to see, I left the Gathering area around 4:30 to go home.

Passing the controversial Scottish Parliament building opposite Holyrood Palace on my way, I walked up the Canongate (the Royal Mile) for a welcome hot Turkish meal in my favourite *Café Truva* owned and run by a friend's son-in-law, (very

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

October 9, 2009

Whisky Tasting/Scottish Evening  
Four Points Sheraton, Ventura

October 10 & 11, 2009

Seaside Highland Games  
Seaside Park Ventura

October 25, 2009

Annual Kirkin O' The Tartan

January 30, 2010

Burn's Supper

For more information visit  
[www.saintandrewsla.org](http://www.saintandrewsla.org)



useful!), and afterwards to my bus, walking about the same distance and more than half the route later taken that evening by the Parade of the Clans.

Thousands of participants including many from outwith Scotland and the UK, led by pipe bands, marched up the very steep cobbled roadway of the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle Esplanade where a pageant entitled *Aisling's Children* celebrating Scotland's history was performed, thereby completing the City of Edinburgh's contribution to the almost year-long **Homecoming Scotland 2009**.

*Kenneth*

**Kenneth Sinclair Stewart**

Secretary of the World Federation of  
Scottish Societies



*Clan tents in the grounds of Holyrood Palace.*

# 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.*

## James Porteous 1848–1922



Courtesy of Fresno Historical Society

**The American Society of Mechanical Engineers rarely bestows a finer accolade than the International Historic Engineering Landmark.**

In 1991 Scottish Inventor, James Porteous posthumously received the award for his innovative *Fresno Scraper* an 1883 agricultural and civil engineering earth moving blade designed to construct canals and ditches in sandy soil.

Porteous was born in Haddington, East Lothian and in 1873, aged 25 he left Scotland for a new life in America. The Scotsman settled in California and formed his own company in Fresno producing wagons, but it all could have been so different! Back at the British ticket office, Porteous did not know where he should travel and the station master suggested traveling with the Shield's family, who were going to Santa Barbara. Porteous eagerly agreed and after initially spending time in Santa Barbara, he travelled to Fresno where he spent the rest of his life working and bringing up his family.


Using the basic skills of a wheelwright and a blacksmith learned back in Scotland while working for his father's business, Porteous provided the most modern equipment for local farmers. Initially, he produced buggies and wagons capable of carrying five to eight tons.

From his own designs and synthesizing elements of scraper models from other Valley inventors, Porteous carefully created an earth moving scraper transforming the way earth could be scraped, moved, dumped and leveled. Existing devices could scrape and gather soil, but the *Fresno* could also discharge soil at

a controlled depth and scoop the earth up rather than push aside, thereby dramatically speeding-up construction of irrigation canals and ditches.

The horse drawn device was an instant success with farmers in central California. *The Fresno Expositor* of April 9th 1884 reported that Porteous had made over 350 scrapers in the previous 18 months and had shipped them to all parts of the state. Soon the device was shipped to South America, India, Australia and Europe.

*The Fresno Scraper* was sold across America initially for farming and then progressing to road and railroad construction and dam projects. The scraper played a critical role in the construction of the Panama Canal. The advent of the tractor replaced the horse, and by 1941 the *Fresno Scraper* was attached to the caterpillar tractor and became known as the *bulldozer*.

James Porteous married Jenny and the couple had six children, three boys and three girls. He died on March 29th 1922 leaving behind an impressive body of work covering over 50 patented inventions. 



Jenny Porteous with five of her children.

Courtesy of Fresno Historical Society



FRESNO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Courtesy of Fresno Historical Society



## ARMISTICE DAY NOVEMBER 11

At the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month we remember the end of the First World War and all who gave their lives then and since. The Poppy is the symbol of Remembrance. Wear a poppy with pride.

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

## Committee News

The **Board of Trustees** met July 11 at the home of Jack Dawson. Minutes will be posted on the website.

The **Communications Committee** coordinates production of The Thistle and other related outreach projects. The committee coordinated editorial content for the Fall 2009 issue via email.

The **Membership** chair has reported no new members since June 2009.

The **Finance Committee** meets regularly under the chairmanship of treasurer Dave Moffett.

All members are welcome to attend committee meetings and Board of Trustee meetings. Dates are posted on the website.

## 144th Scottish Highland Gathering & Games Pleasanton Sept. 5 & 6, 2009

One word describes the **Pleasanton Games, BIG!** Over the course of two days the organizers expected 60,000 people to pass through the turnstiles. The main grandstand, that accommodates 8,000, was the best vantage point from which to watch the heavy athletics and the marching bands. This year the main attraction was the appearance of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards who played separately and in a unique combined performance with the Marine Band, San Diego. Seventy-seven clans and family societies were represented, including our sister St. Andrew's Society of San Francisco. Highland cattle, Clydesdales, and of course the Border Collies were there too. A wonderful two days, but too short to see everything! **Ed.**



The Editor with James Beatty, Chaplain and Membership Chair of St. Andrew's Society of San Francisco.

## Scotch Corner

How to taste single malt scotch whisky... as if you didn't know!

- Remember**, it can ONLY be called scotch if it is distilled in Scotland.
- Use a good glass. The tulip glass is the preferred style because it focuses the aromas and splashes the spirit onto the tongue in a wide fashion. Riedel make this style.
- Pour yourself a dram, anywhere from half an ounce to two.
- Tilt and turn the glass. Let the whisky coat the glass. This increases the surface area, enhancing the aroma.
- Nose the whisky. Place your nose a few inches away from the glass. What do you smell? Keeping your mouth slightly open as you nose the whiskey will help you to better discern and 'taste' the different aromas.
- Add water, as much as half-and-half or as little as a few drops. Adding water depends on the strength and style of the whisky and the taster's preference. Regular bottles contain 40% to 46% alcohol by volume (ABV) and are diluted using the distillery's water source. "Cask strength" whiskies are stronger (generally 46% to 60%) and require more



water. Avoid tap water, because the chlorine and/or dissolved minerals will interfere with the taste.

- Gently agitate the whisky. Nose the whisky again. Change the angle and distance of the glass to pick up all of the subtle aromas. Continue this for a few minutes while the water marries with the whisky and releases additional aromas you may not have noticed at first.
- Take a sip. Take just enough to coat your mouth and begin to slowly swirl it around your tongue. Try and coat your tongue so that the whisky touches all of your taste buds.
- Taste the whisky. Try to hold the whisky in your mouth as long as it takes to notice all of the different flavors.
- Swallow. Try not to open your mouth or close your throat. Let in a tiny amount of air through your mouth and breathe through your nose slowly as the fumes rise up into your sinuses.

*"Always carry a flagon of whisky in case of snakebite, furthermore, always carry a small snake."*

**W. C. Fields**

*Slainte mhath!*

## CLAN CURRIE [WWW.CLANCURRIE.COM](http://WWW.CLANCURRIE.COM)

For the first time in its history **Clan Currie will be represented on clan row at the Seaside Highland Games October 10-11.**

To help celebrate its fiftieth anniversary year the clan commander, **Robert Currie** will be present at the

opening ceremonies and throughout the weekend. Please come and visit. A real Scottish welcome awaits you!

*Beud mhàilte*

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# Beilidh

pronounced kay-lee – gaelic for party or gathering

## September 12, 2009



www.saintandrewsla.org

**China**, from page 1

Chuck Robertson (center) with fellow scholars rest on their climb up Mt. Taishan.

with an opportunity to explore placement possibilities in Chinese universities for a semester or an academic year in the religious studies section, a philosophy department, where the academic study of religion is taught in China.

We visited Beijing, Tianjin, Tai'an, Ji'nan, Wuhan, and

Shanghai, and I met with the heads of departments and scholars from among the most prestigious academic institutions in China: Peking, Renmin (People's), and Tsinghua Universities, and the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing; Nankai

University in Tianjin; Shandong University in Ji'nan; Wuhan University in Wuhan; and Fudan University in Shanghai.

One of the great joys of the trip was in Tai'an. Two of us went up Mt. Tai Shan — over 5000 feet and the holiest of five holy mountains in China — where new emperors would make a pilgrimage to ensure the success of their reign. We hiked half-way up with a group of young scholars and took a cable car from there, gliding up over beautiful views of the mountain, valleys, and the plains below. On top there were several temples, hotels and restaurants. We then flew by cable car back down to the midway point and took a bus the rest of the way. It was a wonderful day! 🦋

*This brief article is a synopsis of a much more detailed report prepared by Chuck on his return from China. The full version is full of interesting detail that makes fascinating reading which I am sure he would be happy to share with anyone who asks. Ed.*

Chuck with a group of Chinese scholars at the top of Mt. Taishan.

**Seaside**, from page 1

For those of you who ventured south to the *Costa Mesa Games* in May you will have seen a new tent on clan row — ours. Yes for the first time the Saint Andrew's Society of Los Angeles was represented at a highland games with their very own tent, staffed by member volunteers. The presence of our tent was such a success that it was decided to purchase (rather than rent) our own tent for the *Seaside Games* in October. We learned quite a lot at Costa Mesa and we hope we have learned lessons that will allow us to improve our showing and be more useful and informative to prospective members when they stop by. Volunteers are needed to staff the tent, normally a two hour shift, so please contact the editor, Dave Moffett, or Dave Macpherson for information on how you can help. There's single malt in the tent for those of you who require additional incentive! See you there! Ed. 🦋

Contact Ian Skone-Rees via email at: rees1@mac.com

**New Members**

We are dependent on the growth of our membership. Please spread the word about your Saint Andrew's Society and encourage your friends to join us in preserving Scottish identity and culture.

**Highland Games Calendar — 2009**

Please refer to the SASLA website [www.saintandrewsla.org](http://www.saintandrewsla.org) for a comprehensive calendar of Highland Games and Scottish celebrations.

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