

# THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue VII

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

Autumn 2000

## Ballard Foundation donates \$100,000 to the Scottish Studies Foundation

Thanks to the efforts of The Hon. Alastair W. Gillespie, who recently retired as a governor of our organization, the Foundation was introduced to the Hon. Willard Estey in his capacity as Chairman of the Harold E. Ballard Foundation. Subsequently, Alastair along with Foundation Chairman Ed Stewart and Treasurer Alan McKenzie made a presentation to the Ballard Board of Directors. This emphasized the Foundation's primary objective of establishing a Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph.

Shortly afterwards the Foundation received a response which read in part as follows:

*"The Directors of the Foundation were very impressed with your description of the activities of the Scottish Studies Foundation and they consider it to be a very worthwhile project. However, the objectives of your*

*organization do not fit with the three areas in which this Foundation is primarily involved. Those areas are, of course, cancer, the wellbeing of children, and the homeless. Having said this, however, the Directors were of the view that the Ballard Foundation should make a worthwhile contribution to the Scottish Studies Foundation ... and I am pleased to advise you that the Foundation will be forwarding to you, in due course, a cheque in the amount of \$100,000."*

We are, of course, most grateful to the Hon. Mr. Estey and two of his fellow Directors -- Ms. Leslie MacLeod and Richard Campbell Meech for this most generous support.

The Foundation's fundraising efforts are being given top priority and the organization will be working closely with Bruce Hill who is coordinating a major fundraising drive at the University of Guelph due to be launched this Fall.

### *Sailpast 2000 a success despite less than perfect weather*

The weather outside was frightful --- and the forecast was for even worse. An early morning fog swirled across Toronto harbour and the upper floors of the downtown skyscrapers had disappeared into the mist. Such were the prospects for this year's 9th annual Scottish Cruise, sponsored by the Scottish Studies Society and hosted by the Scottish Studies Foundation.

But everything went ahead as scheduled. And the mist cleared away and the rain stopped with everyone thoroughly enjoying themselves on the two voyages out into Lake Ontario on the "Empire Sandy," Canada's largest sailing ship.



Highland "sword dance" on the Empire Sandy

However, the poor forecast did keep the crowds thinner than usual. The *Empire Sandy* was about half full for the morning sail and about three-quarters full for the afternoon jaunt. However, Treasurer Alan McKenzie reports we more than broke even financially and plans are going ahead to sail again next year.

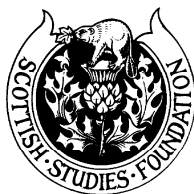
However, the low clouds and poor prospects did force the cancellation of the CNE Air Show for the second day in a row. A few helicopters did pass over the Empire Sandy but none of the usual speedy jets were in evidence. They stayed home.

The less than perfect weather didn't stop the fun and music on board for both cruises. Piper Major John Wakefield (the Queen Mum's favorite Canadian piper) and piper Bill Cockburn played up their usual storm. A newcomer to the festivities was Canadian champion fiddler Michelle Lubiniecki and she was fantastic. During the afternoon cruise, the Georgina Finlay Dancers charmed everyone.

The annual cruises commemorate the arrival of the "Hector" in Canada in 1773. The "Hector" carried the first wave of Scottish settlers to Pictou, Nova Scotia. In later years, that first wave became a flood of Scots to Canada

## *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

## Letter from the Chair



*Dr. Edward Stewart  
Chairman, Scottish Studies Foundation*

*Dear Fellow Members,*

I have, in previous letters to our membership, given some emphasis to the fact that this foundation has been organized by and operates through the efforts of volunteers.

With the exception of small stipends paid to graduate students staffing the University of Guelph's Scottish Studies Office and our recently appointed membership secretary, everything else is the result of contributions of individuals, chiefly members of the Board of Governors, who give freely of their time and effort. This includes the careful maintenance of our finances, publication of our newsletters as well as the organization and execution of events such as the annual Sailpast and Tartan Day Dinner.

These members volunteer to help because they believe in the cause for which the Foundation stands and in what we are trying to accomplish. All too often, I'm afraid, we come to take such contribution for granted. If such has been the case in our organization, I would like to take a small step in correcting this situation by using this newsletter to extend a word of thanks to a number of individuals who have done a great deal to put our organization in the relatively strong position we find ourselves in today.

Let me start with a word of appreciation to two retiring governors -- Alastair Gillespie and Bill Somerville. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, Alastair has been primarily responsible for the large grant

the Scottish Studies Foundation has received from the Ballard Foundation. Further, through his considerable experience in both government and business, he has given us access to leaders in both areas when we required it. And, I am happy to say, has volunteered to continue to do so as we gear up to participate in University of Guelph's fund raising campaign.

Bill Somerville is a past Chairman of the Foundation and is responsible for initiating several of our major fundraising efforts. It was Bill who gained us access to both Bingo and Nevada revenues and it was also through his imaginative efforts that the Tartan Day Dinner and the Sailpast were organized. His several contributions will have a lasting and positive impact on the Foundation.

Another governor -- Paul Thomson -- we might say has taken semi-retirement. While he remains on the Board, he has stepped down from his duties as Membership Chairman. This assignment, which Paul carried out for a number of years, had several onerous aspects as it involved not only keeping track of our roster of members, but the responsibility for packaging and mailing of the various items through which we try and communicate with each of you. And, of course, as our membership has grown, the task has become even more demanding. It is good news, however, that he remains in our ranks and his commitment to continue to develop our website is most encouraging.

There are two assignments that are at the centre of any organization and undoubtedly key to its success. Those are the positions of Treasurer and Secretary. We have been blessed in having these assignments over a number of years, occupied by two extremely competent and dedicated individuals -- Alan McKenzie and David Hunter. Despite carrying, over the years, important and demanding full-time jobs, both have provided the proverbial yeoman's service to the Foundation. There is great comfort for the rest of us in knowing that our finances are being kept in good order and our records and correspondence are being well maintained. Nobody, it is said, is indispensable, but Allan and David come close to it.

Let me now return to our major fundraising events -- the Tartan Day Dinner and the Annual Sailpast. Occasions of this kind demand careful planning and execution which in turn requires hours of time and effort. In the last few years, all of these ingredients have been forthcoming from our Treasurer working along side John

Macdonald, Chairman of the Scottish Studies Society and Neil Fraser, a governor of long standing. Any member who has attended either event will know the effective manner in which the dinner and the Sailpast have been run and that is entirely due to the dedicated efforts that these gentlemen have put forward.

Finally, I would like to say a word of appreciation and pass on my best wishes to Scott Moir. Scott has staffed the SSF office over the last three years while completing his Ph.D. studies at Guelph. He graduates this fall, as all students hope to do, and we know from his successful efforts on our behalf that he will accomplish much in his future endeavors.

If asked, I know that each of these gentlemen would say that their reward comes from the satisfaction in being able to contribute to a cause in which they sincerely believe. Nevertheless, I think it is appropriate, on behalf of all of us who benefit from their efforts, to offer this simple, sincere vote of thanks.

This letter marks the beginning of my third and last year as Chairman of the Foundation. With the assistance of people such as those I have identified as well as the support of all of you, our members, I hope that it will be a most successful year.

Sincerely,  
*Ed Stewart*

### *Red Wilson again comes forward to assist the Foundation*

Members have noted, in prior newsletters, the selection of Lynton "Red" Wilson as this year's Scot of the Year and his assistance in making our year 2000 Tartan Day Dinner a success. Now Mr. Wilson has come forward with even further support by providing us with the largest donation ever made by an individual to the SSF. (Mr. Wilson's modesty precludes us from mentioning the actual amount!)

His generosity makes us all the more appreciative of having a friend and supporter such as Red Wilson within our ranks.

### *Guelph Fall Conference to examine the Scottish Family*

The Scottish Colloquium at the University of Guelph is a pleasant way to enjoy an in-depth look at Scottish and Canadian history. On Saturday, October 14, the Conference will examine "The Scottish Family, Past and Present" with a lineup of knowledgeable historians.

The event, conducted by the School of Scottish Studies, will be held in Room 1714 of the Lifetime Learning Centre in the Ontario Veterinary College on Gordon St. at the University of Guelph.

# Executive Profile

At the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Studies Foundation and the Scottish Studies Society in Toronto on June 1 the executive team was elected to serve during the 2000-2001 term. This set of mini-biographies will help introduce you to this group of enthusiastic volunteers.

## Scottish Studies Foundation Chairman

### Dr. Edward E. Stewart, OC

The son of Scottish-born parents, Ed was born in Montreal and raised in Windsor. His working life included periods as an elementary school teacher, a bureaucrat in the Ontario government and an executive with John Labatt Ltd. He was awarded the Order of Canada in 1991. A member of the Scottish Studies Foundation since 1992, Ed joined the Board of Governors in 1997 and was elected Chairman in 1998. Ed is also a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

## Vice-Chairman, Secretary & Newsletter Editor

### David Hunter

David was born in Glasgow in 1942. Inspired by Scottish inventors Alexander Graham Bell and John Logie Baird, David has spent all of his working life in television. In 1962 he joined Scottish Television, at that time owned by Canada's Roy Thomson. In 1967 he moved to Montreal to work on the design and development of broadcast production equipment. In the early 1970s he moved to Toronto as Product Manager for Philips, the Dutch multi-national corporation. Since 1981 David has been with CTV where he is presently Vice-President of Operations. David joined the Board of Governors of the Scottish Studies Foundation in 1991 and is also a director of the Scottish Studies Society. A keen landscape photographer and outdoor enthusiast, David recently returned from a hiking expedition through Scotland's Cairngorm Mountains.

## Executive Summary

### Scottish Studies Foundation Governors:

Duncan Campbell, Prof. Elizabeth Ewan, W. Neil Fraser, Gordon Hepburn, John H. Macdonald, J. H. Iain MacMillan, Dr. Paul Thomson

### Scottish Studies Society Directors:

Christine Boyle, Duncan Campbell, Prof. Elizabeth Ewan, W. Neil Fraser, Gordon Hepburn, Archibald H. McCallum, Dr. Hugh MacMillan, J.H. Iain MacMillan, Dr. Edward E. Stewart, Dr. Paul Thomson.

## Treasurer

### Alan McKenzie, FSA (Scot.)

Alan joined the Scottish Studies Foundation in July 1986 on the invitation of the Chairman, Harry Ferguson. At that time he was Senior Vice-President and Secretary of Barclays Bank of Canada. Over the years Alan became the Secretary, Governor, and Chairman. He was the first Newsletter Editor of the Foundation's newsletter when the decision was made to open the Foundation to general membership. He is currently a Governor and the Treasurer of the Foundation and also Treasurer of the sister organization the Scottish Studies Society. Alan founded the Clan MacKenzie Society in Canada in 1987 and is the Lieutenant of Cabarfeidh (the chief of the Clan, John Mackenzie, Earl of Cromartie). He is retired from banking but is currently active in contract work for Mellon Bank Canada as their Chief Administration Officer.

## Scottish Studies Society Chairman

### John H. Macdonald, FSA (Scot.)

John retired from the Toronto Star in 1995, after 50 years as a reporter, feature writer, columnist and editor. Currently he is Travel Editor for the seniors' magazine FiftyPlus and is Chairman of the Canadian Chapter of the Society of American Travel Writers. From 1971 to 1980 he was Associate Producer and Director, Scottish World Festival Tattoos at the CNE. John was the founder: of the Clan Donald Society of Canada, Clan Donald Canada and CASSOC. He is also a founding Trustee of the Clan Donald Lands Trust. He was the Co-Chair of the last three Tartan Day/Scot of the Year dinners.

## W. Neil Fraser

Neil has been a member of the Foundation since membership was first instituted and a member of the Board of Governors since 1992. Neil has chaired or co-chaired the Tartan Day/Scot of the Year dinner for the past five years. His is a retired Board Member of Ontario Labour Relations Board and former National Association Executive in the Construction Industry. Neil is Chairman of Clan Fraser Society of Canada; a Past Chairman and Past Secretary-Treasurer of Clans & Scottish Societies of Canada; a Captain in the Old 78th Fraser Highlanders, Montreal; and

## Fall Conference Details Saturday, October 14, 2000

**9:00 - 9:30** Registration and Coffee

### 9:30 - 10:45 Session 1 Pre-Industrial Families

Janay Nugent "The European Family in the Scottish Context"  
Scott Moir "The Minister and the Unwed Mother"  
Mairi Cowan "A 16th century Edinburgh Family and the Magdalen Chapel"

### 10:45 - 11:00 Coffee Break

### Session 2 11:00 -12:00

Michael Wasser "Lady Innermeath's Divorce: A case study in 16th century family history"  
David Mullan "The early modern Scottish family as seen in the religious autobiographical perspective"

### Lunch 12:00 -2:00

### 2:00 - 2:45 Plenary Speaker

Lynn Abram "The orphan country and the New World: Breaking and Making Families in Scotland and Canada"

### 2:45 - 3:00 Coffee Break

### Session 3 3:15 - 5:00 Modern Families

Meghan Cameron "The Scottish Save the Children Fund:  
Eleanor Gordon "The Myth of the Victorian Family"  
Alan McKenzie "Clan MacKenzie"  
Frank Beach "Scottish Genealogy: A User's Guide"

### 5:00 - 8:00 Reception

### Location: The Whippertree, 4th Floor, University Centre

The Conference will be held at the Ontario Veterinary College (O.V.C.) Lifetime Learning Centre, Building 77, Room 1714. There will also be an extensive book sale of used Scottish books.

**Registration:** Pre-registration prior to Sept. 25 (includes lunch and coffee or tea.): \$30.00 (\$25.00 for SSF/CASS members and seniors).

Registration at Conference (no lunch): \$20.00 (\$15.00 for SSF/CASS members and seniors). Students may attend lectures free of charge. Pre-register by phoning the Scottish Studies Office at 519-824-4120, ext. 3209 or e-mail to sreps@uoguelph.ca

**Hotel reservations:** Holiday Inn, Guelph 519-836-0231. Special university rate is \$119 plus taxes. You must mention that you were quoted the special rate. Other hotels are Ramada Inn 519-836-1240 and Days Inn 519-822-9112, although these may already be booked for that weekend.

recipient of a Grant of Arms from the Canadian Heraldic Authority. Neil is a Member of Royal Canadian Military Institute, St. Andrew's Society of Toronto, National Trust for Scotland, and the Scottish Tartans Authority. He is also a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Prof. Elizabeth Ewan**

Elizabeth teaches history in the Scottish Studies program at the University of Guelph and before that she taught at the University of Victoria and the University of Western Ontario. Elizabeth became interested in Scottish history after an undergraduate year abroad at St. Andrews University, Scotland. Elizabeth carried out graduate work in Edinburgh and was granted a Ph.D. in 1985. Her publications include *Townlife in 14<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland* and *Women in Scotland, 1100 to 1750*. But it is not all academics for Elizabeth -- at one time she was a Highland dancer with the Rob Roy Pipe Band in Kingston, Ontario. Elizabeth is a governor of the Scottish Studies Foundation and a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Dr. Paul C. P. Thomson**

Joining the Foundation at the request of one of the founder members, Paul attended the first Foundation board meeting, and subsequently became a Governor. Paul is one of the signatories at incorporation of the Scottish Studies Foundation. He held the position of Vice Chairman in 1988, and from 1994 until 2000 was the Membership Chairman. He set up the Foundation's web site and is currently the web master. Paul was born in Irvine, Scotland, the birthplace of John Galt, the author, and founder of the town of Guelph. Paul graduated with a Ph.D. in Photochemistry from Strathclyde University, Scotland in 1981, and continued post-doctoral research at the University of Toronto. In 1985 he moved into industry, working as a research scientist for Toronto high-tech companies. He currently holds a Technical Marketing position in Mytec, a

### **Thanks to all Members**

All of us on the Board of Governors of the Foundation would like to express our thanks to each and every member for the support and encouragement we have received over the years. It is gratifying to know that our goal of supporting the Scottish Studies program at the University of Guelph is seen as a worthwhile cause, not only in Ontario, but all across Canada, the USA and overseas. Should you be interested in volunteering in any way please let us know.

Toronto-based company developing fingerprint biometric devices.

#### **Gordon Hepburn**

Gordon was born in 1925 and served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1946. After the war, he finished his education at the Dundee School of Economics. In 1950 he founded his own travel agency business. In 1971 he sold five agencies and a senior citizens tour operation to a subsidiary of Unilever. He joined Thomas Cook in the U.K. in 1977 as part of their turnaround team and was appointed CEO of Thomas Cook Canada Ltd. in 1981. Since his retirement he has served on the board of the Council of International Educational Exchange in New York as well as assuming a three-year appointment as Audit Chairman of the Ontario Casino Corporation. Gordon is a governor of the Scottish Studies Foundation and a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **J.H. Iain MacMillan, FSA(Scot)**

Iain was born in Toronto of Scottish parents and is a Life Member of the St. Andrews Society of Toronto and a member of the Gaelic Society of Toronto. Iain has maintained a lifelong interest in all things Scottish especially matters pertaining to Canadian Scots. He is a governor of the Scottish Studies Foundation and a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Duncan Campbell**

Duncan is the Ontario Commissioner for the Clan Campbell North America and is Past-President of the Clan Campbell Association. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1935, the youngest of eight children. His father came from Luig and his mother from Tighnabraich. During the war, he lived with an aunt in Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. After graduation in Scotland, he was first employed as a Customs Clerk and then an officer on the purser's staff with the Anchor Line. His travels took him as far away as Egypt and India. He moved to Canada in 1957, sailing from the U.K. to New York on the Queen Elizabeth I. He has lived in Toronto ever since. He was employed by an insurance company as Manager of their computer systems and then with the Ontario government in a senior position in the Systems Division until his retirement. Duncan is a governor of the Scottish Studies Foundation and a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Dr. Hugh MacMillan, FSA(Scot)**

Hugh was born in Fitzroy Harbour, Ontario in 1924 and is very proud of his Scots-Canadian heritage. His involvement with the University of Guelph goes back to 1969 when he was involved with CASS, the Canadian Association of Scottish Studies.

He co-founded the Scottish Studies Foundation in the mid-1980s. Antiquarian and writer, Hugh graduated in Business Administration from Carlton University in 1947, in journalism from the Newspaper Institute of America in 1948 and in Public Relation from Ryerson in 1964. He was also awarded an honorary D. Lit. from Laurentian University. He was Liaison Officer of Archives Ontario from 1964 to 1989. Hugh is a pioneer in the acquisition of manuscripts, and pictorial material obtained by means of investigative genealogical research, field trips etc. His new book *Adventures of a Paper Sleuth* is due to be published next year. Hugh is a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Archibald H. McCallum**

Archie, as he likes to be called, graduated from Glasgow University with a First in Civil Engineering and from the Royal Technical College with an A.R.T.C. in 1950. He served in the British army, with the Royal Artillery, retiring with the rank of Captain.

On coming to Canada in 1957, he practiced as a Civil Engineer, specializing in the design and construction of pulp and paper mills, being responsible for the completion of "grass roots" mills in Canada and abroad. Archie's interest in Scottish history and the courses available at the University of Guelph introduced him to the Scottish Studies Foundation. He is a director of the Scottish Studies Society.

#### **Christine Boyle**

A mere decade ago, Christine was captivated by the brogue and wit of the tallest leprechaun she'd ever met -- Ted Cowan. Ted eventually recruited her as Administrator of the Scottish Studies program at the University of Guelph, and five years managing the program served her well in setting career directions at the university and in her community development work. Christine has chaired numerous non-profit organizations in her home town of Cambridge, ran as a candidate in the 1997 municipal election (declined the nomination this year), and serves as informal advisor to other area politicians and non-profit groups.

Recently she was nominated for the Cambridge YWCA Women of Distinction Award and continues her volunteer work in surrounding communities. Christine is a mother of a millennium teenager; is studying part-time at the University of Guelph and currently works in the field of public relations and communications for the College of Arts at Guelph. Of Scottish ancestry, she enjoys the conferences and the Foundation's activities, and remembers with fondness, the spirited Cowan years.

# The People and the Sky

Adapted by David Hunter from articles by Robert Pollock and others

As autumn approaches, Canadians are reminded about their historic fascination with time. After all, we have six time zones to contend with -- including that neat little half-hour one in Newfoundland! And soon it will be time for us to put our clocks back an hour -- unless, of course, you sensibly live in Saskatchewan where they don't pay heed to that kind of nonsense!

All of this reminds us of the famous Scots-Canadian Sir Sanford Fleming whose fascination with the clock began in the mid-1870s -- after being stranded for 16 hours in an Irish railway station because of some typographical error that confused a.m. with p.m.!

Sir Sanford grew up in the small Scottish port of Kirkaldy and came to Ontario in 1845 as an 18-year-old immigrant, hoping to turn his training as a draftsman and surveyor into a career in Canada.

Confusion about the actual time of day was common then, for there were almost as many time zones as towns. The traditional way of establishing the correct time was to designate noon as the moment that the sun lay directly overhead. To grasp the implications, just imagine taking the train from Halifax to Windsor and having to reset your watch in Saint John, Quebec City, Montreal, Kingston, Belleville, Toronto, Hamilton, Brantford, London and Windsor!

Sir Sanford began researching the subject. By 1878, he was telling the Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Scientific Knowledge that there should be a prime meridian from which all nations would measure time in 24 standard zones, each covering 15 degrees of longitude. All clocks in each zone would be set to read the same time.

Fleming must have been convincing. First, North America's railways adopted his system.

*When God made time, He made plenty of it!*

*Old Gaelic saying*

Then, in 1879, Washington hosted an International Prime Meridian Conference and that conference officially instituted Standard Time.

It was quite a triumph for the man whose journey to success began with an Atlantic crossing so rough that Sir Sanford and his elder brother David wrote a farewell letter to their family and tossed it overboard in a sealed bottle!

But going back further in time -- say 5,000 years ago -- just think of how hard it would be to keep time then. With only the sun, moon and stars as reference, these celestial bodies took on a mystical significance.

Imagine you are placed back in time in Scotland -- standing with friends and family on a wide hill above the village. It is night, and you shiver in your clothes of animal skin and wool. Your feet are bare. The ground is cold, for it is winter. Most of the trees on the hilltop are gone, only the stumps at waist height remaining. You know this, for you cleared many of them with the axe yourself.

Looking down there is nothing to be seen of the land -- it is blanketed by the dark. Even the village is invisible, though you can smell the smoke from the wood fires inside the houses drifting up the slope in the southerly wind. The only sounds are from the water falling through the glen below and the old trees of the far forest margin creaking in their upper branches as the breeze touches them.

As you lift your head, a pale light defines the shape of the forested mountains around, each individually known -- to the west the flat and black line of the ocean is clear against the sky. The crescent moon is young, and set into that sea before you rose from your bed of heather and furs and came with your people to the hill. So only the stars are in view, shining in their colours in the cold air. You see the eternal patterns, pure and distant, where the gods make their home, and you feel glad. Glad to be able to see, and glad to be alive for the morning.

There is a stir among the small group beside you. A glow of grey and yellow has come to the low part of the horizon. It is



*The Standing Stones of Callanish on the Isle of Lewis*

One of Scotland's numerous megalithic remains, erected in the Stone age and Bronze age about 3,500 to 6,000 years ago. Many of these structures mark the rising and setting points of the sun, for different times of the year, and the moon, at certain points in its long cycle. Standing stones, stone circles and chambered cairns are the most enduring monuments left by the prehistoric inhabitants of Scotland. More information can be found at Robert Pollock's *Stones of Wonder* website at: <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/2621/stones1.htm>

reflected in the eyes of those who watch for the dawn to come. Even as you notice it, the fainter stars in the east fade away as colour comes slowly to the sky again.

How long now? No one moves. A reddish light appears now in the east, with deep grey-blue around and above. You can see your breath and the dew on the hair of your companions. The cold sinks into you, your neck and shoulders are numb, you feel ice beneath your feet.

At last the Chieftain -- the old one -- signals. Along through the grass to the crest, and down in a sweeping line you go, the old one leading. Down the steep side of the hill, moving fast. Through the stream you run, and up the far bank, then along the dyke. A dog is barking in the village as the others come out of the houses in the grey light. They hurry to join with you, and all go through the rough gate to the flat field, where stand the stones.

Your father and mother helped to put the stones up. Helped to quarry them, helped to make the ropes to drag them with, cut the rollers, dug the holes, pulled on the levers, turned and packed them in their sockets and watched them unchanging through the seasons. Your parents are gone. But they wanted the stones to stand in line forever.

The old one gathers all the people and sets them in a group on the north side of the stones. The young children are shivering, surprised by the early arousal, arms around their brothers and sisters. You see how the sky glows in the southeast, and a pale blue

icy light has touched the whole sky. The hilly horizon behind the stone is black and sharp against the light, painful to see, but everyone watches.

Everything important and of value is around you. The village, the fields, the animals, the grain. The tools, the axes and the bows. The old one, the people of the village, the children. The stones, standing to mark the day. And life. All you need is the promise of the end of the dark winter, the light, the warmth, the gift of the season for all things to grow.

And the promise comes. A brilliant flare on the horizon directly behind the stones, and then the disc of the sun itself, gloriously bright, rises fast up and across the horizon, as your people shout and stamp and the old one murmurs the prayer of thanks.

The shortest day is upon you, the day the stones record. But after today is the promise that winter will die, the nights will grow shorter and the sun grow warmer, the grass for the cattle will grow long and green, the earth will be warm for the grain to grow and the harvest to ripen. On this day the sun turns in its course and so life itself can continue in its eternal renewal. You have seen the night, the dawn, and the new day. You are glad, and with the rest you move forward to touch the stones, your eternal friends, in thanks.

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Midwinter, the time of the winter solstice when the days are shortest, was the time of one of the main festivals of the year for the peoples of pagan prehistoric Europe.

The significance of such times of year (and of the seasonal festivities which accompanied them) is difficult for the modern mind to appreciate. But the importance of the midwinter celebrations can be gauged by the fact that a version of those celebrations is still with us today. When the Christian church settled on the dates for its own festivals, it placed the most important at midwinter, within a few days of the winter solstice, to encompass and absorb the pagan rites.

Another important feast day, that of St John the Baptist, was set close to midsummer, when the days are longest and the sun is at its highest position in the sky.

There are many other connections between our modern festivals and calendar system, and ancient skywatching. Three of our days of the week are named after heavenly bodies. The date of Easter, the next most important Christian festival after Christmas, is set today, as in the past, as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

This explains why the date of Easter varies. It is not simply a position in the modern calendar, it is determined by the status of the moon. The months of our

calendar are also derived originally from the natural cycle of the moon in the sky, from full to waning crescent to new to waxing crescent and so to full again, a period of about 29 days.

Another interesting connection concerns the Scottish quarter days of Lammas (early August), Martinmas (early November), Canlemas or Candlemas (early February) and Whitsun (originally early May). These quarter days, also known as 'term days', were when rent was due, leases were signed, and contracts for farm labour began and ended.

These were the periods when families would move house, and fairs would be held. These four days are the equivalent of the old Celtic festivals of Lunasda, Samhuinn, Imbolg and Bealtuinn, which were at the same times of the year, being the four halfway points between the solstices and equinoxes.

Bealtuinn and Samhuinn seemed to be the most important times, Samhuinn being the period in spring when the cattle were taken to the hills, and Samhuinn the time when they were brought down again before the onset of winter. In fact, "Beltane" fires were lit all over the Highlands until the middle of the 19th century. The modern activities at Halloween and Bonfire Night have a direct connection with the ancient festival of Samhuinn and they have managed to retain some of its pagan and elemental character.

It is easy to forget today that the calendar we use, and the way we segment time, are both ultimately derived from the movements of the heavenly bodies. The technology that has put digital watches on our wrists and supports and cossets us in centrally heated homes, air-conditioned offices and bright shopping malls has inevitably distanced us from the natural rhythms of the sky and the earth.

The sun, in its rising and setting and its height in the sky was once the most important object in the lives of our ancestors -- the source of light, heat and growth, the creator of the seasons and of the year.

The moon, once universally used as a measure of time, its position and phase the common currency of everyone, provider of the only light which allowed night-time travel, has now become merely an object of surprised notice on a drive home. The last of those who took off their hat or touched a silver coin as a mark of respect on their first sight of the full moon every month have passed away into history.

But up to the time of the industrial revolution, the mainly rural population of Scotland retained a living interest in the sun, moon and stars. A great many sources from the eighteenth century confirm this. In particular, *A description of the Western Isles of Scotland* and *A voyage to St Kilda* by

Martin Martin, published about 1700. Even a casual reader of these books will be struck by dozens of references to customs obviously derived from a time when the sun and moon were gods or goddesses.

The most interesting feature of these customs is that they were often combined with the Christian tradition to bizarre effects. For example, when arriving on one island from another, travelers would walk sunways around the church before conducting any business. On saints' days, there would be a walk to the well, and a sunwise tour. After childbearing, fire would be carried around the woman sunwise before she was taken to church, and the same would be done to the infant before it was christened.

When the minister visited North Rona, the natives would express their esteem for him by taking a turn around him sunwise, and wishing him all happiness. After a dangerous landing on the Flannan Isles, Lewis fishermen would uncover their heads, make a sunwise turn, and thank God for their safety. When setting out on a fishing trip, the boat would be turned sunwise by the fishermen to ensure their safe return. On Skye, the sunwise tours were made around the ancient chambered cairns

The influence of the moon on human affairs was felt to be direct. Anyone who injured themselves at the change of the moon would suffer the injury at every change thereafter, or afflictions would only recur at the change. Shellfish were thought to be plumper as the moon was waxing and peats would only be cut when the moon was waning, to ensure they dried out and burned well. The St Kildans sailors and fishermen used no compass, but navigated by the sun, moon and stars. In fact, the St Kildans used the sun and the moon in their daily lives in ways, which in our own time, have waned utterly away. ■

*They knoweth the time of day by the motion of the sun from one hill or rock to another; upon either of these the sun is observed to appear at different times; and when the sun doth not appear, they measure the day by the ebbing and flowing of the sea, which they can tell exactly, though they should not see the shore for some days together; their knowledge of the tides depends on the changes of the moon, which they likewise observe, and are very nice [i.e. accurate] in it.*

*From "A Voyage to St Kilda" by Martin Martin, circa 1703.*

## From our Readers

Along with some photos of the Sailpast 2000 event taken by Marie Fraser

### Cruise was a Lifetime Experience

I would like to thank Dr. Paul Thomson of your organization for sending me information on the Foundation. I was most interested in your Scottish History information and even although I received all my education in Glasgow it was much more than I knew. I have distributed the material among my family to help familiarize them with their background. I even managed to get up to Toronto for the Sailpast cruise on the Empire Sandy and it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me and at 90 I might never make the trip again. Thanks.

Mrs. Sadie Reynolds  
Belleville, Ontario

### Guelph Library

My husband and I had the pleasure today of going to the University of Guelph's library. There was so much on the third floor of Scottish Heritage -- it blew our minds! This is a real treasure and you might and you might say hidden as so few of us had heard of it until we receipt the Guelph Alumni booklet. I have enclosed a small contribution to the Foundation just to say thanks.

Constance Stewart Gordon  
Toronto, Ontario

### Remembering the Hector

I was interested in learning that by way of a cruise on the Empire Sandy, the Foundation was celebrating the anniversary arrival of the good ship Hector in Nova Scotia in 1773.



*The Empire Sandy*

My father always told me that my ancestors came to Canada on that voyage. It is great to hear that this event is still remembered after so many years. I understand that a full-scale replica of the Hector is due to be launched in Pictou, Nova Scotia soon. Perhaps one day the Foundation will be able to charter it so we can better experience what the actual voyage would have been like. I, for one, would make the trip from out west for such an event.

Peter McCallum  
Portage La Prairie, Manitoba

[Ed: By coincidence, the launch of the Hector replica in Pictou (Sept. 17, 2000) was delayed by one day due to inclement weather on Sept. 16!]



*Fiddler Michelle Lubiniecki*

## Lochaber no more

*The Sailpast, which commemorated the voyage of the Hector, brought to mind this brief passage from Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson. The poignant scene takes place on the Scottish mainland opposite the Isle of Mull.*

The skipper of the boat, on the other hand, was called Neil Roy Macrob; and since Macrob was one of the names of Alan's clansmen, and Alan himself had sent me to that ferry, I was eager to come to private speech of Neil Roy. In the crowded boat this was of course impossible, and the passage was a very slow affair. There was no wind, and as the boat was wretchedly equipped, we could pull but two oars on one side, and one on the other. The men gave way, however, with a good will, the passengers taking spells to help them, and the whole company giving the time in Gaelic boat-songs.

And what with the songs, and the sea-air, and the good-nature and spirit of all



*Alan McKenzie, Pipe Major John Wakefield, Georgina Findlay and Piper Bill Cockburn*

concerned, and the bright weather, the passage was a pretty thing to have seen.

But there was one melancholy part. In the mouth of Loch Aline we found a great sea-going ship at anchor; and this I supposed at first to be one of the King's cruisers which were kept along that coast, both summer and winter, to prevent communication with the French.

As we got a little nearer, it became plain she was a ship of merchandise; and what still more puzzled me, not only her decks, but the sea-beach also, were quite black with people, and skiffs were continually plying to and fro between them.

Yet nearer, and there began to come to our ears a great sound of mourning, the people on board and those on the shore crying and lamenting one to another so as to pierce the heart.

Then I understood this was an emigrant ship bound for the American colonies. We put the ferry-boat alongside, and the exiles leaned over the bulwarks, weeping and reaching out their hands to my fellow-passengers, among whom they counted some near friends.

How long this might have gone on I do not know, for they seemed to have no sense of time: but at last the captain of the ship, who seemed near beside himself (and no great wonder) in the midst of this crying and confusion, came to the side and begged us to depart.

Thereupon Neil sheered off; and the chief singer in our boat struck into a melancholy air, which was presently taken up both by the emigrants and their friends upon the beach, so that it sounded from all sides like a lament for the dying. I saw the tears run down the cheeks of the men and women in the boat, even as they bent at the oars; and the circumstances and the music of the song (which is one called "Lochaber no more") were highly affecting even to myself. ■

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[dhunter@ctv.ca](mailto:dhunter@ctv.ca)

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Res: (519) 837-0175  
[eeewan@uoguelph.ca](mailto:eeewan@uoguelph.ca)

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Res: (416) 920-6851  
Fax: (416) 920-1275  
[cdnexplorer@msn.com](mailto:cdnexplorer@msn.com)

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Bus: (905) 881-5780

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Res: (416) 756-0345  
Fax: (416) 756-0549  
[jh.macdonald@sympatico.ca](mailto:jh.macdonald@sympatico.ca)

\*J.H. Iain MacMillan, FSA(Scot)  
36 Barbara Crescent  
Toronto, ON M4C 3B2  
Bus: (416) 423-1313  
Fax: (416) 423-0881  
Res: (416) 421-6279  
[macmillans@home.com](mailto:macmillans@home.com)

\*Dr. Paul Thomson (Webmaster)  
1515 Skyline Drive  
Mississauga, ON L5E 2W6  
Res: (905) 278-5022  
Fax: (905) 274-1818  
Bus: (416) 467-3321  
[ptom@mytec.com](mailto:ptom@mytec.com)  
[info@scottishstudies.ca](mailto:info@scottishstudies.ca)

Christine Boyle  
MacKinnon Building Room 447  
College of Arts  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON, N1G 2W1  
(519) 824 4120 ext 3135  
[cboyle@arts.uoguelph.ca](mailto:cboyle@arts.uoguelph.ca)

Dr. Hugh MacMillan, FSA(Scot)  
438 Hartleigh Avenue  
Ottawa, ON, K2B 5J4  
(613) 726-7588

Archibald H. McCallum  
183 Dianne Avenue  
Oakville, ON, L6J 4C8  
(905) 845-1651

### Staff

Catherine McKenzie  
Membership Secretary  
580 Rebecca Street  
Oakville, ON L6K 3N9  
Res: (905) 842-2106

Shannon Creps  
School for Scottish Studies Office  
Room 235, MacKinnon Building  
College of Arts  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON, N1G 2W1  
Bus: (519) 824-4120 x3209  
Fax: (519) 837-8634  
[screps@uoguelph.ca](mailto:screps@uoguelph.ca)

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