

Great SCOT!

Look what's
going on...

Scottish Cultural Organization of the Triangle

March 2010

Ceilidh Concert

*MUSIC, SONG, DANCE AND POETRY
Of Scotland
By Native Scots in the Triangle*

March 28, 2010

4 - 6 pm

Page-Walker Arts & History Center
119 Ambassador Loop, next to City Hall
Cary, North Carolina

A moving mixture of Celtic harp music, solo and duet singing of Scottish songs of love, humor and sadness, Scottish and Cape Breton dancing, fiddle music and poetry of Robert Burns and from the Doric language of northeast Scotland.

Tea, coffee and Scottish nibbles afterwards at 6 pm with the performers and guests. Please visit SCOT website www.SCOT.us for more detailed information.

All this for just \$10 per ticket, and they're going fast! Make your reservations at www.townofcary.org or (919) 460-4963, or through SCOT's website.

Join us on **April 10-11** as we celebrate Tartan Day at The North Carolina Renaissance Faire. We are the Official Tartan Day Celebration for the Triangle!

So don your kilt, wear your tartan, and come out to celebrate your Scottish Heritage. Everyone's a Scot on Tartan Day!

Bonnie Knees Contest
Highland Athletics
Pipes & Drums
Parade of Scots
Scottish Dancers

Details at:
www.ncrenfaire.com



Cary Indoor Competitions and Workshops

SCOT is proud to sponsor the 9th Annual Cary Indoor Competitions and Workshops to be held on **March 27** at Resurrection Lutheran School in Cary. Dancers, pipers and fiddlers from 10 states ranging from Massachusetts to Georgia will convene in Cary to compete for prizes and trophies.

In highland dancing, newer dancers will be competing in the morning. Some of the top dancers in the United States will be competing in the premier categories in the afternoon including the current US champion. In addition, dancers will also perform choreographies of their own composition. At the same time, pipers will compete in several events. And a fiddling workshop by Pat Talbert will be held at the same location to round out this full day of Scottish arts.

On Sunday, March 28, SCOT hosts a highland dancing workshop taught by Joy Tolev, Lynne Erbrick, and Sandra Gribbin. Sandy is the daughter of SCOT members Leslie and George Kennedy. Encouraging these Scottish arts is one of the major purposes for which SCOT was founded and we are delighted to have such a wonderful event take place.



7th Annual Golf Classic

It's that time again! Time to dust off your mashies, cleeks, baffys, niblicks, spoons and brassies. The 7th Annual Mark Johnston SCOT Classic golf event is just around the corner on **Saturday, June 5, 2010**. The course selection committee has chosen **The Crossings at Grove Park** for this prestigious affair! All details are being finalized. 24+ players/slots will be reserved in anticipation of a large gathering, so sign up now! The pertinent details are as follows:

Date: Saturday, June 5, 2010

Place: The Crossings at Grove Park

Tee Time: Range balls will be provided. Please arrive by 9:30 a.m. for groupings, directions, and pictures. First tee time is 10:00 a.m.

Format: 2-person Super Ball

Cost: \$55 for SCOT members, \$65 for non-SCOT members, and \$50 for Juniors (under 16). Includes greens fee and carts. Cash or checks payable to SCOT on the day of the event. These will be collected by Pat Johnston at the beginning of the tournament.

Must sign-up by noon on Tuesday, June 1st! Please let the organizer know if there is anyone with whom you wish to play, or if you want to be paired with an A or B player.

Contests: Mark Johnston SCOT Golf Classic Champion Trophy, Closest to Pin (Men and Women), Long Drive (Men and Women), Best Scottish Attire, and others!

Attire: Classic golf attire: collared shirt, golf shoes (spikeless), no jeans. Scottish wear encouraged: plus fours, kilts (non-regimental only—there is a lot of spinning and twirling involved when swinging the club!)

A dinner with Mark Johnston's famous ribs recipe and barbecue will follow for **all** SCOT members at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Chuck and Cheryl McDougal. Watch for emails with details on this event or call Cheryl McDougal at 783-7476.

Contact Chuck McDougal to register, at home: 919-783-7476, work: 919-783-0491 ext. 208, or by email: elscrodley@nc.rr.com.

SCOT Calendar of Events

- Mar. 27 **SCOT's 9th Annual Cary Indoor Highland Dance & Piping Competitions and Scottish Fiddling Workshop.** Resurrection Lutheran Church. Contact Pat Johnston at patriciatj@aol.com or 919-614-3303 for dancing, John Sprague at esprague@nc.rr.com or 919-828-1269 for piping, and Amy Mooney at danceramy@aol.com or 919-552-3419 for fiddling
- Mar. 28 **Ceilidh Concert** music and dance at the Page-Walker Arts & History Center. Contact George Birrell at GSAMBK@yahoo.com or 919-303-7262
- Apr. 10-11 **Scottish Weekend at the NC Renaissance Faire.** Renn Faire continues April 17-18, 24-25 Contact Judi Lloyd at judith.lloyd@allscripts.com or 919-803-6275
- Apr. 27 **Music from the British Isles.** Stewart Theatre, NCSU. \$10 general public, \$8 seniors. Pipes and Drums, Irish Session Musicians, Tuba and Euphonium Ensemble, and Scottish dancers. www.ncsu.edu/pipesanddrums.
- May 16 **SCOT Afternoon Tea** at Kirk of Kildaire. Details to be announced.
- June 5 **7th Annual Mark Johnston SCOT Golf Classic** at The Crossings at Grove Park. Contact Chuck McDougal at escrodley@nc.rr.com or 919-783-7476
- June 5 **SCOT Family Barbeque** at the home of Chuck and Cheryl McDougal.
- July 8-11 **SCOT Booth** at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.
- Aug. 29 **SCOT Annual General Meeting.** Contact Cheryl Jones at jones_cherylrae@yahoo.com or 919-851-3956.



Poems and Commentary, continued from p.6

On the other hand, Soutar gives little of his own feelings but describes the normal scene of lots of children playing their games in the streets but breaking to follow, chatter with the Leerie and tease him to elicit his usually cheerful response, perhaps as Soutar saw it in streets around the carpenters' yard of Soutar and McQueen off Perth's Old High Street.

Interestingly, Soutar wrote two pieces of poetry on Leerie which enables one to compare a description of a Leerie in the street in English, with the Leerie's street conversation in Scots. The former in pure English is from the viewpoint of an observer poet factually describing the scene of the Leerie and children in the street. The latter in broad Scots reports a spirited challenge from the children and the clever, kind response of the Leerie, exemplifying the normal fast witted social interactions in Scottish streets of old.

These two highly regarded Scottish poets stimulate the memories and thoughts of tens of thousands of Scottish folks from the times of gas lighting and forever give us this now extinct, major character of daily life in the streets of Scotland.

The Lamplighter By Robert Louis Stevenson

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at tea time and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry by with ladder and with light;
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight!

The Lamplighter: The Theme By William Soutar

When the lamplighter comes along
To light the lamps in our street,
All the children around him throng,
And with these words noisily greet
The lamplighter in our street:
"You have lighted the lamps, but why
Don't you light the stars in the sky?"

The lamplighter thinks awhile,
Then he answers with a smile,
As if he enjoys the sport:
"I am sent along to light
The lamps in your street each night,
And the stars I would also light,
But my stick is too short".

Leerie - Licht By William Soutar

Whan leerie-licht comes down¹ the street
He's thronged wi' routin² bairns:
"Leerie – leerie licht the lamps
Ye canna licht the sterns³"

But leerie as he lights the lamps
Has aye the hindmost lauch⁴:
"Gin⁵ I had a langer pole
I'd licht them sune eneuch.⁶"

¹ down, ² shouting, ³ stars, ⁴ laugh, ⁵ given,
⁶ enough

- Dr. George Birrell

Ceud Mile Sailte!

One hundred thousand welcomes to our new members – **Robert and Daphne McLeod from Chapel Hill, and David R. Henderson from Wake Forest.** We hope all of you will remember to invite friends and acquaintances to join SCOT. Encourage

them to check our SCOT website at www.scot.us for information on joining and upcoming events. For our previous members, we remind you that 2010 memberships are due. Annual members who have not renewed memberships by March 31 will be dropped from the membership rolls. We encourage you to get those membership dues in. We don't want you to miss any of the upcoming SCOT events!

Tastes of Scotland



A Short History of Shortbread

Shortbread is perhaps the best known of Scotland's traditional foods. Its roots go far back and there are many, many, stories and myths associated with it. Even the name has confusing origins. Biscuit, meaning twice baked, was, and still is, the name used for small crispy baked goods in Scotland. Bakers called it "bread" to avoid paying a tax levied on biscuits. It is also unclear what the "short" means. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Short" (definition 20): Of edible substances: Friable, easily crumbled. This describes the process of making shortbread. This could also be where the English term "shortening" comes from as the butter coats the flour and keeps the baked goods crumbly. According to John Ayto, the term "shortbread" dates back only as far as the early nineteenth century. [*An A-Z of Food and Drink*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2002 (p. 310).] What was it called prior to this? Perhaps just biscuits.

Although the name may be somewhat modern, the recipe dates much further back. One of the common shapes is round with fluted edges made by pinching the edges of the circle. One story is that this represented the sun and was part of the ancient pagan midwinter celebration, a Yule Cake. Shortbread later became an important part of Christmas and New Year celebrations. Mary Queen of Scots is credited with popularizing a form of shortbread called Petticoat Tails, thin round biscuits cut into triangles. Some say the name came from the French *petites gatelles* which means little cakes. Others say it came from the reign of Queen Elizabeth the First, where the shape of the shortbread resembled the pattern pieces of a ladies petticoat. The word for pattern was tally and thus the name "petticoat tallis." Today, shortbread is traditionally formed into one of three shapes: one large circle divided into segments ("Petticoat Tails"); individual round biscuits ("Shortbread Rounds"); or a thick rectangular slab cut into "fingers." All are pricked with holes to allow the dough to cook evenly and crisply.

Its simple ingredients: flour, sugar, and butter, were common to many cultures and it is interesting how each culture took these ingredients and created a unique product. The earliest Scottish shortbreads surely had ground oats in the mixture. Originally butter was considered food of the poorer classes. The wealthier upper classes used cream to enrich their baking. With the rise of the middle class in the 12th century, butter became more common and written recipes using it became more prevalent. Early shortbread recipes included caraway seeds or decorations of candied fruit and nuts. Even though butter was common, sugar was not, so shortbread was part of special celebrations. In Shetland a decorated shortbread was traditionally broken over a bride's head before she entered her new home.

There are countless shortbread recipes. Many include decorations and flavorings. There are molds to make them in fantastic shapes and designs. Here are two recipes for basic shortbread, one from the 19th century and one modern. They are very similar. Many modern recipes call for rice flour to make an even crumblier texture.

[19th century] Short Bread, Scotch

Mix two pounds of flour with four ounces of moist sugar, two ounces of candied citron, chopped small, and two ounces of sweet almonds, blanched and sliced. Rub one pound of butter into the flour, melt another half pound of butter, and with this work up the four to a smooth paste. If a plainer cake is wanted, less butter may be used. Sometimes the whole of the butter is melted, and then the bread is more easily made. Roll out the pastry to the thickness of an inch, and in a large oval shape, pinch the edges evenly, prick the surface with a fork or skewer, and sprinkle large comfits over the top. Cut the oval across, thus making two cakes, and place these upon paper rubbed with flour, and then upon tins. Bake in a moderate oven. When the bread is lightly browned, it is done enough. It should be remembered that the less the bread is kneaded the shorter it will be.

---*Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery with Numerous Illustrations* [Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.: London] 1874? (p. 866)

[20th century] Shortbread

1 lb (450 g.) butter
 8 oz (225 g.) castor sugar*
 pinch of salt
 1 lb (450 g.) sifted flour
 8 oz (225 g.) rice flour

The ingredients should be warm and dry. Cream the butter and sugar together very well. Mix the flours and salt, sift them, then incorporate them gradually but thoroughly until the dough is like a shortcrust pastry texture. Do not knead or roll out as this only toughens it. Press with the hand into 2 round cakes and if you don't have a wooden shortbread mould, then put on to an ungreased baking sheet covered with baking-paper. The usual thickness is about 3/4 inch (1.9 cm.) for an 8-inch (20.3 cm.) shortbread. Pinch the edges regularly with the finger and thumb and prick all over, lightly with fork. Cook in a pre-heated oven at 375 degrees F. (190 degrees C.) or gas mark 5 for about 1 hour, and after 20 minutes reduce the heat to 350 degrees F. (180 degrees C.) or gas mark 4 to let it crisp up and get a pale fawn colour. Leave to cool before putting on to a rack. NOTE: if rice flour is not available then all wheat flour can be used, but reduce to 1 lb. (450 g.) in all." *Granulated sugar can be used.

---*Traditional Scottish Cookery*, Theodora FitzGibbon [Fontana Paperbacks: UK] 1980 (p. 252)

- Carolyn McDonald Graf



SCOT

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 www.scot.us

The Scottish Cultural Organization of the Triangle (S.C.O.T.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to informing and educating the public about the history, culture, and heritage of Scotland and the Scottish people.

Board of Directors:

George Birrell
 Carolyn Graf
 D'Nise Hefner
 Craig Hill
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 Donald Ross
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Burns Night Recap

When we were preparing for this years Burns Night, there were many times I thought that we would be unable to repeat the success of our 250th Anniversary Special of last year.

How wrong I was, and what a great night we had with 162 people in attendance and once more everyone who took part did a magnificent job! This year there was another worldwide toast to The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns, which means our numbers will be included again in this event.

Those in attendance were fortunate to enjoy the special treat of Iain Kelly and his rendition of "Tam O' Shanter" and a video presentation by Harry Nicol. We had the pleasure of listening to one of our new members, Bill McCulloch, singing and then doing a duet with Julia Cobby. We are so blessed to have such talent in our midst. Our Burns Night would not be the same without our Country Dancers, and my sincere thanks to them once more for helping to make this a special evening. What now may become a fixture on our program was The Port City Pipes and Drums performing on stage again, and what a great performance it was!

Nowhere else in the world is the memory of Robert Burns carried out with more dignity and obvious love of Burns and Scotland than at The Country Squire. We have a wonderful group of people entertaining us, along with a great audience giving their full attention to all that goes on. This makes my job so worthwhile, and fills me with pride and gratitude for everyone who took part in the evening. On behalf of my sister, Iris, sincere thanks to all the SCOT members and their guests who continue to support this annual event.

Mark your calendars for January 22, 2011, and be prepared for another wonderful evening. In the meantime, have a wonderful 2010 and be sure to attend as many SCOT events as possible.

- Donald Ross

Poems and Commentary

Leerie The Lamplighter

Until about fifty years ago, streets in Scottish towns were lit by individual gas lamps which gave off a soft glow creating a sense of pools of warm light rather than the effective but neutral, glaring street lighting of today. These warm pools of light along the street may have come from the lamps being of lesser power and being close enough to the ground so that each could be lit by a man with a long lighting pole every evening. Most of the men who were gas lamp lighters lived locally as do most “lollypop” men and ladies of today and all were known as “Leerie The Lamplighter.” Why Leerie? Maybe because a Leerie was most often seen leering out of the gathering dusk every evening to light each lamp along the streets. Maybe! Other better suggestions as to the origins of the name “Leerie” may be provided by readers who experienced Scottish gas street lighting.

Two Scottish poets wrote about Leerie The Lamplighter, Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) and William Soutar (1898–1943). Stevenson, whose

ability as a poet was overshadowed by being the author of “Treasure Island,” “Kidnapped,” the first version of “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and other novels, lived as a boy on Heriot Row in Edinburgh. This up-market address in the “Georgian New Town” of Edinburgh created between 1750 and 1850, was an appropriate address for this family of stature and wealth.

William Soutar lived on South Inch Terrace and Wilson Street in Perth. Both addresses, while not as nationally prestigious as Heriot Row, were of high social standing in the smaller but equally historic City of Perth, the ancient capital of Scotland and appropriate for his father, a senior partner of a high quality carpentry and joinery firm.

Stevenson’s poem on Leerie opens by describing parts of his daily life as a sickly boy, through his desires to what he would like to do when older and concludes with his central feelings of loneliness as a single child. These feelings are expressed through his anguish that Leerie might go past their house without nodding recognition to his small, watching, pale face at the window every evening.

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We welcome your contributions to this quarterly newsletter! Please forward news of any achievements, births, marriages, or graduations to Amy Mooney (danceramy@aol.com) to be included. If you have an article, story, artwork, or bit of Scottish lore to share, please submit it to Jane Dunbar (thedunbars@mindspring.com).

S.C.O.T.

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