

The Houston Scot

Chieftain's Letter,

Highland Games

As I write this we are preparing for what we hope will be a great weekend for the Houston Highland Games. I'm looking forward to seeing old and new members at our booth and at the Robert Burns Workshops.

Simply delightful evening of Scottish songs at the April Meeting

Simply Scottish presented a selection of Burns and other Scottish songs to about 35 members and guests at the April 28th meeting. H&T member Dave Hutton from Perth (vocals) and Julian Tribe from Oxford (guitar/vocals) began singing together here in Houston about two years ago. On Dave's own admission the content and style of the presentation was heavily influenced by the fact that his mother began dragging him round the Scottish folk music scene in the 1970s and both became groupies of the Corries, who were just then emerging as the leading group in the field. Sadly this was one of the last live gigs for Simply Scottish. Dave Hutton and his wife will soon be relocating to Atlanta. We're sorry to lose the Huttons and wish them well. For that reason and to thank Simply Scottish for their performance we were delighted to feature Dave's tartan the Malcolm as Tartan of the Month on the website for April.

Next Meeting: Monday June 2 at 7:30 PM

Please note that the "May" meeting has been rescheduled one week later than usual to avoid Memorial Day and the Houston Highland Games weekend of May 17-18.

Captain Alistair Macnab will present "*Scotland's Merchant Venturers - the Story of Scotland's Contribution to the Spread of Empire through the Development of Merchant Shipping with a Significant Scottish Component*", highlighting Clan Line, Ben Line, Aberdeen & Commonwealth Line, Bank Line, Denholms, Hogarth's, Lyle's, Paddy Henderson's, City Line, Burrell's and so on as well as the Scottish shipyards that supported these world-wide businesses, mainly Clydeside, but also including Dundee and Aberdeen. Born in Ayr, Alistair left school at 15 to go to sea and rose rapidly through the ranks to become one of the youngest-ever Captains in the British merchant marine, serving all over the world. He began his onshore career in New Orleans, and after spells in Houston, New York and Scotland has spent the last 20+ years back in Houston. His entire career has been linked with the maritime commerce. He retired two years ago after eight years as president of the Houston Port Users Bureau, and has begun a new career lecturing at the University of Houston on international trade. This talk promises to be one of the highlights of the year, so mark your calendars.

Tartan of the Month - Munro

To honor Mark Monroe's sterling service as Program Chair for the last year and Alex and Maryanne Munroe's many years of contribution to the Society we are pleased to feature the Munro as Tartan of the Month for May/June. Check it out at www.heatherandthistle.org.

Program Items for September onwards

Please send ideas to our new Program Chair Dr. Gordon Macleod at gordymacus@yahoo.com.

Robert Boyd, Chieftain

Heather & Thistle Society



Chieftain Dr. Robert Boyd

Volume 8, Issue 9
May, 2008

Newsletter Editor:
Jim Monteith

Officers:

Chieftain – Dr. Robert Boyd
SubChieftain – Rev. Melvyn Douglass
Sgt.-at-Arms – Ardeth Brodie
Secretary – Carmelita Orr
Treasurer – Dr. Walter May

Committee Chairs:

Sunshine-Eileen Moore
Membership-Eileen Moore
Past Chieftains-Cheryl May
Burns Supper-Jim Monteith
Publicity-Melvyn Douglass
Programs-Gordon Macleod

May 2008 meeting has been moved to June 2, 2008 due to the Memorial Day Holiday being on the 26th of May which is the fourth Monday. June 2008 meeting will remain on June 23rd.

Program Input Requested

We now have programs lined up for the May and June meetings. At the May meeting Captain Alistair Macnab's topic will be "Scotland's Merchant Venturers - the Story of Scotland's Contribution to the Spread of Empire through the Development of Merchant Shipping with a Significant Scottish Component". In June, Helen Mann will talk about her research into her own Scottish-Russian heritage. We'll be working on ideas for September onwards, so we are looking for input from members. Please e-mail suggestions to:

Gordon Macleod

Program Chair

gordymacus@yahoo.com

Tartan of the Month

As a gesture of goodwill and appreciation to friends of the Society, we change the tartan background on our web site every month. Starting in April 08, we displayed "Boyd" in honor of new Chieftain Robert (Boyd). The Boyd clan has its home in Ayrshire and indeed Robert was brought up in Prestwich. In May we featured "Malcolm of MacCallum" as a thank you to Dave Hutton for his concert of Scottish Songs at our April meeting. Hutton is a Sept of Clan MacCallum. In June, we will display Munroe to acknowledge the huge contribution to the Society made by Mark (Munroe) during the past year. Mark's programs have made 2007/08 a vintage year with an interesting mix of History, songs, pipes and dancing. Thank you, Mark.



Heather & Thistle Society – Minutes April 28, 2008

Chieftain Dr. Robert Boyd called the business meeting to order at 7:35pm in the St. Thomas Episcopal School Theater. The motion was made and passed to accept the March, 2008 minutes as published in the newsletter.

Treasurer Report: Checking account opening balance is \$3,248.40, closing balance is \$3,064.90. Paid \$183.50 for newsletter reimbursement. Burns Supper account opening balance is \$18,483.63, closing balance \$17,042.63. Paid \$1441.00 to the Highland Games Association for booth charges, ad in program and prize money for Open Piping competition. PCC Contingency Fund opening balance is \$1,412.75, closing balance is \$1,412.92. Gain of 0.16 in interest. The motion was made and passed to accept the treasurer's report.

Membership Report: Eileen Moore reports 99 family, 44 single, 33 life, 40 exempt, and 4 complimentary memberships for a total of 220 members. 77 members are past due on their membership dues. The motion to accept the membership report was made and passed.

Committee Reports called for by **Sub-Chieftain** Rev. Melvyn Douglass
Burn's Club: No report.

Burns Supper: Dr. Ken Sorrels reports BSPC had their first meeting for the 2009 Burns Supper. A rough time-line was gone over. Charles McKay tentative Guest of Honor for the Immortal Memory.

Past Chieftains: Past Chieftain Cheryl May voted in as new Chairman.

Programs: May program will be Alistair McNab. June program will be Helen Mann.

Sunshine: Eileen Moore reports two cards sent out to Maryanne Munroe and James McDaniel. Dr. Robert Moore had thyroid surgery and will be going to MD Anderson for further treatment.

Newsletter: Out on schedule. Background of the website will change every month. Two newsletters returned due to bad addresses.

Houston Grampian: First week of September they will be in attendance at the Royal Highland Games.

Houston Highland Games: Melvin Douglass reports the Games are the weekend of May 17th and 18th. Twelve noon the opening ceremony is held.

RSCDS: No report.

Houston Highlanders: No report.

Sergeant-At-Arms: Ardeth Brodie reports 21 members and 6 guests present. Guests were Christopher Orr, Julian Tribe, Miriam Tribe, Tony Robert, Emily Standish and Bill Galbraith.

Old Business: PCC decided the Society tartans would be allowed to be used at events other than H&T as long as a member of H&T is responsible for them while they are borrowed.

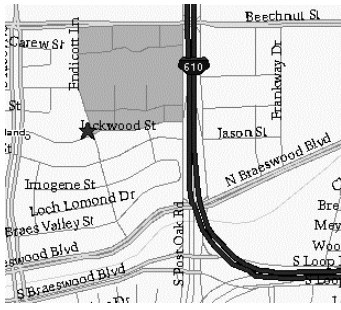
New Business: What used to be the Hospitality Chair position has lapsed. A suggestion was made that a new chair be appointed to provide refreshments at the meetings. Irene Boyd was nominated and voted in as Hospitality Chair. Carmelita Orr was sworn in as Secretary at the meeting since she was absent last month when the rest of the Officers were sworn in. Volunteers are needed to man the booth of the Highland Games and to help set up the booth on the Friday before the Games. The May meeting was moved to June 2nd due to the 26th being a holiday. The June meeting will remain on the 23rd. New members and guests need to be welcomed better so they will feel like returning to the meetings. The monthly meetings need to be promoted more. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Until the reign of James VI (1566-1625) the Crown was normally expected to 'live off its own'. This meant that the income derived from such sources as the crown lands, customs, fines and escheats was supposed to provide enough to meet all the expenses of the royal household as well as all other outlays. The Comptroller was the official responsible for handling the former while the Treasurer took care of the latter. In special circumstances, such as royal marriages or the subjugation of an unruly area like the Borders, the Estates in Parliament would be asked to contribute to an extraordinary tax. In this event half the amount demanded was paid by the clergy, one-third by the nobility and one-sixth by the Burghs.

Under James VI, who had serious financial problems, taxation came to be a more regular affair affecting a greater proportion of the population. Thus, after the Union of the Crowns, taxes spread over several years were requested in 1606, 1612, 1617 and again in 1621 with, latterly, an additional levy of 5 per cent placed on all annual rents. This trend continued under Charles I (1600-49) so that by the outbreak of the first Bishops' War taxation was becoming a regular occurrence. Further important developments took place during the Cromwellian Union when not only an assessment on land values, eventually fixed at £6000 a month, was introduced but an excise duty on beer and spirits, originally adopted during the English Civil War, was also collected. The Restoration witnessed the continuation of this Cromwellian policy. Thus the assessment or 'cess' as it became known was firmly established as the principle mode of direct taxation, Commissioners specifically appointed in 1667 for the purpose of assessing the land tax. Likewise, the excise duty continued to be collected and with the customs was to remain the main form of indirect taxation. Apart from occasional additional expedients like poll taxes in the 1690's the Scottish fiscal system continued to operate in this fashion until it was replaced under the terms of the Treaty of Union (1707). (from Collins Dictionary of Scottish History)

Lila Bell Wallace (b. 25 December 1889, Virden, Manitoba, Canada - d. 8 May 1984, Mount Kisco, New York) Born as Lila Bell Acheson, her father was a Presbyterian minister who brought his family from Canada to the USA when she was a child, and she grew up in the Midwest. She graduated from the University of Oregon (1917), taught at schools for two years, and then worked for the Young Women's Christian Association. In 1921 she married DeWitt Wallace, with whom she co-founded the Readers Digest magazine. They published the first issue in 1922. As the publication quickly caught on after its first issue of 5000 copies, she served as co-chairman of the company until 1973, and as a director until 1984. Although she gradually withdrew from the day-to-day operations, she was known to exercise indirect influence on the *Digest's* editorial agenda. She assembled an extensive collection of art, particularly French Impressionist works, and placed original paintings throughout the *Digest's* offices. Also a lover of gardening and flowers, among the many millions she donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art was a fund to provide fresh flowers daily to the museum's Great Hall. Among her benefactions were the restoration of Giverny, Monet's home in France, the gallery for the Abu Simbel temple at the Metropolitan, the Bird House at the New York Zoological Society's Bronx Zoo, and also millions to various hospitals and churches as well as to such arts institutions as the Juilliard School of Music. Altogether she gave away some \$60 million in her lifetime, and since they had no children, she and her husband left their fortune to foundations that continue to donate millions to various causes. (from Wikipedia)

Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming (May 15, 1857 – May 21, 1911), astronomer, was born in Dundee, Scotland, to Robert Stevens and Mary Walker Stevens. She attended public schools in Dundee, and at the age of 14, she became a pupil-teacher. She married James Orr Fleming, and they moved to the U.S. and settled in Boston, Massachusetts, when she was 21. While she was pregnant with her son, Edward, her husband abandoned her, and she had to find work to support herself and Edward. She worked as a maid in the home of Professor Edward Charles Pickering. Pickering became frustrated with his male assistants at the Harvard College Observatory and famously declared his maid could do a better job. So in 1881, Pickering hired Fleming to do clerical work at the observatory. While there, she devised and helped implement a system of assigning stars a letter according to how much hydrogen could be observed in their spectra. Stars classified as A had the most hydrogen, B the next most, and so on. Later, Annie Jump Cannon would improve upon this work to develop a simpler classification system based on temperature. Fleming contributed to the cataloguing of stars that would be published as the Henry Draper Catalogue. In nine years, she catalogued more than 10,000 stars. During her work, she discovered 59 gaseous nebulae, over 310 variable stars, and 10 novae. In 1907, she published a list of 222 variable stars she had discovered. In 1888, Mrs. Fleming discovered the Horsehead nebula on Harvard plate B2312, describing the bright nebula (later known as IC-434) as having "a semicircular indentation 5 minutes in diameter 30 minutes south of Zeta [Orionis]." William Pickering, who took the photograph, speculated that the spot was dark obscuring matter. All subsequent articles and books seem to deny Fleming and W. H. Pickering credit, because the compiler of the first Index Catalogue, J. L. E. Dreyer, eliminated Mrs. Fleming's name from the list of objects then discovered by Harvard, attributing them all instead merely to "Pickering" (taken by most readers to mean E. C. Pickering, Director of Harvard College Observatory.) But, by the release of the second Index Catalogue by Dreyer in 1908, Mrs. Fleming and others at Harvard were famous enough to receive proper credit. Fleming was placed in charge of dozens of women hired to do mathematical classifications and edited the observatory's publications. In 1899, Fleming was given the title of Curator of Astronomical Photographs. In 1906, she was made an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society of London, the first American woman to be so elected. Soon after, she was appointed honorary fellow in astronomy of Wellesley College. Shortly before her death, the Astronomical Society of Mexico awarded her the Guadalupe Almendaro medal for her discovery of new stars. She published *A Photographic Study of Variable Stars* (1907) and *Spectra and Photographic Magnitudes of Stars in Standard Regions* (1911). She died in Boston of pneumonia. (from Wikipedia)



Heather & Thistle Society Statement And Membership Information

The Heather and Thistle Society was founded in 1953 by Scots living in Houston who wished to “cultivate an interest in and fond recollections of Scotland, its history and traditions, its literature and ideals, its minstrelsy and song, its customs and amusements, and to provide opportunities for good fellowship and social contact through typically Scottish functions, so that the blessing of our Scottish culture may never die in our new homeland”.

Meeting Information

Meeting Place:

St. Thomas Episcopal School
4900 Jackwood
Houston, Texas 77096

Date and Time:

Fourth Monday of the month
7:30 pm

The Heather and Thistle Society meets 10 times a year, September through June. Programs include music, singing, dancing, lively lectures, slide shows and movies about Scotland. The Heather and Thistle Society puts on the annual Robert Burns Supper and Ball in late January of each year. We are an organization that promotes our Scottish heritage, in various ways.

The Heather and Thistle Society’s monthly newsletter, “The Houston Scot” is published from September through June. Original articles, information about Scottish or related events are welcome and should be sent to the editor, Jim Monteith, at 15703 Mound Road, Hockley, Texas 77447 or 936-931-2588.

Membership in the Heather and Thistle Society is open to all with an interest in Scottish heritage and culture. Annual dues are \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family membership. Applications for membership may be obtained from our website.

<http://heatherandthistle.org/documents/membership.doc>

Dues are due at the beginning of the fiscal year, March 1. Completed applications and membership fees should be mailed to: Dr. Walter May

6143 Sienna Arbor Lane
Houston, Texas 77041-6038

The Heather and Thistle Society
Newsletter Editor
15703 Mound Road
Hockley, Texas 77447