

Members' Newsletter

Scottish Presidents' Association

Founded 1958

President: Mrs Mary Roach

34th Annual Lunch – 13 October 2019



President Mary and Consort Laurie Roach, Northampton T&C Association

The 34th Annual Lunch was held on Sunday, 13 October at the Bestwood Lodge Hotel Restaurant, Arnold, Nottinghamshire. 50 members and friends gathered to have lunch at this interesting new venue located in the Bestwood Country Park.

President Mary and Consort Laurie received members and guests at an informal reception in the bar area which was ideal for socialising. At the appointed hour our stalwart Hon. Piper Past President Tony Hindley piped the President, Consort and the Top Table guests to their table (pictured right). The President introduced the top table guests and gave a warm welcome to all present.

Vice President Norma Smith said Grace; and Junior Vice President, Murdo Ferrier

proposed the Loyal Toast.

In her post lunch address, the President again thanked everyone for attending and said how proud she was to be the first President of the Association from Northampton.

She spoke a little of the Association's history and encouraged everyone to promote membership to all those eligible. She was complimentary about the meal and the venue and thanked all the staff for their efficient and friendly service.

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Pictured left: Henry & Pam Franklin with Vida & Past President Hamish Brown

Pictured below: Gina Ferrier, Les Barr, Robert & Carole Perkins, JVP Murdo Ferrier and Ann Slatter.

Following her remarks, the President drew the winning ticket for the customary Bottle Draw which on this occasion was Ruby of Rangoon Gin. The draw provided a modest profit of just over £34 for Association funds.

Table themes for the lunch were based on generic tartans. Flower of Scotland is the President's preferred tartan used for the Top Table. Other tables were named Auld Scotland, Passion of Scotland, Pride of Scotland, Scotland the Brave and the Scotland National tartans.



Pictured left: Past President Bernice Young, VP Norma Smith, Val Garvey, Pat Hewson and Pat Harrison

Pictured right:

Andrew & Past President Vivien M'ltwamwari, Past President Harry & Nancy Sheach and Christine & Past President Murray McVey



Extraordinary Arrangements for 2020/21

Members who receive email communications will know that we had no alternative other than to cancel the Annual Dinner & Dance due to be held at the Rockingham Forest Hotel Corby on Saturday, 16 May 2020.

Also, although some way off, the Annual General Meeting on 20 June will most likely become a casualty of the current restrictions. In the unlikely event that the restrictions are relaxed, it is doubtful that members would wish to expose

themselves to risk by gathering together following the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Constitution, paragraph 14, allows for the Officers of the Association to conduct the running of Association business outside of an AGM. After consultation with the President and Vice Presidents we have decided to cancel the AGM this year. End Year Accounts will be prepared by me and examined by our Examiner and submitted to the membership for adoption by email.

Under these very exceptional circumstances, the Association Officers have also agreed to extend our current President's year until June 2021. Both Vice Presidents will continue in their current role until the 2021 AGM. Hopefully these arrangements will allow time for the return to some normality but who knows

The Annual Lunch has been booked for Sunday, 11 October at the Bestwood Lodge Hotel, Arnold Nottinghamshire. It is unclear at this stage whether it will be possible for this to go ahead.

Membership Matters

Obituary – Marie Wheelan



I am sorry to report the passing, on 24 March, after a long stay in hospital, of Marie Wheelan, Past President of Wakefield Caledonian Society.

Marie joined the Association in 2013 and has been a loyal member attending our annual events along with her friends from Wakefield Caledonian

Society. Marie was quite a character and will be sorely missed by all who knew her. Condolences have been sent from the President and members and an in-memoriam donation has been made by the Association to the family's chosen charity, Leeds Cares, St James' Hospital.

Barnsley Scottish Society

It seems strange how often things go amiss when we rush straight from Christmas into Burns' Night. It certainly came quickly for us. Our gentleman giving the Toast to the Haggis could not come so husband Tony stepped into the breach. Unfortunately, Tony, our Honorary Piper then developed a severe virus taking a turn for the worse the day before Burns Night.

Our President, Dr Kenneth McDonald stepped in to give the (unknown) address to the Haggis and our son Aidan Wemyss Hindley, (who after a break of 40 years took up the pipes again last year) had no option but to pipe in the top table and the Haggis.

A lovely meal was enjoyed by all. Dr Norman Macaskill, Sheffield Caledonian Society entertained us with a new approach to the Immortal Memory - from the standpoint of a clinical psychiatrist! Aidan and his wife Tracy then gave the toast to the Lassies and the reply.

The dancing was, as ever, energetic and enjoyable. A very pleasant evening with a lovely special atmosphere.

Cynthia Hindley 

Ed Note: Pleased to report that Tony is now fully recovered.



Caledonian Society of Doncaster



Our Burns Supper was very successful despite a few last-minute hitches. S.P.A. Hon. Piper Tony Hindley had agreed to pipe in the Haggis but as reported elsewhere he was ill and unable to attend.

To make matters worse, after a bit of arm twisting, Tony & Cynthia had agreed to give the Toast to the Lassies and the reply.

However, I addressed the Haggis and after an enjoyable meal, the Immortal Memory was proposed by Society Past President, David Hunter.

George and Hazel Coull saved the day and gave the Toast to the Lassies and the reply.

After all our worries, in the end we had an enjoyable evening with plenty of dancing.

Harry Sheach 

Huntingdon & District Caledonian Society



Pictured left: President, Steve Cole

This year's celebration was held on 25 January 2020 in the Offord Cluny Village Hall.

President Steve Cole presided over proceedings and began by welcoming members and friends present.

Caterers provided the traditional Burns Night menu of Scotch Broth, Haggis, Tatties and Neeps followed by Raspberry Meringues and Cream or Cheese and Biscuits. Tea or coffee was also served.



The Haggis, piped in by Calum Campbell, Pipe Major of the Cambridge Caledonian Pipe Band was then duly addressed by the President.

After the meal the usual speeches were presented. The 'Toast to the Immortal Memory' of Robert Burns was given by Norman Hart (pictured above), a member of the Society. George Stevenson gave the 'Toast to the Lassies' and the 'Reply' was given by Past President Pam Franklin.

Following the formal proceedings there was time to squeeze in some Scottish country dancing. All in all, a good night was enjoyed by everyone who attended.



Northampton Town and County Association



Pictured right: Past President Margaret McKee greets with a heather corsage, long standing member Betty Sheppard and partner Norman Tyler. Betty will celebrate her 99th birthday in June

We celebrated the first event of our Centenary Year on Saturday, 25 January at Moulton Community Centre with our traditional Burns Nicht Dinner and Dance. Our excellent host for the evening was our Hon. Secretary, Allyson Russell and Mary Roach, Past President and current S.P.A. President was a very able Master of Ceremonies.

We had some great speakers and it is fair to say that the younger generation definitely did us proud. James Russell, aged 11 years (pictured above right) gave an excellent rendition of the Address to the Haggis for the second year running.

Murdo Ferrier, President of Leicester Caledonian Society and JVP of S.P.A. gave an educational and interesting Immortal Memory. He even managed to make a connection to Burns through his family name



- a difficult one to beat for the future!

Jacob Benhayoun, Sixth Form student gave a cheeky Toast to the Lassies which had the audience laughing hilariously and Heather MacCallum, also a Sixth Form student made a very confident and clever reply on behalf of the Lassies.

As always, Alan McIlravia, Hon. Piper for many years, gave a piping recital which stirred the soul and was a chance to catch our breath between lively dancing to the

toe-tapping live music from 'The Occasional Few'. Just as well that we had S.P.A. Past President Ian Slatter (pictured below left being wired up) on hand to shout the instructions thereby ensuring the dance full was always full.

It was no surprise then that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Thank you from the Committee to all involved.

Bill Lockerbie
& Mary Roach 



St Andrew Society of York

Once again, we had a great turn out for Burns Night on Saturday, 25th January, with around 70 members and friends. It was really good to see four of our newest members attending.

Following the traditional piping in, President Marlynn Holroyd (pictured below) addressed the Haggis.



Our President had chosen well to bring the Revd Fraser Aitken (pictured below) down from Ayrshire to propose the toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. By way of background Fraser was minister of Ayr St Columba Church between 1991 and 2019, until his retirement, a much-loved minister, evident by the sometimes 'dubious' jokes he told during his address! Overall an excellent tribute to the Bard.



Pictured above: President Marlynn Holroyd with the Lord Mayor of York, Cllr Janet Looker and her top table guests.



President Elect Alison Paton proposed the toast to the Toon We Bide In, reflecting on her early days in Campbeltown and her studies in York, as well as the York love affair with chocolate!

The Lord Mayor gave an amusing unscripted reply and delighted everyone by reciting verses from Tam O'Shanter!

The evening wouldn't have been complete without the usual light-hearted toast to the Lassies, given by Frank Paterson and the response from Helen Porter.

All in all, an enjoyable occasion and thanks to all who assisted with the arrangements.

And now for a change

Tim and Judith Cobb, Chesterfield Caledonian Association had the pleasure of visiting their son, Rory and his family in New Zealand in January which coincided with Burns Night and were lucky enough to be able to celebrate by the beach at Hokititka which is in the west of the South Island.

As you might imagine, Haggis is in fairly short supply in rural New Zealand so the family had to improvise and adapt their celebrations accordingly.

Pictured right is Tim addressing a dish of 'sausages' with daughter-in-law Kate, killed grandson Hamish and granddaughter Sophie in her tartan skirt. Methinks I spy a drop o' the cratur too! Judith reports that both children stood like statues and took the whole proceedings very seriously!



Usually at this time of year, I am busy finalising arrangements for our Annual Dinner and Dance and looking forward with anticipation to meeting up with members to catch up and enjoy the fellowship our Association always provides. So, it all seems a bit strange to have time on my hands – though somehow it still manages to slip away.

At the time of writing, it's clear that the hotel in Corby cannot accommodate us next year and it's hard to see what the future holds for us. Regardless of the doom and gloom being fed to us daily by the media, I am optimistic that we will prevail.

My thanks to Nancy Barr and Murdo Ferrier for the Lunch photos. Thanks also to all who have provided copy for the Newsletter on their Burns Celebrations.

I have taken the opportunity with our President's approval to try a new format for the newsletter which was beginning to look a bit tired. In changing the format, I have to bear in mind that it must be printable to send to those of members who don't have email. You may or may not like the new format – please let me know what you think. It will be quite easy to switch back.

Thankfully, I haven't heard of any of our members who have contracted Covid-19 but please let me know if you hear of anyone who is ill and would appreciate a card – if my card-making skills fail, I can always drop them a note!

Our President Mary and Consort Laurie, Gwen and I send our very best wishes for a safe and healthy lockdown to all members and your families. Happy Easter!

H M MacDonald OBE
Honorary Secretary & Treasurer
Scottish Presidents' Association
98 Peveril Road
Chesterfield
Derbyshire S41 8SG

t: 01246 210722
e: spahonsecobe@gmail.com

