



CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

Established 1881 NPO Reg No 036-264

NEWSLETTER MAY 2008

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Dear Member

Perhaps some of us remember the days when **Arthur's Seat Hotel**, Sea Point, was a favourite venue for our functions. For those who may not be aware Arthur's Seat is the wondrous little throwback mountain Edinburgh accommodates at its bosom -

*Edinburgh breathes easiest here, where
sea winds are compulsory and kestrels
dance down a fast air,
Sometimes it is a free place, others it's a
mountain in a cage.*

By Norman MacCaig

There you are – a grand description!

WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

By Esther Read

Wander through the **Fife** village of **Auchtertool** in the still evening and you may be alarmed to hear a series rasping coughs, drifting down from the nearby hills of nearby **Clentrie Farm**. This unexpected guttural exhalation is the water buffalo's equivalent of a cow's 'moo'. And Clentrie

Farm is home to the largest herd of the species in Scotland.

Farmer **Steve Mitchell** believes the real surprise is the fact that water buffalo took so long to reach Scotland. Native to Asia they were introduced to Europe by the Crusaders in the Middle Ages.

Much as they were 100 years ago, they have not been selectively bred and Steve believes that, given the way the reputation of farming has been tarnished by BSE (mad cow disease) and intensive farming methods that may be no bad thing. When bred that way year after year the flavour, health and longevity are lost. The way supermarkets have driven agriculture, the cows in some dairy herds live no longer than three to four years. The buffalo has a life span of 20 years. They are the complete multi-purpose animals, fantastic for meat and milk and their hides and horns can also be utilised. Husbandry-wise buffalo pretty much look after themselves and don't require masses of inoculations.

Steve's herd has a 'main man' – **Maltie** the bull – and all 200 have a name. They are happy and healthy in their far North environment and after waiting about 2 000 years for this elemental beast to arrive on Scottish shores, Steve is determined to make the most of its potential. This could almost be described as organic milk production. The trade name is '**Puddledub**', a hamlet close to the farm, and the venture has won Steve the NFU Scotland Young Achiever's Award in 2006.

FROM THE CHIEF

Our outing this month was to the **Söderland Museum in Glencairn** suggested and specially arranged by Councillor Mieke Gordon. The museum is privately owned by retired Rear Admiral Arne Söderland who served in both the military and the navy. They have converted their lovely home to accommodate all of Arne's collections of just about everything ranging from all beer cans produced in this country, flags, cameras, telephones, bed-warmers, aircraft sick bags, leaflets dropped by the RAF behind enemy lines and also by the Luftwaffe on Britain. He is an expert on the Hon JC Smuts and informed us that it was actually Smuts' recommendation that resulted in the RAF being formed. We saw an array of scary medical instruments used over the centuries. On display were some really historic letters written by senior statesmen to one another. All this with a glass of wine in hand made for an enormously interesting and enjoyable outing. What a pity that of the seven people who came along, 6 are on council and one was a non-member. I will definitely be going back again!

We sometimes have some **unexpected surprises** at our Council meetings. At the

last one it was the turn of our **Honorary Secretary and Chieftain Ian McWalter**, who, under correspondence on the agenda, read to us a letter from himself that he would be standing down almost immediately as he has decided to emigrate to England. The official departure date is 19th May. As this will be before our next function, I would like to pay tribute to Ian for all of his efforts in the Society. He has been on Council for a number of years and has always been a capable secretary to the Society and a willing volunteer. He really knows the ropes and the people that matter in Federation. I know that I will be speaking for all of you when I say "Good luck Laddie, we will really miss you and wish you every success!"

The next function is a tribute to our **Provincial Chief, our very own Past Chief Lance Wiseman**, who will be our guest for the evening. We have decided to book a delightful little restaurant for the occasion so the evening will be fun and sociable. Please do come along – it is not often that we have one of our own holding such senior office!

For those of you who are fortunate enough not to be tied to working in an office, be sure to go along for the **tour of Groote Schuur Estate** specially arranged for us by Chieftain Narina Gilder. As the youth nowadays say: It should be a blast!

Here are **some facts about the 1500's**:

1. Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

2. Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Remember the AGM is not too far away. We really would like some new faces on Council with some fresh ideas - and who do not suffer easily from depression(!) - so please give it some thought!
Yours aye,
Peter

FUNCTIONS

PROVINCIAL CHIEF'S VISIT

Date Saturday 24 May

Time 07h15 for 07h30

Venue Azure Restaurant, Blue Route Mall, Tokai Road, Tokai (next to external entrance to Woolworths)

Tickets R70

Beer and wine are for sale. Bring your own wine if you wish. Corkage: R10. Loads of parking!

We have booked this pleasant restaurant all to ourselves as we extend a special welcome to our Provincial Chief and Past Chief of our Society, Lance Wiseman to join us. Two pipers will be present. A two course meal will be served and a warm sociable evening can be expected.

For bookings or further info please call **Vicki MacKenzie on 021 797 0557 or cell 084 597 0557**. Alternatively **Mieke Gordon on 021 782 5864**.

TOUR of GROOTE SCHUUR ESTATE

Date Tuesday 17 June

Time 10:00 – 12:00

Cost R25

In an effort to give you interesting events with a difference, we invite you to join us in a tour of the above estate which is of great historic and artistic note. The tour will be followed by refreshments. When booking, please supply us with your full name and ID number. Please bring the latter with you on the day. To book, please phone **Margaret Currie at 021 716 3674 or Narina Gilder at 021 531 1820**. See you there!

The AGM, a whisky tasting, Chief's at Home, Kirkin' of the Chief, and St Andrew's Nicht are in the planning stage. Watch here for details.

PINELANDS SOCIETY

Due to difficulty with the venue, the function at the end of May had to be cancelled. **An evening of Entertainment – 31 May**. For further information and to book please telephone **Anne Miller at 021 591 1499 or Anne Stevenson 021554 0302**.

Should you require transport to functions, please telephone our Secretary, **Ian McWalter at 021 685 6000 (a/h)** to arrange this.

MEMBERS' NEWS

MacWalter, a sept of **MacFarlane** has a crest of a demi-savage holding a sheaf of arrows in his right hand, pointing with his left to an imperial crown, and supported by two Highlanders in their native dress, armed with broadswords and bows, with the motto: *This I'll defend. (Lyon register 1 184)*

We say farewell to our honorary secretary, **Ian McWalter**, who has served us exceedingly well during his time in office.

Ian is leaving for the UK where he has employment awaiting him. Our best wishes go with him, we appreciate what he has done for us so willingly – we shall miss him.

We extend our sincere sympathies to dance teacher **Judy Lucas and family** on the loss of her brother.

There are a few of our members who have health problems on an ongoing basis – **Phyllis Cruikshank** and **Eleanor Wiseman** in particular. We send good thoughts in their direction.

News seems rather scarce at the moment, so we send good wishes to all of you hoping you are enjoying the glorious autumn weather and reminding you to forward to us any change in detail (particularly change in address), and any news, good or bad, you would care to share with us.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BEN NEVIS

Courtesy of Mieke Gordon

The March 6, 2008, issue of **London Review of Books** reports that so many people's ashes are scattered on the summit of Ben Nevis that it is changing the chemical balance of the soil, fertilising it with phosphorous and calcium to the detriment of rare alpine plants. The **Nevis Partnership** now says: *"Try to throw them in the air on a windy day or into a corrie so that they disperse more widely."*

Also, all the plaques are being removed to a Memorial Site for Contemplation at the foot of the mountain.

GREAT SCOTS!

Supplied by Ian McWalter

James Watt – right next to **Dolly** (the sheep) in the **Discovery Gallery**, is the **Bo Steam Engine**, the second oldest steam engine in the world which crushed barley water for more than 100 years at a London Brewery. Today it runs on compressed steam, but the mechanism built in **1786** still works like a charm and is switched on every day. The museum also owns a very rare cistern barometer by **Watt Instrument Maker** in Glasgow and is displayed in the **Instruments of Science Gallery** with a copying device which is kept in the **Innovations Gallery**.

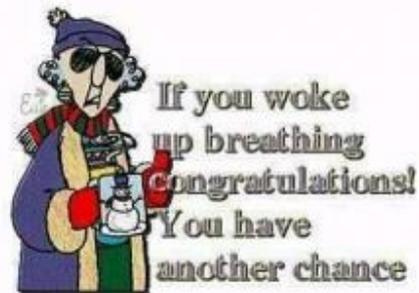
TIME FOR A SMILE

The human race is divided into two sections:

First - Scots

Second - those who would like to be Scots!

A Scotsman keeps the Sabbath and anything else he can lay his hands on!



*Till the soil – bid cities rise
Be strong, o Celt – be rich, be wise.
But still, with those divine grey eyes,
Respect the realms of mysteries.*

From your Chief, Lady President and Council,

And your scribe