

Caledonian

Newcastle Family History Society Inc

Newsletter of the Scottish Special Interest Group

No 1

Lamas 2023

Failte!

Welcome to this Lamas Newsletter!

Scottish Quarter Days:

Traditionally the quarter days were the four dates each year on which servants were hired, school term started and rents were due, such as farm rents and leasehold payments. The quarter days have been observed since the Middle Ages and they ensured that debts and unresolved lawsuits were not allowed to linger on. Accounts had to be settled, a reckoning had to be made and publicly recorded on the quarter days.

The Term and Quarter Days (Scotland) Act 1990 redefined the days in official use as:

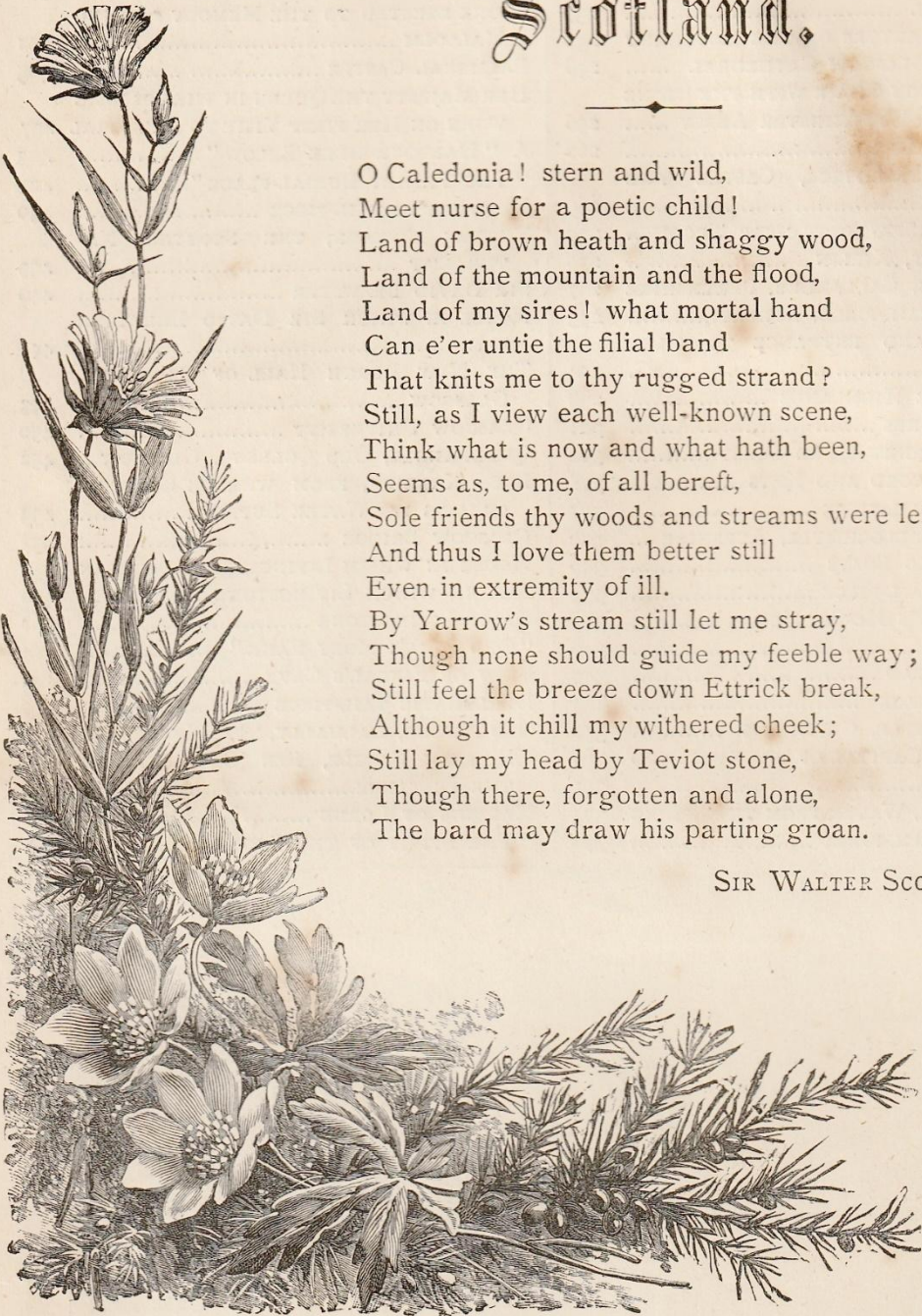
- 28th February – Candlemas
- 28th May – Whitsunday
- 28th August – Lamas
- 28th November – Martinmas

This first issue of our newsletter, *Caledonian*, is being released for Lamas, 2023, and the members of the Scottish Special Interest Group (SIG) hope to bring out further issues each following quarter day.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of *Caledonian* and look forward to your continuing interest.



Scotland.



O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand?
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Scotland by Sir Walter Scott as printed in the book *Picturesque Scotland in Lay and Legend Song and Story*, late 19th century.

What is the Scottish SIG?

The Newcastle Family History Society provides the opportunity for its members with a common interest to meet in groups where they can share experiences and expand their knowledge. These groups are called *Special Interest Groups* or *SIGs*.

The Scottish SIG meets at least ten times a year. We do not meet in January when the Society is closed for the Christmas/New Year period and not in December if the date might conflict with activities around that time of year. The convenor of the group is Mel Woodford.

We usually have an attendance of about ten members at each meeting but these numbers vary as people can come and go as they wish. Visitors would always be welcome. Our meeting day is the second Tuesday of the month and meetings start at 1.00pm in the back room. Our meetings may feature a talk by a member, sometimes illustrated with projected images and diagrams, discussions on how to attack Scottish genealogical problems and general Scottish matters of interest. For example, we have learned that if buying an article of Harris Tweed, you should always look for the official logo to prove authenticity.

Sharing is the purpose of these meetings with everyone offered the opportunity to participate by helping to break down the inevitable 'brick walls' encountered in family history research or by passing on a newly-discovered source of information.

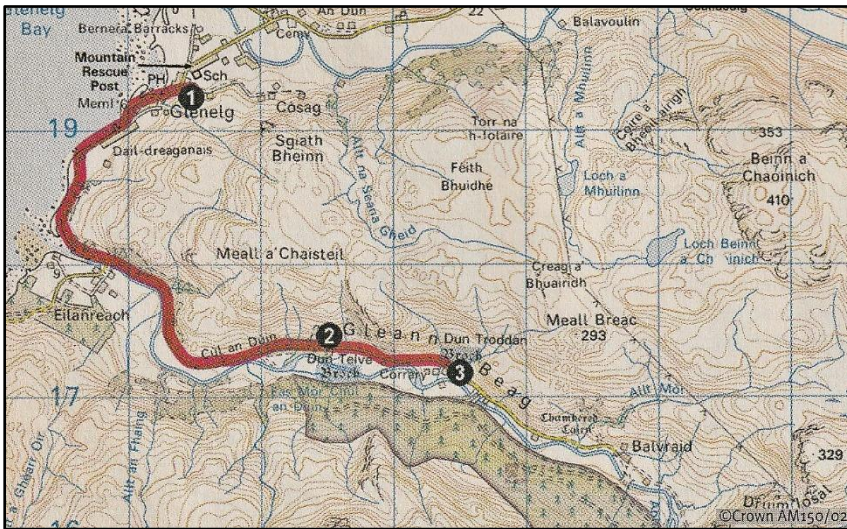
If you, or someone you know, might enjoy the Scottish SIG meetings, we would be pleased to see you at a meeting. A very warm *fàilte* awaits you.



A meeting of the Scottish SIG captured by Mel Woodford.

The Glenelg Brochs

The broch is a tall, dry-stone circular structure, tapering to the top, with an internal staircase giving access to rooms on various floors and the roof. The earliest were built in Orkney about 600BC and the Glenelg brochs were built about 500BC. Those near the coast were probably designed to provide defence against sea-borne invaders, while those away from the water, such as at Glenelg, may have protected the inhabitants from wolves and bears. By 200BC the broch was not so important for defence and by 200AD many had been abandoned. So strongly built were they, however, that most would still be standing today if they hadn't been mined for building stone by later peoples.



How to get to the Glenelg brochs:

- (1) The village of Glenelg;
- (2) Dun Telve broch;
- (3) Dun Troddan broch.

Below: The entrance to Dun Telve broch





An inside view of Dun Telve, showing the variety of stones used in its construction. The wall is hollow in parts to provide space for the internal staircase.



As can be seen from this reconstruction sourced from the Internet, the broch may have been surrounded by a walled yard containing buildings filling various purposes. To discover more, go to the Caithness broch project at thebrochproject.co.uk

The broch survived as a building type for about 800 years so must have been effective in providing security for the highlanders of the time.

Sir James Matthew Barrie:

Fact file on the man who gave the world Peter Pan.

Sir James Matthew Barrie, 1st Baronet, was the son of a weaver, David Barrie.

Family Search has Barrie's birth in Kirriemuir, Angus on 9th May 1860. At the age of 13, Barrie went to Dumfries Academy in the care of his eldest siblings who taught there. He developed a taste for 'penny dreadfuls'. Indeed, the plot of his play, Quality Street, would still interest a Romance Commissioning Editor today.

The first appearance of Peter Pan came in *The Little White Bird*, an adult novel which was serialised in the US, then published in a single volume in the UK in 1901.

In 1894 Barrie married actress Mary Ansell in a Scottish ceremony at his parents' home in Kirriemuir, later suing for divorce on the grounds of her infidelity.

Peter Pan went to Hollywood where he was given the Disney treatment and voiced by child star, Bobby Driscoll. Peter Pan later did the unthinkable and grew up and developed a fear of flying in 'Hook' so that Robin Williams could play him. Barrie himself was played by Johnny Depp in the film 'Finding Neverland'. The story focussed on Barrie's platonic friendship with Sylvia Llewelyn Davies.



Above: The Barrie grave, Kirriemuir
Below: The birthplace of J.M. Barrie.



Some Interesting Websites

Scotland's Places <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk>

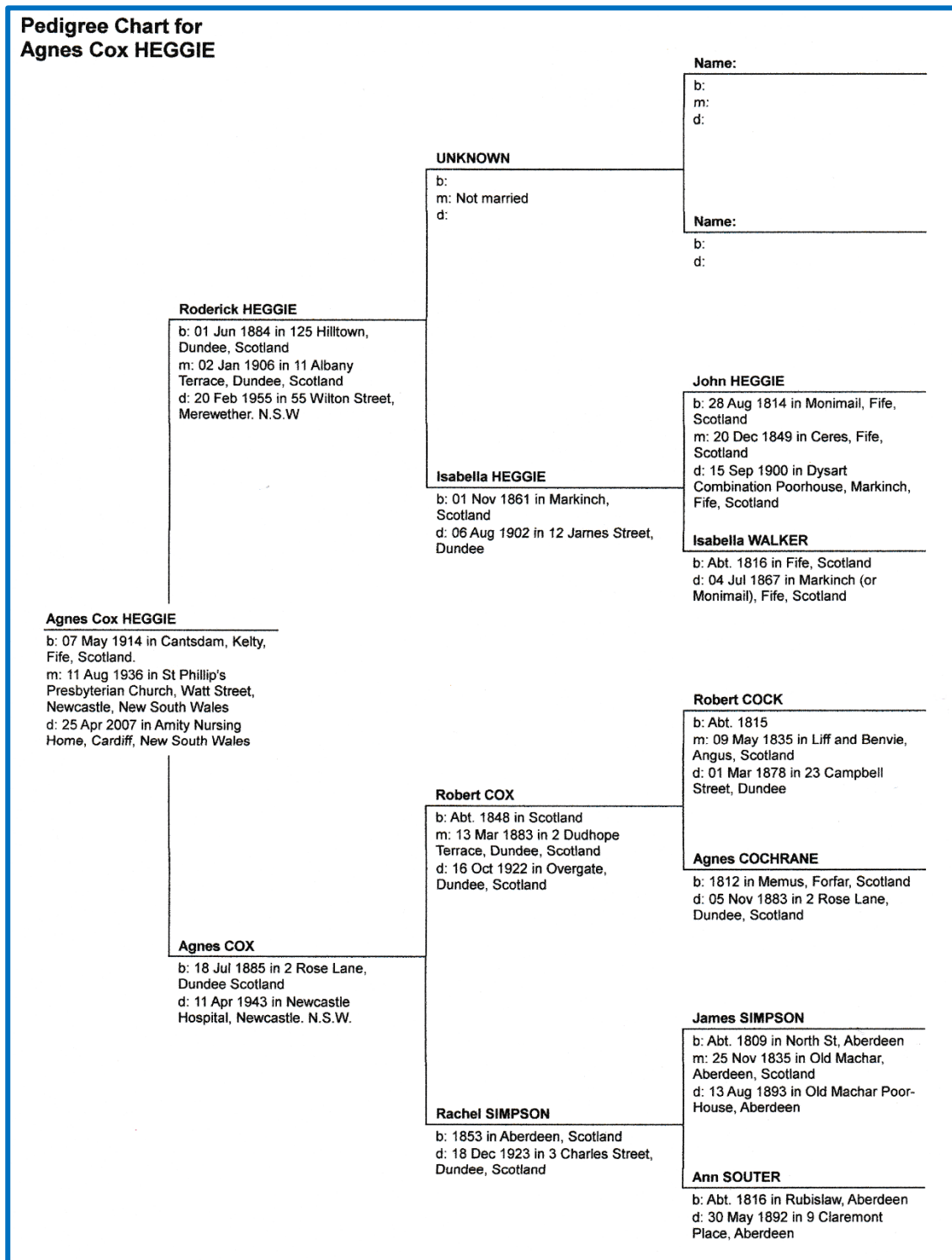
Scotland's Family www.scotlandfamily.com

Perpetual Calendar www.timeanddate.com/calendar

Castle Gardens – America's first immigration centre
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ny-castle-garden-ellis-island>



Are any of these names familiar?



My mother was Agnes Cox Heggie and these are some of her ancestors. They come from a variety of places in Scotland, namely Fife, Dundee, Forfar and Aberdeen. If you share any of these people in your family tree I would very much like to hear from you.

Ken Shilling (kenandmaree @gmail.com)

From a Scottish Album



Cawdor Castle is 8km south-west of Nairn and not far from Inverness. It is known to many school children as the site of Duncan's murder in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, but this is highly unlikely. The central tower dates from the 14th century and the wings were 17th century additions. Macbeth died in 1057.



Main picture: A general view of Cawdor Castle showing the central tower and wings

Left: the main entrance

Below: the castle from the garden.



Our Scottish SIG Open Day

Saturday 12th August was a fine, sunny day, just as we might have ordered for our Scottish SIG event. This meant that we could enjoy our morning tea or coffee, along with a selection of Scottish delicacies provided by members of the group, outside in the warmth of the winter sun. Inside the rooms was just as warm with the interest and friendliness of the more than 100 people who attended during the day. At times our rooms were rather packed but everyone seemed to be having an enjoyable time looking at the exhibits and learning something about Scotland and how to find your ancestors there.

Among the exhibits was a slide show in the back room arranged by Lea Harris while another constructed by Mel Woodford played continuously in the main hallway. Su Carter manned the refreshment table and made many cups of tea or coffee. Dundee cake, oatcakes and many varieties of shortbread were also available.

What would a Scottish open day be without the sound of the pipes? Professional piper Ian Innes entertained our visitors and some members of the local community when he played some tunes outside the main building. He also piped in a haggis supplied and carried in by Sheila Farrell. It was Mick Farrell who gave a short talk about the immortal Robert Burns and recited some of the bard's works before giving the *Address to a Haggis* and cutting it open.

Fair fa' your honest, soncie face,
Great chieftain o the puddin' race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Paunch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang's my arm. ...

And then, O what a glorious sight.
Warm-reekin, rich!

Samples of haggis, along with a sip of a good whisky (if you wanted it) were eagerly sought and it was not long before the 'great chieftain o the puddin' race' was completely consumed.

The raffle was drawn at the end of the day with Beverley Richardson winning first prize of the panoramic picture of Eilean Donan castle. Lee ? won second prize and John Easton third. Sharon Boyce won the fourth prize with Marilyn and Clive Maddocks and Michelle ? taking the remaining prizes.

A number of small dogs visited us during the day but it was Su Carter's Mae who stayed the whole time, quietly keeping an eye on proceedings. No doubt everything went off to her satisfaction because she was very well behaved and friendly the whole day.

Society members and visitors were invited to record the names of their Scottish families and the board set aside for this purpose was soon filled. They were also invited to record the county of origin of their Scottish ancestors and it was Ayrshire that proved the most popular with ten entries. In alphabetical order of county, the results were:

Aberdeenshire – 6; Angus – 2; Argyll – 3; Ayrshire – 10; Berwickshire – 1; Caithness – 1;
Clackmannashire – 1; Dumfriesshire – 2; Dunbartonshire – 1; East Lothian – 1; Fife – 6;
Inverness-shire – 1; Lanarkshire – 7; Midlothian – 4; Nairnshire – 1; Perthshire – 5;
Renfrewshire – 1; Ross and Cromarty – 7; Roxburghshire – 2; Selkirkshire – 2;
Stirlingshire – 2; Sutherland – 1; West Lothian – 2.


All in all, it was a great event for Family History Month. We met some very interesting people and will be pleased to welcome again those who joined the Society when next they visit our rooms. Last, but not least, thanks to all the members of the Scottish SIG who worked so hard to make the day the success it was.



Su Carter's Scottish terrier Mae enjoyed the day as much as the rest of us.



Some of the crowd attracted by the call of the pipes played by Ian Innes.



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The refreshment table with its load of Scottish goodies.



A group of members and visitors enjoying the presentation built from the pictures of Janet and Stephen Young on their recent holiday in Scotland.



Ian Innes pipes in the haggis which is carried by Sheila Farrell.

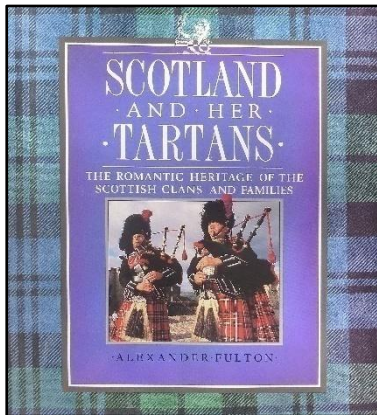


Above: The 'honest, soncie face' of the haggis.
Image: Natalie Bridges.

Right: Mick Farrell opens the Scottish treat.
Image: Lea Harris



The Clans of Scotland



The following is derived largely from *Scotland and her Tartans* by Alexander Fulton. This volume was published by Bramley Books in 1991. Another book that is worth reading is *The Complete Book of Tartan* by Iain Zaczek and Charles Phillips published by Hermes House in 2004.

The Scottish people and their nation have emerged from an amazing amalgam of Celtic, Pictish, British, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon and French cultures. As Scots spread throughout the world, they took composite traditions with them.

The clan tartan is the most powerful worldwide symbol of kinship and the kilt the most distinctive national dress. The kilt is a product of the earlier part of the 18th century and the clan tartan worn as a mark of corporate recognition, came rather later. Yet by the 1850s, for Lowland families as well as for Highland clans, tartan had become so much the fashion that even in the predominantly agricultural Hillfoots district of Clackmannashire it is recorded that 'no lady considered herself dressed without a tartan plaid or shawl'.

The meaning of 'clan' in Gaelic is 'children' or more loosely and appropriately 'family'. Branches of a clan which owe allegiance to the clan chief are known as 'septs'.

The word 'sept' in relation to a clan can be described loosely as dependents or followers. It usually refers to those families who attach themselves to larger clans for protection or economic reasons. These families may have no blood connection to the clan but would have to swear allegiance to the clan chief.

Clansmen were bound to offer their chief part of their crops or animals and to take up arms for him. In times of outright war-fare they fought for him and for whichever side he supported rather than one cause or another. The call to arms came by means of the 'fiery cross' – a rough wooden cross, one end of the crosspiece burning or charred and the other end with a blood-stained cloth attached. This was carried by runners throughout the clan lands to the accompaniment of a war cry or slogan. Men would immediately stop what they were doing and hurry to a designated meeting place. The last time that the 'fiery cross' was used was in Canada in 1812-13 when the men of Glengarry were summoned by their local chief to fight off a band of American raiders.

The inter-clan conflicts inherent in the system continued until well into the 18th century – Campbell against MacDonalds, Mackays against Gordons, Camerons against Mackintoshes, MacDonells of Glengarry against Mackenzies of Kintail, and almost everyone against the MacGregors.

The defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden ensured that the clan system was now reduced to mere fantasy and measures taken by the Government to prevent any recurrence of such rebellion hastened the collapse of the system.

The Disarming Act of 1746 not only banned the carrying of arms, but made it an offence ‘within that part of Great Britain called Scotland ... on any pretext whatsoever, [to] wear or put on the clothes commonly called Highland clothes ... and that no tartan or party-coloured plaid or stuff shall be used for Great Coats or upper coats’. The punishment for anyone convicted on the evidence of ‘one or more credible witnesses’ was six months in gaol for the first offence and transportation for seven years for the second.

The Act against Highland dress was repealed in 1782 but by that time the skills of dyeing and weaving the intricate tartan, if not wholly forgotten, had ceased to be a way of life.



In our next issue, No 2, Martinmas 2023, there will be an article about the Clan Fergusson (Ferguson).

The Scottish SIG would also like to receive your stories to include in *Caledonian*.

Please send your contribution to kenandmaree@gmail.com



Bye the nou