

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue XV

Newsletter of the Scottish Studies Society: ISSN No. 1491-2759

Winter/Spring 2003

Tenth anniversary of Scottish Studies Tartan Day Dinner to be celebrated on April 16

The Scottish Studies Society will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of our annual Tartan Day Celebration Dinner at the Granite Club on April 16, 2003. On this special evening we will once again be celebrating our Scots-Canadian heritage.

Since 1993 the event has brought together people from across Canada to Toronto for a celebration of Scots-Canadian heritage and culture. As is customary with each event, a "Scot of the Year" is recognized and entertainment provided.

The "Scot of the Year" is someone who has been active in promoting Scottish-Canadian heritage and culture and has been a



Iain Ronald and Alastair Gillespie will be presented with Scot of the Year 2003 awards at this year's event.

leader in the business and community service fields.

This year, for the first time, two recipients have been chosen. The Honourable Alastair Gillespie, P.C., O.C. has had a successful career as a Minister of the Crown and in the business world. He has a long record of community service, and in 1998, was named an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Iain Ronald has had a fifty-year career in the finance and retail industries in Canada. He continues to serve on a number of prominent Canadian boards and works tirelessly for many non-profit organizations.

Both Alastair and Iain have been active members of the Campaign for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph and have been instrumental in raising significant amounts of money that will go towards the funding of a Chair of Scottish Studies there.

Entertainment for the evening will be provided by the 48th Highlanders Pipes & Drums and from Sandy MacIntyre's Band, *Steeped in Tradition*. Tables of eight or ten can be purchased for \$1200 and \$1500 respectively. Single tickets are available for \$150.

Scots Wha Hae

*a desire to nurture and preserve
their heritage in Canada
are invited to join*



THE SCOTTISH STUDIES FOUNDATION

*a charitable organization
dedicated to actively supporting the
Scottish Studies Program
at*

The University of Guelph

Charitable registration
No. 119253490 RR0001

Website: <http://www.scottishstudies.ca>

Family History Day at the University of Guelph

On Saturday May 3, 2003 from 10 am to 1 pm, the University of Guelph's Scottish Studies Programme is hosting a Family History Day. This is designed to assist people interested in their Scottish family history with sources and technique to start off or aid their research. The program will be a series of three presentations. They will take the form of "Getting Started", "I've started but don't know where to look now" and "Really tricky problems".

The speaker will be **Jane MacNamara**. Jane is a member of the Ontario Genealogical Society and a founding member of Friends of Archives of Ontario. Jane lectures for both of these groups and also originated the Genealogy Summer Camps in Toronto. She also takes tours to Salt Lake City.

Following the lectures, there will be the opportunity to do a tour of the University of Guelph Scottish Collection to familiarize people with the library and the materials available to assist in genealogical research.

The cost for the morning which will include a printed booklet of sources and morning tea is \$40 (\$35 for SSF Members) payable to the University of Guelph. For further information please contact June Pearson, Alumni Manager, College of Arts on (519) 824 4120 Ex: 53093 or Email: jpearson@uoguelph.ca.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Fellow Members,

Since my last report, the Annual Meetings of both the Scottish Studies Foundation and Society have taken place and, once again, we have an impressive list of volunteers (see page 8) who have agreed to serve on the Boards of these two organizations. I would like to extend my thanks to them all for giving their valuable time and effort to support our cause.

Now you may recall from my last report that I mentioned to you that members are always asking me how they can help, especially those of you who live some distance from the Toronto/Guelph area. Well, as it happens, we now have a very important task for all our Canadian members to carry out.

We are looking to the Canadian Federal Government to increase its support of our initiative to endow the Chair in Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph, similar to the support the Ministry of Canadian Heritage has given to the Irish Studies Program at Montreal's Concordia University.

Not surprisingly, as a first step, we have been advised that it is crucial for us to raise our profile with MPs at the federal level. After that we will be in a much better position to lobby for support. Although we know intuitively that the concept of providing an academic infrastructure for the Scots-Canadian community commands tremendous support across Canada, it is important to have this documented.

So this is where you come in! We need as many individuals and organizations to register their support of our cause with their

local Member of Parliament.

To assist with this, we have prepared a sample letter which has been mailed with this newsletter.

The idea is that you use this as the basis of a letter you would send to your MP. If you would like us to customize this letter for you, we will be pleased to do so.

Also, we would like to enlist the support of as many other Scots-Canadian groups as possible, so we would like to know of as many organizations you believe would be interested in registering their support as well.

At this point in time, we now have a truly wonderful opportunity to put Scottish Studies permanently on the map in Canada. The chance to create an institution that will stand the test of time is almost within our grasp. And I'm sure that with your help we can make it happen!

Sincerely,
David Hunter

Unique collection of 18th century views of Glasgow donated to the Foundation

Scottish Studies member and art collector Ed



Ed O'Brien with one of Robert Paul Eleve's engravings

O'Brien has made an interesting donation of 18th century engravings to be sold to raise funds for the Foundation.

Ed is originally from the Shawlands Cross area of Glasgow and has been living in Canada since 1957.

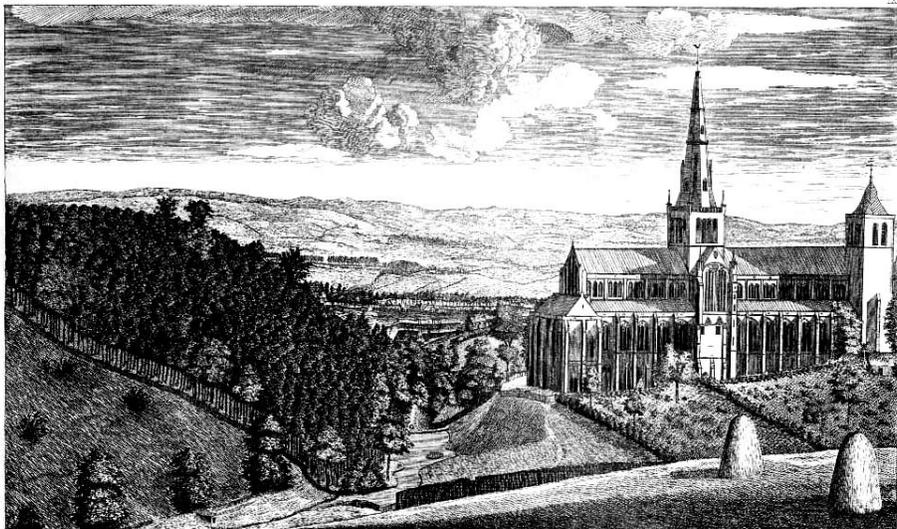
Before his retirement he managed a number of National Trust branches where he specialized in retirement savings, working with many of the "captains" of Canadian industry and eventually becoming known as National Trust's "Guru" of RRSPs!

For 36 years, Ed was the chairman of a work group at the Easter Seals Society's camp for crippled kids in Collingwood, Ontario, raising funds and carrying out maintenance and repairs. His dedicated efforts ensured that the camp was able to operate at no cost to Easter Seals.

Ed was given the engravings from a friend who owned the Court Bar near George Square in Glasgow. The bar had been in his friend's family for many generations and the engravings had been stored there for many years.

They depict scenes of Glasgow and surroundings in the period just before the industrial revolution which was to transform Glasgow from a pastoral riverside cathedral town to a huge urban metropolis.

The artist, Robert Paul Eleve, was a contemporary of Robert Foulis who established the Foulis Press, one of the 18th century's great printing and publishing firms. In 1753 Foulis opened a school of art and design at Glasgow University. Known as the Foulis Academy, its students produced a wide range of prints, paintings, and sculpture. The subjects ranged from copies of Old Master paintings to Robert Paul Eleve's famous views of Glasgow. ■



*View taken from the North of the Cathedral Church of Glasgow.
Engraved in this Academy in Glasgow by the said Eleve.*

Burns Night 2003: An International Event

Guests from Scotland, England (and even Fiji!) braved the cold to attend the Society's International Celebration of Robert Burns on January 18. Our MC for the night again was Gordon Hepburn who also gave *The Immortal Memory*, George Walker gave the *Address to the Haggis*, Dr. Richard Janeczko toasted *The Lassies* and Daisy White gave the reply. Fiddler Jeffrey Gosse and his team had everyone up dancing and the Tunnochbrae Dancers gave a dazzling performance of Scottish Dancing. The pipes and drums of the 48th Highlanders made sure that everyone in the hotel knew that a Scottish event was taking place!



The 48th Highlanders



← James Robertson ,
President of the Robert
Burns World Federation
and Dr. Jim Connor, Past
President and current
“ambassador” of the
Robert Burns Association
of North America

Traditional Scottish
dancing by the
Tunnochbrae Dancers →



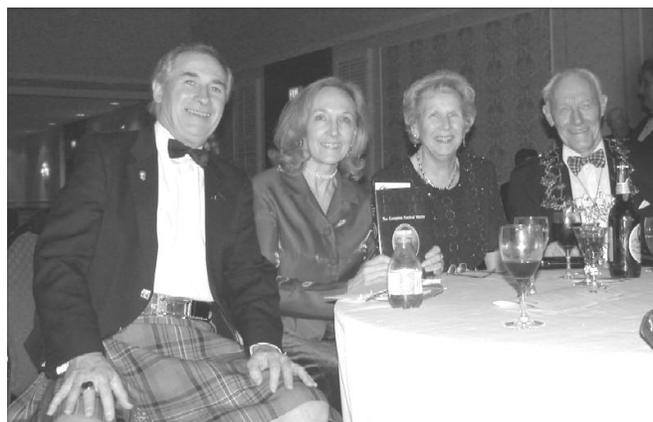
Fiddler Jeffrey Gosse from the Sandy MacIntyre band



Burning off the calories with Scottish dance “Strip the Willow!”



Folk singer Danielle Bourre with MC Gordon Hepburn



Alex Crawley with landscape artist Jeanne Isley and Eileen and James Robertson

Scotland's Antarctic Expedition

By Alan McKenzie

Scotland has suddenly discovered that it has found a new hero. His name is Dr William Speirs Bruce. He headed Scotland's only National Antarctic Expedition from 1902-1904 and discovered Coats Land, mapped the Weddell Sea, set up the longest surviving meteorological station and produced a hefty six volume scientific results report of oceanographic, meteorological, glaciological and biological research. Indeed, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, more generally known as the Scotia Expedition, has been described as one of the most successful scientific explorations of the Antarctic. But until recently it was almost unknown in Scotland, or anywhere else for that matter.

How is it that at the height of the great excitement of Antarctic exploration in the early years of the 20th century that Scott and Shackleton's heroic, but nonetheless monumental failures captured the public imagination while the humble Scotia Expedition received so little acclaim? Well, for a start, the world followed with some excitement the attempts to get to the South Pole. There was that extraordinary race between Amundsen and Scott. They both succeeded in reaching the South Pole but Scott's expedition ended tragically with the deaths of Captain Scott's brave team. These kinds of events made the headlines. Shackleton's

amazing escape from what seemed utter disaster when his ship *Endurance* was crushed in the Antarctic ice and abandoned was truly a story of amazing fortitude and courage. But his expedition was a failure for all that.

Bruce, however, had no interest in the race to the Pole. It did not, in his opinion, serve any scientific purpose. Most of the money needed to finance the Scotia Expedition was raised from the wealthy Coats brothers from Paisley. That is the reason that Bruce named the 150 miles of new land he discovered in the Antarctic, Coats Land. His scientific support



Dr William Speirs Bruce (1867-1921)

was provided mainly by the prestigious Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) and it is thanks to that illustrious body that the Scotia Expedition is being recognized in the centenary years 2002-2004. Patron of the Scotia Centenary is HRH the Princess Royal and another patron is Crown Prince Albert of Monaco. The Crown Prince is a descendant of Prince Albert I of Monaco

who was an accomplished oceanographer in his own right and a great friend of Dr Bruce. Bruce accompanied the Prince on expeditions to Spitsbergen in the 1890s and was a regular visitor to Monaco.

Among the ambitious plans drawn up to mark the 100th anniversary of this great Scottish expedition and to ensure that "Scotland's overlooked polar hero" is forgotten no more, was a dinner held in Glasgow on October 30, 2002. The Lord Provost of Glasgow hosted this dinner in the prestigious City Chambers in the presence of Princess



Princess Anne with the Earl of Dalkeith (President of the RSGS) and SSF Governor and Past Chairman Alan McKenzie

Anne, who is also a Vice President of the RSGS.

I knew all about Dr Bruce's Scotia Expedition since he was married to my great aunt, Jessie Mackenzie, a Highland lass that he met when she was a nurse working at his father's surgery in London. In searching the Web I discovered that the RSGS was arranging centenary celebrations and was looking for donations. I sent an e-mail to Dr David Mackenzie Munro, Secretary of the RSGS, offering to make a donation and mentioning that Bruce was my great uncle. Dr Munro responded by inviting me to the centenary dinner in Glasgow and at the same time mentioned that "other descendants of Dr Bruce will be coming from Canada". I was to discover that Bruce's only two grandchildren were still alive, one living in Toronto (another William Bruce) and the other in Hamilton, Ontario (Mrs Monica Watson). I immediately contacted Mrs Watson and was invited to dinner at her home with my wife Jill. Monica had collected a number of documents and other memorabilia and had recently donated to the RSGS her grandfather's gold medal that the RSGS had awarded him almost 100 years ago together with Bruce's camera with which he took so many photographs in the Antarctic.

The proliferation of newspaper and magazine articles on the Scotia Expedition



The 1902-1904 Scottish National Antarctic Expedition



The expedition's piper Gilbert Kerr

has given much needed publicity to this long overlooked Scottish enterprise. I had collected some air-miles and elected to use them on a trip to Glasgow to attend the dinner and visit the RSGS. One outcome is that the Scottish Studies Foundation and the RSGS will each join each other's society. At the centenary dinner there were many descendants of the Scotia's original crew. There were four descendants of the ship's captain, Captain Robertson, who came all the way from Australia. I met Mr Kerr, the grandson of the Scotia's piper. The piper, Gilbert Kerr, playing to a penguin, has become the well-known symbol of the Scotia Expedition and indeed it was selected to form part of the logo of the Scotia Centenary. The piper, in full Highland dress, stands in a snow covered wilderness playing to a placid penguin which stands by his side listening to the unusual sounds emanating from the instrument. The penguin seems quite enchanted by the music. It is not at all evident that this little music lover is tied to the piper's foot with a string! In fact in a visit to the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow I saw a large stuffed penguin standing in front of a photograph of William Speirs Bruce. There was a note tied to the foot of the penguin which read: "Stop cruelty



Alan McKenzie and his cousin Bruce Watson

to penguins - ban bagpipers!"

At the reception prior to the centenary dinner in Glasgow I was pleased to meet Falcon Scott, the grandson of the famous Captain Robert Falcon Scott. I found Mrs Monica Watson, my second cousin, and asked her to introduce me to her son Bruce Watson, who also lives in Hamilton. This she did and as we were talking Princess Anne was introduced to us by Dr Munro. I told Her Royal Highness that Bruce and I were cousins, had just met each other, and we had both come from Canada. She was much amused by this and asked if we lived at opposite ends of Canada. "No" I replied, "we live just twenty minutes away from each other!"

In 2003 there is to be a big exhibition of the Scotia Expedition at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. It is good to know that the Scotia Expedition is getting the publicity it surely deserves. It has only taken one hundred years! ■

Professor Ronald Morton Smith's estate bequeaths major donation to the Foundation

For many years Ronald Morton Smith or "Sanskrit" Smith was a familiar figure to those who attended the Colloquia at the University of Guelph until he died at eighty in 1997. However, very few of those attending were aware of the genius he was.

His support of the Foundation was unflinching and the idea of establishing a permanent Chair in Scottish Studies in Canada was near and dear to his heart. After his passing, he is keeping the cause alive by bequeathing a significant portion of his estate to the Scottish Studies Campaign for which all of us involved with the Foundation are truly grateful.

Professor Smith was born in Galashiels in 1916, and he never forgot his Scottish origins or the classical education which he received as a boy. His first degree was in classics at the University of St Andrews and in his youth he acquired an abiding interest in Greek and Latin literature.

Smith learned Japanese during World War II and Korean late in life. He took a first-class degree at Oxford in Sanskrit and Avestan, and taught Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Avestan in Cambridge before coming to Toronto in 1955.

Once in Canada, Professor Smith taught classical and Vedic Sanskrit and Avestan in the Department of East Asian Studies until his retirement in 1982, except for the twelve years (1966-1978) during which he was a member of the separate Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies. His retirement was a *viridis senectus*, when he blossomed as a successful teacher of Indian and Korean art and as a scholar, not only publishing widely, but leaving over 1500 pages of unpublished writing when he died.

Professor Smith never swerved from his dedication to honest scholarship of the kind which always retains its value and validity through changes of intellectual fashion, but he was far more than an old-fashioned scholar. He took an interest in the whole world from Celtic Ireland to Japan, as the warm tributes from colleagues and friends in the volume *Corolla Torontonensis*, edited by Emmet Robbins and Stella Sandahl in 1994, make abundantly clear.

A prominent figure in Scottish dancing in Toronto, he composed songs and dances, published two volumes of children's poetry in 1994, and composed an epic poem against Oxford linguistic philosophy.

In all his forty-two years in Canada, rain or shine, winter or summer, there were no sightings of this native Scotsman without a kilt. During his first Canadian winter, as the



"Sanskrit" Smith

mercury plummeted, colleagues asked him how he felt. His answer: "It's a wee bit cold around the ears!"

They don't make very many like him these days.

Thanks to Timothy Barnes and the University of Toronto's Classics Newsletter for providing background information.

Professor Smith's home town of Galashiels is located in the historic Borders area of Scotland. Galashiels lies near the junction of the Gala Water and the River Tweed, 28 miles southeast of Edinburgh and 5 miles north of Selkirk.

In medieval times, a hunting tower was situated nearby at the heart of the royal forest of Gala, and huts or "shiels" by the river are said to have been used by pilgrims on their way to Melrose Abbey.

Over the centuries, Borders people have held tenaciously on to a sense of identity and culture. Local poets and writers used their daily encounters and experiences to write stories and ballads inspired by every aspect of Borders life, from the shepherds, supernatural folklore, love and romance to the plundering and pillage by the Reivers.

This excerpt from William Henry Ogilvie's poem *The Raiders* captures some of the essence of Borders drama.

*"Last night a wind from Lammermuir
came roaring up the glen,
With the tramp of trooping horses
and the laugh of reckless men,
And struck a mailed hand on the gate
and cried in rebel glee,
Come forth, come forth my Borderer,
and ride the March with me."*

The Lumberjills of Scotland

by Rosalind A. Elder

It was the year 1942. The designated meeting place was “Under the Clock, Glasgow Central Station.” I was awaiting the arrival of the Forestry Commission representative who was to escort our group to a training camp in Brechin, Angus. I had joined up only a week earlier and had no idea of what being a lumberjill in the Women’s Timber Corp.

Rosalind A. Elder recounts her experience as one of thousands of young women who joined the Women’s Land Army Timber Corps in order to make a contribution to the war effort during World War II.

Working with experienced forest workers from Canada and Newfoundland they were out in all kinds of weather in the forests of Great Britain, felling, snedding, loading, crosscutting, driving tractors, trucks, working with horses, measuring and operating sawmills

One thousand were camped in wooden huts in the north of Scotland, others in rugged billets, far from the comforts of family and home.

A female forester (nicknamed a “lumberjill”) was expected to wield a six pound axe, and produce enough timber to supply timber for pit props for the mines, telegraph poles, road blocks, ships masts, railway sleepers (ties), gunmats, mobile tracking to support tanks, ladders, newsprint and even crosses for soldiers graves.

Training centres were set up throughout the UK and Shandford Lodge in Brechin, Angus in Scotland was one of these training camps. Here the young women were taught the rudiments of forestry, handling axes, saws, vehicles and horses. It was a rude awakening for some, as the majority had been city bred and were unfamiliar with the wide-open spaces or the deep woods.

After a two-week course they were dispersed throughout the countryside, most of the Scots went to camps situated in remote areas of the highlands. Inverness-shire, Morayshire, Argyleshire and many other parts of Scotland.

It was with a cheerful heart these young women undertook the task before them, learning the skills needed to get the job done to win the war.

entailed. A new experience I hoped. What I did not realize was that I was going to work harder than I had ever dreamed possible.

I was sixteen years old, but said I was seventeen and a half, no one questioned it, and, having passed the physical, I was accepted. So within a week I was on my way, boarding the train with the other recruits with enthusiasm, but not without some apprehension.

The training camp was in Brechin, Angus, a shooting lodge a palatial home, obviously commandeered for the duration of the war. On arrival at Shandford Lodge, we were shown to our quarters -- army huts with army cots, rough gray blankets, and outdoor toilets. The staff occupied the Lodge, our orientation took place in the dining room of the lodge, but other than eating meals there, we never entered. We were eventually issued with black leather boots, overalls, uniforms, and of course, wellington boots and a sou’wester.

Time was of the essence, and none was wasted on preliminaries, training began in the morning so were advised to get as much sleep as possible. Scrambling around in a wooden hut washing and dressing in the cold damp November weather was something we had to get accustomed to. At first light, we clambered aboard an open lorry, and were shipped off to the woods, to begin our first day as foresters.

It was something of a shock when handed a six-pound axe and shown how to “lay-in” a tree. With a short demonstration on the use of the same, demonstrations on the felling, snedding and the loading of tractors and trucks followed. Crosscutting and the use of the bowman saw, levers, cant hooks and all the tools of the trade. Around noon we were issued with a cheese, or grated carrot between two slices of bread, we boiled billycans of water on an open bush fire to make our own tea.

At 5 p.m., we were advised that dinner awaited us back at the camp, and that as we were only two miles away, we should start walking. Most of the girls had huge blisters on their heels from the new boots; I decided to carry mine over my shoulder, walking the entire way in my socks. Eventually we toughened up and proved that we could handle the job. By the end of the month’s training we were tossing logs, felling trees,



Lumberjills at Shandford Lodge near Brechin in Scotland

cross-cutting logs and loading vehicles. I had elected to become a horsewoman; an old Irish man was the trainer, and in no time I was handling horses like I’d been doing it all my life. Several of the others became tractor and lorry drivers, but the majority were fellers, crosscutters, loaders, and measurers. Being a horse-woman or teamster was the most arduous job of all, running behind a horse dragging trees was risky as well as dangerous as the others were felling trees all around me. I had to be quick on my feet, and if the horse didn’t move fast enough I’d decided that I was not going to hang about. Training completed, we were dispersed throughout the countryside to various forestry camps, I was sent to a new one in the Highlands, in the village of Advie, Morayshire. It was a cold snowy day in December when we alighted from the train at Advie station. On the siding we noticed a row of empty flat cars waiting to be loaded, we guessed who would be providing the timber. Fortunately, several of my friends were also assigned to the same place, by this time we had formed compatible friendships, and made sure to get camp beds alongside one another in the same hut. Our camp was set up in a field far from civilization; about forty of us shared two long wooden huts. The ablution shed was in the centre, reached by a long duckboard. A dining hut and cookhouse made up the remainder of our new home.

It was rugged, draughty and most uncomfortable, our only source of heat was a cast iron stove, which we stoked until it was red hot. We were told that our work was vital to the War effort, but this did not reflect in the treatment we received after the war when we were denied recognition as a service. We numbered 6,900 members in the Women’s Land Army and Timber Corps. in the U.K. No change of occupation was permitted, nor transfers into what was considered the Senior Services. Our

uniforms were not ours to keep; we returned them after the war.

Throughout the war, we were underpaid and most of it that was deducted for our food and lodgings, in wooden huts with no plumbing, or creature comforts! We were expected to produce enough timber to supply wood for props for the mines, telegraph poles, blocks for roads, masts for ships, sleepers for railways, ladders, newsprint, gun mats and even crosses for graves for servicemen. We worked in all kinds of weather to do this, wielding a six-pound axe. I had been a junior in a public library in Glasgow, with prospects of moving up to assistant librarian. I also found the lack of decent reading material a real hardship.

One of the girls had a phonograph, her favourite singer was Tony Martin, and I memorized lyrics to his songs whether I wanted to or not. We entertained ourselves as best we could; it was a drastic change from life in a big city. The girl who owned the phonograph left on sick leave and later died of T.B. One other girl took an overdose of aspirins and was taken to hospital, but was back in the woods the following Monday.

We had quite a number of unfortunate incidents; some of the girls got pregnant and had to be sent home, lots of hasty weddings. British, Canadian, and Newfoundlanders surrounded our camp. Needless to say, this created problems. And with not enough girls to go around, they often fought over us especially at the dances held weekly by the locals in their village halls. We learned to dance reels, strathspeys and jigs in no time. It was a sight to behold the Canadians and Newfoundlanders doing the eightsome reels. Strip the willow was a favourite of theirs,

they could really let themselves go then, whooping and hollering. No drink was allowed of course, but the troops had caches of it hidden outdoors in the bushes I expect. We soon found that "Mr. Coutts's Jubilee Band" was a far cry from "Joe Loss and his Orchestra." Eventually, we formed our own concert group. I took part in a number of skits and sang in the choir.

We made many friends among the boys from the Canadian Forestry Corp, and the Newfoundland Forestry Unit. My particular job as a horsewoman was strenuous. After the lumberjills had felled the trees, I would move in with the horse, tie a chain around the bole of the tree and attach it to the swingle bar. Then, leading the horse through brush and around stumps, deliver the tree to the girls in the clearing.

Here the trees were cut into mill logs, pit props, telegraph poles and pulpwood, crosscut and loaded. I worked mainly with Belgian breed horses, Clydesdales, and a Highland Garron named Tommy. He bolted one day and ended up in a bog. It took four men most of the day to dig him out.

One of the Belgians named Nancy had a bad habit of swinging her rear hoof, kicking out for no reason. On the way to the stables, we passed the local post office. When the postmistress's dog barked at her heels Nancy kicked him and broke his leg. After that, none of us wanted to work with her, so an Italian prisoner was assigned Nancy, which proved to be a good choice as she behaved better for him.

My quota was about sixty trees a day, five and a half days a week. In the summer, we worked until 6 p.m., until dusk in the winter. We Scots were given New Year's Day off in lieu of Christmas and Boxing Day; our annual leave was one week. The other services received 28 days. It was not long enough to go anywhere to rest up or recuperate.

There were several accidents of course, forestry being one of the most dangerous occupations. My friend lost the top of the finger of her right hand, and was unable to dress or take care of herself for some time. I helped when I wasn't in the woods, but mainly she just hung about camp until it healed sufficiently to return to work.

Our half-day off was on a Saturday, we hopped on our bicycles and rode the ten miles to the nearest town for an afternoon at the pictures, a snack in the cafe, then on to the local dance. We danced every dance! Jitter-bugged and waltzed to the music of the Canadian Forestry Band, they were terrific! We rode our bicycles home after the dance, another 10 miles at least. The night ride along the quiet, dark country roads was an adventure in itself. It was eerie! the sound of scurrying in the bushes, owls hooting and small animals squealing. It was worse on a bright moonlight night when the trees cast

weird shadows. We covered those roads at breakneck speeds, and being city-raised made no attempt to investigate the strange noises.

I was quite happy being outdoors all summer long, tanned and healthy. I particularly enjoyed the beautiful scenery of my native land, watching the golden eagles fly over the heather hills, seeing the morning mist lift from the mountain tops on my way into the woods. In the spring, we heard the cuckoo call echoing across the valley. Early mornings found me up at dawn, shoveling out the stables, feeding, watering and grooming the horses before starting work; it was no fun in the winter. Falling out of bed, going through the creepy old churchyard on the way to the stables with my paraffin lamp held aloft was scary, especially through the graveyard.

However, when I reached the age of 17 and a half I decided that it was time to join the W.A.A.F. As I was now of age to do so, I traveled to Inverness to the recruiting office to enroll. After interviews and medicals I was accepted, I was delighted and looked forward to joining a senior service. When I informed the W.L.A.T.C. that I would be transferring they refused to allow the transfer as they considered my work essential to the war effort and that I was of more value there than anything I could do in the W.A.A.F.

They won their case and I was forced to continue on in the Timber Corp until the war ended. I was promoted to leader-girl, the only "rank" in the W.T.C. I wore a special badge on my sleeve, and received an extra 10 shillings. I smile when I remember my whistle and alarm clock.

We had Italian and German prisoners-of-war working beside us. The Italians used to sit on a pile of logs at lunch-break, singing "O Sole Mio," as though their hearts would break. All they ever wanted was to go home to sunny Italy and make love, so they told us. My job was to ensure that they and the others did not linger over their break periods; the prisoners found it highly amusing when I blew my wee whistle to signal their return to work.

When the war in Europe finally ended, we were engaged primarily in thinning out trees. We were not released then, and the Corps was not disbanded until 1950. A number of us were preparing to marry our overseas fiancés, this allowed us to leave the Land Army Timber Corps. It was eight months after the war before I was demobbed, and then only because I married an overseas serviceman.

I have fond memories of my Women's Timber Corp days, and when I reminisce, I think of sunshine, laughter, the scent of freshly cut wood and the voices of the lumberjills calling Tim...berr!



By this personal message I wish to express to you

R. Elder. W.T.C. 855

my appreciation of your loyal and devoted service

as a member of the Women's Land Army from

2/11/42 to 22/1/46

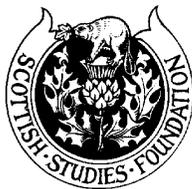
Your unsparing efforts at a time when the victory

of our cause depended on the utmost use of the

resources of our land have earned for you the

country's gratitude.

*Certificate issued to Rosalind Elder by HRH
Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother*



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