



# The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Summer 2007

## From the President

Lads and Lassies,

Once again it is my distinct pleasure to update you on the recent activities of your society and inform you of future events. I am delighted that so many of you have responded enthusiastically to the recent society gatherings and in our efforts to raise an awareness of our objectives in the Williamsburg area. We have also observed a surge in membership applications, an indication that our efforts to recruit new members are beginning to reach fruition.

Our "back to the future" activity, the St. Andrew's Society Family Picnic and Ceilidh in June, was an unqualified success, far exceeding our wildest expectations! The Queens Lake Clubhouse was packed to overflowing. Many of our members took this opportunity as a means of sharing our rich Scottish heritage and culture by inviting friends and family. In addition to the incredible BBQ pork and chicken provided by Williamsburg Concessions and the side dishes offered by the members, we were treated to wonderful entertainment. Our old friend Bill Darrow provided a selection of traditional Scottish ballads, while members of the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums got the blood flowing with rousing pipe tunes. Bridget Boswell's students also provided us with an exciting demonstration of Highland Dancing.

In August we had a well attended and delightful Quarterly Luncheon at the Port of York Dining Facility at the Coast Guard Training Center in Yorktown. The buffet was delicious and the extemporaneous program was wonderful. Scheduled speaker Maureen Brown was unable to attend, so members and attendees gave brief descriptions and interesting vignettes of their Scottish connection.

The Williamsburg Scottish Festival on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September was an absolute success and our tent on “Clan Row” was packed throughout the day. Unfortunately, I spent most of my day working as the Clan Coordinator and trying to orchestrate the clan participation activities ... a job not totally dissimilar from trying to herd cats. Regardless, the participation of our lads and lassies in this wonderful event gave us the opportunity to join in fellowship and immerse ourselves in “things Scottish” ... oh, and also to recruit new members for our Society!

That’s a very brief update on the SAS-W’s summer activities; but, there is the aroma of fall in the air. An important event is the upcoming Annual General Membership Meeting and Members’ Night. This is the event where the society takes those actions that require the involvement of the entire membership. There are two actions that must be addressed. One is a change in our bylaws. A copy of the proposed changes was provided you recently. The second is the selection of four nominees to serve a term on the society’s board of directors. Ah, but this is also Members’ Night and an opportunity to socialize and enjoy delicious food and beverage. You have received your AGM/Members’ Night flyer and I certainly urge you to attend this important gathering.

Yours Aye,



Howard S. Topp  
*Clan Sutherland*



## **Family Picnic and Ceilidh**

Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg held a family picnic and Ceilidh in Queen's Lake Clubhouse on June 23. Balladeer Bill Darrow from North Carolina serenaded the attendees with a selection of popular and traditional Scottish tunes, while the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums added a martial flavor with rousing bagpipe selections from Scotland's eventful history. Highland dancing demonstrations were provided by the young lady students of Bridget (Glassen) Boswell with the dances introduced and explained by local dance teacher Dawn Kinkaid. It was a thrilling program with a groaning buffet table of delicious food. The Clubhouse was full and the event was a great success. Our thanks to all who made the arrangements.



**Bill Darrow  
serenades us all.**



**A couple of SAS stalwarts (above) check out the dancing girls (below)**





**Queen's Lake Clubhouse was full for this event. The Williamsburg Pipes and Drums (below) played a rousing sequence of Scottish favorites.**



## Summer Luncheon

On Wednesday, August 17, 30 Saint Andrew's Society members and their guests met for a summer luncheon at the Port of York U.S. Coast Guard Station in Yorktown. After a buffet lunch, each member shared a bit of their Scottish Heritage. It was a wonderful way of getting to know each other a little better, and was quite enjoyable as well! This was a beautiful venue with delicious food.



**Comments and photos by Jamie Griffin.**





**Secrets are exchanged over lunch**



## Scottish Festival

The Williamsburg Scottish Festival and Celtic Celebration is the year's highlight for local Scottish heritage groups. This year's festival was held at the Jamestown Campground on Saturday, September 29, 2007. What a perfect day! The sky was the color of the saltire flag, bright and sunny, and delightfully cool breezes wafted through the grounds. Thousands of visitors attended, watching the ceremonies, listening to the massed pipe bands and greeting the Honored Clan for 2007, Clan Wallace, with a host of other Scottish clans and families. They bought Celtic products and ate and drank Scottish food and drink while listening to Celtic rock, bagpipe lullabies and haunting harp music. Sword fights, Irish dancing, sheep dog demonstrations and children's games were featured. Scotland's historical King James himself showed up to stroll through the campgrounds and lounge in his tent with his court. St. Andrew's Society had its own tent and it was well attended. Wandering through these happy crowds I was conscious that I was with my own people and that history has given us a wonderful, rich heritage. Following are a few photos.



**The St. Andrew's Society tent at the Scottish Festival**





**SAS members chat at the Festival**



**Scotland's King James and court lounge in the royal tent**



**The Killmarnock & District Pipe Band readies for the march**



**The massed bands**



**Presenting the colors (above). Young Scots in training (below). Photos by Jamie Griffin.**





**Scotland's rampant lion flies over the festival while two little girls, unimpressed by the adult activities, play with the grass.**



## King Arthur In Scotland?

The following article is from Don Dixon:

In 1963, while in the USAF, I made my way from Turkey to the west coast of Scotland, where I would be stationed for the next three years. Not only did I come away from that tiny country with a Scottish wife and two Scottish-born children but also with a deep abiding love of all things Scottish., especially its rich history. While there, I took every opportunity to clamber upon ancient ruins, something I had never seen in my native state of Georgia. I would walk among and sit upon the old stones and parapets, gaze down upon the surrounding countryside and wonder what great and famous man or woman of history passed by that very spot. What famous battle raged at the same place where I stood? Thinking about these things thrilled me beyond belief. What I didn't know then as I climbed over and through one particular ruin was that perhaps I was in the very spot where centuries earlier my hero, King Arthur, fought and won a bloody battle, his last victorious one.

There is only one source for an historical Arthur, and that is the Welsh writer Nennius, who lived around 796AD. In his *Historia Britonum*, he recorded 12 victorious battles of *Dux Bellorum* (battle leader), most of which can be reckoned to be sites within modern day Scotland. From this accounting, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, Layamon, Malory, Tennyson and others wove their tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table centuries later. Of course, they mixed legend, myth and superstition into their stories to evolve into what we have come to know as King Arthur, a once and mighty king, but one from England. According to Nennius the battles were,

- “At the mouth of the river called Glein”--probably in Norththumberland
- “The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> battles were on the river Dubglas” (Douglas) which flows into Loch Lomond in the region of Lennuis (Lennox)
- “The 6<sup>th</sup> battle was on the river called Bassas” -Cambuslang in the southern suburbs of Glasgow
- “The 7<sup>th</sup> battle was the Battle of Celidon”, in the modern Caledonian Forest, (*Coed Celyddon*) probably the Moffat region of Dumfriesshire
- “The 8<sup>th</sup> battle was in Gurnnion Fort”, perhaps Winchester
- “The 9<sup>th</sup> battle was in the City of the Legion”, perhaps Chester
- “The 10<sup>th</sup> battle was on the river called Tribruit”, probably the river Frew at Striling
- “The 11<sup>th</sup> battle was on the hill called Agned”probably Edinburgh
- “The 12<sup>th</sup> battle was on Badon Hill”, probably Greenan Castle in Ayrshire.

According to George Eyre-Todd in his book The Story of Glasgow, when the

Roman troops were withdrawn from Britain around AD 390, the Picts from the north of Scotland and the Angles from the south-east launched fierce attacks upon Scotland. However, King Arthur repulsed these attacks in Strathclyde and the lowlands but was finally killed at Camelot, near Falkirk in Stirlingshire. After his death, his nephew Owen succeeded him. Owen was the father of St Mungo, the patron saint and founder of Glasgow, and the husband of Theneu, daughter of the leader whom Arthur had installed as protector of the east section of the Scottish lowlands. Theneu's brother was Medraut (Modred), who betrayed Arthur and brought the Picts across the Forth to slay Arthur at Camelot, sometimes called the Palace of the Picts, or Camelot.

But what of Geenan Castle and the Battle of Badon Hill? According to Nennius, 960 men fell in one day at the Battle of Badon Hill, Arthur's greatest victory, and tradition states that this battle halted the advance of the Saxons. But where did it take place? The historian N.L. Goodrich argues that the site for the original Camelot was at Badon Hill, or the present day site of Greenan Castle. Located some three miles south of Ayr off the A719, on a high cliff, the ruin is on the site of an iron age hill fort. In Scotland the iron age was from 750 BC-500 AD. Nearby, there is an ancient stone commemorating a peace treaty between the Picts and the Scots. Not particularly spectacular in its setting or its prominence, the 16<sup>th</sup> century ruin of Greenan Castle is infinitely intriguing to me because it sits on a site of infinitely intriguing mystery. But I assure you, when I walk its environs, I feel its mystery, and the visions in my mind become as real as the ground I walk upon.



Don Dixon



**Greenan Castle**

### **New Website for SAS**

On August 5 the Society's new website was launched. This new site replaces the old site which was inactive. The new site is attractive and easy to navigate. It will be kept current, so members can check upcoming events by going to the site. Please see [www.scotsofwmbg.org](http://www.scotsofwmbg.org) to view the site.

## **Letter from Bob Flinn**

On February 22 long-time SAS member Bob Flinn wrote a letter to SAS President Howard Topp that may be of interest to our members:

Dear Howard,

Congratulations as new Society President and thank you and the Board very much for the official letter of several days ago and the arrival today of the very handsome plaque!

I was sorry to miss Burns' Nicht – heard it went very well. Am glad the Society is looking forward to its 40<sup>th</sup> and, of course, hopefully, it will be represented when Her Majesty arrives in May, *quite* an event!

My 27 years as a Society member makes me glad to have been a part of a good group that remembers its Scottish ancestry and focus at a time when so much diversity seemingly pulls us away from our identity. Thus, I enclose my check for continued membership that the good Scottish roots may be kept alive in our times and into the future....

Sincerely, Bob Flinn

## **Swem Library to Hold Archives of Scottish Coalition**

The Swem Library of the College of William and Mary has expressed interest in acquiring and organizing the archives of the members of the Scottish Coalition. The Scottish Coalition consists of the American Scottish Foundation, The Caledonian Foundation, The Council of Scottish Clans and Associations, Scottish Heritage, the Association of St. Andrew's Societies, Living Legacy of Scotland Inc. and the Association of Scottish Games and Festivals. The Library needs \$2,000 to hold these archives and St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg is considering a donation of \$200 (ten percent). Because of William and Mary's history the Swem Library would be a fitting place to hold the archives, manuscripts and rare books of these organizations.



## Flowers of the Forest

### Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis, RIP

The Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg 8/29/2007

## Virginia Hutcheson Davis

Dedicated to the preservation of Tidewater history

Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis, widow of James Williams Davis Sr., of Richmond and Williamsburg, died Saturday, Aug. 18.

She was the author of the Tidewater Virginia Families books, and editor/publisher of the quarterly publication, Tidewater Virginia Families: A Magazine of History and Genealogy. A writer and speaker, she was known for her dedication to the preservation of the history and records of Tidewater Virginia.

Mrs. Davis was a member of the Order of First Families of Virginia, the Jamestowne Society, the James City Company, Order of Descendants of Ancient Planters, Order of First Families of North Carolina, Colonial Dames of the Seventeenth Century, National Genealogical Society, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and other historical and genealogical societies.

She was also a member of the Henricus Foundation Advisory Board; council member of the Jamestowne Society; past governor of the Virginia Genealogical Society; and

member of the Human Genetics Advisory Board, Virginia Commonwealth University, Medical College of Virginia.

Survivors include her children: Elizabeth Lee Wadkins Vliet, M.D., and her husband, Gordon Cheesman Vliet, of Tucson, Ariz.; J Thomas Wadkins III, and his wife, Robin Perdue Wadkins of Richmond, and Richard Cleveland Wadkins, and his wife, Helen Struthers Wadkins, and their daughters, Kyle Lee and Sarah Tyce Wadkins of Edinburg.

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 1, in Hollywood Cemetery, 412 South Cherry St., Richmond. A Celebration of Life and Spirit will follow at 2 p.m. at Covenant Woods, 7090 Lee Davis Rd., Mechanicsville.

No flowers please. Memorials may be made to the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Jamestown Rediscovery, 201 W Franklin St., Richmond VA 23220, or the Henricus Foundation, PO Box 523, Chesterfield VA 23832.

## Margaret Virginia Disharoon Govan, RIP

### MARGARET VIRGINIA DISHAROON GOVAN

**HAMPTON** - Margaret Virginia Disharoon Govan (known as 'Peggy') died Wednesday, July 11, 2007. She was born Oct. 31, 1931, in Capital Heights, Md., and was the youngest child of James Sydney and Mary Agnes Disharoon.

Peggy was a member of the Maryland Historical Society and did extensive genealogical research on her family tree. She fully-documented her family's genealogy back to the year 1674 and two land grants in Maryland and Virginia and some service records for Revolutionary War service.

Peggy married Colin MacIvor Govan March 25, 1951; has one son, Colin M. Govan III (known as 'Trey') and his wife, Karen; and three grandchildren, April Govan Butler (married to Sean Butler and lives in San Antonio, Texas), Colin M. Govan IV and Gordon James Govan, two grandsons who live next door to granddad Govan in Hampton.

At age 16, Peggy became a Christian, accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior, was baptized in the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., (where she also married her beloved husband, Colin) and began an exemplary life as a truly happy 'born-again Christian' and a shining light to everyone who got to know her. To her husband, she was an "earth-bound Angel." To her son, she was a "loving friend, confidant and the greatest



Mom a guy could ever wish for"! To her grandchildren, she was "happy stories, funny, good times, a great teacher and loving grandma, wonderful memories for a lifetime, dependable and always loving"! To neighbors, store clerks, people at church, she was a very nice person they liked talking with about anything. She treated everyone with the same kindness and respect that God taught her.

The family will receive friends from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Sunday at Peninsula Funeral Home. A funeral service will be conducted at 11:30 a.m. Monday at the funeral home. Burial will be private.

Peninsula Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Lib Bierer, RIP



Daily Press photo

WILLIAMSBURG - Elizabeth Lynn Bierer died at her home Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2007. She was born in 1922 in Washington, DC. Lib and her husband, Pat, first came to Williamsburg on their honeymoon in 1950. Lovers of early English and American history, they decided Williamsburg was the place they wanted to live when Pat retired from the United States Navy Supply Corps. In 1961, they began their lifelong project of creating their home in the 18th century vernacular. A true 'partner' in all respects, Lib was actively involved in the design and construction.

She is survived by her daughter Bessie Bierer of Atlanta, Ga.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct 4, 2007 at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. Following the service, a reception will be held at the Bierer home. Burial will be at the Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Bruton Parish Church, National Glaucoma Research, 22512 Gateway Center Drive, Clarksburg, MD 20871; or Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403. Nelsen Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## **Ronald Speirs, Scottish-American Warrior, RIP**

Although he was not a member of the Saint Andrew's Society, I believe we should note the passing of Lt. Col. Ronald Speirs (1920-2007). My uncle was a Scottish-American warrior, born in Edinburgh in 1920. He emigrated to the States as a child with his family in 1924. When war loomed he joined the U.S. Army and served as a paratrooper officer. He dropped into France on D-day, proved himself in the crucible of battle, and led his troops through the Battle of the Bulge and then all the way to Hitler's "Eagle's Nest" in Berchtesgaden. He developed a reputation as a "born killer" and his troops both respected and feared him. His commanding officers recognized him as a natural leader and a superb combat commander. During the war he rose to command Easy Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 506<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne. This was the "Band of Brothers" of the book by Stephen Ambrose and the TV series. Speirs was one of the major characters in the book and film. After the war he stayed on in the Army. Please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald\\_Speirs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Speirs) for the Wikipedia article on him.



**Capt. Ronald Speirs**



# Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

## Application for Membership

PO Box 533, Williamsburg VA 23187

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

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

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

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

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Years at Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Legacy Application? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

(A Legacy member is the son/grandson or daughter/granddaughter of an active member in good standing or of a deceased former member, who is age eighteen through twenty-one. Admission fees are waived for Legacy Members; however annual dues are required.)

If Yes, Father/Mother or Grandfather/Grandmother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Other Professional or Social Organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Scottish Family Connections (documentation not required): \_\_\_\_\_

Any Visits to Scotland – Frequency and Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Clan Association(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Clan Organization or Other Scottish Society: \_\_\_\_\_

What tartan(s) do you wear? \_\_\_\_\_

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

To the best of our knowledge, the above applicant is of sound character 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**

Initiation and First Year's Dues (\$60.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Small Photograph suitable for digitization \_\_\_\_\_

Current local address and telephone number included \_\_\_\_\_

Verification of Legacy Member Eligibility \_\_\_\_\_