



# The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Fall 2014

## President's Message – Fall 2014

Lads and Lassies,

It seems that our exceptionally hot summer is fading away to make room for some cooler weather and rainy skies. We certainly welcome the change. There were several interesting events during this period that we have covered in this issue of the Spectator.

First, the Gaelic Song and Language Week was held in mid July at Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina. Two of our Society-sponsored grantees attended this event, Michael Small and Barbara Lynn Rice, both of whom have sent us interesting accounts of the event. This is the type of educational Scottish and Celtic heritage event that the Society wishes to encourage. Please see the two articles below.

Second, the Plains Scottish Games took place in August at The Plains, Virginia. Duncan McIver and Bob Davis attended and had a great time. Please see Duncan's article below.

Third, the Society September luncheon was held at Peter Chang's Chinese Restaurant in Williamsburg, in early September. Our speaker was Andrew O'Donnghaile, another Society grantee who is studying Gaelic and medieval history at St. John's College in Cambridge. This was a terrific event, Andrew was a great lecturer, and the food was awesome. Please see the article below.

On September 17 we had our first Society Board Meeting after the long summer break when many people were out of town, and we handled several issues of interest. We discussed upcoming events in detail and debated some proposed new administrative procedures for the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee conducted a vote for new Board members and came to a satisfactory conclusion. As a general rule, it was agreed to separate business activities meetings from social functions. The procedure for potential new members to contact the Society with initial questions will be simplified.

Society Events that are upcoming include Society participation in the Fall Festival of Folklife in Newport News Park on October 4 and 5. This is a major event and we will have a tent there. Please be sure to attend if you can! The Fall Kirking is set for November 16 at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. The Annual General Meeting is also scheduled for November, although we do not yet have a firm date or site. We will have a festive December lunch on Sunday December 7 at the Hellenic Center and we hope to arrange for an interesting speaker. Planning is already underway for the 2015 Burns Night.

The rest of the year looks interesting for SAS members. Keep watching the website for the latest news.

Yours Aye, Marshall S Thomas



### **July 2014: Michael Small Attends Gaelic Song and Language Week**

Micheal Small is a Gaelic language student and one of the Society's grantees to whom we gave a modest stipend for him to attend the American Scottish Gaelic Society's Gaelic Song and Language Week on July 6-11, 2014 at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. He had quite an adventure and was kind enough to write it up for us. The following is from Michael Small (edited/shortened to fit in to the Spectator):



I first heard of this event from a former classmate. She and I were in the same beginner level class (via Skype) at the Acadamaidh Gàidhlig an Atlantaig in Canada, taken in 2011. She and I have remained in touch since that year. She attended the event last year and suggested that I attend this year.

When I learned that two of my Gaelic instructors, and a renowned Gaelic singer whose name was familiar to me, would be attending, I knew I must attend. It would provide me a perhaps not-likely-to-be-repeated opportunity to meet them all at the same event.

After scheduling my flight to/from Boston to Charlotte, arranging for a ride to/from the airport to Banner Elk, and a kennel to watch my dog for a few days there was only to wait. The plan was to meet a fellow attendee at the airport in

Charlotte and ride together to Banner Elk. A few days prior to departure I was contacted by my traveling companion and asked if I would mind waiting at the Charlotte airport for one of the instructors, whose original flight from Canada had been canceled. Of course I said I did not mind, despite the wait being several hours.

### **Travel/arrival day:**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of July I woke at 02:30 and by 03:15 was on my way to the airport in order to catch a 06:10 flight, arriving in Charlotte at just after 08:00. I met with my traveling companion, we collected our bags and began our wait. Unfortunately, because we had checked bags we had to leave the “secure area” of the airport and our wait was near the exit where the only seats were hard metal, and the only available food was over-priced prepackaged salads and such. Still, we were able to sit, chat and get to know each other a bit. At about 2:30 we met the instructor, caught our van-ride, and began our ride, predicted to take about 2 hours, to Lees-McRae College.

The limo ride to Lees-McRae College was harrowing to say the least. The driver seemed to care not a whit for the speed limit, eyes on the road, or his hands on the steering wheel, even when negotiating some of the winding roads in the mountains of NC. Additionally, he made it clear he did not want to actually drive onto the college campus, preferring instead to drop us off on the main road in Banner Elk. However, we did convince him to drop us off on the campus.

When we arrived, our bags were quickly unloaded by the driver, who was obviously in a hurry to depart. Soon after, whilst checking in, I realized one of my bags, a small black bag which was in the luggage storage bin with the others, was missing. I called him to report the missing bag and he seemed rather upset when I asked him to bring it to me. He agreed to do so, the next day, but wanted more money.

After completing check in, including receiving our dorm key, linens and meal pass we headed to the dining hall for supper. There I met my friend, Sharon, who had invited me to attend, and one of my Gaelic instructors, Cam MacRae. What a pleasure that was after so many times we had talked or exchanged e-mail. After supper we all gathered for orientation and an explanation of the schedule for the next few days.

### **Classes**

The classes, òrain (songs) and canan (language), were divided into three levels: I, II, III. The schedule varied a bit from day to day in order to allow students to experience as many levels as possible. Students were allowed to attend any class, or level they chose, but advanced students in a lower level class were asked to refrain from answering every question.

### **Instructors**

Nick Freer – Canan I Angus McLeod – Canan II and III, Òrain II and III. Angus was my Gaelic instructor from 2012-2013.

Christine Primrose – Canan II and III, Òrain I, II and III. Christine is a world-renowned Gaelic singer.

### **Classes attended**

I attended one Canan I (language 1) during the week and found that it was in fact below my current level so I chose to concentrate on the second level of language and all levels of songs.

I found that the Canan II was a good fit for me because I know enough Gaelic that I understood most of what was said, and was able to practice a few new phrases. One of the most interesting aspects of this class level was that we played cards using Gaelic to communicate. Once I found my self in a Canan II (intermediate language) that became a Canan III because most of the attendees were that far along in their conversational abilities. I remained in the room but I much of the dialogue contained words I did not know.

I attended all levels of the song classes and I enjoyed those most of all. I am not a singer but Christine made the experience so enjoyable that I was not self-conscious about my lack of singing ability.

Christine is a “Lewis woman” (she is from the Isle of Lewis) and on several occasions she told us about life on Lewis. That to me was one of the most enjoyable aspects of the class. I found the classes helped me to better understand how to speak the language because the rhythm and cadence are all important. I also developed a better understanding of the structure of the songs, and the stories behind many of the songs. The one disappointment I had was my cell phone, which I was using to record the singing. It “cuts off” after 5 minutes, therefore some of the recordings are incomplete or are in multiple segments.

### **Special Events**

Monday (7<sup>th</sup>) storytelling, ACGA meeting, Gaelic stories/movies

Tuesday (8<sup>th</sup>) whisk(e)y tasting, silent auction and book/music/video sale

Wednesday (9<sup>th</sup>) Doctor Michael Newton book signing, and a cèilidh

Thursday (10<sup>th</sup>) Christine Primrose discussion of songs and sing-along opening ceremonies of Highland Games at Grandfather Mountain

Friday (11<sup>th</sup>) -all classes meet in McMillan dorm group room at 10:00.

After packing our bags we met in the above mentioned room to share our experiences, and have a final sing-along. Christine Primrose spoke to the group and led us in I stated that the experience was one of the highlights of my life, along with my trips to Scotland, and that “Ma tha mi beò fhathast” (If I am still alive) I will return next year and stay for the weekend games.

--*Michael Small*

### **July 2014: 2014 Gaelic Song & Language Week at Grandfather Mountain**

And here is another view of the gathering from Barbara Lynn Rice, who was also sponsored by our Society. Below: ACGA group shot by Molly McRae



An Commun Gàidhealachd Ameireaganach (ACGA), known in English as the American Scottish Gaelic Society, holds its annual Gaelic Song & Language Week each July on the campus of Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina near Grandfather Mountain. This year's session was held July 6-11, 2014.

This is the only Immersion Week held in the United States that offers the opportunity to learn Gaelic song along with the language. There are usually three

teachers who are fluent Gaelic speakers. In 2014, there was a native-born Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis, Christine Primrose, who is a well-known singer; Angus MacLeod from Nova Scotia, Canada, who has been speaking Gaelic since 1995; and Nicholas Freer from Virginia, who has been speaking Gaelic since 1988.

The week begins on Sunday, when everyone checks into the dormitory rooms at the college, and later goes to an orientation meeting. The following day, classes begin at 8:30AM and end at 3PM with Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced levels in the Gaelic language and song. On the beginning level, the teacher will speak in both English and Gaelic; intermediate, less so in English, more in Gaelic to encourage the students to speak in the language; and on the advanced level, the entire class is conducted in Gaelic. Students are allowed to visit the more advanced classes to observe. Special interest sessions are held in the afternoons from 3:15-4:45PM. This is the schedule from Monday to Thursday. On the last day, Friday morning, all the classes meet together for a final session.

### **Barbara**

Barbara attended the Intermediate level (Canan II and Òrain II) for language and singing. Angus MacLeod, who taught the Intermediate language (Canan) level this session, was very concerned, that people learned to speak conversational Gaelic on an everyday basis, and found some fun ways to engage the members of the



class in conversation. One was to actually play a game of cards, “Go Fish”, in Gaelic, and we learned to say phrases that are usually stated in a card game. Another way was to describe an object that was passed around the class. Many people tend to learn reading and writing in Gaelic well enough, but not enough to have a real conversation, and this was one method of breaking the ice.

For Gaelic song, Christine Primrose taught the class to sing several Gaelic songs (Òrain) with great care and attention to the meaning and pronunciation. This was adding to the repertoire of many who already have been singing in Gaelic, but also bringing some new insight into singing well-known traditional and more recent Gaelic music. I should also mention, that Angus MacLeod also taught a session in Gaelic song, with music coming from Nova Scotia, where Gaelic is still spoken.

The special interest sessions included a whisky tasting (I don't drink whisky, but it was highly informative how many different whiskies are made and what makes them unique), storytelling, a book signing, and more. There were also opportunities on different evenings for a cèilidh (more storytelling, songs, and poetry recitation in Gaelic – of which I did one poem), a Gaelic book sale, and a silent auction of inexpensive donated items.

All in all, it was a very pleasant setting, where I met some very wonderful people, and had the rare opportunity to interview all three of the teachers for an article for the New York Caledonian Club newsletter.

*--Barbara Lynn Rice*

### **August 2014: The Plains Scottish Games and Festival**

On August 30/31 our own Duncan McIver attended the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Scottish Games and Festival, held at the Great Meadow in the Plains, Virginia, August 30-31. This has become a great Scottish event and features exciting games, Clan gatherings, Scottish music, dancing and culture displays, delicious food and drink, and popular vendors. The weather was beautiful, the volunteers did a terrific job for the estimated attendance of 15,000 enthusiastic and fun loving Scots and Scottish admirers. Both Bob Davis and Duncan McIver of the SASW attended and enjoyed this exciting Scottish event. The 2014 Honored Clan was MacTavish. Please see the photos below by Duncan McIver. Additional information is available on the website: <http://www.vascottishgames.org>





Duncan is armed and ready



Matthew and Jenny Elliot of the Scottish Trading Company. We recommend this company for highland gear/goods.



## September 2014: September Luncheon

The Society's September Luncheon was held at Peter Chang's Chinese Restaurant on September 6, 2014. The venue was excellent, the food was great, and our speaker was Andrew O'Donnghaile, a Society grantee who is studying Gaelic and medieval history at St. John's College in Cambridge. His slide show was fascinating - Jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Canai: Church Administration in the Legal and Geographic Landscape of Early Medieval Ireland. Heavy stuff! The presentation was eye-opening and Andrew was a good speaker. 27 Society members attended, and it was wonderful seeing old friends again. Our thanks to Andrew, and to Kathy Kasley and Ev Tucker for making the arrangements. Here are a few photos taken at the event:







Andrew O'Donnghaile



## Flowers of the Forest

Gloria Anne Foss

April 29, 1936 - June 26, 2014

Gloria Foss was an SAS member and we send our condolences to John and to her family.

Gloria Anne Mains Flinter Foss, wife of General John W. Foss (Retired) died on 26 June, 2014. She was born to Henry and Isabella Mains on 29 April, 1936 in Glasgow, Scotland. As a young girl she lived at the family hotel in Glasgow. In a German bombing raid in 1940, she and her family survived a near miss which destroyed the home across the street. Later the family moved to East Anglia so her father could work at one of the American bomber bases as a mechanic. There they endured the hardships of wartime Britain, with buzz bombs attacks in 1944-1945. Her father died in 1945, and the family returned to Glasgow in 1948. She was an excellent student, and played field hockey for her school. In December 1951 her mother died from cancer. Her aunt had married a US Army doctor, Marcus Flinter and the couple adopted Gloria and her younger brother. She and her brother then crossed the Atlantic by ship to reach her aunt and uncle, stationed in Venezuela. Their next post was Fort Benning, where Gloria graduated from Columbus High School and went on to nursing school. In 1956 she met John Foss, and within months the two were married. When he was transferred to Germany, she remained in Georgia to complete her nursing training and graduated salutatorian of her class. She then rejoined John in Germany and began her thirty-three year tour as an Army wife. While in Germany their first child, John was born. A transfer back to Fort Benning lasted three and a half years, as she remained there while John had a tour in Korea. In 1961 their second child, Kevin was born. Their next station was West Point, where John served as an instructor, and later became the first exchange instructor to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, England. While there, their child, Julia, was born in 1966. With the three children, she moved to Florida to live near her adoptive father while John had a combat tour in Vietnam. After a year at Fort Leavenworth and the Staff College, John returned to Vietnam and Gloria and the family moved back to Florida. During his absences, Gloria maintained the family and kept them happy with trips to the beach and the Apollo launches. On his return from Vietnam, the family was transferred to Germany, where they enjoyed travel



and skiing for two years. They were stationed at several more posts in the US over the next several years: Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; Fort Monroe, Virginia and Fort Hood, Texas. After his promotion to Brigadier General, the family went to the Philippines as part of the diplomatic station. Then they had their third tour of Germany, followed by a return to Fort Benning. As the family moved around, Gloria was always active in the OWC, and volunteered in the Red Cross chapters at each post. She spent a great deal of time helping the Army community. From Benning they moved to Fort Bragg for three years, then a year at Fort Myer and the Pentagon. In 1989 their final tour was two years as CG TRADOC at Fort Monroe. Upon retirement, they moved to Kingsmill. Her time there was spent in travel to England, Scotland, Germany, and China; in activities at the sports club; and in caring for the many animals and birds (from hummingbirds to hawks) that came to the house.

She was a great Mom to her three children; John (wife Theresa); Kevin (wife Cristina) and Julia (husband Jimmy). She passed her passions for nature and animals to all of her children, along with her love of reading and books. Her inspiration also made all three excellent cooks. She loved her three grandchildren Bryana, Kyla and Brady and supported them in many ways. All got to see her in her last days. Gloria was also a steady participant at St. Bede Catholic Church. Gloria had friends across the world who prayed for her during her illness. She was truly a super Mom and Grandma.

A visitation will take place on Friday, July 4 from 6-8pm at Nelsen Funeral Home, 3785 Strawberry Plains Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188. A funeral mass will be held on Saturday, July 5, at 11am, at St. Bede Roman Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23188. Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. Online condolences may be offered at [www.nelsencares.com](http://www.nelsencares.com).

Nelson Funeral Home.





# Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

## Application for Membership

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you, applying as a new member  or as a Spouse  Son  Daughter  in the same household of a current member (check one)?

Member's Name if you are a spouse/son/daughter: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Schools/Colleges: \_\_\_\_\_

Business or Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name (if not a member): \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Scottish Ancestry: \_\_\_\_\_

Scottish Interests – (History, Literature, Arts, Clan Affiliation etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Clan Affiliation or Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

To the best of our knowledge, the above applicant is of sound character, over the age of 21 years and is entirely suitable to membership in the Society. Applicant will actively participate in the functions of the Society as circumstances allow and will perform conscientiously any duties undertaken.

Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist for Membership:

Initial Individual Membership in a Household– Initiation (\$20.00) plus First Year's Dues (\$40.00). Total of \$60.00.

Additional Membership within same household – Initiation (\$20.00) plus First Year's Dues (\$20.00). Total of \$40.00.

Your check made out to: St. Andrews' Society of Williamsburg

A Small Photograph of you suitable for digitization.

Completed Application with address, phone number and e-mail address included.

NOTE: All memberships are individual and only one applicant per application.