



# The Caledonian

VOL. XXXIX NO. 3 NOVEMBER 2022



THE SCOTTISH-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE SOUTHERN TIER, INC.



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## FROM THE CHIEF:

Your board has been meeting in person at last, but with some folks on the sick list and others traveling to foreign shores, it's been

difficult to get together. We're happy to welcome Jan Kostolansky back after her medical adventures, and offer our condolences to Alastair Cormack on the loss of his mother. St. Andrews Day Annual Meeting date is almost upon us, and here are the details:

## ST. ANDREWS DAY TEA & ANNUAL MEETING



Saturday, November 26, 2022

3-4 PM

at First Congregational United  
Church of Christ, Corning NY

Light Refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP!

Jan Kostolansky

[jankosto59@gmail.com](mailto:jankosto59@gmail.com) or 607-368-8385

We will be holding the annual Election of Officers at this time.

Please plan on joining us!

*Timothy W. Swan*

Chief



## HALLOWEEN IN SCOTLAND

By Jemma Beedie: Found at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/scottish-halloween>



The Halloween holiday has roots in Scotland. Starting out as the Celtic festival of Samhain, it marked the end of the summer and the harvest, and the coming of the dark winter. Over the years, Samhain developed into Halloween

and spread around the world.

But the Americanization of Halloween—through television, films, and both-ways immigration—means that Scottish children wear Toy Story costumes and carry plastic pumpkins to gather sweets from their neighbors. There is, though, still one big difference between Scotland and the rest of the world: here, trick-or-treating is not a one-way transaction.

Children knock at the houses in their villages, apartment block towers, or housing estates. When the tenant comes to the door, the children each perform a "turn": they tell a joke or sing a song. They are then rewarded for their performance with a chocolate or sweet. No turn, no reward.

This custom is called "guising." The word dates back to the 13th century, and meant "to dress fantastically," with the same word root as "disguise." Guising has been a tradition in Scotland since at least the 16th century. Julian Goodare, professor of history at Edinburgh University, notes that it used to take place at a very different time of the year. "In the 16th and 17th centuries, guising in the sense of dressing up and visiting houses mainly happened during the 12 days of Christmas," he explains, "though there were also local celebrations at other times of year."

One of those times was during the harvest. Many traditional Scottish Halloween customs involve food in some way, as recorded in the Robert Burns poem, "Halloween," published in 1785. Games involving roasting nuts and peeling apples could reveal the nature of one's true love. (In the poem, players threw nuts with party-goers' names painted on them into the firecoals to see in which order they burst.) Dooking (or "bobbing" in North America) for apples has never gone out of fashion.

Another food-focused game saw scones dipped in treacle, hung up for children to try to bite. "It would twirl round and you'd end up with the treacle all over your face," says Margaret Hamilton, born in 1950, who grew up in Bannockburn.

Andy Hodgson, who grew up in Dundee in the 1960s, recollected what his childhood Halloweens were like. "The whole thing I remember is being cold," he says. "And the smell of coal burning because everyone had coal fires in those days, and the smell of neep lanterns."



Neep Lanterns 2022 by Linda Ferris

Scottish families traditionally carved turnips, or "neeps," which were plentiful thanks to the harvest. "They were so big and heavy, when you were a kid you couldn't possibly carry it. We had smaller neep lanterns, probably the size of my fist. They weren't very effective and the house stank for days," Hodgson says.

Guising was always the biggest event of the night, though. Both Hodgson and Hamilton spoke about performing songs or dances in return for fruit, nuts, or a penny.

Shetland, to the north, and the Outer Hebrides, to the west, have different traditions shaped by their contact with Vikings and the North Atlantic trade. Both places saw children dress in creepy outfits, however, and take part in guising. There are many pictures of islanders dressed in sheep skulls, skins, and straw wigs. Katie Laurenson, speaking in 1961, remembered her experiences guising for "a corn a mael in me buggy [a little meal in my container]" as there were few pennies given to children in Shetland in her youth.

Guising didn't always mean performance. During her childhood in Perthshire, Margaret McDiarmid, born in 1904 and speaking to an archivist in 1964, explained how some children did housework instead. "They used to come to the house and sweep the floor and tidy up the house. They had big brooms. Instead of tidying it, they just disordered it. And then you had to give them money or



something."

It is unusual today to give children money on Halloween. Usually, it's only done by those who have forgotten to prepare for guisers. "My children are so delighted when people give them money," says Stephanie Hamilton. "It's rare, but they've often got a few coins when they've been out guising. I remember when I was wee we would sometimes get 20 pence from some of the older folk on our street and would be equally delighted."

Lesley McGregor also spoke fondly of her memories of guising as a child. "When I was younger, we made a point of playing an instrument, and one year we even did a rendition of Chesney Hawkes's "The One and Only,"" she says. Last year, her six-year-old daughter Jura instead opted to tell a rude joke as her "turn": "Why did the baker have brown hands? Because he was kneading a jobby [a poo]!"

"A lot of folk said it was the best joke they heard all night," laughs McGregor.

Hamilton's son, Mikey, five, also told a great joke last year: "What's a vampire's favorite fruit? A necktarine!" Mikey's favorite thing about Halloween is "going to all the houses and getting all the sweeties."

It is heartwarming to see that modern-day children in Scotland enjoy many of the same customs remembered fondly by their grandparents. Even if the costumes and rewards are different, Halloween is still about performance in return for sugary goods.

## TIDBITS ABOUT TARTANS

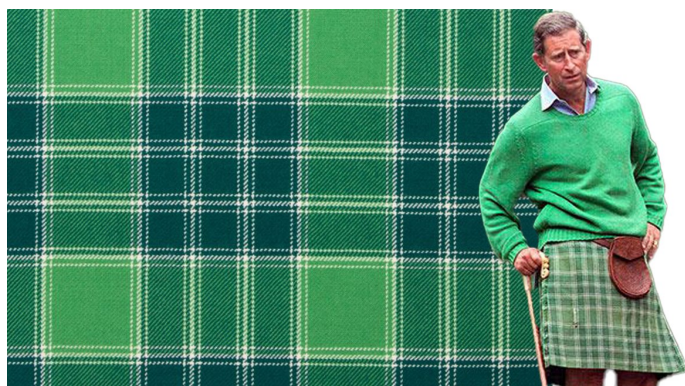
From <https://www.scotlandshop.com/tartanblog/royal-tartan-guide>



There are many tartans associated with the Royal family and the Queen did in fact have an official tartan, Stewart Royal. Interesting that the family often sports one tartan or another, with the notable exception of William, Prince of Wales. The only photos your editor was able to find showing William in a kilt were from his early childhood...



In the last photo of Her Majesty that was published, she is sporting the Balmoral tartan... The King Charles III and the Queen Consort have also often appeared in the Balmoral tartan.



This is the Macdonald Lord of the Isles Tartan, which the King often wears, among many others.



A number of tartans have been designed in honor of the current Royal family. In 2012 the Royal Pride tartan was designed to celebrate the engagement of Prince William to Catherine Middleton. The prominent blue stripe is said to recall the dress Kate wore during their engagement announcement which matched the ring given to her by William which was Princess Diana's.

### SMILE...



Three Scotsmen, all in their 80s and each rather hard of hearing, were playing golf one fine but windy September day. One remarked "Windy, isn't it?" The second Scot replied "No, it's not Wednesday, it's Thursday." At that point the third man chimed in, "I'm thirsty too. Let's have a beer."



## Past Chiefs of the Scottish-American Society of the Southern Tier, Inc.

<i>George Cunningham</i>	<i>1973 to 1985</i>
<i>Don Campbell</i>	<i>1985 to 1991</i>
<i>Doug Colborn</i>	<i>1991 to 2000</i>
<i>Donald Flatt</i>	<i>2000 to 2003</i>
<i>Tom McIntyre</i>	<i>2003 to 2009</i>
<i>Blake Mayo</i>	<i>2009 to 2015</i>
<i>Gil Ferris</i>	<i>2015 to 2017</i>
<i>Rick Mason</i>	<i>2017 to 2019</i>

Major Paul Burns piping the Queen home with 'Sleep, Dearie, Sleep'



Scottish-American Society of the Southern Tier  
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## DATES TO REMEMBER:

### St. Andrews Day Tea & Annual Meeting

November 26 3-4 PM

at First Congregational United Church of Christ,  
Corning NY

### BURNS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

January 28 3 PM

At the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, Big Flats



*May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.*