



The Desert Scene

Happy New Year!!!

Let's all wish for the woes of this past year are behind us and that the world stabilizes somewhat in 2009.

Last month I bemoaned the fact that I didn't get any local input for the newsletter. I introduced a new section on "who we are ...and where we are from" hoping that I would get some response. I am pleased to say that I have three members who have contributed to this newsletter. Maybe once we all get the hang of it we can look forward to hearing about all of our members.

I am delighted to include an article from our "Desert Mouse" friend Kay Adkins whose article on cooking from our recipe book you will find wonderful and amusing.

I am also looking forward to be able to meet up with members at functions and meetings and say more than just "hello"...It will be "hello...it was nice to read about you"

I will be back in the desert area on December 28th for a three month stay. Liz and I are looking forward to the nice weather and a chance to meet with you at monthly meetings and at the Burn's Supper.



The Executive Team

President: Ina Gibbons

Vice President: Greg Persall

Treasurer: Roberta Guy

Secretary: Joyce McHattie

Historian: Sir John Porter

Membership: Dwight Fine

Regalia: Dennis Noble

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Scottish Supplement

Follow the link for interesting photographs of Dunfermline...my home town....A number of views of Dunfermline Abbey, including inside the nave and the tower with "King Robert the Bruce" carved round the top; ~ Abbot's House, the oldest dwelling in Dunfermline, now a Heritage Centre; ~ A woolen Santa Claus and his wife in an old fireplace in Abbot's House.

For all these graphics and further information, see:

<http://www.rampantscotland.com/colour/supplement081220.htm>

Please note.....

We still have cookbooks available. If anyone is interested they can contact Joyce and Dennis Noble at d.n.ca@hotmail.com or they can be reached by telephone at 760-836-9059. They are \$12 each.

Our 2008-09 membership books have been printed and can be picked up at our monthly luncheons.

**A Scottish Cookbook Christmas
by Kay Adkins**

I may have plenty of Matheson, McCrae, and McDonald blood, with a touch of Stewart here and there, but Martha Stewart I am not. So this year's annual Christmas "Turkey or Ham?" decision just seemed boring. Then I went to the Scottish Society of the Desert's St. Andrew's dinner and picked up a copy of the Scottish Society of the Desert Cookbook. Aha! I would have a Scottish Christmas dinner with recipes from the cookbook!

I have to come clean here and admit that, while I submitted a number of recipes to the cookbook, complete with commentary regarding the making of those dishes, I ummm....well....another nod to Martha Stewart...I may be going to jail for plagiarism. I have never made a single one of the recipes – something I fully admitted to Joyce Noble when I submitted the recipes to her. At least I hope I did. We'll find out during the plagiarism trial when she's called as a witness.

I've never been to Scotland and I don't know a Cullen Skink from a Stoved Howtowdie, so I decided I'd better stick with more familiar fare. On Christmas Eve I started out with Sir John Porter's Soda Scones. Things were going well until I got to the 4th ingredient. Baking Powder. Not baking

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soda? Nope. Baking Powder. Maybe I'm just too linear in my thinking, but how can you have a soda scone without any soda? So, to ease my mental anxiety, I used only 3 tsp baking powder and added one tsp of baking soda. Mental crisis averted. And they turned out beautifully. Light and flavorful. Just right for Christmas morning and snacking throughout the day.

Early Christmas morning I needed to start my very own recipe for Cock-a-Leekie Soup and get Dwight Fine's Dundee Cake in the oven. Throw a chicken in water and bring to a boil. O.K. I can handle that. Herbs, salt, pepper, onions, leeks...Onions? Oh, that explains why I still have those two nice onions sitting in my fridge. Happily, they were never missed from the soup. Nor was the prune garnish – some things I just can't bring myself to do and putting prunes on chicken soup falls into that category. Nonetheless, it made for an excellent first course.

The Dundee Cake was more of a challenge. When I saw Dwight at our weekly International Folk Dance Group gathering the Tuesday before Christmas he informed me that he had never actually made a Dundee Cake in his life. This made me feel better about my untried submissions (he acknowledged his source in the cookbook, and will be avoiding time in the pokey), but left me on my own where questions were concerned. What do currants, sultanas, and raisins all have in common? They're ALL raisins. Who knew? From red grapes, white grapes, and the old tried and true dark purple grapes. Everything went together well and calling on his old food prep skills, my husband Don split the blanched almonds for the decoration on top. As directed, I preheated the oven to 500 degrees, put in the cake and lowered the heat immediately to 325 degrees. One and a half hours later, I learned that modern ovens hold heat better than old ones. The recipe says that if it's "purring", to pop it back in the oven for a bit. Don & I listened to the cake and could definitely hear purring. We have two contented cats, so we know this sound well. So our ears said "cook it a bit more", but our eyes said "take it out NOW!". Yes, I made an Over-Dundee cake. It still tasted pretty good as long as I cut off the burnt bottom and the back edge. Fortunately, I had foreseen just such a difficulty and had my husband's favorite Checker pie ready as a stand-in. Filled with raisins and walnuts, the Checker pie fit with the theme, as I'm learning that nearly everything Scottish has raisins in it somewhere. The Dundee Cake had excellent flavor and will definitely be made again sometime, but without the initial burst of intense heat.

Joyce Noble' Roast Beef recipe was simple and straightforward, as was her Yorkshire Pudding, an English invader to the meal. And Ina Gibbons' Neeps

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and Tatties were easy to make as well. "Easy" and I get along very well when it comes to cooking. Nearly all of my veggies came from the Certified Farmer's Market held by the Camelot Theatre, so I mixed things up a little by getting purple Peruvian potatoes for the Tatties. Purple like a thistle. Add the excellent sauce included in Joyce's Roast Beef Recipe and there you have it! A meal fit for a Clan Chief. The sauce was the star of the meal.

The true reward came after the meal when absolutely no one complained about a thing. Not a single thing. Well, just a little teasing about burning the cake. Like many a family, mine all hold second jobs as food critics. At least they seem to whenever my Mother-in-law or I cook anything. So there is a definite advantage to cooking unfamiliar foods. If they don't have a clue how it's supposed to look or taste, they can't complain. After all the guests had gone Don told me it was the best roast beef he'd ever had. Better even than the Ocean Shores Prime Rib End Cut? Yes! I tell you, I may have to make every meal a Scottish Society Cookbook meal!

Our Condolences.

The Scottish Society of the Desert extends its deepest sympathy to Sir John Porter on the death of his dear friend and caregiver, Dan Zazueta. Dan died of the results of an automobile accident on December 7, 2008.

Who we are and where we are from.....

Ina Gibbons, President.

Ina was born in Greenock, Scotland. Greenock is located about 20 miles west of Glasgow. She attended St. Columba's High School, and James Watt College. Ina came to New Jersey in 1960 where she met and married Kevin. She worked for many years as a Corporate Pension Plan Designer for a major insurance company. She has two children and four grandchildren. In 1974 Kevin's company transferred them to Orange County California. Again in 1989 they were transferred to Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1999 Kevin decided to retire early and at that point they decided to head back to California.

Ina has been involved in community activities most of her life. She was appointed to the Cultural Arts Commission in the City of Placentia, she served on the redevelopment advisory board for the City, and she organized Placentia's annual parade and picnic in the park for ten years

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before moving to Ohio. She was on the Board of Directors for the Placentia Founders Association.

Ina's big claim to fame is that she prevented the City of Placentia from raising their utility taxes, by gathering enough signatures to force the local council to put the issue on the ballot and have the people vote on it.

Needless to say the city lost, proving that you can fight City Hall!

In Cincinnati Ohio, Ina joined the beautification committee and was instrumental in having a park developed in the village where she lived. The local council also appointed her to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

She was also a Board member for her homeowners association.

Clan association is both Ferguson and Macdougall.

Ruby Calvert

Ruby was born in Toronto Canada of Scottish parents. Mum was from Glasgow and Father was from Edinburgh, Ruby comments on being brought up in a very Scottish oriented manner which encouraged a lifelong love of everything Scottish. Ruby was married to Jack, a Northern Ireland Scot for 40 years. Ruby and Jack lived in Canada where Jack worked in the ill fated Avro "Arrow" project which closed down. Jack and Ruby then found their way to California where they raised three children.

Ruby shares a love of Scottish Country dancing and Jack presided over the Ulster/American society for several years.

Ruby travels to Scotland a lot and comments that she will provide helpful hints to anyone planning a trip to the "Old Country"

Clan association is Robertson.

Rob Heggie

Pipe Major, Palm Springs Pipe Band

Rob's father Andrew was a proud Scot, born in Falkirk, Scotland who never gave up his citizenship but moved to BC Canada where Rob was born. Rob met his wife Cynthia in Hollywood while playing with Seaforth Highlanders for the 1976 Rose Bowl parade in honor of the Bi-Centennial and has lived in Palm Desert since 1992, with three wonderful children.

Next to family and business Rob's true passion is "piping". He is the Pipe Major and founder of the Palm Springs Pipe Band www.palmspringspipeband.com and responsible, along with help from Ina Gibbons, Greg Persall, and Pipe Sgt. Rod Cribbes and Jim McPhail for the strategic alliance between the Scottish Society of the Desert and the PSPB. (New members and sponsorship/donations welcome!)

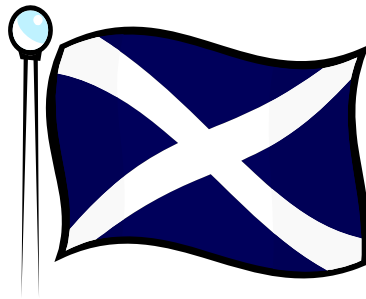


Rob was a champion competitor at an early age in Vancouver, becoming instructor to many pipers and champion bands. He was Pipe Major of a number of bands, N.C.O. in the Canadian Army reserves Seaforth Highlanders, Staff Sgt. Delta Police Pipe Band and played with and taught the Niagara Falls Police Pipe Band. Rob has been accredited by the Queen's Piper, Director British Army Piping, honored to play in performances for Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles and Princess Di, Prince Andrew and Fergie, Prime Ministers and Governors among others.

Rob was reared in British Columbia, studied on a full scholarship for bagpipes at Simon Fraser University B.C. and member of the original SFU Pipe Band. He completed his studies at BCIT in Engineering and founded www.hkretail.net here in the valley in 1992.

Rob's kilt tartan is Hunting McIntosh as the Heggie's are a Sept of that Clan.

St Andrews Celebration



I'd like to thank everyone who attended our annual St. Andrew's dinner on December 6th. Thanks to all of you it was a huge success. This was the largest turnout that the Society has had for a St. Andrew's dinner. We had 114 people in attendance.

The President of the Inland Empire Scottish Society, Aaron Creighton and his wife Kathy joined us for the evening.

We sponsored the "toys for tots" program, and two members of the US Navy came down from 29 Palms Marine Base and enjoyed the evening with us.



Robert Heggie and Rod Cribbes of the Palm Springs pipe band, and Bruce Topp of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipe Band entertained us. A special commendation was presented to Sir John Porter for all of the hours he has volunteered to the Society over the past five years. A special thanks goes out to my Board of Directors, without them this event would not have been possible.

Thanks also to Michelle Valdez of the Hyatt Grand Champions for the help and assistance she gave in organizing this event. Michelle will also be helping us organize our upcoming Burns supper on January 24th.

Please mark your calendars, for our Burns supper and get your RSVP's in early. Back by popular demand will be twenty members of the RCMP pipe band to entertain us.

Sincerely,

Ina Gibbons, President

Mark your Calendars

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| January 10, 2009 | Monthly Luncheon and speaker |
| January 24, 2009 | Robert Burns Supper at Hyatt Resort, Indian Wells |
| February 7, 2009 | Monthly Luncheon and speaker |
| March 7, 2009 | Monthly Luncheon and speaker |
| April 6, 2009 | Tartan Day Dinner (location to be announced) |
| May 9, 2009 | Monthly Luncheon and speaker |

Donald Trump's Scottish Family Home

US entrepreneur Donald Trump has announced that he is to refurbish historic Menie House and make it his family home in Scotland. The building is on Menie Estate, which the billionaire is to develop into a "world class" golf resort on the Aberdeenshire coast. The 14th-century property is to be restored to its "original condition" - though it will presumably also have the comforts expected by a wealthy 21st century businessman. His aim is to

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make his Scottish home "reflect the levels of excellence" of his other properties around the world. A number of local companies have been engaged, including Interiors Unlimited of Inverurie, Fraser's of Ellon, Bon Accord Granite and Ecosse Contract Services. It is expected that restoration work on Menie House and the associated Menie Park Lodge will be completed in the spring of next year.

This month in History

January 7 1451

The founding of Glasgow University, forty years after the creation of St. Andrew's University, that enabled Scotland, like England, to boast of two universities.

January 17 1746

The Battle of Falkirk fought between nearly 8,000 Jacobite rebels led by 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' and Lord George Murray and about 7,000 British government troops commanded by General Henry Hawley.

January 19 1736

The birth of engineer and inventor, James Watt, at Greenock, a son of a shipwright and merchant.

January 25 1759

The birth of Scotland's greatest poet, Robert Burns, in Alloway, to William Burness and Agnes Broun. He followed his father as a tenant farmer, and despite his poverty, was well read. At fifteen, he wrote his first poem, My Handsome Nell, about the subjects that were to dominate his life, Scotch and women. He became more interested in the romantic nature of poetry than the hard work of ploughing and planned to emigrate from Scotland. However, his first collection, Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, was published to great critical success and helped induce him to remain. Unfortunately, fame did not bring wealth and he was forced to work as an exciseman to make a living. He continued to write, contributing songs to James Johnston's Scots' Musical Museum and George Thomson's Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs. His early death at age thirty-seven on 21 July 1796 was a great shock. Shortly thereafter, friends started a ritual Burns' Supper in tribute which is now held by Scots and Scottish descendants worldwide. The basic format has remained unchanged and begins when the chairman invites the guests to stand to receive the Haggis as a piper leads the chef carrying the Haggis to the top table. Someone then recites Burns' famous poem, To a Haggis, and then cuts it open. This

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is followed by a toast to the Haggis with a glass of Whisky. The menu typically includes Cock-a-leekie soup, Champit Tatties, Bashed Neeps, Tyspy Laird (sherry trifle), and Coffee. Someone then gives the Immortal Memory speech and there is also an address to the women, both to thank those that prepared the food and to the lasses in Burns' life. The evening continues with songs and poems, especially Tam O' Shanter and Holy Willie's Prayer, and ends with everyone joining hands and singing Auld Lang Syne.

Membership

For Membership information please contact Dwight Fine

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Contact us

Any short pieces of interesting and relevant articles for future newsletters will be most welcome. Please contact us on topics with a Scottish connection and we will do our best to publish in future editions. Your newsletter contact is Alec Norrie at anorrie@radarinteractive.com

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