



THE THISTLE AND QUILL

Newsletter of the St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota

www.mnstandrewssociety.org

June 2010

Were You "Blown Away" by the 2010 Scottish Fair and Highland Games?

The 2010 Minnesota Scottish Fair and Highland Games has come and gone as we slide into summer and maybe think about non-Scottish things for awhile. The Fair and Games, held on May 22 at the Dakota County Fairgrounds for the seventh time, proved to be a big success, despite, and maybe because of the weather. The weather prediction for that Saturday was for perfect weather, sunny and 80 degrees with no chance of rain. That prediction probably helped draw out big crowds for the Fair. But how could the weather people, with all their fancy radar and equipment and computer models, be so wrong? The day started in fog, which quickly burned off. But then the clouds rolled in, and with them several shower bursts, one with tiny hail. The last one ended, fortunately, just before the noon Parade of Tartans. Pipers were rightfully concerned for the well-being of their pipes, which do not take kindly to the rain, but they nevertheless trooped on and provided that wonderful sound that we Scots love. The clearing skies in the afternoon were welcomed, but they were being cleared by a fierce wind that only grew stronger as the day progressed. By late afternoon, gusts of over 40 mph were coming through regularly and several clan tents and contents were damaged. Vendors were having similar issues. Many people were seen hanging on to their tent frames in the hope that it and they would not be blown away by the gusts. By late afternoon many tents were down, either intentionally by concerned owners, or by the sheering power of the wind.

Despite all that wonderful Minnesota spring weather, the Fair was a great success. Parking areas were getting quite full. Crowds were filling all the venues and vendors reported having a very good day. This year there were more food vendors than ever before, including some very interesting new ones. New Zealand meat pies, chocolate truffles, and walleye chunks were among the new ones, along with many of the old reliables. The lines for food got long at times, which is bad for the customer, but great for the vendors. New merchandise vendors were also making their presence known, including Geoffrey Tailor kilts and Utilikilts.

There were more bands this year than ever before, in response to the newly sanctioned competition. Thank you to Kieran Folliard for making that possible. That of course made the massed bands at the end of the day more memorable than ever. Plus the music in the McCracken Pub, which could be heard over much of the grounds, was festive, professional and great to hear. Yes, the Fair had its difficulties with the weather, but it is clearly maturing nicely and is becoming a major Midwest event that seems to grow and get better every year!

Tartan Day Was Turned into a Very Enjoyable Weekend

The official Tartan Day, as always, was April 6, a day to remember our heritage and commemorate the Declaration of Arbroath, which some call the Scottish Declaration of Independence. But the local celebration of the day occurred this year on April 9 and 10. The celebration kicked off with a wonderful ceilidh at the brand new Kieran's Pub in Block E in downtown Minneapolis. Across the street, the Timberwolves were playing the Lakers, so it was a busy night around First Avenue. It was great to see so many tartans mixed in with the basketball jerseys as the crowds poured in.

The ceilidh combined great food and drink with a fundraising tombola and raffle, topped off with country dancing, all in Kieran's new Titanic Room.

The next day, the annual festivities started at 3 p.m. with the parade of bands, clans and organizations up the State Capitol Mall. The ceremony was emceed by Neil Johnson. The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Barbara Reyelts of Duluth. Barbara has devoted much of her life to sharing her interest and knowledge of Scottish Highland dancing by performing, teaching, and promoting it throughout the Midwest. She is a very deserving recipient and her family was obviously very proud of her, attending events throughout the weekend in full Scottish garb. After the Capitol ceremony, folks retired to Merlin's rest to continue the celebration. All in all, the whole weekend was a great success. Many thanks to all who helped organize and put on this event.

St. Andrew's Society Leadership

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Bob Olsson: Chair, Board of Governors;
(H) 651-770-5820; macolsson@macdougallmn.com

Class of 2010

Eileen Stewart dore.stewart@gmail.com

Doug Stewart dore.stewart@gmail.com

Class of 2011

Judith Palmateer jpalmateer0463@comcast.net

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Angie Schwartz ams1822@gmail.com

Neil Johnson johnson_neil@comcast.net

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Lyaman (Mac) MacPherson: President
layman@tomacLtd.com

Sandy Poole, 1st Vice President (Events)
highland_lassy@yahoo.com

Don Bruce, 2nd Vice President & T&Q co-editor
bruce1051@comcast.net

Jack MacKinnon, Secretary
jmackinnon2004@yahoo.com

Tom King, Treasurer
doulltommy@yahoo.com

Don and Jo Luther, Delegate at Large
don.luther@comcast.net

Phil Sutherland, Delegate at Large
phil.sutherland@allina.com

Joanne Wahl, Delegate at Large
wahlprop@integra.net

Wells Wright, Jr., Del. at Large & T & Q co-editor
wells@usfamily.net

NON-VOTING OFFICERS

J. Thomas (Tom) Parry/Barbara Macdonald Parry,
Historians; jtparry@mchsi.com

Don Luther, Webmaster
webmaster@standrewssocietymn.org

Rev. Donald O. Nesheim, Chaplain
dnesheim@earthlink.net

Judith Palmateer, Grant Coordinator
jpalmateer0463@comcast.net

SOCIETY PIPERS

Bill Gilchrist ghillie@bitstream.net

Pat McCormick patmccormick3@aol.com

St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota
P.O. Box 24888, Edina, MN 55424-0888

www.mnstandrewssociety.org

e-mail: webmaster@mnstandrewssociety.org

**ATTEND THE 2010 ST.
ANDREW'S SOCIETY AGM
ON SATURDAY, JUNE 19**

The St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 19, 2010 at the home of Joanne and Roger Wahl in Prior Lake. Please make plans to attend the meeting and enjoy a great afternoon on the lake.

Several offices are up for election, including First and Second Vice President, and all Delegate at large positions. If you would like to be considered for one of these positions, please contact Bob Olsson. We would love to get some new blood involved in the leadership of St. Andrew's and you could help us with that.

We will also be discussing the past year and our partnership with the Scottish American Center. If you have any business that you wish to bring up, please come to the meeting, or, if you can't make it, contact Bob to get it on the agenda.

We will be having a picnic at the Wahls in addition to the meeting, so please come out for a great afternoon of a little business and a lot of fun. Bring a dish to share!

The Wahls live at 16510 Inguadona Beach Circle SW in Prior Lake. To get to their home, go south on Interstate 35 to the 185th Street exit in Lakeville. Go west to Prior Lake and go left on Hwy 13 south. Go to 170th Street SW and go right (west). Go to Willow Lane and go right. Stay on Willow until you come to Inguadona Beach Circle, go left onto the circle but bear right until you come to 16510. We hope to see many members there for a good time.

The Stone of Destiny: A fun movie about a piece of Scots history

By Don Bruce

The Stone of Destiny is, of course, the Stone of Scone, the great stone upon which the kings of Scotland sat when they were being crowned. King Edward I seized it in 1296 and took it off to London, where it was placed under the throne in Westminster Abbey, to signify that the King of England was also the King of Scotland. In 2008, *The Stone of Destiny* also became a movie. It did not attain wide release and is not very well known. It is unfortunately not available on Netflix, but is available for purchase through Amazon at a price not too much greater than a rental. It is worth the small price for some good fun!

The movie is about the successful plot by several students from Glasgow, executed on Christmas Eve 1950, to steal the stone from Westminster and return it to its rightful home in Scotland. It stars several actors of note, including Billy Boyd (Pippin in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy), Robert Carlyle (*Hamish MacBeth* and *The Full Monty*), Kate Mara, and Charlie Cox as the ringleader, Ian Hamilton. The film is directed by Charles Martin Smith, the American actor best known for his performances in *American Graffiti* and *Never Cry Wolf*.

The movie follows the hatching of the plot, the forming of the group that will carry it out, and the theft itself, along with the return of the stone to Scotland. It ends with the group being arrested and the stone being returned to England. It was filmed in Scotland, England, and Canada, with scenes in Westminster, and many recognizable landmarks in Scotland, including Arbroath Abbey and the Glenfinnan train viaduct.

The movie starts in Glasgow where young Ian Hamilton becomes enamored of the idea of stealing the Stone as a show of Scottish national spirit. He is at first put off by John MacCormick (Carlyle), rector of Glasgow University, but later encouraged by him. From there he recruits his group of ragtag thieves: Kay (Mara), the beautiful redhead with a strong Nationalist spirit; Gavin (Stephen McCole), the big drunk brought in for his

muscle; and Alan Stuart (Ciaron Kelly), the quiet, young, studious, last minute addition, who is the rare freshman who owns a car.

They set off for London, where they run into problems with their first attempt. They regroup, but Kay gets sick and they must regroup again. Finally, the plan of action comes together and they are successful, but the film makes their efforts quite humorous and looking like they will fail at any moment. But, somehow they succeed and leave London with the stone, now in 2 pieces, and return it to Scotland. News of the theft is greeted with street celebrations in Scotland and reawakens dormant Scottish pride. The thieves “hide” the stone in a field on their way back and when they go to retrieve it, more humorous problems occur. They finally get the stone put back together and decide to give it back. The stone is brought to Arbroath, where the group is arrested, but never prosecuted. The movie ends by explaining that the Stone was returned to Scotland by England in 1996, but is only on loan and must be returned for the next coronation. Of course, it can now be seen at Edinburgh Castle.

The movie, like most films based on historical events, is not 100% accurate. The exact timing of all the events is not clear, and license is taken with what actually happened to the Stone after they took it. But, despite that, it is an enjoyable depiction of what must have been a bumbling theft of a precious relic by a bunch of young, energetic and inspired students who were clearly not very good thieves.

The film is done with a charming, humorous touch, and really has the feel of mid-20th century Scotland and England. What is really amazing is the depiction of security in 1950 and how different things are in 2010. You can be assured that no one would be able to get anywhere near the Stone now if a theft was attempted.

**St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota and Scottish Community
Schedule of Events**

- 1. June St. Andrew's Pub Night, Friday, June 18, 7 pm, Cooper Pub, St. Louis Park*
- 2. St. Andrew's Annual General Meeting, Saturday, June 19, 1 pm, at JoAnne and Roger Wahl's home on Prior Lake*
- 3. July St. Andrew's Pub Night, Friday, July 16, 7 pm, the Mc Glockenspiel Pub (Glockenspiel Restaurant), St. Paul*
- 4. August St. Andrew's Pub Night, Friday, August 20, 7 pm, McGarrys' Pub, Maple Plain*
- 5. September St. Andrew's Pub Night, Friday, September 24, 7 pm, Merlin's Rest*
- 6. St. Andrew's Day Event, November 2010, to be determined*
- 7. St. Andrew's Burns Dinner, Friday, January 21, 2011, Fort Snelling Officer's Club*

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c/o Scottish American Center
3030 West River Parkway S, #300
Minneapolis MN 55406

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