



The Caledonian

VOL. XL NO. 2 MARCH 2023



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



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Chief: Tim Swan

156 Fuller Road, Osceola PA 16942
(607) 329-8359 twswan@rocketmail.com

Assistant Chief: Russell Gridley

15 Foothill Road, Elmira NY 14903
(607) 562-7046

Secretary: Nedra McElroy

4 Lackawanna Avenue, Bath NY 14810
(607) 776-6727 mscrayola@stny.rr.com

Treasurer: Alastair Cormack

76 University Street, Alfred NY 14802
(607) 587-8295 cormack@alfred.edu

Trustees

Wendy Brooks, wbbpipes@gmail.com

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Ray Margeson, rmargeson@aol.com

Bill Sitzman ibcengineering@juno.com

Sandy Swan, sandyswan21@gmail.com

Sam Watson, barbsam418@gmail.com

Editor:

Nedra McElroy, mscrayola@stny.rr.com

Caledonian Highlanders Pipes & Drums:

Pipe Major, Tom Kennedy

Band Historian, Lee Adelsberg

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Webmaster: Sean McElroy, info@sasst.org



FROM THE CHIEF:

After a hugely successful Burns Night Celebration we are excited to tell you that we made our financial goal for 2023. Thank you to all our sponsors, members, Board of Directors, the Wings of Eagles and the Colonial Restaurant and Catering. In recent years the event has drawn more people and interest in the Scottish heritage. The event is



our main fundraiser for our three scholarships.

As you know each year the SAS gives \$500 scholarships to college-bound high school seniors or students who are already enrolled in a college. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in or connection to Scottish

ancestry, history, culture, art or music. The George Cunningham Scottish Essay Award is given in memory of native Scot,



George Cunningham, dearly missed founding member and first chief of the Scottish American Society,

bagpiper in the Caledonian Highlanders, singer of Scottish songs, and talented artist and engineer. The Bruce Stewart Memorial Scholarship is presented by the family of the late beloved member of the Scottish American Society. And the Robert Burns Scholarship, is in memory of the world-famous poet and lyricist.

In late February, I was contacted by the family of Bruce Bresee of Ulster, PA. Bruce had a love for Scotland. This love led to more than 20 trips to Scotland. While there he stayed at B&B's and

photographed the Scottish people, making many life-long friends. His favorite stop was the Shetland Islands. Over the years **Bruce** accumulated more than 125 books and the family asked if the Scottish American Society would like to have this collection of books. Without hesitation I said yes and met with his daughter in Mansfield. After many hours, I inventoried all the books by name and author. I also added in our existing books as well as my own. I will get this completed list to **Nedra** so that everyone can see our 'Library' of Scottish books and magazines. I will be the caretaker of this library until someone else wants the duty. I am currently looking for a book case for the collection of about 160 books.

Now it is time to focus on **Tartan Day**. Be sure to see the separate piece (next page) about this event held on April 6th at Centerway Square in Corning, NY. Also coming up is the **Annual Finger Lakes Celtic Festival** on Saturday May 20th from 9:30am to 7:30pm. It will be held at the Lincoln Hill Farms 3792 NY 247, Canandaigua, NY 14424. Come be Celtic for the day (if you're not already) and enjoy a pleasing array of sights, sounds and smells. This event includes highland games, bagpiping and massed bands, dance exhibitions, Celtic music, demonstrations, a large gathering of Scottish clans, historical & heritage societies, artisans, kids' activities, and so much more. Admission fee, no pets, free parking and it's happening Rain or Shine.

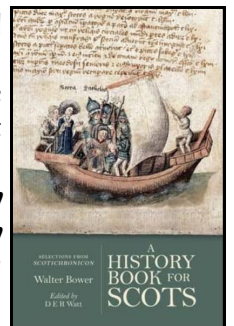
 Timothy W. Swan
Chief

THE DECLARATION OF ARBROATH

In 1320, **Robert the Bruce**, king of Scots, sent a letter to **Pope John XXII**, known as the Declaration of Arbroath. This document detailed the history of the Scottish people and the oppressive behavior of their English neighbors, and it asked the Pope to recognize Scottish sovereignty. **Robert** wrote, For as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is not for glory, nor riches, nor honors that we are fighting, but for freedom." The letter was also copied into the manuscript of the *Scotichronicon*, made about a century later.

The *Scotichronicon*, 'a history book for Scots' was written on a small island in the Firth of Forth in the 1440s by **Walter Bower**, who set out to tell the whole story of the Scottish nation in a single huge book. It begins with the mythical voyage of **Scota**,

the Pharaoh's daughter, from Egypt with the Stone of Destiny. The land that her sons discovered in the Western Ocean was named after her: Scotland. It goes on to describe the turbulent events that followed, among them the wars of the Scots and the Picts (begun by a quarrel over a dog); the poisoning of **King Fergus** by his wife; **Macbeth's** usurpation and uneasy reign; the good deeds of **Margaret**, queen and saint; **Bruce's** murder of the baron, **John 'Red' Comyn**; the founding of Scotland's first university at St Andrews; the 'Burnt Candlemas' (a failed invasion of Scotland in early 1356 by an English army commanded by **King Edward III**); and the endless troubles between Scotland and England. Weaving in and out of the events of **Bower's** factual history, like a wonderful pageant, are other subjects that fascinated him: harrowing visions of hell and purgatory, extraordinary miracles; the exploits of knights and beggars, merchants and monks; the ravages of flood and fire; the terrors of the plague; and the answers to such puzzling questions as what makes a good king, and why Englishmen have tails. In 1998 **Donald Watt** (Scottish historian, professor of Medieval History at St Andrews) and his team of scholars completed the first modern edition and translation of *Scotichronicon* in nine volumes. It has been described as 'a massive achievement for Scottish cultural history' and 'an open invitation to join a voyage of discovery'. There is also a book called *A History Book for Scots* which has selections from the whole of *Scotichronicon*. This book puts Bower's epic of Scotland into the hands of the general reader and is a marvelous and unforgettable story, which should probably be required reading for anyone of Scottish descent. Perhaps the importance of *Scotichronicon* itself was best summed up by Bower himself, who wrote at the end of it: *Non Scotus est Christe cui liber non placet iste*—Christ! He is not a Scot who is not pleased with this book! *A History Book for Scots* is currently available at Amazon.

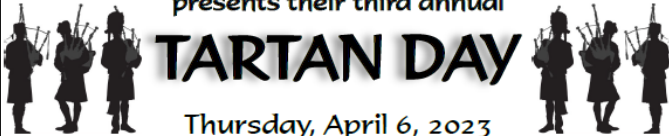


THE KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS

Research by Chief Tim Swan

- Kirkin' o' the Tartans - Clan representatives carry lengths (or flags) of tartans forward to the altar rail and the Chaplain says a few words about the Scottish heritage and gives a blessing.

The Scottish-American Society of the Southern Tier
presents their third annual



Thursday, April 6, 2023

6 - 7 PM

Centerway Square, Corning, NY
followed by a Market Street Pub Crawl

Program

Welcome, Invocation by Chief Tim Swan

National Anthem with Michael Flanagan

Proclamation Presented by Bill Boland, Mayor of Corning

Calling of the Clans by Chief Tim Swan

Listen to the Pipes: Concert by
The Caledonian Highlanders Pipes & Drums

All are welcome!
Hope to see you there!
Wear your tartan!

Questions, comments, concerns: info@sasst.org

- The "Kirkin' O' The Tartans" is the presentation of a Scottish family's symbol, its tartan, at church for blessing. After **Bonnie Prince Charlie**'s Scottish forces were defeated by the English in 1746 in the Battle of Culloden, the wearing of tartans and the playing of bagpipes were forbidden in Scotland for many years.
- While the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service celebrates Scotland and Scottish heritage, it is truly a Scottish-American custom. If one searches the Internet for information, stories abound of the Kirkin's roots being in days of the Act of Proscription, when the wearing of the kilt was banned in the Highlands - according to the legend, Highlanders hid pieces of tartan and brought them to church to be secretly blessed at a particular point in the service. Ask any Scot or Scottish expatriate about the Kirkin', and chances are you will be met with a questioning look and an admission of ignorance of this supposedly centuries-old Scottish tradition.

HOLY HAREBELLS, IT'S SPRING!

Found on 'O Flower of Scotland', Facebook page, posted by
Jimmy Wood...and other Bluebell notes from
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/

The Scottish bluebell is a beautiful blossom steeped in myth and folklore. Legend has it that fairies live amongst them and cast their spells onto the bluebells.

Also known as Dead Man's bells, fairies have been known to lay down their wrath on those that would dare disturb them by picking or damaging the flower and thus releasing their spells.

It is also said that witches would turn themselves into hares to hide among the sea of lilac and so hence their other name Harebells.

One thing for sure, best not to wander off the beaten path or you may find yourself on the wrong end of these illusive mythical creatures

With the bluebell one of the most iconic flowers of Britain, it is no surprise that folklore surrounds them. Although for such a dainty flower, much of the folklore is quite gloomy.

Bluebell woods (see photo on back page) are enchanted. Fairies used them to lure and trap people in their nether world.

- When a bluebell's bell rings, it calls all the fairies to a gathering, but if a human hears the bell, they will be visited by a malicious fairy and die soon after.
- If a child picks a bluebell in a bluebell wood, they will never be seen again.
- If you wear a garland of bluebells, you will be compelled to tell the truth
- If you turn one of the flowers inside out without tearing it, you will eventually win the one you love.
- In the language of flowers, the bluebell symbolizes constancy, humility and gratitude.
- Leaving folklore aside, let's not forget that we owe the British bluebell much more than myth and sentiment, as it's had practical uses throughout the ages.
- During Queen Elizabeth I's reign, the big ruff collars were stiffened using starch made from the crushed bulbs of bluebells.
- During the Bronze Age, feathers were stuck on arrows using the sticky sap from bluebells.
- The gummy sap was also used as glue for bookbinding. As the sap is so toxic, it stopped certain insects from attacking the binding.
- Herbalists used to use bluebells to help prevent nightmares.
- 13th century monks used them to treat snakebites and lepers – very much a kill or cure remedy given that bluebells are poisonous.
- Scientists are researching how the toxic chemicals in bluebells could one day help treat cancer.





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>
<i>Tim Swan</i>	<i>2019 to</i>



Nedra McElroy
4 Lackawanna Avenue
Bath NY 14810-1650

Address Service Requested



DATES TO REMEMBER:

TARTAN DAY

April 6, Corning Centerway Square, 6:00pm

FINGER LAKES CELTIC FESTIVAL

May 20, 2023 Saturday

Lincoln Hill Farms

3792 NY-247, Canandaigua, NY 14424

9:30am – 7:00pm

Rain or Shine

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS PICNIC

July 22, Mossy Bank Park, Bath NY